

"Gentlemen—sportsmen all. The game's afoot," he yelled. "Principals and seconds have gone on. It is just four o'clock, and if we start now we shall be in good time. All out for the fight—all out."

In the old "One Tun" there rose a mighty cheer. The company, baying like hounds about to be blooded, half-mad with joy over the impending, unexpected fight, trooped out of the house in noisy groups, and assembled in the deserted Piccadilly Circus. In the grey light of the very early morning, some horribly flushed, others pallid and exhausted, or hectic and feverish after the night's orgie, they walked or staggered down Piccadilly.

The increasing light caught them unsparingly, and outlined their wild, mad faces, their dishevelled finery, and their faded clothes. In a straggling crowd, picking up revellers as they passed, they marched on Hyde Park, making the peaceful morning hideous with their discordant progress. And in Hyde Park Bill Gibbons and his assistant had driven the last stake into the ground and knotted the last rope. The bishop of the ring, leaning against his beloved posts, waited the coming of his Corinthian patrons. An early morning sunbeam, catching his round and ruddy face, discovered him for a moment asleep where he stood. As he slept, Bill Gibbons' head drooped forward into his ample bosom, while his hat fell to the ground and rolled in the cool grass, where the overnight dew sparkled like diamonds set in a great green carpet.