

THE STRAW

CHAPTER I

GAY had been out hunting with the Quorn. On the ride home he had fallen into the company of two or three kindred spirits, dare-devil sportsmen, propounding the biggest joke of the season in the confidential dusk. A word or two had been enough to fire him, to make him, rocking in his saddle, throw in his lot with them.

And now the moon was up, a winking, disappearing moon, and the hilarious conspiracy was afoot.

They had dined in Melton with Rafferty, the sapper, who was qualified to draw on a glorious experience of night alarms, and who had ripped the lining out of his dinner-jacket to improvise masks. As he had insisted, they might as well do the thing in style.