

THE STRAW

galloped after Chop most obligingly, and said : ' Beg pardon, you've dropped your bow, sir.' Thought it some ritualistic adornment. We left the parson thanking him out of the Communion Service, but none of us said Amen."

"Who is the girl?" said Gay; "the girl coming with Maria?"

She had had some difficulty in making her horse follow the other down. It was fresh and skittish, pretending to be scared by the flapping hood of a motor. So she rode in by herself, holding her whip and reins carefully, but betraying in her look of relief at having controlled the creature, that she was not quite at home in the saddle. Two or three people smiled at her and she smiled too, deliciously, colouring a little. Something pinned Gay's attention to her the moment she came in sight.

"She's the girl I am going to marry," said Lord Robert promptly, "when I have disposed of the other six. How is it that most of our beauties go out like a candle when you put them under a riding-hat?"

"I've heard," said the man next him, "that she is an heiress that Maria—who can't see two impossible people without shaking them up