

THE STRAW

on them," said Gay. "I wonder he doesn't chuck her off."

"Not he," said Lord Robert, "the weight of her would cow an elephant. I know how Burkinshaw jumped at the innovation of her riding on a cross saddle. 'Perfectly proper!' said he, considering the sore backs in his stables. It isn't the flighty ones take to it; it's the ones with sensible husbands who pay the piper."

"Well," said a man at his elbow, "it must be more amusing to feel a horse between your knees than to be hooked on to him as if he was a clothes-peg."

Lord Robert, keeping his watch on the gate, took off his hat to the lady.

"Somebody," he remarked, "asked me the other day why the deuce she wore that black bow. Said it was positively indecent to go about advertising your sex like that."

"Oh, she doesn't wear it for that reason," said Gay. "Don't you know Chop, the parson? You can't tell the two apart without it. We are never quite clear which of them sports it, all we know is it's to distinguish them from each other."

"And the day before yesterday a farmer picked it up," said Rafferty, striking in, "and