

THE SPORTS OF THE SCHOOL!

A Splendid Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

- AND -

GREYFRIARS LYRICS

A Special New Feature in This Issue.





The above sketch illustrates one of the many thrilling incidents in the Fine Detective Tale in this week's **PLUCK**. Out on Friday. :: Price One Penny. ::



The "LORD ROBERTS" TARGET PISTOL.

Beautifully plated and finished. May be carried in the pocket. Will kill birds and rabbits up to 50 yards. Noiseless Ball Cartridges, 9d. per 100. Shot, 1/6 per 100. 100 birds or rabbits may be killed at a cost of 9d. only. Send for list. **CROWN GUN WORKS, 6, Whittall Street, BIRMINGHAM.**

IF YOU WANT Good Cheap Photographic Material or Cameras, send postcard for Samples and Catalogue **FREE**.—Works: **JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.**

TEN DAYS' FREE TRIAL



Packed Free. Carriage Paid. Direct from Factory, without one penny deposit. Highest grade British-made All-Steel MEAD SUPERB

'COVENTRY FLYERS'

WARRANTED FIFTEEN YEARS.

Defiance Puncture-Resisting or Dunlop Tyres, Brooks' Saddles, Coasters, Sprocket-Gears, etc.

£2-15 to £6-19-6

CASH OR EASY MONTHLY PAYMENTS.

in 365 days. **World's Record !!**

Tyres and Accessories at *half usual prices.*

Shop-Soiled & Second-hand Cycles from 15/-

Write at once for **Free Art Catalogue,**

Marvelous Offers and details of World's Record Ride. Rider Agents Wanted. Motor-Cycles and Cycle-Cars at Factory Prices.

Est. 25 yrs.

MEAD

CYCLE Co., Dept. 44D
11-13 Paradise St., LIVERPOOL.

FUN for SIXPENCE.

VENTRILOQUIST'S Double Throat; fits roof of mouth; astonishes and mystifies; sing like a canary, whine like a puppy, and imitate birds and beasts. Ventriloquism Treatise free. Sixpence each, four for 1s.—**BENSON (Dept. 6), 239, Pentonville Road, London, N.**



FREE, ABSOLUTELY FREE.

This beautiful 18-ct. Gold-filled Signet Ring. We make this extraordinary offer to introduce our new catalogue. All we ask of you is to send your name and address, with P.O. for 10d. to cover the cost of engraving your initials and postage. Two-Initial Inter-twined Monogram, 1s. 1d.—**SIMS & MAYER (Dept 15), Walter House, 418 to 422, Strand, London, W.C.**

These Readers :: ::



Have Won Cash Prizes

:: IN ::

"THE PENNY POPULAR"
POPLETS
COMPETITION.

WHY NOT YOU?

GET **"THE PENNY POPULAR"** TO-DAY

THIS WEEK'S PRIZE-WINNERS.

POPLETS NO. 7 RESULT.

FIRST PRIZE of 20s.

A. R. McINTOSH, 4, PERSEVERANCE STREET, DODWORTH ROAD, BARNSELY.

Example: Bathing.

Poplet: Brute Snaps Gladys.

SECOND PRIZE of 10s.

W. CHEETHAM, Junior, 83, ANDOVER STREET, PITSMOOR, SHEFFIELD.

Example: Picnic Party.

Poplet: Pa Feels Young.

THIRD PRIZE of 5s.

K. BAKER, THE FERNS, BARONSFIELD ROAD, ST. MARGARETS-ON-THAMES.

Example: Cats.

Poplet: Cuddled by Spinsters.

TWO 2s. 6d. PRIZES go to

E. WHITE, Junior, 744, Woodborough Road, Mapperley, Nottingham; J. M. GRUNDY, 51, Coventry Road, Kingsbury, Near Tamworth.

FIVE 1s. PRIZES go to

L. BRIDEN, 53, Durants Road, Ponders End, Middlesex; HERBERT CAIN, 8, Parliament Street, Ramsey, Isle of Man; EDWARD N. COURTNEY, 38, Castlereagh Place, Belfast; FRED WEATHERLEY, 15, Silkeys Lane, Chirton, North Shields; T. F. NOBLE, 13, Port Street, Cranston Hill, Glasgow.

On Sale Everywhere.

The Magnet 1st

Library

A Companion Paper to
"THE CEM" LIBRARY
and
"THE PENNY POPULAR."

NEXT MONDAY'S STORY:

**"SELF-DENIAL
WEEK AT
GREYFRIARS!"**

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale.

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

Order Your Copy Early.

A Complete School Story Book, attractive to All Readers.

The Editor will be obliged if you will hand this book, when finished with, to a friend.



THE SPORTS OF THE SCHOOL!

A Splendid, New, Long,
Complete Story of the
Chums of Greyfriars.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Coker Goes It!

LOOK out!"
"It's Coker!"
Tramp! tramp! tramp!
"Great Scott!"

Tramp! tramp! tramp! Jingle! jingle! jingle! tramp!

There was a roar of voices in the old Close of Greyfriars. Fellows ran from all directions, masters came to their study windows; even on the cricket-field, where the Sixth were playing the Fifth, play ceased, and the cricketers stared towards the scene of the uproar. Even Billy Bunter came out of the tuckshop to see what was going on, with a half-consumed jam-tart in his hand.

A big, raw-boned horse was careering wildly across the Close, with a Fifth Form fellow in the saddle striving in vain to control him.

Coker of the Fifth—for it was the great Coker—dragged at the reins, and punched the ribs of his steed with his heels, and roared at the horse as though he expected the animal to understand English; but his dragging, his punching, and his roaring only seemed to have the effect of further exciting the excited animal.

The horse had the bit between his teeth, and was quite out of hand, and he was going at full career, and Coker could no more stop him than he could have stopped a runaway locomotive.

There was a rush of the fellows in the Close to get out of the way.

Scattering before the charge of the big, raw-boned "gee-gee" and the frantic rider, the Greyfriars fellows yelled advice to Coker—mostly in a humorous strain.

"Put the brake on, Coker!"
"Back-pedal, you ass!"
"Let go the anchor!"
"Put some salt on his tail!"

"Gerrout of the way!" gasped Coker. "I kik-kik-can't stop him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The way Coker's feet were going looked, indeed, as though he was trying to back-pedal with the stirrups. His cap had been blown off, and his hair was flying in the wind. His face was crimson with excitement and exertion.

The horse seemed bent upon charging directly at the wall of the schoolhouse; and if he had done so, the career of Coker of the Fifth would have come to a very sudden termination, and the Fifth Form at Greyfriars would have been deprived of one of its brightest ornaments. But it appeared to be only his fun, after all, for within six feet of the wall he suddenly wheeled, and dashed away towards the Head's garden.

Behind the galloping horse the crowd of fellows closed up in pursuit.

"Take the gate, Coker!"

"Hold on to his ears!"

"Stick to it, Coker! Hurray!"

Coker had lost the reins now, and was holding on to mane and saddle. His knees clasped the ribs of the horse, and the stirrups flew free. The yells of the juniors seemed to spur on the steed to greater efforts. He was charging at the gate into the Head's garden, and this time he did not turn back. He took the gate at a bound, and landed in the garden, and trampled across the flower-beds.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, of the Remove. "There will be a row about this! This is too rich—even for Coker!"

"I didn't know Coker was a giddy horseman before!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"He's giddy, if not a horseman," chuckled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Coker!" roared Peter Todd. "Try the greenhouse next!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gosling, who added the duties of a gardener to those of a porter, was in the garden, and he jumped out of the way of Coker's charging steed just in time. Gosling, crimson with rage, roared at the unhappy Fifth-Former:

"Get hout! Take that there 'orse out of 'ere! You 'ear me, Master Coker! I'll report yer! Look at them flower-beds! Wot I says is this 'ere—"

But Coker did not stay to listen to what Gosling had to say. He couldn't. His frantic steed charged down the gravel path, and then came charging back. It really looked as if he were going to take the greenhouse next, and the results would have been disastrous if he had done so. Gosling picked up a big garden-broom and smote at the steed, and turned him aside. The smite took effect chiefly on Coker's leg, and Coker yelled:

"Yaroooh!"
"Get hout!" roared Gosling. "Take that 'orse away! You 'ear me?"

"I kik-kik-can't!"
Gosling made another smite with the broom, and the horse charged away at the gate. The gate was crowded with juniors, but they scattered at once to give the runaway room. The horse came thundering over, Coker clinging wildly to his back.

"S-s-stop him, somebody!" shrieked Coker. "Hold him! Potter—Green—you fatheads, come and lend me a hand! Yow!"

"Go it, Coker!"
"Hang on to his ears!"
"Hurray!"
"Oh, crumbs! I shall be ki-ki-killed! Somebody stop him! Help! Yaroooh!"

Away went the frantic steed, Coker's yells and punches and kicks having driven him into almost a state of lunacy by this time. He charged down on the playing-fields, and there was a roar from the cricketers:

"Keep off!"
"Get away!"
"Don't ride on the pitch, you idiot!"

Coker didn't want to ride anywhere, but he had no choice in the matter. The horse trampled over the cricket-pitch, amid yells of indignation from the Fifth and Sixth. Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, rushed up with a bat flourishing in the air, and the horse swung away from him and dashed towards the pavilion. Half a dozen fellows with stumps headed him off, and he came whirling back into the Close.

Tramp! tramp! tramp! Clatter! jingle!
"Hurray!"
"Go it, Coker!"

Harry Wharton made a jump to catch the lashing reins, but he did not succeed, and he jumped back just in time to save himself. Coker and the horse charged on. Upon the steps of the School House appeared the reverend form of Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars. He raised his hand commandingly to the hapless rider.

"Coker, stop this at once! How dare you ride about in the Close in this reckless manner? I command you to cease this ridiculous exhibition immediately!"

But the Head's command was of no more avail than Canute's commands to the waves. Coker would have stopped the exhibition, with all his heart; but it did not depend on Coker.

Tramp! tramp! tramp!
"Oh, crumbs! I shall be kik-kik-killed! Yaroooh!"
"What-ho, she bumps!" yelled Johnny Bull.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Dear me!" exclaimed the Head. "The horse appears to be out of control. Pray stop him!"

Wharton and Peter Todd succeeded in getting hold of the reins at last. The steed was dragged to a halt, and Coker slid over his tail, and rolled on the ground. He sat up, almost at the doctor's feet, and blinked at him.

"Ow! ow! ow!"
"Coker!"
"Yow-ow-ow!"

Peter Todd of the Remove vaulted lightly into the saddle, and had the horse under control at once. The Head fixed his eyes sternly upon Coker, and Coker blinked at the Head.

"Coker, are you hurt?"
"Ow! Yes! I think all my bones are broken!" groaned Coker. "I've sprained every ankle I've got, and broken all my ribs, I think—and my backbone—ow!—and my neck! Groogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Don't be absurd, Coker! You have certainly not broken your neck, or your backbone," said the Head, frowning.

"Well, I feel as if I have, sir!" gasped Coker, staggering to his feet. "I don't know what was the matter with the horse. He's quiet enough now."

"Because he's got a chap on his back who can ride!" grinned Todd.

"Oh, that's all rot! I'm a good rider."
"You certainly do not seem a good rider, Coker!" said the Head severely. "And you should not have brought that horse into the Close. You have done very great damage. What did you do this ridiculous thing for?"

"I—I'm practising, sir," said Coker. "I just rode him in to show the fellows how I could manage him, and, somehow or other, he ran off with me. I think it must have been Todd's face that frightened him. Ow!"

"Take the animal away at once!" said the Head.
"Certainly, sir. I'll ride him back to Friardale—"

"You will do nothing of the kind, Coker! I forbid you to mount that horse again. Pray take him away!"

"Yes, sir," said Peter cheerfully. And the Head, frowning, went into the House again.

"Look here, that's my horse, you cheeky fag!" shouted Coker. "You just get off, and give him to me."
Peter Todd chuckled.

"No fear! I'll take him back to the livery stables for you."

Coker did not seem grateful for that kind offer. He rushed at the horse, and Peter rode away to the gates with Coker in hot pursuit. They disappeared out of the school gates, leaving the crowd of fellows yelling with laughter.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes, "this is the first time I've seen Coker trying to witch the world with noble horsemanship, as Spokeshave says—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"He said he was practising," grinned Johnny Bull. "I think he will want a lot of practice, if that's the way he begins. I should advise him to have a Bowden brake put on next time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Coker came in red and dusty a quarter of an hour later. He had not succeeded in catching Peter Todd. That cheerful youth was enjoying a canter in the lanes on Coker's horse.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Bunter's First Lesson!

"I 'VE got it!"
Peter Todd uttered that exclamation as he came to a halt in Friardale Lane. It was some hours after the adventure—or, rather, the misadventure—of Coker of the Fifth, and Peter had taken the horse back to the livery-stables in Friardale.

Peter was not alone now. His study mates in No. 7 Study were with him—his cousin Alonzo, and Billy Bunter, and Tom Dutton, the deaf junior.

"Got what?" asked Billy Bunter. "Anything to eat?"
"No, ass! Look at that!"

Peter Todd pointed to a notice pinned upon the trunk of a tree. The juniors gathered round and regarded it, Billy Bunter blinking at it through his big spectacles. The notice ran:

**"FRIARDALE FLOWER SHOW
AND SPORTS!
PONY RACES AND JUMPING!"**

There was a picture of a rider taking a hedge, and in smaller print particulars of the show and the races, and the prizes offered.

"I've seen that before!" grunted Bunter.
"I've got it!" repeated Peter Todd emphatically.

"Got what, my dear Peter?" asked Alonzo Todd.
"That's what Coker was riding that geegee for," explained Peter. "He said he was practising. Coker's entered for the pony races!"

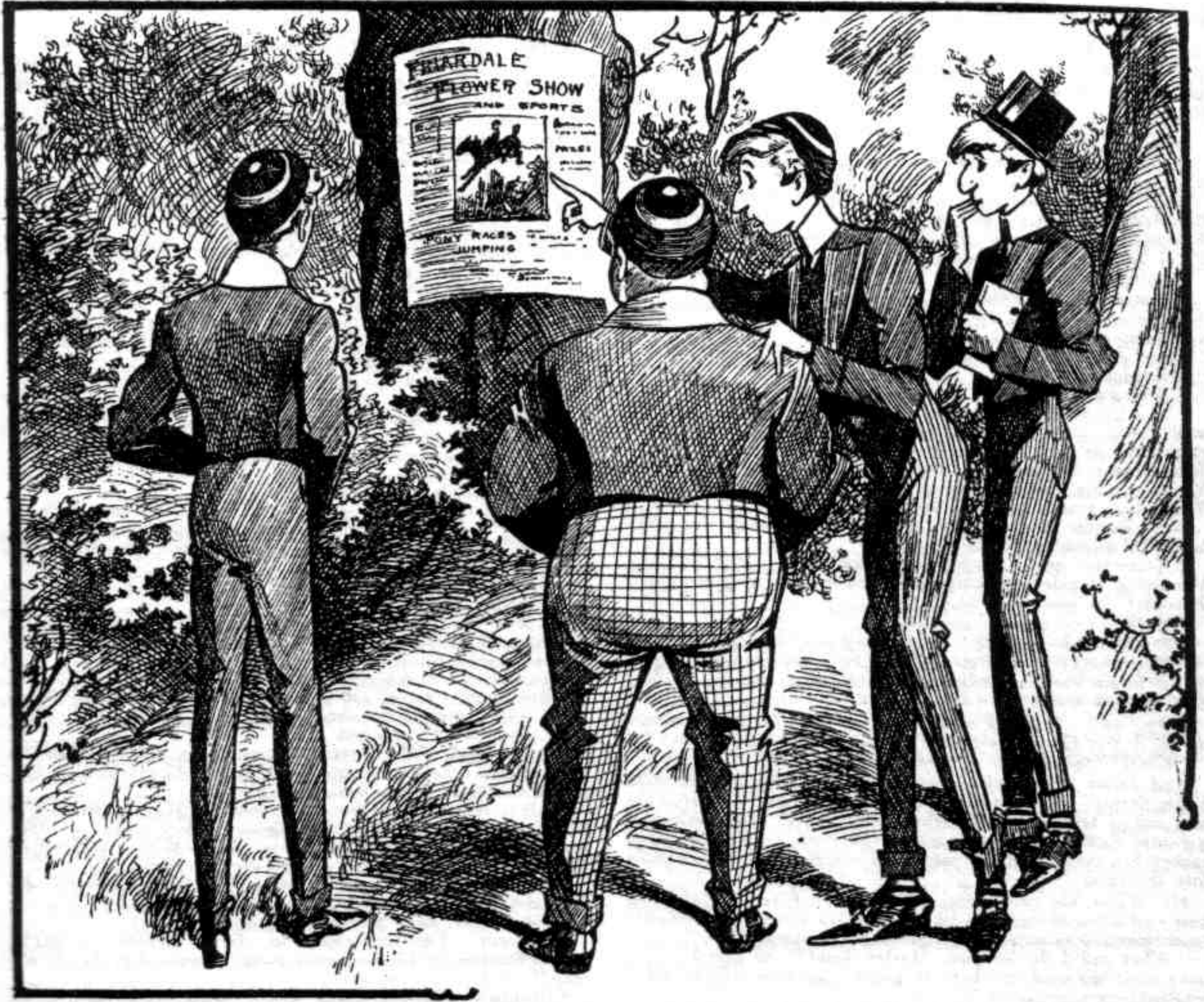
"The ass!" said Bunter. "He can't ride for toffee. I'm a jolly good rider myself—I dare say I could rope in those prizes, if it were worth the fag!"

