

them, and the atmosphere drew into the wake of the passing crowd all whom they passed. In the early morning the company of the "One Tun" had collected, by a special law of gravitation which governed the progress of a fighting crowd, at least another five hundred of the children of the night. Even the ghostly shapes of things that once were men walked with brighter eyes and stronger gait on the heels of the gathering crowd. For them a fight was afoot, entertainment in itself, and was there not always a pocket to be picked or a purse to be snatched in such a crowd?

The party strode rapidly towards the ring. Burly John Jackson, with a crop in his hand, wearing a plum-coloured coat and a hat like a modern bishop's, walked forward at the head of an assembly he mastered by his personality. The Corinthians, with their necks and mouths swathed in handkerchiefs and their exaggerated collars turned up to break the keen air of the spring morning, walked, some arm-in-arm, in groups of twos and threes. Notorious dandies, some of them; all scrupulously dressed men of fashion, they were odd figures to be seen abroad in such company at such an hour. In many cases they were accompanied by their servants or "minders," the last gentry being pugilists or ex-pugilists who found the duty of acting as bodyguards to gentlemen liable to get into hot corners more or less profitable. The fighting-men kept together to a great degree, imitating their masters, the Corinthians. They walked in two groups. Of one, Bill Richmond, the black pugilist, was the centre. Hen Pearce, the new-comer, with Paddington Jones on

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