

## THE STRAW

"Come on," he said in a stage whisper, squeezing through the briars to the moss-stained wooden rails that guarded the plantation.

"Wait till I find the tools," said Rafferty, fumbling in the car. "I've provided a jemmy and a rope ladder and a square of brown paper smeared with marmalade—treacle is the professional article, but it wasn't to be had. And I say, you fellows, kindly shuffle your feet when you're planking them in a flower-bed, or you'll have the police tracking us by our boots."

"Reminds me," said Lord Robert, sitting on the top rail, with an air of unnatural prudence. "I'm proposing to pull a pair of socks over mine."

"Oh, come on," said Gay.

He pushed into the tangle of underwood, stumbling over a fox-earth and bursting through the brambles; reaching a dim, but open, stretch of grass on the inner side; and the others followed.

Faintly visible on the right was a fantastic array of gravestones, weather-stained, leaning drunkenly, reminiscent of a time when the massive, ivy-clad house was not simply the hunting quarters of Burkinshaw. In parts it had been