Peter grinned.
"You're going to have a chance, my fat tulip," he said.

M
286

**"THE GEM" LIBRARY
FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE
COUPON.**

To be enclosed, with coupon taken from page 2, GEM No. 286, with all requests for correspondents. This may only be used by readers in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, India, or other of our Colonies.
See Page 26, "The Gem" Library, Number 286.



Peter Todd pointed to the notice pinned on the trunk of the tree. "That was what Coker was riding the gee-gee for," he explained. "Coker's entered for the pony races." "The ass!" said Billy Bunter. "I am a jolly good rider myself. I dare say I could rope in the prizes if it were worth the fag!" (See Chapter 2.)

"Oh, really, Todd—"

"We're going to enter for the pony races," said Peter cheerfully. "I'm a good rider, and Alonzo can ride, though he can't do anything else—"

"My dear Peter—"

"I said that we're going to make No. 7 top study in the Remove," continued Peter Todd. "I've got pretty rotten materials to work with, I know—"

"Look here, Todd—"

"But it's a bad workman that quarrels with his tools—I mean his tools," said Peter. "We are all going to enter."

"Well, I don't mind," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I'm a good rider. I don't want to swank, but I will say that there are very few fellows who can manage a horse like me."

"It's hard enough to manage a donkey like you," Peter remarked. "But I'm going to manage you all right. You're going to practise—"

"I don't mind. Of course, you'll have to find the money for hiring ponies and things, and you can have it back out of the prize."

Peter Todd rubbed his hands gleefully. It was his great ambition to make his study top study in the Remove, but considering the quality of his comrades he had all his work cut out to make Harry Wharton & Co. take a back seat.

Billy Bunter was chiefly distinguished as being the fattest junior at Greyfriars. Alonzo Todd was the most amiable youth in the world, but had no other great distinction. Tom Dutton was a handsome and sturdy fellow, but he was deaf. But Peter Todd never turned back after setting his hand to

the plough, and certainly it could not be denied that he had made his mark in the Remove.

"Can you ride, Dutton?" Peter demanded.

"Eh?" said Dutton.

"Can you ride?"

"Certainly not."

"Then you'll have to learn," said Peter, bawling.

"Learn to put on side?" said Dutton, in surprise. "I'm not going to do anything of the sort. I'll leave that to Bunter."

"Oh, crumbs! I said can you ride?" shrieked Peter.

"Oh, ride!" said Dutton. "Why don't you speak plainly? Yes, I can ride all right—I was brought up among horses. It wouldn't be a bad idea to enter for that pony race, Toddy."

"That's just what I've been saying."

"Eh? It wouldn't be playing," said Tom Dutton, with a shake of the head. "Lots of fellows will enter—young farmer chaps round here, as well as Greyfriars fellows, and perhaps some of the Highcliffe chaps. It won't be easy."

"We're going to enter!" bawled Peter. "All four of us!"

"Good!" said Tom Dutton cheerfully. "I'm glad I thought of it."

"You didn't think of it, chump; I thought of it, jossler!"

"Eh?"

"My dear Peter," said Alonzo, "it does not really matter who thought of it, so long as we enter and are successful in obtaining the prizes."

"Not much chance for you chaps if I enter," said Billy

Bunter. "Of course, you might take second and third prizes and keep them in the study. Wharton and his lot will be bound to enter when they hear of this."

"We've got to beat No. 1 Study!" said Peter firmly. "It won't be very hard to beat Coker of the Fifth—but Wharton is a tough customer—and Bob Cherry can ride. We've got to show them that No. 7 is top study in the Remove."

"You leave it to me," said Bunter airily.

Peter Todd snorted.

"I'm going to put you through some practice, and see what you can do," he said. "Come on!"

And Peter started towards the village. His companions followed him—Peter was accustomed to giving orders in No. 7 Study, and he never allowed his orders to be questioned. Peter Todd was an exceedingly masterful youth.

"Going to practise now?" asked Bunter.

"You are," said Peter.

"Oh, good! Get me a really good horse, and I'll show you what riding is," said Bunter.

"I'm going to get a horse that suits you," said Peter—"a wooden one."

"Wha-a-at!"

"You know that's how they practise riding in the Army," said Peter. "When a chap joins a cavalry regiment, if he can't ride, he's put on a rocking-horse to practise. It teaches him to keep his seat, you know—and gets him used to the kind of geegee that is supplied by the War Office in war time. That's how you're going to begin."

Billy Bunter glared at his study leader through his spectacles in speechless wrath.

"You—you ass!" he spluttered at last. "If you think I'm going to ride a rocking-horse you're jolly well mistaken. I won't!"

"Eh?"

"I won't! I—ow—ow! Leggo my ear, you fathead!"

"You won't?" said Peter agreeably, compressing the grip of his finger and thumb upon Billy Bunter's fat ear. "Did you say you won't?"

"Ow, ow! I really meant to say—yow!—that I won't mind, if you think it's really necessary—yaroo!"

"Good!" said Peter. "That's settled, then!"

And Peter Todd halted outside the toyshop in Friardale High Street. The toys and games emporium of Friardale was not a large establishment; but Peter had noticed a gigantic rocking-horse in passing the shop, which was kept rather for show than for sale. He marched his companions into the shop.

Mr. Wicks, the proprietor, who supplied bats and balls and nets and other things of a like sort to the Greyfriars fellows, came forward most politely, rubbing his hands.

"What can I do for you, Master Todd?" he asked. "I have some splendid new bats in, which I am now selling under—ahem!—cost price—"

"I'm looking for a horse," said Peter.

"A—a—a horse!" said Mr. Wicks. "I do not supply horses, Master Todd. You must go to the livery stables for a horse."

"I mean a wooden one," explained Peter. "A live one wooden do."

Mr. Wicks politely laughed at that execrable pun.

"Oh, you want a rocking-horse!" he said. "A present for some little brother at home, I presume. Very good—very good! Look at this one—more than half life-size—in splendid condition—slightly shop-soiled, and therefore remarkably cheap—"

"It's for Bunter," said Peter Todd. "Can he try it now?"

"Ahem! Certainly!" Mr. Wicks, trying to conceal his astonishment at the idea of a fellow of Bunter's age requiring a rocking-horse, dragged out the horse. "Pray mount it now, Master Bunter. I am sure you will like it."

"We don't want to buy it outright," said Peter. "I want to hire it for Bunter, after he's tried it."

"Quite so—quite so; you shall have it on the most reasonable terms, and I will send it to the school by the carrier," said the obliging Mr. Wicks. "Pray use this chair to mount, Master Bunter."

Billy Bunter gave Peter a glance of speechless fury. But Peter's steely eye was upon him, and he did not dare to disobey. He mounted upon the chair, and put one fat leg over the back of the rocking-horse.

The wooden animal plunged forward under his weight, and Bunter gave a yell and clasped his arms round the wooden neck. Peter Todd pulled the chair away, and set the horse into still more violent motion. Bunter clung on frantically.

"Stoppit!" he roared. "Lemme get a seat, you idiot."

"A jolly good rider like you can get a seat while the horse is going," chuckled Peter.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"Ow! Oh, really—"

"Sit tight! Put your knees in, you fat duffer."

"Yaroo!"

"Hold on, fathead."

Bunter got astride of the saddle somehow, and received the reins from the grinning Dutton. He bestowed a glare upon Peter Todd that would have shrivelled that junior up, if glares could shrivel. Mr. Wicks stood back smiling.

"Sit on it as if it were a horse, and not a fence," yelled Peter. "Hold the reins like reins, not like tiller-lines. Have some sense, fathead."

"Ow! Don't work it so fast—yah!"

"A real horse would go faster than that! Use it."

"Oh, dear! Oh I—I shall fall off! Yah!"

"If you can't ride, it's time you learned," said Peter calmly; and he shoved at the rocking-horse with more energy than ever.

"Oh! Ow! Oh! Yow! Leave off! Yah!"

The rocking-horse was in violent motion now. Bunter swung backwards and forwards, popping up and down in the saddle, and kicking wildly to get his feet into the stirrups. He plunged forward suddenly upon the horse's neck. There was an exclamation of alarm from Mr. Wicks.

"Look out!"

But it was too late. Bunter's weight was a little too much for the rocking-horse. It heeled over on its head, and Bunter shot across the wooden head, and landed sprawling on the counter.

Crash! Crash! Crash!

Cricket-bats and fishing-rods, and balls and rackets went clattering to the floor. Billy Bunter sprawled among them.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "I'm injured! Yaroo! I'm killed! Oh!"

"Get on again!" roared Peter.

"Yaroo!"

"Ahem!" said Mr. Wicks, hastily. "Perhaps Master Bunter will have more room for practice at—at the school, Master Todd. Really—"

"Yaroo! I won't get on again! Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled off the counter, and, dodging Peter Todd, rolled out of the shop.

"Come back!" shouted Peter.

But for once Billy Bunter did not obey the voice of his leader. He was sprinting away towards Greyfriars as fast as his fat little legs could carry him.

"All serene; send the horse along, Mr. Wicks," said Peter. And the Co. left the shop. They came up with Bunter at the gates of Greyfriars. Billy Bunter blinked at Peter with a look as if he could have eaten him.

"Have you told them to send that rotten horse?" he bawled.

"Yes. You start practice to-morrow."

"I won't! I'm not going to. I— Leggo my ear!" yelled Bunter. "I'll begin as early as you like, Todd, old chap."

"Righto!" grinned Peter Todd. And he walked in at the gates; and Billy Bunter shook a furious fist after him.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Coker on the War Path!

"WHERE'S Inky?"

The chums of the Remove were gathered in Study No. 1 for tea. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were the owners of the study, but Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were as much at home there as in their own quarters.

There was a feed of unusual splendour on the table—hot buttered muffins, sardines, jam and marmalade, and cake of two kinds—so it was natural that the faces of the Remove chums should wear cheerful expressions. They had been playing the Upper Fourth in a match, and had beaten them by thirty runs, another cause of satisfaction. Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry had arrived to grace the festive board with their presence, as a novelist would say; but Hurree Singh—familiarily known as Inky, from his beautiful complexion—had not yet turned up.

Bob Cherry put his head out of the study doorway and bawled.

"Inky!"

"The comefulness is terrific, my worthy chum," replied the soft voice of the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Muffins are done," said Bob.

"I am here, my esteemed and ludicrous chum," said Inky, coming into the study with a broad grin on his brown face. "I have been talkfully conversing with the honourable and esteemed Bunter, and have learned the news."

"What's the news?" asked Nugent. "Some more of Peter Todd's blessed tricks?"

"Quitefully so. My esteemed chums have heard of the Flower Show in Friardale?"

"Yes," said Harry Wharton. "It's under the patronage of the vicar, old Lambe—I heard him tell the Head that he 'hoped it would be a greatah success than evah this yah.'"

The juniors chuckled at that excellent rendering of the excellent Mr. Lambe's accent.

"There are ponyful races as well as a flowerful show," explained Hurree Singh, "and I have been told by the esteemed Bunter that No. 7 Study have entered."

"Like their cheek," said Bob. "I can imagine the Funny Four on horseback—especially Bunter. He would want a dray-horse to carry him, I should think. As for Dutton, he wouldn't hear the pistol go off to start them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Alonzo—ye gods and little fishes!" said Nugent. "It would be only kind to advise him not to do it without the aid of a net."

Wharton frowned over his muffins.

"This Study can't be left out," he remarked. "I had thought about the blessed pony races, but we shall be so busy with the cricket I let it slide. I suppose that's what Coker was practising for—to ride at the show. There will be casualties if they let him in. It's up to us not to let No. 7 get ahead."

"But we don't want to follow their lead," said Nugent. "We've done some gardening in our time; we might go in for the flower part of the bizney. What about raising some special Spanish onions, or something like that—warranted to kill at forty rods."

"Peter Todd can ride," said Harry thoughtfully. "I don't think it would be quite cricket to enter against him, because—well, you chaps know I can ride; and as he's entered first, it would look rather rotten to step in later and rope off the prize. I think I should do it easily enough—without gas, you know."

"I know you would," assented Nugent. "Let Toddy go in and win, and give his blessed study a leg up. But we ought to have a show of some sort. I don't know whether we could exhibit Inky as the only known specimen of the black tulip—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh grinned good-naturedly. He was accustomed to little jokes about his complexion.

"We'll make the flowers our department," said Wharton. "After all, we've done some gardening, and we can do it again. Roses are the thing; we can get some tips from Gosling—"

"If we give him some tips in return," grinned Nugent.

"And you can learn a lot of things out of a book about gardening," said Bob Cherry wisely. "Might make a regular show of it, and show them that we can do something as well as play cricket. We'll raise some splendid Glaw de Deejong—"

"Some which?"

"Glaw de Deejong," said Bob.

"What's that—some Oriental plant?" asked Nugent innocently. "Have you ever heard of it, Inky? Is it Hindustanee?"

"I have never heard the esteemed word before, my worthy chum. Perhaps it is Chinese," murmured the nabob.

"It's French," roared Bob Cherry. "Don't you know what Glaw de Deejong is? It's the name of a rose."

"Is it? Jolly queer name for a rose," said Nugent, with a shake of the head. "Does it mean anything?"

"It means Glory of Deejong, of course, fathead."

"Gloire de Dijon," said Wharton, laughing.

"That's what I said," growled Bob Cherry. "Glaw de Deejong. Pass the muffins."

A fat face, with a pair of spectacles adorning it, looked into the study. Bob Cherry picked up a muffin and took aim, and the fat face dodged behind the half-open door.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Come in, Bunter," said Bob Cherry kindly. "There's one muffin for you as soon as you show your nose."

"Oh, really, Cherry, I was going to say that I'd like you fellows to come to tea in my study; but as you're having tea, I'll have tea with you, if you like," said Billy Bunter, still keeping in cover of the door. "I say, you know I'm going to stand a first-class feed when I get the first prize in the pony race."

"When?" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"If you fellows would like to enter, I'll give you some coaching, if you like," said the Owl of the Remove, still behind the door. "I'm a first-class rider. You remember how I rode your pony when I was at your place, Wharton."

"Ahem! Look here, you chaps, I'm coming in to tea—Ow! Ow! Yow! Leggo my ear, Todd, you beast! Yah!"

"I remember you nearly broke his knees," growled Wharton.

There was a bump in the passage.

"Study No. 7 doesn't go round asking itself to tea," growled the voice of Peter Todd. "I've mentioned that to you before, you boulder. Keep up the dignity of the study."

"I'm hungry," roared Bunter. "You don't give me enough to eat in No. 7. If you don't look out I'll change back into No. 1, where I used to be."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"That you jolly well won't!" called out Nugent, with a chuckle. "Peter the Great is welcome to you, you fat boulder!"

"Your horse has come," said Peter. "You're going to begin practice now. Come on! They've put him in the Rag."

"Oh, really, Todd—"

"Shall I help you along, Bunter?"

"Look here, Todd! I— Yah! It's all right, you beast, I'll come!" wailed Bunter. And Billy Bunter's voice died away down the passage.

"What the dickens are they up to?" ejaculated Wharton. "He says the horse has been put into the Rag. They'll get into a row if they bring a horse indoors."

"Better go down and see what the kids are up to," grinned Bob Cherry. "May save them from getting their little selves a licking."

And the Famous Five hurriedly finished their tea, and descended to the Rag—the large room on the ground floor of the School House, which was used by the juniors for meetings, debates, theatrical performances—and other performances. Quite a crowd was gathering in the Rag and about the doorway when the Famous Five arrived, and all of them were grinning.

"I guess this takes the biscuit!" remarked Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "Bunter's learning to ride! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Has he really got a horse in there?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Yep."

"Only a wooden one," chuckled Tom Brown. "Peter's teaching him to ride like a giddy cavalryman."

"Oh, my hat!"

The chums of the Remove pushed their way in. In the middle of the Rag was a huge wooden rocking-horse—supplied by the obliging Mr. Wicks on hire. In the midst of a circle of grinning juniors, Billy Bunter was receiving instruction in the noble art of horsemanship. He was standing with one foot in the stirrup, and Peter Todd was encouraging him to mount, using his boot for that purpose.

"Lemme have a chair to mount from," gasped Bunter. "The beastly thing won't keep still! If you kick me again, you beast—Ow! I'll get on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter made a wild plunge, and not only got on, but got over, and fell into Tom Dutton's arms on the other side. Dutton rolled him over on the floor.

"Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself and falls on t'other side!" chuckled Nugent, who was well up in his Shakespeare.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter sat up on the floor. Peter Todd gently stirred him with his foot.

"You overdid it that time, Bunt! Try again!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here comes Coker on the warpath!"

Coker of the Fifth, with a decidedly angry brow, strode into the Rag.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Coker is Sorry!

COKER was looking "wrathy," and there was no doubt that he was, as Bob said, on the warpath. He took no notice of the grinning juniors or of the rocking-horse. He strode straight up to Peter Todd and shook a huge fist within an inch of Peter's somewhat prominent nose.

"See that?" he roared.

Peter did not even duck his head back. He regarded Coker's big fist with calm attention.

