

THE STRAW

handkerchief and wiping his eyes as he galloped. "There they are. And running——!"

Lord Robert shot past him, rubbing his face on his sleeve.

"That was a stinger," he said. "Ah, there's that rail. It's turned me over before. If Paddy remembers it as well as I do he'll be careful. If not, it means another doctor's bill."

He crashed sublimely into the rail he mentioned, but it splintered harmlessly as he and his chestnut vanished, a vision of flying heels; and the next man veered from his own line to take advantage of the sudden gap. Gay had shown the way over without a touch; he was worse to follow.

The run was turning into a steeplechase, so breathless was it, with hounds scouring faster and faster on to a screaming scent, and the east wind flinging back their cry in the teeth of pursuit. It was not a time to diverge toward gates, nor even for glancing right and left in search of the easy places each man carried in his head; it was just up and over. If your horse couldn't take a fence clean and pecked on landing, you made it up between this mistake and the next, mindful to keep a grip on the reins if you found yourself in the