

THE STRAW

"Awful thing superstition," he grumbled. "I'm sure the foxes delight in running bang against it. What do they care in their hearts which way the wind is? They're skimming close to the ground themselves; it's *we* who get all the battering in a gale. I wish I could find a man with the wit to disobey my orders. I can't ride this brute another yard."

A dealer who had come out to give an unknown quantity his first sight of hounds, and had wonderfully survived, drew his prodigy alongside Lord Robert's washy chestnut.

"Care to try him, my lord?" he suggested blandly. The young 'un flung up his head snorting. His eye was wild and his neck was white with lather.

"Thanks; I haven't the nerves to ride a steam engine," said Lord Robert. "There's another squall coming up."

"It looks to me," said his neighbour, "as if there are enough loose horses in our tracks already to start a circus."

"And one's a side-saddle," said Gay, deserting the happy band falling in behind the huntsman. He knew the beast; he had ridden him himself, and sold him to Burkinshaw. And he felt as if Fate had sent him careering riderless to his hard. He began his search with a