"Certainly!" he said, with mockness that would have done credit to his cousin Alonzo. "In my opinion it wants washing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you want it on your nose?" roared Coker.

Todd looked surprised.

"No, my dear Coker! Then my nose would want washing, too."

"I'm not going to have it!" spluttered Coker.

"My nose?"

"No, you ass! Your cheek!"

"My cheek!" said Peter Todd, in surprise. "But I'm not going to give you either my nose or my cheek, Coker."

"You—you—you young rotter! I'm fed up with your cheek! Do you understand?"

"No, I don't," said Peter, shaking his head. "If you were fed up with my cheek, I should think you were a cannibal. But—"

NEXT
MONDAY:

"SELF-DENIAL WEEK AT GREYFRIARS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.

"I hear you've entered for the pony races in Friardale."

"Quite so."

"Well, I'm not going to allow it. I've entered, and I'm not going to have junior kids racing along with me. You ought to understand that you must keep out of these things when the Fifth take them up. I won't have it—see?"

"If you are alluding to the prize, I agree with you," said Peter calmly. "You certainly won't have that."

"I've come to tell you," said Coker sulphurously, "that you're to chuck it! You're to take your silly name off the list!"

"What for?" demanded Peter.

"Because I'm not going to have fags riding against me," said Coker, with great loftiness.

"But I sha'n't ride against you unless you get in my way, and you won't get ahead enough for that," said Peter innocently.

There was a yell of laughter from the juniors—not so much at Peter's humour as at Horace Coker's expression. The Fifth-Former seemed on the verge of an explosion.

"Look here—" he spluttered.

"Oh, draw it mild, Coker!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "The pony race is an open event—open to everybody. Todd can enter if he likes."

"Begad, yaas!" said Lord Mauleverer indignantly. "I was thinkin' of enterin' myself, only it's too much fag. Stick to it, Todd."

"I'm going to stick to it," said Todd serenely. "I don't mind your entering as well, Coker."

"You—you—you don't mind!" stuttered Coker.

"No. It will give us some comic relief, you know."

"Look here! Are you going to keep out of that race?" demanded Coker.

"No fear!"

"Then I'm going to lick you."

And Coker rushed at Peter Todd.

"Rescue, Remove!" roared Harry Wharton.

A swarm of juniors tumbled over one another in their hurry to get their hands upon Coker of the Fifth.

Coker was a decidedly lordly youth, and he generally considered it quite beneath his dignity to take note even of the existence of such a form as the Lower Fourth. When he did come in contact with the Remove there was generally trouble, and Coker generally got most of the trouble. But there was no curing Coker of his lofty attitude, though the Removites, to do them justice, had tried very hard. But of all the examples of Horace Coker's "cheek," there had been no example quite so staggering as this. That Coker should take it upon himself to exclude Removites from the pony races was an assumption on the part of Coker that called for immediate vengeance.

"Here, keep off, you fags!" bawled Coker. "Hands off, you cheeky rats! I'm going to lick Todd! Yow! I'm going to lick—Yah! I'm going to—"

Bump!

Coker was down, with a dozen juniors sprawling over him. Peter Todd stood with his hands in his pockets, regarding the scene with perfect calmness.

"Sit on him!" he said. "Bunter, sit on his head! Your weight will keep him quiet if anything will!"

"Yar-o-oh! Leggo! Gerroff! Oh!"

Coker spluttered wildly as Billy Bunter sat on his head.

But Bunter did not sit there long. He sat down with a grin, but after about the tenth part of a second the grin vanished from his face, and he leaped to his feet with a fiendish yell.

"Sit down!" roared Peter. "What's the matter with you?"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter. "I'm bitten! Yawp!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll b-b-bite you again if you sit on my head!" stuttered Coker. "You—you fat p-p-p-porpoise! Lemme go! I'm going to lick Todd! Yar-o-oh!"

"Looks to me as if you're going to get the licking," remarked Bolsover major.

"Poor old Coker!" said Peter Todd. "Always putting his foot in it! Always biting off more than he can chew! But if he wants to ride we'll let him ride. We've got a horse here that exactly suits him. It can't bolt with him, anyway. Put him on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea caught on at once. A dozen pairs of hands grasped Coker and heaved him towards the rocking-horse. The unfortunate Fifth-Former struggled wildly. But the odds were too great. By force of numbers he was heaved upon the rocking-horse, astride, and Peter Todd drew a stout cord from his pocket and tied Coker's feet under the horse. Then his hands were tied to the wooden neck.

Then the juniors released him.

Peter Todd set the horse into motion. The sight of the

great Coker rocking on the wooden horse made the juniors scream.

"Lemme get down!" shrieked Coker. "Untie me! Todd, I'll be the death of you! I'll lick you all—every man Jack of you! I'll smash you! Lemme down!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites formed up in a grinning circle round Coker. Peter Todd kept the rocking-horse in motion with his foot, and Coker rocked to and fro, whether he wished to or not. Coker's face was scarlet with fury. There were encouraging shouts from the Removites as he rocked.

"Go it, Coker!"

"Stick in your knees!"

"Charge, Chester, charge!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roars of laughter and Coker's infuriated shouts rang far from the Rag. Wingate of the Sixth put an angry face in at the door.

"What's all this row about?" he shouted. "You young rascals—Why—what—Coker—Great Scott! Playing with a rocking-horse at your time of life! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not!" shrieked Coker. "I—I—"

"Well, it's a queer game for a Fifth-Form chap, but everybody to his taste!" said Wingate. "But play a bit more quietly, Coker. We can hear you all over the house!"

"I tell you—"

"Not so much row, Coker!" said Wingate, and he walked away laughing.

"If you don't let me down, you young villains—"

"You've let yourself down, this time!" grinned Nugent.

"Don't let the horse stop, Toddy. Give him a shove. Coker likes a charging gee-gee!"

"You—you—you young scoundrels—"

"Call up all the fellows to see him!" yelled Bob Cherry. This is a sight! The Fifth ought to see this!"

There was not much need to call the fellows up. Fellows were crowding round the door by the dozen—juniors and seniors. Fags of the Third and Second, who usually went in awe of the great Coker, were shrieking with laughter. His own chums, Potter and Green of the Fifth, looked in, and went into hysterics.

Peter Todd kept the rocking-horse in rapid motion, and the jerking and swaying considerably interrupted Coker's attempted explanation that he was not doing it from choice.

"Well, this takes the cake!" said Potter, of the Fifth.

"I must say that this is more than a joke, Coker! Think of your dignity, man!"

"I—I'm not—yah!—stop this thing, you beast, Todd! I'm not—I didn't—I wasn't—Rescue!—yah!—you young villains!" spluttered Coker incoherently.

"Chuck it, Coker!" said Greene. "Dash it all, old man, you're making the Fifth look ridiculous, playing a kid's game like that!"

"You—you idiot! I'm not—I don't want—Ow—ow!"

"What ever is all this dreadful noise about?" exclaimed Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth, pushing his way into the Rag. "Coker! Is that you, Coker? Coker, you are making yourself ridiculous! Get down from that horse!"

"It's all right, sir," said Peter Todd. "Coker's entered for the pony race in Friardale, and he's learning to ride!"

"It is absurd—absurd—"

"I don't want—I didn't—I wasn't—!" howled Coker.

"It's a joke, sir—a jape—a—"

"I suppose so," said Mr. Capper severely. "And I must say that jokes of this kind, Coker, are not suitable to a boy in a senior form. You are making yourself ridiculous. If you do not cease that foolish nonsense at once, I shall mention the matter to your Form-master, Coker!"

And Mr. Capper stalked away.

The juniors shrieked. Mr. Capper's misapprehension was natural enough, but its effect upon Coker was infuriating. He gave the juniors a ferocious glare.

"Will you untie me?" he shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Potter, you idiot. Greene, you silly ass—ow!—rescue—yah!—oh!"

"By Jove! He's tied on!" exclaimed Potter, in surprise.

"Coker needs tying on to a horse," explained Peter Todd.

"You saw him on a live horse, didn't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you don't untie me, Potter—yow!—I'll punch your silly head—ow!"

"Potter, you idiot. Greene, you silly ass—ow!—rescue!—rescue at last. But the Removites were by no means disposed to be interfered with. Harry Wharton shouted to them to line up, and Potter and Greene were grasped by many hands and hurled forth into the passage.

"Will you l-l-l-let me down?" stuttered Coker.



"What's happened to Dutton?" asked Harry Wharton anxiously. "His pony chucked him and bolted. I found him fainting in the road, and carried him six or seven miles here," gasped Bunter. (See Chapter 6.)

"Only on conditions," said Peter Todd calmly. "You're going to apologise for having the cheek to try and dictate to the Remove, and to promise never to do it again."

"I won't!" yelled Coker.

"Then we'll clear out and lock the door, and leave you here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker gave Peter Todd a ferocious look. But he was in the hands of the Philistines, and there was no help for him. Nugent had already locked the door on the inside to keep out any of the Fifth who might be inclined to rescue their Form-fellow.

"I—I—I—" stuttered Coker. "I'll let you enter for the pony race if you like, Todd!"

"Thank you for nothing!" said Peter. "Are you sorry?"

"No!" yelled Coker.

Peter started the rocking-horse again.

"Ow!" roared Coker. "Yes; I'm sorry!"

"You won't never do so no more?"

"N-n-no! Nunno! Oh, you young villain! No!"

"Good; then we'll leave you to Potter to untie!" said

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

Peter. "Come on you fellows—good-bye, Coker. I had a ride on your horse, you know, and now I've given you one—one good turn deserves another."

"You—you—you—"

"You've stuck on this one better than you did the other," said Peter. "Good-bye. If you keep up the practice, you'll be able to ride a rocking-horse nicely in time. Perhaps it would be better for you to begin with a clothes-horse, though!"

And the Removites walked away, yelling with laughter, leaving Coker mounted on the rocking-horse till Potter and Greene, finding the coast clear, came in and untied him.

They untied him with tears in their eyes.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Cowardly Attack!

"BLESSED if I see the game!" growled Vavasour.

"I don't either," said Gadsby. "What's the game, Pon?"

"It's a game we're going to win, my sons," said Ponsonby, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School.

NEXT MONDAY: "SELF-DENIAL WEEK AT GREYFRIARS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. Order Early.

"Lucky for you chaps you've got me to do something for you. You're looking forward to winning the first and second prizes in the pony race, aren't you?"

"Yes; rather!" said Gadsby and Monson together.

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"Then I repeat that it's lucky for you you've got a chap with brains to do some thinking for you," said Ponsonby. "Some of the Greyfriars chaps have entered."

Vavasour sniffed.

"We needn't be afraid of them, he said. "If Wharton was in it, I should think our chance was U. P., but it's only a set of freaks—Todd and Bunter and deaf duffers. You don't think their precious Coker will beat us, do you?"

"Not Coker; but Todd and Dutton!"

"Oh, rats!"

"I know a thing or two about horses, and about riding, too," said Ponsonby. "Peter Todd is a good rider, and that deaf chap, Dutton, is a corker. I've seen him ride. Tom Dutton is the man we've got to fear!"

"Well, we can't stop him going in for the race, I suppose," said Vavasour. "And I'll ride against him any day!"

"And get beaten!" said Ponsonby.

Vavasour sniffed. Vavasour was not remarkable for brains, nor for abilities in any directions; but that did not prevent him from having a remarkably good opinion of himself.

"What are we sticking behind this hedge for?" demanded Monson.

"We're waiting for Dutton."

"How do you know he's coming here?"

Ponsonby chuckled.

"Because I've been keeping my peepers open, my infants—while you fellows have been thinking of smoking and penny nap!" he replied.

The four Highcliffe fellows were hidden behind a hedge, looking out through a gap upon the leafy lane. There was a great deal of bad blood between Highcliffe and Greyfriars. The Highcliffians held their heads very high. But it was not only their "swank" that exasperated Harry Wharton and Co. It was the fact that they never played the game. At one time the two schools had regularly met in cricket and footer matches, but the fixtures were now all "off." And the juniors of the two schools, if not the seniors, seldom met without trouble ensuing.

"Look here," went on Ponsonby, in a low voice. "We mean to rope in the prizes among us, don't we? That's settled!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Absolutely!"

"Well, there are chances against us. Dutton is the hardest nut we have to crack, as Wharton hasn't entered. Blessed if I know why he hasn't, because he could pull it off easily; but there you are, he hasn't!"

"I don't think he could beat me," said Vavasour. "Do you?"

"I don't think so—I know it!" said Ponsonby pleasantly.

"So can Dutton—on his head! But we're going to put a spoke in their wheel. I suppose you fellows are not thinking of sticking at a trifle to pull the race off!"

"No fear!" said the three, together.

"Right! Well, I've been keeping my eyes open, and I find that Dutton comes out every day after lessons for a ride in this lane—getting himself in form for the race. The others come sometimes—Dutton always."

"You're not thinking of piling on him, and biffing him, I suppose?"

"Why not?" said Ponsonby coolly.

He sank his voice still lower, though there was no one but his friends to hear in the deserted lane.

"We're not going to be beaten by Greyfriars cads, I suppose. They brag enough already about wiping us off the earth with their blessed cricket and footer. We're not going to be licked all along the line. The race comes off in a few days now, and if Dutton were pretty roughly ragged he would be fit to ride. That's my idea!"

The Highcliffians exchanged glances.

"It's rather thick!" murmured Gadsby.

"Oh, rot!" said Ponsonby irritably. "They've ragged us often enough, goodness knows. Didn't they duck me in the horse-pond the other day because I was—was—"

"Because you were ragging the old apple-woman," chuckled Gadsby.

"Well, it was no business of theirs, I suppose. Tom Dutton will be coming by here any minute now, and my idea is to yank him off his geegee, and duck him, and soak him in the ditch, and give him a lathering. It's no worse than they've done to us. If he's not in form to ride in the race, that's his look-out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, we sha'n't mention the race—not that it would be any good talking to him, as he's as deaf as a post; but—"

Clat, clat, clat, clatter!

"Here he comes!"

The four Highcliffians peered through the gap in the hedge. A junior in a Greyfriars cap, mounted upon a smart pony, was coming down the lane at a good pace. It was Tom Dutton of the Remove. He was riding well, as even Vavasour had to acknowledge as he looked at him. He was nearly abreast of the ambush when Ponsonby gave the signal, and the four Highcliffe fellows rushed out into the road.

Ponsonby caught at the bridle and stopped the pony. Tom Dutton glared down at him in great indignation.

"Let my pony alone, you rotter!" he exclaimed.

"Jump off!" said Ponsonby.

"Eh?"

"Get down, you deaf chump!"

"Bump?" said Dutton. "I'll bump you, if you don't get out of the way and let me ride on! Hands off, you Highcliffe cads!"

"Will you get down?" roared Ponsonby.

"Brown? No, I'm not Brown. My name's Dutton."

"Oh, crumbs, I can't talk to him!" gasped Ponsonby. "Collar him, and yank him off the blessed geegee! Don't mind if you hurt him."

And Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour laid violent hands upon the Greyfriars junior.

"Leggo!" roared Dutton. "What do you want?"

"We want you," grinned Gadsby. "Down you come!"

Dutton's eyes blazed, and he slashed recklessly with his riding-whip. Gadsby roared as he caught the lash across his face, and then there was a shriek from Vavasour, as the whip lashed over his ears. Monson jumped back. The startled horse was rearing, and the bridle was dragged from Ponsonby's hands.

"Get out of the way!" roared Dutton, lashing out recklessly.

He made the pony rear and prance, and the Highcliffians, in fear of their limbs, leaped back out of the way.

Dutton grinned, and rode on.

Ponsonby set his teeth, and whipped out a catapult from his pocket. He caught up a fragment of flint from the road. Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour had caught up stones, too.

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

The pony leaped wildly as the stone from the catapult struck it with a sharp blow on the hind-quarter. Then came the stones hurled by the other three, and the pony reared wildly. Tom Dutton was almost unseated.

"You cads!" he roared.

"Pelt him!" yelled Ponsonby.

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

The stones flew fast, and the pony, stung almost to madness, went careering wildly down the road. Dutton strove in vain to hold him in. With his head tossing wildly, and Dutton dragging at the reins, the animal disappeared round a bend in the lane.

"Phew!" muttered Gadsby. "We've done it now!"

"Absolutely!" stuttered Vavasour.

"The gee's run away with him," said Monson. "I—I say, there may be an accident; he may get his beastly neck broken, you know." And Monson turned quite pale.

"Oh, rot!" said Ponsonby. "If he gets a fall, it won't kill him—and if it knocks him up for the race, so much the better."

"I—I say, hadn't we better follow him?" muttered Monson.

"Rats! No. If there's an accident, we don't want to get mixed up in it."

"I—I say, Pon—"

"Don't talk rot!" said Ponsonby roughly. "Let's get off."

"But—but if he's hurt—"

"Shut up, and let's clear!"

Ponsonby strode away, and the other Highcliffians, with troubled faces, followed him. Not that they felt particularly sorry for Tom Dutton; but they were thinking of the possible consequences to their precious selves.

The clatter of the pony's hoofs died away in the distance as the young rascals hurried towards Highcliffe.

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

If they could have seen Dutton then, they would have realised that their uneasiness was well founded. Dutton was a skilful rider, but the pony was maddened by pain, and quite out of control. He dragged hard at the reins as the animal tore away, but he dragged in vain, and soon it was all he could do to keep his seat as the maddened animal tore on.

