

Bindle looked at the horse suspiciously and, seeing there were no indications of vice, at the same time realising that there was nothing else to be done, he acquiesced.

"Steady on, ole sport," he counselled Spotty. "Don't you chuck me clean over the other side."

With a dexterous heave, Spotty landed him well upon the animal's back. Bindle calmly proceeded to throw one leg over, sitting astride.

"Not that way," said Tippitt, "both legs on the near side."

"You can ride your nag wot way you like, Tippy," said Bindle; "but as for me, I likes to 'ave a leg each side. 'Ow the 'ell am I goin' to 'old on if I sit like a bloomin' lady. My Gawd!" he exclaimed, passing his hand along the backbone of the animal, "if I don't 'ave a cushion I shall wear through in two ticks. 'Ere, Spotty, give us a cloth o' some sort, then you can back me as a two-to-one chance."

Tippitt, more accustomed than Bindle to such adventures, vaulted lightly upon his animal, and led the way out of the yard. For some distance they proceeded at an ambling walk, which Bindle found in no way inconvenient. Just as they had entered the Fulham Road, where it branches off from the Brompton Road, an urchin gave Bindle's horse a flick on the flank with a stick, sending it into a ponderous trot, amidst the jangle and clatter of harness. Bindle clutched wildly at the collar.