

THE STRAW

those parts of America that bloodthirsty writers pick out on the map to locate their shooting stories) to an inheritance worth little, and a neighbourhood that had missed him sadly.

He stayed on the outskirts of the congregation, disregarding Rafferty's invitation to push in and hear the fun, and pretending to humour his mare who, not being coddled in a box reeking of ammonia and as hot as an oven, was behaving in the bitter wind with the patience of an unshorn lamb.

"And," concluded Burkinshaw solemnly, in his loud bass voice, that even in calamity sounded boastful, "the rascals were no raw hands, confound them. They appear to have been disturbed at their work."

Gay looked over their heads at the girl then ; he could not help it. His heart leapt and then dropped unaccountably, because her eyes were cast down.

"But," said the pompous victim, "they got away with a valuable historical painting—the portrait of Lady Sarah."

"Shocking!" said Lord Robert. "Look here, Rafferty and I want you to dine with us to-night, in Melton. It will be handy for you to pop up and down communicating with the police. And we'll do what we can to console