He sat tight, with a firm grip on the reins, and his teeth hard set. He was a plucky fellow, and he felt no fear, though his face was pale.

He swept at top speed out of the lane into the high-road. He made a desperate effort to hold in the horse, and the animal reared and plunged furiously, and the junior shot fairly out of the saddle.

"Oh!"

Crash!

He rolled into the grass beside the road, and the riderless steed went careering wildly on, with lashing, clattering hoofs.

In the thick grass beside the road Tom Dutton lay motionless.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Bunter the Hero!

"Oh, crumbs!"

Billy Bunter jumped out of the road as a riderless horse came charging down towards him, with tossing head and lashing reins and whirling stirrups. Bunter blinked in alarm at the dashing pony, and made one jump to the side of the road. The runaway went trampling past, with a rattle of hoofs and jingle of stirrups.

"M-m-my hat!" murmured Billy Bunter. "That was a narrow shave! That's Dutton's pony, too—he's let it get away!" Bunter sniffed. "Silly ass! And they still keep me riding on a rocking-horse, and won't give me a chance! Yah!"

Billy Bunter's brain did not work quickly, but it occurred to him, after the galloping pony had vanished from sight, that some accident might have happened to Tom Dutton. He knew that Tom was a good rider, and unless something had happened it was remarkable that the pony should be running loose.

"Poor old Dutton!" murmured Billy Bunter. "He was going to stand me tea when he came in—he said jam-tarts and cake specially. I hope he's not killed."

And with that charitable hope in his breast, Billy Bunter went down the road in the direction whence the pony had come, blinking to and fro for Dutton. Whether it was friendship for Dutton, or the thought of the feed he would miss if Dutton had been killed, we cannot say, but certainly Bunter was looking very anxious and perturbed.

Perhaps some of the study feeling was beginning to enter even into Billy Bunter's plump breast at last, under the vigorous training of Peter Todd. Certainly Bunter had improved in many respects since Peter had taken him in hand.

"Oh, really—By gum!" ejaculated Bunter suddenly.

He halted as he caught sight of the still form stretched in the belt of grass by the roadside.

It was Dutton!

Bunter blinked at him in dismay for some seconds, and then knelt by his side.

"I say, Dutton, old man—are you dead, old man?"

"Groogh!"

"He's not dead!" muttered Bunter, in great relief. "He couldn't grunt if he were dead—at least, I suppose he couldn't. I say, Dutton!"

"Ow!"

"Are you injured anywhere, Dutton?"

Tom Dutton stared at him dizzily.

"I've had a fall," he gasped. "My leg's hurt—I twisted it in coming down."

"Well, you are a clumsy ass, you know!" said Bunter.

"Eh? You happened to pass? Lucky for me you did, Bunter. You can help me back to Greyfriars now."

"Oh!" murmured Bunter.

"Have you seen my pony?"

"He passed me full pelt," said Bunter. "Long way down the road. I came to look for you."

"Of course it's true?" said Tom Dutton irritably. "I asked you if you'd seen my pony."

"Yes!" roared Bunter. "He's bolted."

"Why didn't you catch him?" demanded Dutton.

"I didn't have time, and I didn't think of it till he was gone."

"I don't see how it could have been too warm to catch a pony," said Dutton, sitting up. "I think you're an ass, Bunter. But if you've let him go, you've let him go, and that's an end of it. How am I going to get back to the school?"

"Try and walk. Lean on me," said Bunter generously.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"Help me up, then."

Bunter dragged Tom Dutton to his feet. The deaf junior uttered a cry of pain. His right leg seemed to hang uselessly, and all his weight was put on his left.

"Ow! Gently does it!" he groaned. "I've twisted my leg! Those Highcliffe cads—I'll hammer them when I see them again. Ow! They pelted the horse and made him bolt. Ow!"

"Lean on me, and hop on one leg," said Bunter. "We're only a quarter of a mile from Greyfriars. I'll help you in, and when we get in we'll have that feed."

"Friend in need?" said Dutton. "Yes, that's what you are, and no mistake. I'm jolly glad you came along, but I wish you'd had sense enough to stop the pony. I could have got back on him, you know."

"Pity you didn't have sense enough not to fall off!" grunted Bunter.

"Offence? Certainly not!" said Dutton. "I'm much obliged to you. Only, go as easy as you can—my leg hurts me something awful."

And Billy Bunter staggered away down the road, with Tom Dutton leaning very heavily upon his shoulder. The fat junior was soon panting. His own weight was quite enough for any fellow to carry about—Bunter's averdupois was not slight. Now he had Tom Dutton's weight in addition, and he panted under it. But friendship, or the feed, kept him steadily to his task. They staggered slowly down the road, and Greyfriars came in sight at last.

"I—I say, hold up!" exclaimed Bunter, as Dutton leaned more heavily on him. "I—I can't stand much more weight, you know."

Dutton did not reply, and Bunter, blinking at him, saw, with alarm, that his eyes had closed.

The junior had fainted.

"Oh, great Christopher Columbus and Charley's Aunt!" groaned Bunter. "What am I going to do with him now?"

He let Tom Dutton slip into the grass by the road. The junior was quite unconscious. The Owl of the Remove thought of leaving him where he was, and dashing away to the school for help, but Dutton was not in a state to be left alone. There was really only one thing to be done—to carry him in.

Bunter groaned aloud at the idea; but he nerved himself to it. After all, there would be some eclat for the fellow who carried in an injured chum on his shoulders—and it was not often that Bunter distinguished himself by loyalty or devotion. The fat Remove felt quite a glow of heroism as he pictured it in his mind. He rested for about five minutes. Dutton was still unconscious. Then, making a tremendous effort, the Owl of the Remove hoisted his comrade upon his shoulders, and reeled away towards the school.

"Ow! Ow! Huh! Hah! Grooh! Hooh! Yoooh!"

Bunter kept up that series of ejaculations almost incessantly as he plodded away towards Greyfriars with Dutton on his shoulders.

"Ow! Crumbs! Oh, scissors! Yah! I'm out of breath! Grooh! He's heavy! Ow! I can't stand much more of it! Yah! I'm nearly done! Oh, crumbs!"

It was a continuous monologue.

But everything comes to an end at last, and the fat junior reached the gates of Greyfriars with his burden. He staggered across the Close to the School House. There was a shout as he was sighted. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry and Nugent and the two Todds came out of the house, with other fellows behind them. They all stared blankly at Billy Bunter as he staggered up with his burden.

"Hallo—hallo—hallo! What's the game?" demanded Bob Cherry. "Are you practising to start as a strong man in a circus, Bunter?"

"Ow—ow—ow! Crumbs! Oh—ow!" gasped Bunter.

"Dutton's hurt!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Billy Bunter rolled up, and let his burden slide to the ground. Then he stood panting, and mopping the perspiration from his brow.

"Ow! I'm done in!" he gasped. "Poor old Dutton's fainted! You'd better look after him! I'm done in—done brown!"

Peter Todd picked up Dutton at once, and, with Alonzo's assistance, carried him into the house. The other fellows gathered round Billy Bunter in amazement. Bob Cherry gave him a thump on the back, and Bunter left off gasping to roar.

"Ow! You fathead! What are you hitting me for?"

"I'm not hitting you—only slapping you on the back!" explained Bob.

"Ow—ow! Don't be a rough ass!"

"What happened to Dutton?" asked Harry Wharton.

"His pony chucked him, and bolted. I found him fainting

on the road, about six or seven miles from here, and carried him home," said Bunter.

Billy Bunter had an imagination that would have made his fortune as a journalist.

"Six or seven miles!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Might have been eight or nine," said Bunter. "I didn't stop to measure the distance. I know I'm done in!"

"Might have turned out to be only a dozen yards, if you'd measured it," suggested Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—I say, you fellows, this ain't a laughing matter! I'm exhausted. I've carried Dutton on my back ten or twelve miles!"

"Make it leagues!" grinned Nugent.

"Never mind; you've done jolly well, though I fancy it wasn't half a mile—you couldn't have done it," said Wharton.

"Bunter, old man, what's the matter with you?"

"I'm tired."

"I mean, what's the matter with you? Not ill? Not dotty? Not potty?"

"Eh? No, of course not!"

"Then it's a giddy miracle! What do you mean by doing a decent thing all of a sudden, and taking us all by surprise?" demanded Wharton.

"Oh, really——"

"Come on!" exclaimed Wharton. "You're coming with me!"

And he grasped the fat junior by the collar.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "I won't—lemme alone! I—I say——"

"To the tuck-shop!" added Wharton.

"Eh?"

"We're going to feed you, as the reward of merit!"

"Oh," said Bunter, "now you're talking! I'll come with pleasure, Harry, old chap. As a matter of fact, I'm rather peckish. Don't you worry; I'll come!"

And he did; and he stood up to the counter of the tuck-shop heroically, and, in spite of his fatigue, he did nobly there, keeping up his gastronomic efforts so long as the treat lasted; and when it was over he was almost as much in need of being carried in as Tom Dutton had been.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith is Too Funny!

HOW'S Dutton?"

Harry Wharton and several other fellows asked the question together, as Peter Todd came into the common-room a little later. Peter Todd's face was gloomy for once.

The doctor had been telephoned for to attend to Dutton, and the deaf junior was in bed. The medical man had just left.

"It's rotten!" said Todd. "He's come round all right; but his leg's hurt. It's not serious, but I'm not at all sure that he'll be fit to ride at the show."

"Oh, that's hard cheese!" said Bob Cherry.

"Rotten!" said Peter gloomily. "Dutton was our champion, you know. I'm a good rider; but I was depending on Dutton to win first prize for the study, if I didn't get home. I think he could beat me, if anybody could. Now, if he's crooked, it's quite possible the race will go to some of the Highcliffe cads. Four of them have entered—Vavasour, Gadsby, Monson, and Ponsonby. Ponsonby is a good rider!"

"Beastly to be beaten by the Highcliffe cads!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, especially after what they've done!"

"What have they done now?"

"Dutton's told me; his pony chucked him through those cads pelting it with stones. It happened that he met them—or else they were watching for him; I shouldn't wonder. I almost think they're cads enough to plan a thing like this!"

Wharton's brow darkened.

"I think they are," he said. "I know they mobbed us once on their cricket-ground when we were beating them. Fellows who would do that would do anything. We've scratched all our fixtures with them because they don't play the game, and they've got their backs up awfully over it. This is too thick. If Dutton should be crooked for the race through this happening, and Ponsonby pulls it off, it will be simply a swindle!"

"The swindlefulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of the head.

Peter Todd clenched his hands.

"I'd like to get within hitting distance of them!" he exclaimed. "The rotten cads! Why, Tom might have broken a leg—or his neck, for that matter. But what worries me is that, if he's crooked, Ponsonby may win the race. I hope I can beat him, but I was sure of Dutton. We could

serve them the same way as they've served him—only we can't play such a dirty trick. That's where they've got the pull over us!"

"I guess I can suggest a way out of it," said Fisher T. Fish.

Peter Todd sniffed. He had not much faith in the wonderful ideas of the Yankee schoolboy. Fisher T. Fish prided himself upon being brainy; but no one beside Fisher Tarleton Fish had seen any signs of the braininess.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, you know," said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "Fishy may have a good idea for once. What is it, Fishy?"

"I guess it's as easy as rolling off a log," said Fish confidently. "We ride over there, you know—ride!"

"Eh? You ride over where?"

"In the Yew-nited States," explained Fish, "what we don't know about riding isn't worth a red cent. I guess I'm the man you want! It's not too late to enter, is it? Well, then, I'll put my name down, and ride to win!"

"You—you——"

"It will come to the same thing, I guess—it will be a win for Greyfriars and the Remove," said Fish. "I guess that fills the bill—just a few!"

"Oh, sit on him, somebody!" growled Peter Todd. "Don't be funny, now, Fishy; this is a serious matter!"

"But I'm not being funny!" roared Fish. "I——"

"Yes, you are," said Bob Cherry. "You don't know it, but you are. Ring off!"

"Well, I guess——"

"Shurrup!" roared Peter Todd, picking up an inkpot from the table; and Fisher T. Fish sniffed and stalked away. "Look here, you chaps," went on Peter, "we can't play the Highcliffe cads a rotten trick like this, but I think we ought to make them sit up for what they've done. They may do it over again with some more of us, if they don't have a lesson. Will you chaps pile in with me to make them sit up?"

"What-ho!"

"The what-ho-fulness is terrific!"

"Then we'll jolly well lay for them to-morrow, and give them beans!" said Peter Todd. "It isn't a time for study rows now—it's us against Highcliffe!"

"Yes, rather!" said Wharton cordially. "We'll do all we can to help you through. We're leaving the race to you, as it was your idea to enter for it, and we'll back you up all along the line!"

"We're going to get one of the flower show prizes, you know," said Bob. "I'm going to try to rope it in with a Glaw de Deejong!"

"What's that? Not a horse?"

"A horse, you fathead! It's a rose!" said Bob, in disgust.

"Don't you understand French?"

"Yes—French French," said Peter sweetly. "Remove French is rather too much for me. But I hope you'll get a prize for your Claw de Bonbon——"

"Glaw de Deejong, ass!"

"But what's the idea about the Highcliffe cads?" asked Nugent. "How are you going to get at the rotters?"

"I've got a wheeze," said Peter Todd. "You chaps be ready to trot out with me after lessons to-morrow, and we'll make them sorry for themselves. I know where to find them when they go out riding for training, you know. So-long! I'm going up to Dutton now. He's got to stay in bed the rest of the evening!"

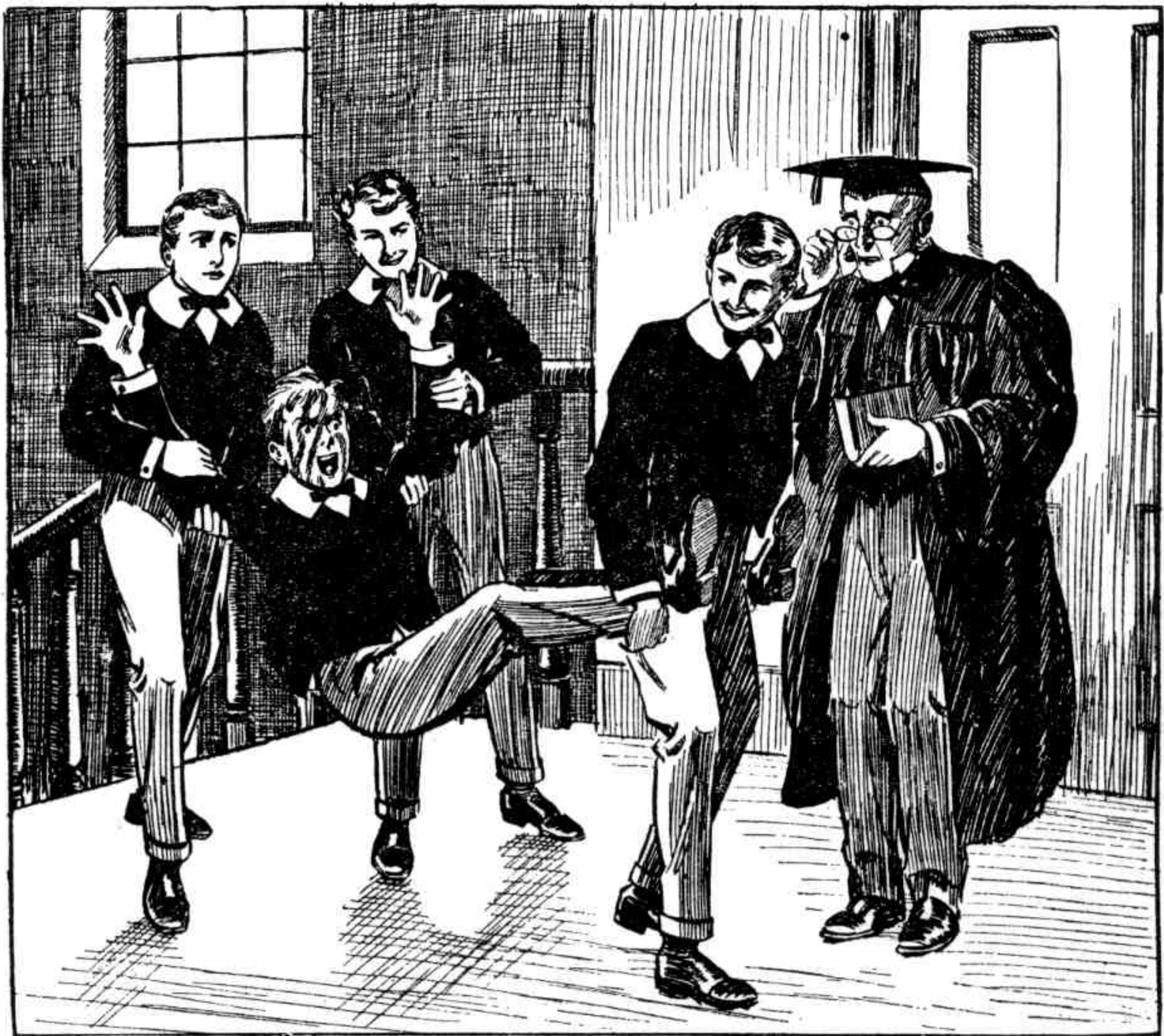
Peter Todd was very attentive to his "crooked" chum; but he did not forget Billy Bunter. That plump youth was being kept steadily at practice on the rocking-horse in the Rag.

