

drunken, crazy glee, through the rooms and in the passages. The outer doors were closed, and the crowd clamoured to the bar, singing and capering as they wildly ordered drinks. The fighting spirit, the unleashed devil in the men of that day, was abroad, ravening in the "One Tun." The sporting men began to call the odds, and their chattering became an unceasing babel, rising higher than the mad riot of sounds coming from the half-crazed crowd, clamouring at the bar and in the passages.

In all this welter of madness, this inferno of sound, two men, unobserved, confronted each other in a quieter corner of the house, for a few moments.

They were Colonel Darleigh and Sir John Dering.

"Passion is running high," Sir John said, as they met. "I prefer to consider what I say. I do not speak the thought that is in my mind before these men."

Sir John spoke slowly and deliberately.

"When this fight is over, at the end of the month, I shall challenge you with knowing that Belcher had been blinded."

"I shall call you a liar," Colonel Darleigh answered, with rising passion. "If you will say what you think now, I'll call you a liar as soon as you speak the words."

Sir John Dering shrugged his shoulders.

"Time enough," he said. "Time enough. With this fight we play the last round. It shall settle our accounts in full."

Colonel Darleigh laughed harshly.

"As you please, Sir John," he said.

At that moment Gentleman Jackson hustled into the room.

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