

THE STRAW

"Odd? I should think so. That man was the finest steeplechase rider in England. There was no one to touch him across the sticks——"

"Poor Tokenhouse!" said Maria.

"—Till one day he was riding in a match with Bill Lauder and a few other fellows; they had a lot on it and they were all mad to win, going like blazes, and they got mixed up at one of the jumps; there were five of them in a heap, and Tokenhouse underneath. He ought to have been killed, but he wasn't."

"I can see it now," interrupted another man. "Two of them down and the others spinning up to the fence one by one—nothing on earth could stop 'em—coming over crash on the top."

"Tokenhouse hasn't been on a horse since," said the man who was telling Judy. "His nerve is gone. He was the first down, and if the rest of them had been professionals instead of crack-brained lunatics, they'd have been warned off. Poor old Tokenhouse! He lives with Gay and saunters among us like his own ghost in the hunting season. They say he has a screw loose; that his one amusement is writing sermons on the wickedness of the Turf."