Fellows would gather in a crowd to see Billy Bunter at practice, and the Owl of the Remove always went through it with a very bad grace; but there was no doubt that it was doing him good. He was learning to sit well in the saddle, to keep his feet in the stirrups, and to hold the reins instead of the horse's neck. great improvements. What kind of a figure he would make in the race was another question—but Peter Todd was determined that he should try for it. And Billy Bunter, though he rode as gracefully as a sack of coke, was quite convinced that he would "rope in" the first prize. He told the fellows just to wait till they saw him on a real horse, and he would show them what riding was really like—and the fellows waited with gleeful anticipations.

"Not so bad!" said Peter Todd, when he allowed Bunter to climb down from the wooden horse at last. "I think perhaps you will be able to stick on a horse now, though you can't ride for toffee."

"Look here, Todd," said Bunter, glaring at him. "I think this jealousy of a fellow's riding is out of place, as we're in the same study——"

"Come round to the stables now," said Peter, putting his arm in Bunter's. "I've tipped the coachman, and he's going



The juniors seized the schoolboy inventor and carried him upstairs. Mr. Lathom came along as they reached the first landing. "Dear me! Is he still hysterical?" gasped the kind-hearted master. "Leggo!" roared Glyn; "I'm all right, sir! I—yah—you're choking me, you silly fatheads!" (For this amusing incident, you should order a copy of this week's splendid number of "THE GEM LIBRARY," which contains a magnificent long complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, entitled, "FRIENDS DIVIDED!" by Martin Clifford, and the first instalment of a grand new serial, entitled "THE CORINTHIAN." Advise ALL your chums to get this bumper number.)

to let you mount the coach-horse. If you can stick on, we'll have a pony out for you on Saturday."

And Bunter was marched round to the stables. The Head's big, fat coach-horse was not a difficult animal to mount, and Bunter was quite confident. Vernon-Smith and Skinner and several other fellows followed them.

"I—I say, what about a saddle?" asked Bunter.

"Blow the saddle! You're to stick on his back," said Peter Todd. "Keep your knees well in, and take hold of the halter. That's what you've got to do."

"B-b-but suppose he kicks—"

"He won't kick—and if he does, you must get used to it," said Peter mercilessly. "It's rotten to be afraid of a horse, Bunter. Study No. 7 is afraid of nothing."

"I'm not afraid!" roared Bunter. "Only—"

"Then up you go!"

Peter Todd helped Bunter to mount. The fat junior groaned and submitted. He was hoisted upon the coach-horse, and the horse remained calmly munching, with Bunter on his back. The fat Removite's confidence returned.

"Well, this is easy enough," he remarked. "Let him loose, Toddy, and I'll ride him barebacked round the stable-
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

yard. I'm a first-class bareback rider, you know."

Todd backed the horse out of the stall, and turned him into the stable-yard, and slipped a bridle upon him. Vernon-Smith and Skinner were whispering together, and the Bounder slyly drew a cracker from his pocket. It was what is called a "jumping" cracker—one of those fearsome contrivances in the firework line that explode six times in succession when they are once lighted.

Billy Bunter rode the stolid old horse quite easily and triumphantly round the yard. The horse was as safe to sit on as a sofa, and Bunter was quite elated. He jerked at the reins Todd had handed him.

"Buck up, you old beast!" said Bunter, addressing the horse. "Get a move on you! I'll make him gallop, Toddy. I wish I could get him to buck-jump—I'd show you what bareback riding was like then!"

"Got a match?" murmured the Bounder.

"Here you are!"

Scratch!

Vernon-Smith tossed the cracker under the horse's feet, and strolled out of the stable-yard with Skinner. Todd saw the action, and uttered an exclamation.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"SELF-DENIAL WEEK AT GREYFRIARS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.



"What's that? Smithy, you silly fathead——"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The coach-horse gave a terrific jump. Bunter uttered a wild yell, and sprawled upon his neck, clutching at the mane.

"Ow, help! Yaroooh! Help! Oh!"

Bang! Bang!

"Oh, crumbs! Stop him! Yah! Oh!"

BANG!

The horse, scared out of his wits by the explosions, was buck-jumping now in a way that would have satisfied a cowboy of the Wild West. Bunter slid off the horse's back, still clinging to his neck with both arms, and he swung round under the tossing head of the startled horse, as the animal careered round the yard.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder. "This way for the buck-jumping! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Help! Oh! Rescue! Ow!" roared Bunter.

The frightened horse made a rush for the gate. Vernon-Smith and Skinner jumped out of the way, and Bunter let go and was tossed aside like a sack of potatoes. His arms were flung round the Bounder's neck—the nearest thing to catch hold of. Vernon-Smith went to the ground under the shock, with Billy Bunter sprawling over him.

It was the Bounder's turn to yell then. Bunter was not a light weight to fall on anybody. He was still clinging to the Bounder, too scared to know what had happened.

"Oh! Gerroff!" roared Vernon-Smith, as Bunter sprawled over his face, grinding the back of his head upon the stone paving. "Yaroooh! Draggimoff!"

"Help!" roared Bunter. "Rescue!"

"Gerroff! You're squashing me! Ow!"

Billy Bunter, realising that he was not killed, sat up—on the Bounder's face. The unfortunate practical joker struggled and gasped spasmodically.

"Ger-r-r-r-ro-o-off!" he gasped. "Oh, help!"

Bunter was in no hurry to get off, apparently. He sat tight.

"You shouldn't have scared the horse, Smithy," he remarked. "I'm too exhausted to get up. Sorry—it's your own fault!"

"Groog! I'm chook-chook-choking! Gerroff!" gurgled the Bounder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" asked Bob Cherry, coming into the yard, and leading the horse, which he had captured in the Close.

"Smithy's been a little too funny, that's all," grinned Peter Todd. "It's dangerous to let off fireworks near a horse, Smithy—dangerous for you, too. Sit on him, Bunter!"

"Groogh!" spluttered the unfortunate Bounder. "Gerroff! Todd, you beast, if you stand on my legs, I'll—grooh—take this fat beast off my head—yow! Skinner, you cad, rescue! Ow!"

The Bounder made a terrific effort, and wriggled from under the fat junior. He leaped to his feet, crimson with rage and exertion, and smothered with dust. Billy Bunter promptly dodged behind Peter Todd as the Bounder rushed at him.

"All your own fault, Smithy," said Peter cheerfully. "Now, if you run on my fist, you will hurt your nose—there, I told you so sorry!"

The Bounder sat down violently, and Peter and Bunter walked away. The Bounder rose, a little more slowly this time, with his hand to his nose. He glared at Skinner.

"What are you grinning at, you silly ass?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha! Sorry—I didn't mean to—ha, ha!—grin!" said Skinner. And then he dodged out of the yard just in time as the Bounder hit out.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Ponsonby & Co. Are Sent Home!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Quiet!" growled Peter Todd.

"I'm being quiet, ain't I?" grunted Bunter. "I was going to say——"

"Shurrup!"

"Oh, really, Todd——"

"Anybody got a pin?" asked Peter.

"Here you are!"

"Stick it into Bunter if he opens his silly mouth again."

"Right ho!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you know, I was only going to ask if you'd brought any sandwiches with you, and—— Yah-h-h-h!"

"Jab him every time he jaws!" said Peter cheerfully.

"The Highcliffe cads may come along any minute now!"

Where the wood bordered the Highcliffe road a dozen or more Greyfriars juniors were in ambush, keenly watching the road. They were waiting for Ponsonby & Co. Nearer to

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

Highcliffe School, Tom Brown was acting as a scout, watching for the approach of the Highcliffians, ready to give the signal whistle as soon as they came in sight. Peter Todd was in the lead, but all the Famous Five were there to back him up. Billy Bunter and Alonzo had come along, and even Tom Dutton had limped out with the party. Billy Bunter was thinking chiefly of the sandwiches somebody should have brought, until a quarter of an inch of pin-point in his fat leg gave him another subject for reflection. The fat junior blinked at Bob Cherry through his big spectacles with a ferocious glare, but he did not venture to make any further remarks.

"I suppose you're sure they'll come along here, Toddy?" said Nugent, in a low voice.

Peter Todd sniffed.

"Of course I'm sure, fathead. I've seen them a dozen times—they always come this way. You trust your Uncle Peter!"

"Hark!" said Harry Wharton, suddenly holding up his hand.

Pheep!

It was the whistle down the road, from the scout watching for the enemy.

"That's Browney's toot," said Peter Todd, in a whisper, as the New Zealand junior's whistle came softly through the trees. "They're coming."

"Good egg!"

"Quiet, all of you! Don't jaw——"

"Seems to me you're doing your whack at the jawing," said Johnny Bull. "Shall Bob stick the pin in you next?"

"Shurrup! They're coming! When I give the signal, jump out, and we'll show 'em how the Top Study in the Remove does things."

"Top study be blowed!" said Wharton promptly.

"Study No. 1 is top study——"

"Now, look here, Wharton——"

"Look here, Todd——"

"I can hear them now," said Nugent. "Wouldn't it be better to leave the jawing till afterwards? Only a suggestion, you know."

"Quiet! Shurrup!"

Clatter! clatter! clatter!

Four riders came down the leafy lane at a good pace. The Greyfriars juniors, quiet enough now, looked out from their ambush, and recognised the horsemen as they came round the bend of the lane—Ponsonby, Gadsby, Monson, and Vavasour, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe. Tom Dutton's eyes gleamed as he looked at them. His leg was still very painful, and he was in a vengeful humour.

The four Highcliffians rode on without a suspicion, and came abreast of the ambush.

Then there was a sharp call from Peter Todd, and the concealed juniors leaped into the road.

"Collar them!"

Wharton and Bob Cherry seized the bridles of two of the horses in a twinkling, and brought them to a halt. They were Ponsonby's and Monson's. Gadsby tried to dash on, but Nugent and Bulstrode and Mark Linley were upon him before he could get clear, and he was dragged to a halt. Vavasour wheeled his pony, and dashed back towards Highcliffe—so suddenly that he eluded even the quick hands of Peter Todd.

"Stop him!" roared Dutton.

"Collar the cad!"

Peter Todd dashed in pursuit.

But Vavasour lashed his pony cruelly, and the animal broke into a swinging gallop, and the Greyfriars junior dropped hopelessly behind.

But a lithe form leaped out from the trees ahead of Vavasour, and stood in the middle of the road. Peter Todd uttered a shout.

"Good old Browney! Stop him!"

Tom Brown stood directly in Vavasour's way. Vavasour brandished his riding-whip.

"Clear off!" he screamed. "I'll ride you down!"

The New Zealand junior did not move.

Vavasour rode right at him, and almost at the last moment Tom Brown stepped aside from the charging pony, catching the bridle as he did so, and swinging the animal round in so sudden a circle that Vavasour lost his seat, and rolled in the dust of the lane.

Peter Todd dashed up, grinning, before Vavasour could recover his feet.

"Good for you, Frozen Mutton!" he exclaimed. "Trot the pony along, and I'll bring the ass."

He grasped Vavasour by the collar.

"Up with you!" he said briskly.

"Lemme alone, you cad!"

"This way," said Peter Todd; and he jerked Vavasour to

his feet, and marched him back along the lane after his pony.

The four Highcliffians were marched into the wood, in the midst of the triumphant juniors of Greyfriars.

They did not resist; the odds were too great. And they were not of the stuff of which heroes are made.

"The tables are turned this time, my infants!" said Peter Todd cheerfully. "This is where you get it in the neck!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Ponsonby. "Look here, if you play any of your rotten tricks, we shall complain to our headmaster, and he will come over and see Dr. Locke about it."

"Good! And he can tell him at the same time about your pelting Dutton's pony, and risking breaking his neck," said Peter.

"Don't waste time jawing to the cads!" exclaimed Tom Dutton impatiently. "I can't hear a word you're saying. Get to bizney."

"Where's the cord?"

"Eh? What do you want a sword for?"

"Cord!" yelled Peter.

"Oh, oord! Why can't you speak plainly? Here it is."

Tom Dutton drew a coil of thin but strong cord from his pocket. The Highcliffians looked at it with considerable apprehension.

"Look here, what are you going to do?" demanded Gadsby.

"Don't be impatient, kid. Wait till the curtain goes up!" grinned Peter. "Stick them in their saddles, kids—face to the tail!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" roared Ponsonby. "I won't—"

"Yes, you will. Your mistake," said Peter calmly.

Ponsonby began to struggle; but his struggling did not avail him. He was lifted upon his pony, with his face to the tail, and a winding cord round his legs bound him there, so that he could not escape. Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour were served the same in turn, and they sat with red and furious faces, in the midst of the grinning Greyfriars fellows.

"We'll make you sit up for this!" Gadsby muttered between his teeth.

"Go hon!" said Peter Todd cheerfully. "This isn't so bad as what you did to Dutton. He might have broken a limb, instead of getting a sprain. We're going to teach you better. Savvy? And we've not finished yet. Where's the soot?"

"The soot?" yelled Vavasour.

"Certainly."

"You're—you're not going to put soot on us!" shrieked Gadsby.

"Why not? Don't you think it will soot?" asked Peter calmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Trot out the soot, Alonzo."

"Yes, my dear Peter."

Alonzo Todd opened a bag, and Peter pushed back his sleeves and scooped out soot with his hand. He dabbed it calmly upon Gadsby's face to start with. Gadsby wriggled and struggled furiously, but his legs were tied to the horse, and his wrists were tied together, so his resistance was not of much use. Todd rubbed the soot well into his face, quickly transforming him into a queer-looking imitation of a nigger minstrel.

"Oh, you—hooh-hooh-grooh!" spluttered Gadsby. "Oh, I—Yah-groogh!"

"Better keep your mouth shut," said Peter kindly. "I can't help the soot going in, if you wag your jaw all the time."

"Groooogh!"

"Keep it shut, kid!"

"Yow-w-w-wow!"

"Now your turn, Pon., my man."

"If you put that stuff on me—" shrieked Ponsonby.

He had no time to say more; the stuff was being put on him, and a dab of soot in his mouth made him choke and splutter wildly.

Vavasour and Monson were "sooted" next, and then the operation was completed. The aspect of the Highcliffians was so utterly ridiculous that the Greyfriars juniors shrieked with laughter as they looked at them.

"Think they'll do?" asked Peter Todd, carefully wiping his sooty hand upon Ponsonby's handkerchief, and then sticking the handkerchief down its owner's back.

"I should say so!" grinned Bob Cherry. "They will make a sensation in Highcliffe, I should think, going home like this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You scoundrels!" roared Ponsonby. "You dare not send us back to Highcliffe like this!"

"Your mistake," said Peter. "That's where you're going."

"I—I—I—"

"It will give the kids something to smile about," said

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

Peter. "You are even funnier than usual in this rig, Pon."

"You—you villain!"

"Lead them out into the road," said Peter.

"I say, let us off this!" panted Vavasour. "The fellows will laugh us to death over this—they will, you know, absolutely! I say—"

"You should have thought of that before you went for Dutton," said Peter Todd.

"Look here, I say—I'll stand you half-a-quad!" said Vavasour.

"Go hon!"

"I'll make it a pound—absolutely!" screamed Vavasour, as the ponies were led out into the road to be started for Highcliffe.

"My dear chap, you're too generous!" said Peter Todd, with a shake of the head. "Now then, start them! All ready?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Go!"

And, with a shout, the ponies were started, and they trotted off towards the gates of Highcliffe School. Their riders, with sooty faces as black as aces of spades, sitting with their faces to the tails of their ponies, looked back at the Greyfriars juniors as they were carried away. They yelled out threats and insults, which were replied to by yells of laughter from the successful raiders.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "This takes the cake—it simply puts the lid on! I wonder what Highcliffe will say when they get in?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors followed the Highcliffian quartette as far as the bend in the road, where they could see the gates of the school. They saw several Highcliffe fellows looking out of the gates, as the ponies with their queer burdens trotted up, and they heard the yell of laughter that greeted Ponsonby & Co. The sooty riders disappeared in at the gates of the school, and the Greyfriars juniors wiped their eyes.

"Better clear out of this," remarked Nugent. "I shouldn't wonder if Ponsonby & Co. feel wrathful, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, clear out," said Peter Todd, chuckling. "They might give us a dose of the same; and that isn't in the programme."

And the raiders, laughing loudly, marched off in triumph. While Ponsonby & Co., surrounded by a crowd yelling with laughter, in the quadrangle of Highcliffe, were shrieking to the fellows there to release them, and almost foaming with fury.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Coker Argues It Out!

HORACE COKER was frowning.

There were wrinkles in the brow of the great Coker and indignation in his breast.

As the day of the Friardale Flower Show and Pony Races drew nearer, Coker realised more and more that it wouldn't do.

The frown deepened upon his manly brow as he sat at the tea-table with his study-mates, Potter and Greene of the Fifth, on this particular evening. He was so preoccupied that he was almost forgetting to eat. Potter and Greene, however, were making up for any deficiency on Coker's part in that respect. Coker—who had plenty of money—generally did most of the supplying of good things for the study table, and Potter and Greene felt themselves in duty bound to do full justice to the feed. It was an agreeable duty, and they did it well.

