

A DOWNING STREET SENSATION 31

With elaborate intentness he examined the particular animal that had been assigned to him.

"Wot part d'you sit on, ole son?" he enquired of Tippitt, a pale, weedy youth, with a thin dark moustache that curled into the corners of his mouth. Tippitt's main characteristic was that he always had a cigarette either stuck to his lip or behind his ear. Sometimes both.

"On 'is tail," replied Tippitt laconically, his cigarette wagging up and down as he spoke.

"Sit on 'is wot?" cried Bindle, walking round to the stern of his animal and examining the tail with great attention. "Sit on 'is wot?"

"On 'is tail," repeated Tippitt without manifesting any interest in the conversation. "Right back on 'is 'aunches," he added by way of explanation; "more comfortable."

"Oh!" said Bindle, relieved, "I see. Pity you can't say wot you mean, Tippy, ain't it? Personally, meself, I'd sooner sit well up, so as I could put me arms round 'is neck. Hi! Spotty!" he called to an unprepossessing stable-hand. "Bring a ladder."

"A wot?" enquired Spotty dully.

"A ladder," explained Bindle. "I got to mount this 'ere Derby winner."

Spotty strolled leisurely across the yard towards Bindle, and for a moment stood regarding the horse in a detached sort of way.

"I'll give you a leg up, mate," he said accommodatingly.