

THE STRAW

curious sense of its inevitableness. Oddly enough he was not thinking much that she might be hurt. Fortune had sent him this opportunity, and in one breath he was assuring himself that she could not possibly recognise him as last night's ruffian, and, on the other hand, that now he had his chance to explain.

There was a fall in the wind, or rather he did not feel it, since it was behind him, driving him instead of buffeting in his face. How quickly the riotous life had left the trampled pastures over which they had galloped ! They lay below him like empty wastes. Here and there the disturbed cattle were herding in the corners, panting after a stampede ; and the sheep were still running all together. There was no guessing how far her horse might have followed unstayed, nor how far from him she might be lying crumpled under a hedge.

Gay pushed on faster, burst through a gap with his two horses and nearly let out a shout when at last he saw her.

She was gallantly trudging through the bents and rushes that hid the uneven bottom, her torn habit over her arm, her hat gone, her head flung back, courageous.

The Samaritan cantered down to her, wanting no introduction.