"It won't do!" exclaimed Coker at last, coming out of his reverie.

"No," said Potter, with his mouth full of shrimps.

"Better put in some fresh tea."

"What!"

"It's too weak."

"Eh? What's too weak, fathead?" demanded Coker.

"Weren't you speaking about the tea?" asked Potter innocently. "It's had a second lot of water in, you know, and if it won't do—"

"Blow the tea!"

"It's cool enough already," said Greene.

"Look here!" roared Coker. "I'm not talking about the tea! Confound the tea! I'm talking about the flower show!"

"Oh, the flower show!" said Greene, helping himself to shrimps. "I see! Coker, old man, you've shown your usual judgment in getting these shrimps. They're ripping!"

"Blow the shrimps!"

"Certainly. But they're ripping, all the same. Never

NEXT
MONDAY:

"SELF-DENIAL WEEK AT GREYFRIARS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.

mind the flower show now," added Greene kindly. "Tuck into the shrimps before they're all gone."

"Look here! I've said it won't do, and it won't! I'm not going to allow it!"

"But you can't help it," said Potter, in surprise. "Old Lambe runs the flower show, and he won't stop it to please you. He says it's going to be a great success this yah than last yah."

"Ass! I mean it won't do for those Remove kids to be riding in the same race with a Fifth Form chap. Can't be done!"

"Well, they've entered."

"Then they've got to get out. A fellow is bound to think of the dignity of his Form," said Coker loftily. "I can't ride in a race with a set of fags. It's absurd. Now, they've got to stand out. It's no good talking to them—I've done that."

Potter and Greene chuckled as they thought of the scene in the Rag, with Horace Coker on the rocking-horse.

"Not much good jawing to them," said Potter. "They're cheeky enough for anything. Of course, it's like their impudence to enter for the race at all. That new kid, Todd, is cheekier than Wharton and Cherry and Nugent rolled together. He wants taking down a peg badly. But—"

"But the cheekiest beast won't be taken down," said Greene. "Perhaps it's better to leave 'em alone. Pass the jam!"

"They're going to stand out!" said Coker.

"Wish you luck! I don't see how you're going to do it, though."

"Can't you think of a way?" demanded Coker. "I don't see why I should have to do all the thinking that's done in this blessed study."

"Well, you're such a brainy chap, you know, Coker," said Potter solemnly.

Coker nodded.

"Yes, that's true enough," he said. "I must admit I've got most of the brains in this study. I always was brainy."

Potter choked over his tea, and Greene gave a peculiar gurgle, which he changed into a cough. Coker glared at them suspiciously.

"Well, what's the joke?" he demanded.

"Ahem! Tea went down the wrong way," said Potter blandly. "Go on, Coker, old man! Think it out! Bring your brain to bear on it."

Coker rose from the table.

"Come on!" he said.

"Eh? Not finished tea yet," said Greene.

"Blow tea! I'm going to put it straight to young Todd, and if he doesn't see reason I'm going to lick him," said Coker. "That's the only thing I can think of. You fellows can come with me in case there's trouble."

"Jolly certain to be trouble," murmured Greene. "I—I say, Coker, old man, why not treat the cheeky young bounders with—with scorn?"

"Are you coming?" asked Coker.

Potter and Greene groaned and rose to their feet. As a matter of fact, Potter and Greene had no anticipation whatever that Horace Coker would "pull off" the pony race, but they did not venture to say so to Coker. They followed their leader to the Remove passage, and Horace Coker announced his arrival by a tremendous kick at the door, which sent it flying open.

Tom Dutton was in the study by himself. He did not look up. He was at work, and the kick at the door had not disturbed him.

"Hallo!" said Coker. "Where's Todd?"

"Yes," said Dutton. "I'm doing my prep, you know. Do you want anything?"

GOOD TURNS!—No. 3.



A Magnetite
 assisting
 an old lady
 to alight
 from a
 motor-omnibus.



Dutton swept at top speed into the lane, and he made a desperate effort to hold the maddened horse. But the animal reared and plunged furiously, and Dutton was shot fairly out of the saddle. Crash! The junior rolled into the thick grass by the side of the road, and lay there motionless. (See Chapter 5.)

"I've come to talk to you about that pony race," said Coker.

Tom Dutton flushed angrily.

"Wash your own!" he replied.

"Eh?"

"It needs it more than mine, and chance it," said Dutton.

"What is the silly ass talking about?" said Coker, puzzled.

"He's as deaf as a giddy post!" chuckled Potter. "He thinks you told him to wash his face."

"Oh, my hat! Dutton, you fathead——"

"Eh?"

"Where's Peter Todd? I've come here to talk to him."

"Rot!" said Dutton. "If you want to sing hymns, you can sing 'em in your own study. I'm doing my prep. You're jolly well not going to sing hymns here!"

"My only aunt!" gasped Coker. "I don't envy Todd if he has to talk much to this chap. I say, Dutton, why don't you get an ear-trumpet, you chump?"

"Eh?"

"It's about the pony race," bawled Coker. "You're not to enter—see?"

"I shouldn't wonder," said Dutton. "My leg is much better, and I shall be able to ride all right. I don't know about winning in a canter, but I shall try hard. Very kind of you to say so."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"Oh; crumbs! I didn't say you'd win in a canter!" shrieked Coker. "I said you're not to enter—see?"

"Yes, all right," said Dutton.

"Yes, all right if you're reasonable," said Coker. "You agree to stand out, then?"

"Certainly. I shall do my best, and I hope I shall beat you."

"I'm not going to allow Remove kids to enter!" yelled Coker. "Can't you understand? It's beneath my dignity to ride with fags in a race."

"I hope you will," said Dutton, with a nod. "My idea is that Todd will get second place, and Alonzo third; but you're welcome to try for a place."

Potter and Greene chuckled, and Coker gasped. The Fifth Former put his mouth close to Dutton's ear, and bawled with all the force of his lungs:

"You're going to stand out of the race. Do you hear that?"

"You needn't shout. I'm not deaf," said Dutton. "I can hear you all right if you don't mumble. I think you're a silly ass! I'm not going to stand out—I'm going to ride to win! You haven't got an earthly!"

"What!"

"You can't ride for toffee!" said Dutton. "If we don't ride, the Highcliffe cads will get the first prize! You're no good at all!"

Coker turned crimson with rage. "It's no good talking to him, and it's jolly hard work, too," he said. "He's got to be bumped till he comes to his senses. Collar the silly duffer."

"Hands off!" yelled Dutton, jumping up as the three Fifth-Formers seized him. "Rescue—rescue, Remove!"

"Lock the door!" chuckled Coker. "We'll deal with the rotters one at a time."

Potter turned the key. The struggling Dutton was swung into the air in the grasp of the chums of the Fifth.

"Now, we don't want to hurt you," said Coker. "We're arguing it out in the only way you can understand. Will you stand out of the race?"

"I haven't any."

"What!"

"Besides, what do you want lace for? Do you mean a rot-lace?"

"Will you stop out of the pony race?" bellowed Coker.

"Oh! No fear! Not much!"

"Bump him!" yelled the exasperated Coker. "If he can't hear, he can feel. Bump him!"

"Yar-o-oh!" roared Dutton, as he descended on the carpet, and the dust rose round him. "Ow! Leggo! Chuck it! Rescue!"

There was a rush of footsteps in the passage, and a hand tried the door. Then there was a loud knocking.

"Hallo! What's the trouble here?" shouted the voice of Peter Todd.

"Rescue!" yelled Dutton.

"We're arguing with Dutton," called back Coker. "We'll let you in when we've finished. Sorry I can't stop to unlock the door now."

Bump!

"Yah! Oh!"

"Open the door!" shouted Peter through the keyhole.

"Another time," grinned Coker. "Give him another bump! He will be quite reasonable soon. Nothing like a really good bumping to bring a cheeky lad to reason. Have you had enough, Dutton?"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Say when," said Coker. "You're going to be bumped till you agree not to ride in the pony race. Say when."

Bump—bump!

"Ow! Rescue!"

Bang, bang, bang! Crash! The door shook under the assaults of the Removites without, but it did not open.

THE TENTH CHAPTER. Sauce for the Gander.

PETER TODD was simply raging in the passage. The cool cheek of the Fifth-Former in taking possession of his study, and ragging his study-mate there, had a most exasperating effect upon Peter Todd. He kicked and thumped at the door, and yelled through the keyhole, but only the roars of Dutton, as he was bumped on the carpet, responded.

"The awful cheek!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "We shall have to burst in the door somehow, if they won't open it! Hark!"

Bump! came from within the study, and a yell followed. Coker was evidently continuing his argument with the obstinate Dutton.

Peter Todd snorted.

"The cheeky beast! He wants to shift us out of the race—the awful nerve! He can't ride for toffee; and the High-cliffe cads will have the prize if Study No. 7 doesn't rope it in. I—I—I'll pulverise him. I'll—"

Bump!

"Ow! Rescue!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Here, let's use Bunter for a battering-ram!" exclaimed Bob Cherry excitedly. "You take one leg, Toddy, and I'll take the other, and we'll swing him against the door."

"You silly ass!" shrieked Bunter. "I—I—I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, I can get the door open!" grunted Bunter.

"You leave it to me."

Todd glared at him.

"Don't talk out of your silly neck, now," he exclaimed.

"How are you going to do it?"

Bunter grinned.

"You know what a jolly clever ventriloquist I am—"

"Oh, don't gas now, you fat duffer—"

"Oh, really Todd! You know I can imitate anybody's voice, and I'll pitch it to Coker in old Prout's tootle—"

"My hat!" Peter Todd gave Bunter a slap on the shoulder that made him roar. "Good wheeze! I didn't think of that."

"Ow! Don't bust my backbone, you fathead!" roared Bunter.

"Go it," murmured Bob Cherry.

Bump! came from within the study again. Coker and Potter and Greene were arguing it out still, and the argument was very painful to Tom Dutton. But the deaf junior had no intention of giving in. Coker was growing more and more exasperated. He considered that he had taken quite enough trouble to bring Dutton to reason; and the junior's persistent unreasonableness was distinctly irritating.

"Now, look here, Dutton!" Coker bawled in the deaf junior's ear. "Why don't you do the sensible thing, and agree to stand out?"

"I'd land out, if I had a chance," gasped Dutton. "Come on, one at a time, and you'll see."

There was a sudden scurrying of feet in the passage, and the banging at the door ceased.

Coker started.

"Hallo! That sounds as if the row had brought up some beastly prefect," said Potter.

"We're not going to open the door to a prefect," growled Coker. "The prefects can't interfere with the Fifth. They can go and chop chips."

There was a sharp rap at the door.

"Oh, buzz off!" yelled Coker. "You're not coming in here."

"Coker!" rapped out a sharp voice.

Coker jumped.

"Oh, crumbs, it's Prout!"

"Coker!" went on the sharp voice, which was either that of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, or exactly like it. "Coker! Open this door at once!"

Coker & Co. exchanged hopeless glances. They would have kept the Remove fellows out all evening if necessary, but they could not disobey the order of their Form-master.

"What rotten luck!" muttered Greene. "Fancy old Prout coming here. I thought he had gone out, too."

"One of those young cads must have fetched him," muttered Coker. "Sneaks! Yah!"

Rap! Rap! Rap!

"Open this door, Coker."

"A-a-all right, sir. I—I—I—"

"Do not bandy words with me, Coker. Open the door."

The Fifth-formers released Dutton, who stood panting. Coker reluctantly turned the key in the lock.

"If you please, sir," he began, as he opened the door, "we— Why—what—my hat!"

There was a rush of juniors from the passage, and they swarmed into the study. Coker & Co. were rushed off their feet in a second. They were taken utterly by surprise. They had fancied that the Removites had been scared off the scene by the approach of the Fifth Form-master.

"Down with them!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Pile on 'em!"

"The pilefulness is terrific."

"Hurray!"

"Gerroff!" roared Coker. "I—I say, where's Prout? What—what—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Prout's out!" chuckled Peter Todd. "It was only his voice. Bunter borrowed it for the occasion!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker glared at the grinning Owl of the Remove. He understood now that he had been tricked by Billy Bunter's peculiar gift.

"Done!" gasped Greene dolefully. "I say, Coker, you were an ass—"

"Silly ass!" mumbled Potter. "I say, you kids, we'll make it pax—"

"Not just yet," grinned Peter Todd. "Come in, and lock the door, you kids. Coker has come into the lion's den, and there is no exit at present."

"Lemme gerrup!" shouted Coker furiously.

"Sit on him!" Peter Todd locked the door. The study was swarming with juniors, and there was hardly room to move. The odds were hopelessly against the Fifth-formers now, and they had no chance. Coker and Potter and Greene exchanged uneasy glances. They had indeed ventured into the lion's den, as Peter Todd declared. How they were going to get out was another question.

"Ow!" mumbled Dutton. "They've been bumping me to make me agree to stand out of the race, the cheeky rotters. Not that I'd do it."

"What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," remarked Peter Todd. "Coker has bumped Dutton to make him stand out of the race. We're going to bump Coker till he agrees to stand out. One good turn deserves another."

"Hear, hear!"

"Don't you dare to bump me," roared Coker. "Why, you cheeky fags, I'll—I'll—"

"The saucfulness of the honourable goose is excellent for the esteemed gander," grinned Huree Janset Ram Singh.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton to the Rescue!

"The bumpfulness of the ludicrous Coker will be——"

"Terrific!" said Bob Cherry. "Collar him."

"Leggo!" spluttered Coker. "Leggo. I—I'll——"

Coker was grasped by six or seven pair of hands. He struggled madly in the grasp of the Removites, but he struggled in vain. Peter Todd looked on with a sweet smile, and wagged his forefinger at Coker.

"Coker, my infant, this is where you are going through it," he said. "You have been bumping Dutton, a member of Study No. 7, whose person is sacred——"

"I'll bump him again," roared Coker.

"To make him stand out of the race," continued Peter Todd calmly. "It was like your awful cheek, Coker."

"I'm not going to ride with inky fags," yelled Coker.

"Exactly; you're not. We're not going to let you," chuckled Peter Todd. "We have been feeling very keenly that we can't let Greyfriars be disgraced by such a jolly rotten rider as you are, Coker."

"Wha-a-a-at!"

"So we're going to argue it with you, till you agree to keep out of the race. That will also put you up to a wrinkle about trying to bully the Remove," said Peter cheerfully.

"Bump him!"

"Look here. I—oh——"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Say when," said Peter, in cheery imitation of Coker's own manner. "You've only got to promise to stand out of the race, you know."

"I won't! I—I never. I—— Yah! You young fiends! Oh!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Harder!" said Peter Todd. "Never mind the carpet—it needs dusting, anyway. Put your beef into it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow! I'm hurt!" yelled the unfortunate Coker. "I—I—— Ow! Leave off! Yah!"

"Are you going to promise?"

"Ow! Never! Yow!"

Bump! Bump! Bump! Bump!

"There's still time," said Peter Todd agreeably. "The floor will stand it any amount of times. You're an obstinate chap, Coker. You don't seem to understand the force of your own arguments when they're turned round on you."

"Leave off," groaned Coker. "I—I'll agree, if you like, you young beasts. Ow! I'm aching all over. I—— Oh! I can't stand any more."

"Good! I'm glad to see you so reasonable, Cokey, old man. You agree to stand out of the race at the Friardale Flower Show?"

"Look here, I——"

"Bump him!"

"Hold on!" yelled Coker. "I agree! I agree!"

"Honour bright?"

"Yes," groaned Coker.

"Good egg!" Gentlemen, we have convinced Coker, by his own arguments——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now kick the bounders out."

The study door was open, and Coker, Potter, and Greene went hurtling into the passage. They picked themselves up and fled. A yell of laughter from the Removites followed them. Horace Coker of the Fifth frequently had the worst of it in his little tussle with the Remove, but he had seldom experienced so crushing a defeat as this. The three heroes of the Fifth almost crawled into the study, and Horace Coker sat down heavily—and jumped up again very quickly. Sitting down was not comfortable just then.

"Ow!" groaned Coker. "This is a go!"

"Yes, I must say you've made a muck of it," said Potter. "I was against it, you know."

"Oh, shut up."

"So was I!" said Greene. "You remember I was against it, Coker——"

"Cheese it!" snorted Coker. "If you'd backed me up, it wouldn't have turned out like this! Ow! I'm aching all over! Ow! I'll make Peter Todd smart for this—ow! Fancy having the cheek to bump a Fifth-Former! Ow!"

"Well, it might have been worse!" said Potter philosophically.

"Eb—how could it have been worse, fathead?" groaned Coker.

"Why, they might have bumped me, too!"

"And me," said Greene. "You see, it might have been ever so much worse, Coker. May as well finish tea now."

And Potter and Greene sat down to tea, and Coker strode out of the study and slammed the door behind him—and they finished tea in peace.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"THE rotters!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"The cads!"

"What's the trouble, Toddy?"

"The awful spoofers!"

"My dear Peter——"

"The swindlers!" roared Peter Todd, showing no sign of getting to the end of his vocabulary. "The—the thieves! The burglars!"

The fellows in the junior common-room gathered round Peter Todd. It was seldom that the leader of No. 7 Study had been seen in a state of such excitement. He had just come in from Friardale, and he had come in in a state of boundless wrath.

