

'Stand aside, you blighters,' I said, 'and he'll jump that, the d—d gig and all.' But they were afferaid!"

I asked if the animal was quiet to drive.

"Quiet to drive, sir, did you say? I should say so. I says *Away*, and *off* he goes." Here the thin scream became a screech. "Then I says *Pull up, you blighter*, and he stops dead. A child could drive him. He don't want no driving. You could drive him with a silken thread." His voice melted, and with an exquisite tender cadence he repeated: "With a silk-en therredd!"

"Well," I said. "How much?"

"How much, did you say, sir? How much?" He made it appear that this question came upon him as an extraordinary surprise. I nodded.

He meditated on the startling problem, and then yelled: "Thirty guineas. It's giving him away."

"Make it shillings," I said. I was ingenuously satisfied with my retort, but the man somehow failed to appreciate it.

"Come here," he said, in a tone of intimate confidence. "Come here. Listen. I've had that pony's picture painted. Finest artist in England, sir. And frame! You never see such a frame! At thirty guineas I'll throw the picture in. Look ye! That picture cost me two quid, and here's the receipt." He pulled forth a grimy paper, and I accepted it from his villainous fingers. It proved, however, to be a receipt for four pounds, and for the portrait, not of a pony, but of a man.

"This is a receipt for your own portrait," I said.