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He has been out working a horse on the gallops. "Not a sinner about," he says, with wry satisfaction. "Sunday morning, they're all in bed." But the wind has exacerbated his conjunctivitis. There's something wrong with his ears, too – they're stuffed with cotton wool. Barney Curley moves slowly, nowadays, can't walk very far. Last year he lay in hospital for three months.

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