"My dear Peter," said Alonzo reproachfully. "I am sure that Uncle Benjamin would not approve of these violent expressions. I really consider——"

"Oh, cheese it, Lonzy! The blighters!"

Bob Cherry smote Peter a powerful smite on the shoulder.

"What's the matter?" he roared. "Can't you explain, and let the gas escape afterwards? Who are they, and what have they been doing?"

"Yes, let's hear what's happened," said Harry Wharton.

"Pat him on the back and calm him, Bob."

Peter dodged. A pat on the back from Bob Cherry's powerful hand was not a joke.

"It's the Highcliffe cads!" he gasped.

"What have they done?"

"Collared our ponies."

"Phew!"

"Do you understand?" roared Peter. "We engaged four ponies at Gunn's livery stables—and the Highcliffe cads have roped them in over our heads. When I called on Gunn just now, he said he was sorry we couldn't have them on Saturday for the race. Of course, there wasn't any legal agreement on the subject, but it was understood that we were to have the ponies. Ponsonby has knocked us out. He's engaged them for Saturday—not to ride, you savvy—the cads have their own ponies—but to keep them away from us. And Gunn has let them bribe him into playing us that dirty trick!"

"Ass!" said Nugent. "You ought to have made it a settled bargain with him. You couldn't expect him to keep the geegees disengaged in case you wanted them."

"Well, it was an understanding."

"A misunderstanding!" grinned Vernon-Smith. "And can't Gunn let you have any horseflesh at all on Saturday?"

"He says not. The Highcliffe cads have been bribing him. Of course, they're better customers than we are—they've got heaps of money," said Peter bitterly.

Harry Wharton whistled.

"And the race is to-morrow," he said. "You'll have to find some horseflesh somewhere else in the time, Peter. It's a rotten trick of Ponsonby's, but it can't be helped. You can try the livery stables in Courtfield."

Peter shook his head despondently.

"I've telephoned them already; they've disposed of everything for Saturday. Lots of people want geegees for Saturday, and there's a run on them."

"This is where Top Study gets it in the neck, then," remarked Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Peter. "The question is, what's going to be done? We're going to ride to-morrow, if we have to raid the ponies from Highcliffe itself!"

"Precious little time left to make new arrangements," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "Of course, they've left it till the latest moment to dish you."

"The dishfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Would it not be possible to out-bribe the esteemed Highcliffe rotters?"

"Can't be done now—they've engaged the geegees, and Gunn can't go back on them if he wants to."

"Then the esteemed game is up."

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton. "Let's see—yes, there's time."

"Time for what?" growled Peter.

"Time to get ponies from Wharton Lodge," said Harry quietly. "My own pony, at home, and three more—my uncle goes in for horseflesh, you know—and he could stand a dozen if we wanted them. And I'm sure he would if I asked him, and explained how we are fixed. They can be sent down by rail, and get here to-night."

Peter Todd rushed at the captain of the Remove and hugged him ecstatically.

"Oh, you're a giddy genius! You can really do it?"

"I'll try, anyway!" said Harry, laughing. "It will be one

in the eye for the Highcliffe cads, to see you turn up for the race after all."

"Hurrah!"

Wharton glanced up at the common-room clock.

"We've got time to get down to Friardale and send the wire, and get an answer, before afternoon lessons," he said. "Get out your jigger and come along."

In a couple of minutes Harry Wharton and Peter Todd were wheeling their bicycles across the Close to the gates. Coker of the Fifth met them in the Close, and called to them.

"Sorry! Can't stop!" said Peter.

"Look here," said Coker, frowning. "I gave you my word to keep out of the pony race. Of course, I shall keep it!"

Peter chuckled.

"What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," he remarked.

"Look here, if you keep me to it, I shall stick to it," said Coker. "But—"

"All serene, my son! I was only pulling your leg!" said Peter. "You are free to ride if you want to—by kind permission of No 7 Study!"

"Well, that's all right," said Coker. "It's a go, then. Of course, you kids wouldn't have any chance, anyway, so it makes no difference to you."

"None at all," said Peter. "You will finish up eleventh or twelfth, and it can't make any difference. You will save somebody else from getting in last, so really it would be a kindness of you to ride."

"You young ass! I—"

"Ta-ta!" said Peter; and the juniors mounted their bicycles in the gateway, and pedalled off.

Horace Coker looked after them with a frown. But he was much relieved at being set free from the unfortunate promise that had been extracted from him in No. 7 Study. And he had wisely decided not to "chip in" any more in Peter Todd's affairs. It had dawned upon Coker that he was destined to get the worst of it in his little tussles with that cheerful and enterprising youth.

Wharton and his companion lost no time in getting to the post-office in Friardale. They left their machines outside, and

concocted a long telegram to Colonel Wharton at the counter. That telegram took most of their combined cash to settle for it, but, as Peter Todd remarked, it was no time to stick at trifles.

"I'll ask my uncle to wire back here, and we can wait for the telegram," said Harry. "If we're a bit late for lessons it can't be helped."

"Right-ho!" said Peter.

And the telegram was despatched, and the two juniors strolled out into the old High Street of Friardale to wait for the answer.

"The Head will let us keep the ponies in the school stables to-night," said Harry. "I've asked my uncle to send them to Greyfriars. They'll be safer there than at Gunn's; there's no telling what Ponsonby might try next. He wouldn't be above trying to get at the geegees."

"Talk of angels!" said Peter Todd. "Here they are!"

Ponsonby & Co. had just come out of Uncle Clegg's tuck-shop, a little farther down the street. They grinned as they looked at the two Greyfriars juniors.

"Hallo!" said Ponsonby. "How many of you chaps are riding in the race to-morrow?"

And the Highcliffians chuckled gleefully.

"Four of us!" said Peter calmly.

"Got the geegees?"

"Yes, that's all right."

Ponsonby started.

"Have you see Gunn to-day?" he asked.

"Yes, I've seen him."

"Hasn't he told you—"

"Yes," said Peter Todd deliberately. "He's explained that a rotten cad has done me, and got him to fail in his engagement with me. But as it happens there are ways and means of getting over that, so we shall ride all the same—you rotter!"

"I don't see where you'll get the gees from," said Gadsby.

"There aren't any to be had in Courtfield, I know that!"

"Absolutely!" grinned Vavasour.

"Well, you'll see," said Peter comfortably. "I'd beat you rotters in the show, if I had to ride a 'bus-horse!'"

And the Greyfriars juniors turned their backs on the Highcliffians and strolled back to the post-office.

A Danger to Britain!



The sure and steady advance of the Chinese has been viewed with grave concern in European circles for some time past. With the object of making clear the danger underlying this progress, a long, 80,000-word, complete story, entitled:

The Yellow Sphinx

has been specially written for the "Union Jack." This great tale—dramatic and realistic—should be read by every patriotic Britisher, for it conveys a grave warning and shows what terrible power the Yellow Races may one day wield over the White Nations. Such famous characters as:

SEXTON BLAKE, YVONNE, & WU LING

all appear in "The Yellow Sphinx," which is altogether unique. Do not miss it on any account, but make sure of a copy of Thursday's Summer Number of the

UNION JACK

2d. Special Coloured Cover. 2d.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

STILL OBTAINABLE FROM ALL NEWSAGENTS.

3 SPLENDID, NEW ADDITIONS TO "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3^d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

No. 232. THE FOUR MUSKETEERS.

A Grand, Long, Complete Tale dealing with the School Life of Sexton Blake's Boy Assistant.

No. 233. THE CONQUEST OF LONDON.

A Story of the Great German War.
By JOHN TREGELLIS.

No. 234. THE RIVAL CINEMATOGRAPHERS.

A Splendid, Complete Story of Thrilling Adventure,
By SIDNEY DREW.

BUY THESE GRAND STORY, BOOKS TO-DAY.

ON SALE EVERYWHERE.

Ponsonby bit his lip. "They've got some rotten trick for getting the gees after all," said Monson.

"Gunn wouldn't dare to go back on us," said Ponsonby. "What are the cads hanging round the post-office for? Been wiring to somebody for geegees, perhaps. My hat! If they ride after all, you fellows—"

"I shall beat them," said Vasasour.

Ponsonby sniffed.

"Beat your grandmother! That deaf fathead, Dutton, could ride your silly head off, though he's lame still!"

"Look here, Pon—"

"We're not done yet!" growled Ponsonby. "If they get geegees from somewhere, we've got to get at them and settle on Gunn, and get left at the finish."

"But how—"

"Come into the post-office."

Ponsonby & Co. entered the post-office. That establishment was a grocer's shop as well as a post-office, and sold ices and ginger-beer. The Highcliffians sat down to eat ices and wait, so long as the Greyfriars juniors waited. It was easy enough for Ponsonby to guess that Harry Wharton and Todd were waiting for the reply to a telegram. They could have no motive otherwise for lounging about the post-office.

Ponsonby soon saw that his surmise was correct. Wharton came into the office half an hour later to inquire if a telegram had arrived. It had not come yet, and he went out. The Highcliffians had overheard his inquiry, and they exchanged glances.

"The rotters!" growled Gadsby. "I shouldn't have thought they had money enough for this kind of thing. It will cost a good bit to have geegees sent from a distance."

"May have had a whip-round to pay for it, or they may have relations in the business," said Ponsonby, with a curl of his lip. "Anyway, that's what they're after, and we're going to see it through."

"We shall be late for lessons," hinted Monson.

"Blow lessons!"

And the Highcliffians ate ices and waited and watched. Another half-hour elapsed, and it was certainly time for the juniors to get back to school. But Wharton and Todd were still waiting, and their enemies waited, too. But there was not much longer to wait. The two Greyfriars juniors came into the post-office once more, and a telegram was handed to Wharton over the counter.

"Good egg, Toddy!" he exclaimed. "This is from my uncle."

"His uncle!" murmured Ponsonby. "That's it, is it? Some blessed livery-stable keeper, I suppose! Pah!"

The Greyfriars juniors read the telegram with great satisfaction. It was a long one, though not so long as Wharton's, and it was very satisfactory. It ran:

"Telegram received. Right. Four good ponies arrive Greyfriars this evening. Rely on this. Good luck.—
WHARTON."

"Hurray!" shouted Peter Todd.

Ponsonby came over towards the Greyfriars juniors.

"Managed it all right?" he asked. "I'm glad, of course! As a sportsman, I shouldn't like you to be shut out of the race."

"Yes; we know exactly how much of a sportsman you are!" said Peter Todd. "You've played a low-down trick on us, and it won't do you any good. Show him the telegram, Wharton!"

Wharton laughed and held it out. Ponsonby read it eagerly. He gritted his teeth, though he tried to appear indifferent.

"Well, that's lucky for you," he remarked.

"But not for you!" said Peter Todd, with a chuckle. "This is where you get left."

"I suppose you'll have the gees up at Gunn's place?" Ponsonby remarked carelessly.

"No fear!"

"Most convenient place, you know—near the ground for the race—"

"And in your reach for another rotten trick!" said Harry Wharton.

"I hope you don't suspect that we should—"

"We suspect that you'd do anything mean and rotten!" said Harry, with cheerful frankness. "And we're jolly well not going to give you the chance!"

"Then you're going to have the ponies at the school?" asked Ponsonby.

"Yes; under our eyes, where they won't be in any danger!" grinned Peter. "You can look for the licking of your lives to-morrow!"

And the Greyfriars fellows, in great spirits, mounted their bicycles, and rode home. The Highcliffians left the post-office with gloomy brows.

"Dished again!" growled Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" muttered Vasasour.

Ponsonby made an angry gesture.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"We're not letting it go at that!" he said, in a low voice. "Look here, you chaps, it's no good blinking the fact that they're better than we are at this game. Vav thinks he can beat them, but he can't—not with straight riding. We've lost this round, but there's time before to-morrow."

"You're not thinking of raiding the ponies at their blessed school, are you?" asked Monson, with a whistle.

"Why not?" asked Ponsonby coolly. "We couldn't get bookmakers for a long time without learning some of the business of racing men. There are ways and means. Have you ever heard of horses being doped?"

"Phew!"

"It's only necessary to get at them in their stables, and give them something to swallow," said Ponsonby. "I can get it from Banks, the bookie, easily enough."

"But—but how—"

"We're not going to lose this race," said Ponsonby, between his teeth. "Come on; let's get back to Highcliffe, and talk it over. We're late enough for lessons already."

And the precious quartette walked away, discussing their new scheme in low tones.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Like Thieves in the Night!

MR. CAPPER, the master of the Upper Fourth, frowned as Wharton and Peter Todd came into the Form-room. As Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was away ill, Mr. Capper had the doubtful pleasure of taking the Remove as well as his own Form temporarily.

"You are late, sir!" said Mr. Capper, waving a magisterial forefinger at the two juniors. "You have missed a whole lesson."

"So sorry, sir," said Peter Todd meekly. "Most important communication from Wharton's uncle, sir."

"Indeed! I hope your uncle is not ill, Wharton?"

"Oh, no, sir! But I had a wire from him about a very important matter," said Harry. "I hope you will excuse us, sir."

"Very well; you may go to your places!" said Mr. Capper doubtfully.

If the Fourth Form-master had known that the important matter was the pony race at the Friardale Flower Show, he would probably not have been so lenient. Fortunately, he did not know.

"I say, you fellows, is it all right?" whispered Billy Bunter, as the two Removites sat down.

"Right as rain!" said Peter Todd. "Shurrup, fathead! We've got to be as good as gold! Suppose we should get detained to-morrow afternoon?"

That consideration was quite enough to make the Removites as good as gold. During the few days they had taken their lessons with the Upper Fourth they had caused Mr. Capper to feel the most benevolent wishes for Mr. Quelch's rapid recovery and return to Greyfriars. But nothing could exceed their extreme goodness on the present occasion. Mr. Capper was surprised and pleased. Even Billy Bunter was attentive to his lessons, and the Remove were as quiet as mice, and showed an anxiety to please the Form-master that was very gratifying to Mr. Capper.

They were glad enough when lessons were over, however. Peter Todd was in a very thoughtful mood, and after lessons he took the Famous Five into his confidence on the subject of his cogitations.

"It's rather lucky that you chaps aren't riding in the race to-morrow," he remarked, by way of a beginning.

"Yes; it means a win for your study," said Nugent blandly.

"Of which otherwisefully the doubtfulness would be terrific!" observed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Oh, I don't mean that!" said Peter. "We should win all right, anyway. But we're riding to-morrow, and so we shall have to have a good night's rest to keep in form. As you fellows are not riding, you needn't be so particular."

"What on earth are you driving at?" demanded Wharton.

"The geegees will be here this evening," said Peter.

"Yes; my uncle will send a groom with them, and they'll arrive all right," said Harry. "No danger of Ponsonby & Co. getting at them on the way, if that's what you mean."

"That's not it. They'll be here all night," said Peter.

"Look here, I don't trust Ponsonby half an inch. You remember you raided Highcliffe once, and licked those cads in their own studies?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Suppose Ponsonby thought of the same wheeze, and got at the geegees?" said Peter. "You know it's easy enough to spoil a horse for a race, if you can get at him; and those rotters would stick at nothing—they've proved that already!"

Bob Cherry whistled softly.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"SELF-DENIAL WEEK AT GREYFRIARS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.

"You surely don't suspect—"

"I do!" said Peter. "Ponsonby was getting all the information he could to-day from us. I thought it over afterwards, and I believe he will try to get at the geegees. It would be easy enough, for that matter."

"He's rotter enough!" said Wharton. "But—"

"The geegees will have to be watched to-night," said Peter. "If we stay up to watch, we shall be off colour to-morrow. I want you fellows to do it. This isn't a time for study rows, you know—it's Greyfriars against Highcliffe—fair play against foul! Will you do it for us?"

"Like a bird!" said Bob Cherry promptly. "I hardly think Ponsonby would venture; but we'll look after the horses, anyway. I'm game!"

"Same here!" said Johnny Bull.

"The gamefulness is terrific, my esteemed chum!"

"Now I come to think of it, I think it's quite likely they haven't got to the end of their tricks yet," said Wharton, with a nod. "Ponsonby knows they can't win, and he won't leave a stone unturned to beat Greyfriars. We'll stay up and watch. It will have to be kept jolly dark, though. The Head wouldn't understand."

"We'll frustrate their giddy knavish tricks, and confound their politics!" grinned Nugent. "You can rely on us, Toddy."

Peter Todd looked greatly relieved.

"Then it will be all plane sailing," he said. "You can rely on Study No. 7 to keep the giddy flag flying, if we get fair play."

The juniors were at tea when the ponies arrived.

Dr. Locke, who took a kindly interest in the flower show, and intended to be present at the pony races, had willingly given permission for the animals to be stabled at Greyfriars for the night.

A crowd of juniors met them, and followed them to their new quarters, and the four intended competitors mounted them and rode them round the yard, amid cheers.

Billy Bunter succeeded in sticking upon his steed, and had evidently profited very much by the practice. Tom Dutton was still limping a little, but he was in great form otherwise, and Bob Cherry slapped him on the back when he dismounted.

"Good for you!" he exclaimed. "You've got a jolly good chance, anyway."

Dutton shook his head.

"That's where you're wrong," he remarked.

Bob stared.

"Don't you think you've got a chance?" he demanded.

"Certainly not. No good making him prance. It will be a stiff race, I can tell you, and I'm going to ride to win."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Tom Dutton suspiciously.

"I didn't say prance, fathead. I said chance," shrieked Bob.

