

## THE STRAW

pitiful to know fear of a man of her own rank, who had fallen so.

"I've—*given* you this," she said. "It might help ; you might—oh, I am sorry, I am so sorry——!"

And she was gone like a dream, and he dared not follow, pursue her, explain to her—dared not do anything but swing himself to the grass ; one hand closed mechanically on what she had thrust into it. It was not money. She must have caught up the first trinket she had of any value.

His cheek burned hot in the sharp night air, and he was divided between shame and a kind of warm rapture in this adventure. Without any sense of direction he blundered across the garden, glad of the darkness, landing at last among the rest of them watching for him behind the spinney. They had packed Lady Sarah inside the motor, and Lord Robert had started his engine and was whistling up the laggard.

"Whoop !" he said. "In with you. Why, man, we were planning a rescue. We had no manner of doubt Burkinshaw had nailed you and was sitting on your head."

Gay hurled himself into the car as it started. It was too dark to see without guessing now