

hundred pounds to ten thousand pounds. I am at your service, Sir John."

The company gasped in astonishment—they were even too surprised to become immediately articulate.

"Holy smoke," said Bill Richmond, relieving the tension, and bringing the house down with a roar of laughter. "Why, it's fifty to one Belcher, and I wouldn't take the odds to my waistcoat and stand on Firby."

The two antagonists and the chairman were standing—their faces slightly pale. After Richmond's sally, a roar of laughter rippled round the table. As it ascended to a roar, Will Warr, red, sweating, short of breath, his sleeves turned up, just as he had rushed from the bar, swung open the door and entered the room, clamouring for attention.

"Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen," he shouted above the rising babel, alarm plainly written on his homely, battered face.

Mr. Fletcher Reid rapped on the table. His nerves were irritable.

"Well—what is it, Warr—what is it? Have you seen the ghost of Piccadilly or the Black Death?" he asked testily.

"There is a young man outside," old Warr said. "He says he must come in; he says he has a message—and by God he has a message, too. He says it may affect any match-making that may take place to-night."

Darleigh turned slightly more pallid in the heated air of the room, charged with this new excitement.

"What does he want?" asked Mr. Reid, looking doubtfully over the drink-inflamed faces of his com-

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