

was not sitting in the sun, but his face took on a troubled, anxious expression. That I should be talking about the horses was in itself surprising; that I should so hopelessly jumble noblemen and horses together was, no doubt, a matter for anxiety.

"A man named Marston owns Sir Michael," Steel said deliberately, and with a soothing intonation in his voice; "wait a bit—I've got it; there's another horse from the same stable called the Count; that's what you've got in your mind. I was really afraid it was a touch of the sun, for you've not been pegging."

"Who owns the Count?" I queried. "Is it a man named Griffith?"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Steel, "you *are* mixed; Griffith's a jock, and wouldn't be allowed to race or own horses. I'll tell you who owns him," he added, looking at his race card—"Macklin! that's the man. He's trained in the same stable with Sir Michael."

"Let's go and have a look at the horses," I said, moving down the steps.

Steel's eye opened wide with astonishment. "You're coming on nicely," he remarked; "you'll wind up by having a bet on Sir Michael yourself."

"No, I shan't do that; and you had better wait till I find out about something."

"I suppose you're going to ask the jockey," he sneered banteringly.

"Yes," I answered simply, "if I get a chance."

"If you make that mistake, old man, he will probably tell you to go to—"

"Jahannam," I put in.

"That's just what he'll do," said Steel, with a grin at my Hindustani.

We walked over to the paddock. Gentlemen and ladies were sauntering around amongst the high-tempered horses who were waiting, all on edge, for the struggle that lay before them.

"This way, please," whispered The Thing in my ear. Straight, like a sleep-walker, I followed the whisper to where a great white-stockinged chest-

nut was stretching his long, lean neck impatiently, and making nervous music with the snaffle in his teeth.

I knew I should see the little man of brickbat proclivities beside the Count. He was there in all the splendour of Oxford-blue jacket, and deep crimson sash.

"Who is that little man in blue and crimson?" I asked Steel. I knew; for The Thing was whispering in my ear, "that's Griffith;" but I wanted a human voice to assure me that I was not dreaming.

"That's Griffith, the jockey; 'Little Griff,' as they call him—one of the best boys that ever came out from Australia. He's the Fred Archer of India. Wonder what he's riding—" and he looked at his card again. "By Jove! The Count! Wonder what he's doing upon that crock—to make the running for his stable companion, Sir Michael, I suppose."

"I'll ask him," I said.

Steel put a detaining hand on my arm, and his blue eyes were full of a new wonder. I went over and spoke to the little man.

"Good day, sir," he exclaimed, touching his cap, as he looked up at me.

"You remember me then?" I queried.

"I'd be a sweep if I didn't," he answered.

"Is that the Count?" I asked carelessly.

"Yes, sir. You can bet your life on him this trip."

The signal to mount came from the judges' stand. A big, red-faced man stepped up and held his hand on a level with the Count's forearm; the jockey put his foot in it, and was lifted into the saddle.

I walked back to Steel. "That horse is going to win," I assured him; "but there is one thing I don't quite understand—the jockey once told me that if I saw the Count with his *shoes off* he was certain to win."

Steel looked at the horse as I spoke, and exclaimed: "Don't you see—they *have* taken his shoes off—he's as