

CHAPTER II

A DOWNING STREET SENSATION

"**M**E ride eight miles on an 'orse!" exclaimed Bindle, looking up at the foreman in surprise. "An' who's a-comin' to 'old me on?"

Bindle stood in the yard of Messrs. Empson & Daley, cartage contractors, regarding a pair of burly cart-horses, ready-harnessed, with the traces thrown over their backs.

The foreman explained in the idiom adopted by foremen that "orders is orders."

"You can ride on top, run beside, or 'ang on be'ind; but you got to be at Merton at twelve o'clock," he said. "We jest 'ad a telephone message that a van's stranded this side o' Merton, 'orses broken down, an' you an' Tippitt 'ave got to take these 'ere and deliver the goods. Then take the van where you're told, an' bring back them ruddy 'orses 'ere, an' don't you forget it."

Bindle scratched his head through the blue and white cricket cap he habitually wore. Horses had suddenly assumed for him new significance.