"Dance! What rot. It's not a circus performance," said Dutton disdainfully. "Lot you know about riding, Bob Cherry."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Bob. "Rescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll do, Tommy," said Peter Todd, as he led his friend away. "If I don't pull it off, you will, and the Highcliffe cads will get the kybosh."

"Bosh! I should say so. He was suggesting that I should make him prance and dance," said Dutton. "Fancy that—in a race, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shouldn't wonder if Dutton gets second prize," remarked Billy Bunter thoughtfully. "That little black pony suits me a treat, and I shall romp home."

"Romp off, more likely," grinned Todd.

When the Remove went up to the dormitory that night there were five of them who did not go to sleep. Harry Wharton & Co. had not forgotten their pledge. All trouble between the Famous Five and Study No. 7 was at an end now—for the present. The rival Co.'s were pulling together with the greatest cordiality.

Wingate of the Sixth saw lights out, and did not observe that five of the juniors were only half-undressed. When the light was out, and the captain of Greyfriars was gone, Harry Wharton sat up in bed, the better to keep awake.

"No good getting out before eleven," he remarked. "If the prefects spotted us, we should be bundled in again."

"The bundleness would be terrific."

"Call me at eleven, will you?" yawned Bob Cherry. "I might nod off."

"Right-ho!"

All was silent in the Remove dormitory when eleven rang out from the clock-tower. Harry Wharton was awake, though he had had to struggle hard with drowsiness. As the strokes

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

of eleven died away, he stepped out of bed, and dabbed his face with a wet sponge to drive away his drowsiness.

"Bob!" he whispered.

Snore!

"Frank!"

Snore!

Wharton grinned, and squeezed the wet sponge over Bob Cherry's face. Bob came out of the land of dreams with a jump.

"Gerrooh! Wharrer marrer? 'Taint rising-bell."

"It's eleven."

Bob yawned portentously.

"Oh, rotten! I'm sleepy."

"Bargain's a bargain, Bob. Jump up."

And Bob Cherry grunted again, and rolled out of bed. Nugent, and Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were awakened by the same efficacious means, and the Famous Five donned their outer garments.

"Quiet!" murmured Wharton. "If Loder spotted us now, all the fat would be in the fire. We can drop out of the box-room window."

"Right you are!"

Taking their boots in their hands, the five juniors left the dormitory silently, and stole along the passageway. In the box-room they put on their boots, and one by one dropped from the window to the out-house below, and thence to the ground.

The Close was very dark and silent. A light gleamed from the window of the Head's study; and another from the window of Loder, the prefect.

The juniors stole cautiously round the house, and reached the stables. The coachman slept in the same building, but his window was dark, and he was evidently in the arms of Murphy, as Hurree Singh put it—probably meaning Morpheus.

There was a padlock on the stable door, and the juniors did not seek to enter it. It was a warm summer's night, and, as Wharton observed, they would keep awake better in the yard. They sat down on a bench by the wall in the darkest corner, where they could keep a watch on the stable door and window. But Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull leaned back against the wall, and were soon asleep again. But the other three remained wide awake.

They did not talk. If Ponsonby & Co. came, they did not want to give the alarm. They wanted to catch the raiders in the act, and make them sorry they had come.

Midnight tolled out from the clock tower.

The last light in the windows of Greyfriars had been extinguished now; all within the great building slept.

In the stable-yard, Nugent had nodded off. But Wharton's eyes were wide open, and the dark, gleaming eyes of Hurree Jamset Singh never closed.

Faintly from the stable came the sounds of horses moving in their stalls. The half-hour chimed out.

As the chime died away into silence, Wharton held out his hand.

"Listen!" he whispered.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh nodded, his eyes glittering in the gloom. His keen ears had caught the slight sound too.

It was a stealthy footstep upon the stones of the yard.

In the starlight that fell clearly in the yard, four dusky forms appeared in sight, stealing towards the stable.

Peering cautiously round as they advanced, the four intruders reached the stable door, and there they halted, and there was a sound of faint whispering.

Peter Todd's uneasiness had been well founded. Even in the dim light of the stars, the Greyfriars juniors could recognise the four fellows from Highcliffe. It was Ponsonby and Co.'s last attempt at foul play; and but for the watch kept by the Greyfriars fellows it would have succeeded.

With a light touch, Wharton awoke Nugent and Bull and Bob Cherry. The five Removees arose to their feet, without a sound, their eyes fixed upon the whispering group at the stable door.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Dished!

"IT'S locked!"

Gadsby whispered the words softly; but in the deep silence, they were plainly heard by the hidden watchers in the dusky corner of the yard.

"What did you expect?" muttered Ponsonby. "I'm ready for that."

"It's a padlock."

"I'll have it open in a jiffey."

"And—and you've got the stuff ready?"

"Of course I have. Quiet! I believe the coachman sleeps over the stable here—can't be too careful."

"Oh, we're safe enough."

"Absolutely!"

Click!
The sharp sound rang for an instant through the stable-yard. Vavasour uttered a suppressed exclamation.

"Phew! That's a row."
"It's done now," said Ponsonby coolly. "That was the lock. Help me with the door; it's heavy. Not a sound, mind."

The Highcliffians pushed the door slowly open. Then, with cautious footsteps, they disappeared into the stable.

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "That's burglary. Those young scoundrels could be locked up for that—breaking locks at night."

"Time we jumped on them," whispered Johnny Bull. "We don't want to give them a chance with the gee-gees."

Wharton nodded. "Follow me—but quiet. We don't want to wake the coachman, if we can help it."

The juniors stole softly across the yard to the open door of the stable. They heard Ponsonby's whispered voice as they approached.

"Wait a minute, till my eyes get used to this beastly dark. We can't strike a light here; the horses might get scared and make a row."

"Mind they don't kick out, Pon," whispered Vavasour nervously.

"Rats! They won't kick. I know how to handle them. I've only got to get this stuff into their mouths; they'll swallow it easily enough. Banks told me all about it. It's a sure thing."

"And—can't it be found out?"
"No fear! The geees will break down in the race, that's all. They'll all be all right the next day, and it would puzzle a vet. to tell what had been the matter with them. It's as safe as houses."

"There'll be a surprise for the Greyfriars kids to-morrow afternoon," murmured Gadsby, with a chuckle.

"There'll be a surprise for you cads to-night," said a cool voice.

The four young rascals simply jumped as the unexpected voice fell upon their ears. With startled exclamations they swung round.

Five juniors stood in the open doorway. Escape was cut off.

Ponsonby clenched his hands hard. "Oh!" he muttered. "They've been keeping watch! Oh!"

"So we've caught you!" said Harry Wharton.

"Hang you!"
"Better not make a row," grinned Bob Cherry, as Ponsonby's voice came loudly through the stable. "If the coachman wakes up, you'll be handed over to the police."

The Highcliffians stood with white, scared faces. They knew the risk they had run, and what its consequences might be if the Greyfriars juniors chose.

"I—I say," muttered Ponsonby, the first of the raiders to recover his presence of mind. "I say, we—we came to look at the horses, that's all!"

"That's all, is it?" asked Wharton.

"Ye-e-es. Yes, that's all. You—you see, we wanted to see what kind of geegees you'd been able to get," Ponsonby explained, gaining confidence as he proceeded. "You don't think we were going to steal the horses, do you?"

"No, we don't think that," said Harry quietly.

"That's all right, then," said Ponsonby, relieved. "Of course, we—we shouldn't really have come without asking permission; but we're rather anxious about the race, you know, and we wanted to see what your mounts were like."

"And that's all?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes, that's all. Of course. What more could there be?" muttered Ponsonby.

"That's all—absolutely!" quavered Vavasour.

"Go on!" said Bob Cherry. "Ananias was nothing to this, and Baron Munchausen was a regular Georgie Washington in comparison. Pile in, and roll out a few more."

"I—I assure you you're mistaken—absolutely!" stammered Ponsonby.

"That's all we came for, honour bright!" said Monson.

"Oh, shut up!" said Wharton, in disgust. "You came here to dope the ponies, and we know it. That's why we've been keeping watch—Todd guessed you'd do it."

Ponsonby ground his teeth.

"I—I assure you you're mistaken absolutely!" stammered Vavasour.

"We've heard every word you've been saying," said Wharton quietly.

"Oh!"

"You've got the stuff with you," continued the captain of the Remove. "Come out here into the yard and put it down."

The Highcliffians hesitated. But there was no help for it, and they came out of the stable. The starlight gleamed upon their pale faces and scared eyes.

"Put the stuff down!" said Harry menacingly.

Ponsonby muttered something, and drew a bag from his pocket. Wharton took it and opened it, and several little soft balls were disclosed to view.

The Greyfriars junior ground them under his heel upon the stones.

"Is that all you've got about you?" he asked.

"Yes," said Ponsonby sullenly.

"Good! I won't tell you what I think of you!" said Harry, with a scorn in his voice that brought a flush to Ponsonby's pale face. "You were trying to get the race by foul play, and you've been dished. It would serve you right if we rang up the police-station and had you taken into charge for house-breaking."

"You—you won't do that!" panted Vavasour. "I—I say, we should be sacked from Highcliffe, you know. It—it would be ruin for all of us!"

"Just what you deserve, you rotten worm!" said Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, let us off!" groaned Vavasour. "I'll give you my word not to try anything of the kind again—on my honour."

"On your what?" asked Wharton. "Don't be funny."

"Will you let us go?" said Ponsonby savagely. "It won't do any good to you to be found out of your dormitory at midnight if you make a row!"

"That's all right—we could explain that we were watching for thieves, and produce you as evidence," said Nugent.

"I—I say, let us go!" mumbled Vavasour. "I'll tell you what; I'll agree to stand out of the race to-morrow if you like. I—I'll stand you a quid each!"

"Shut up, you fool!" muttered Ponsonby.

Vavasour turned on him savagely and passionately.

"You got us into this, you idiot!" he exclaimed. "It was your idea from the first—I should never have thought of it. You brought us here."

"Lot of good saying that now, isn't it?" snarled Ponsonby.

"Shut up—you make me ill."

"We're not going to hand you over to the police," said Wharton quietly. "You deserve it, but we don't want a scandal. You're going to be ducked in the horse-trough, and then you can clear."

"You won't duck me!" said Ponsonby, setting his teeth.

"Quite right—we won't—you'll duck yourselves," said Wharton. "Each of you will jump right into the horse-trough there, in turn—or else we shall collar you and keep you prisoners till morning. I've a jolly good mind to do it anyway. But we'll give you your choice—ducking or the police-station."

The Highcliffe fellows exchanged dismayed glances. There was no help for them—they knew that. Arrest and disgrace, flogging and expulsion from school—that was in the power of the Greyfriars fellows to give them as punishment—and they deserved it fully. And as they looked at Harry Wharton's face they read there iron determination. He had no mercy to waste upon the treacherous rascals.

Ponsonby measured the Removites with his eye, calculating the chances of a rush. But he knew he could not depend upon Vavasour or Monson, if upon Gadsby, to back him up. And the Removites were five to four. And at any disturbance the coachman and the porter would be awakened. The rascals were fairly caught in the trap.

"Well?" said Wharton. "We're not going to wait here all night. Are you going to have the ducking or the police-station? We're not going to soil our hands on you—you'll jump into that trough in turn, and I'll give you one minute to decide."

"I—I say—" stammered Vavasour feebly.

"Shut up! I don't want to talk to you," said Wharton.

"You're not fit for a decent chap to talk to. Take your choice—and buck up."

"You've got us in your power now!" muttered Ponsonby.

"You put yourselves there, you mean. You know very well that if we were in your place, you wouldn't let us off so lightly!"

Ponsonby knew that well enough; indeed, he was wondering inwardly that Wharton did not make the most of his advantage.

"I don't mind the ducking," faltered Vavasour. "I—I'll do it if you like."

"You can take your choice about it!" said Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I don't care twopence either way. But time's up now—yes or no?"

"Yes!" gasped Vavasour.

"The yesfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree James; Ram Singh, with a chuckle.

Vavasour stumbled towards the horse-trough. It was a large trough, and nearly full of water. He hesitated as he glanced at the water, and looked down at his clothes—but it was either that or worse—and he made an effort.

Splash!
"Groogh!"

He swamped into the water, and Bob Cherry cheerfully seized a stable-broom, and pushed him well under. He scrambled out drenched and dripping.

"You can buzz off," said Bob. "Your turn next, Ponsonby."

Ponsonby, with black fury in his face, approached the trough. There was no help for it—and, after giving Bob an almost murderous glance, he tumbled in. The heavy broom drove him under, and he gasped and spluttered, and rolled out again.

"Monson next!"

Monson rolled and wallowed in the trough. Then came Gadsby's turn, and he splashed in. Four drenched, dripping, and infuriated juniors stood in the midst of a pool of water when the punishment was over.

"Now clear off!" said Harry Wharton. "Not a word—clear!"

And the drenched rascals stumbled away, grinding their teeth. They disappeared into the darkness, followed by a chuckle from the Removites.

"I fancy they won't come here again in a hurry," grinned Bob Cherry.

"It's jolly lucky Todd spotted their game, and we kept watch," said Wharton soberly. "It would have been all up with the race to-morrow if they had got that stuff into the ponies' mouths. The utter rotters! I think we'd better stay here for a bit, in case Ponsonby should come back—we can't afford to run risks."

Wharton closed the stable door, and fastened the padlock again as well as he was able. Then the juniors resumed their seats upon the bench. But the Highcliffians did not reappear. The Famous Five remained till the first grey streaks of dawn appeared in the sky; and then, as all danger was over, they made their way back to their dormitory. Ponsonby & Co. had played their last card, and they had lost, and the race would be run on fair terms—and—from the Greyfriars point of view, at least—there wasn't much doubt about what the result would be.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Dutton's Triumph.

THERE were five very sleepy juniors in the Remove dormitory when the rising-bell clanged out in the morning.

The Famous Five rubbed their eyes sleepily as they sat up.

"M-m-my word!" mumbled Bob Cherry. "There are some silly asses who have a night out for pleasure. Blessed if I see where the pleasure comes in!"

"The drowsfulness of my esteemed self is terrific!" sighed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Too bad!" said Peter Todd sympathetically. "But you didn't have your watch for nothing?"

Peter had been fast asleep when the chums of the Remove returned to the dormitory, and they had not awakened him. Wharton explained what had happened in the stable. Peter gave an expressive whistle.

"Jolly lucky you kept watch!" he remarked. "Of all the rotters, I think those fellows take the cake. But they'll get it in the neck this afternoon!"

And with that the Co. consoled themselves for their drowsiness at morning lessons, which earned them fifty lines apiece from Mr. Capper.

Glad enough were the Remove when morning lessons were over. Although only four of them had entered for the race, the whole Form intended to be present—and, in fact, more than half Greyfriars was going to the flower show.

"So you kids are really entering—eh?" said Coker, of the Fifth, greeting the Funny Four as they came out after dinner. "It's like your cheek. But I hope some of you will get second prize. You've just a bare chance of that, you know."

"Oh, yes, we're going to have second prize!" said Peter Todd cheerfully. "I'm looking forward to that myself. Dutton's going to have the first."

"Oh, really, Todd!" said Billy Bunter.

"And Bunter will put in the comic relief," said Bob Cherry.

"You wait till you see me riding," said Billy Bunter. "It isn't my way to brag—like some fellows—but I will say that what I don't know about riding would—"

"Fill volumes!" suggested Bob.

"No; I wasn't going to say that. It would—"

"Fill whole libraries, you mean."

"No!" yelled Bunter. "What I don't know about riding

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,

Every Wednesday.

would not be worth learning. That's what I was going to say, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Quite a crowd gathered round to see the four juniors lead out their steeds. Coker's mount was at the stables in the village, and he started off quite early with Potter and Greene. Coker walked with his nose very high in the air and an expression of great satisfaction upon his face. He confided to his companions that, after all, it was just as well that the Remove kids were in the race, as their defeat would have the effect of putting them in their places. Whereat Potter winked at Greene behind Coker's shoulder, and Greene coughed violently.

While Todd & Co. were taking their ponies down to Friar-dale Harry Wharton and his friends and Hazeldene called at Cliff House for Marjorie Hazeldene and Miss Clara. The show was in full swing when they arrived.

Billy Bunter rolled up with an air of great importance, and saluted Marjorie and Clara with great emprosement.

"Jolly glad you've come!" he remarked. "You're going to see some jolly good riding. You've never seen me ride, have you? It will be a treat—though I say it. There's no false modesty about me, you know."

"No; I've noticed that," said Miss Clara, with a nod.

"When a fellow can do a thing really well, it's mere rot to pretend he can't!" said Bunter. "They're wasting time over those silly flowers now—the races begin at four. I suppose you're going to see me off?"

"Yes, I suppose we shall see you off," assented Miss Clara. "I hope you will be able to get on again, too."

"I don't mean that," said Bunter. "I mean you'll see me start. Of course I sha'n't fall off. By the way, the first prize is a money prize, you know. I'm going to stand a feed out of it. I hope you'll come."

Marjorie smiled.

"Nothing like issuing your invitations in time," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here come the Highcliffe cads," growled Johnny Bull. "They look rather seedy after their night out."

Ponsonby & Co. passed the Greyfriars fellows with their noses in the air. The four Highcliffians certainly looked none the better for their experience of the previous night. Vavasour was looking quite yellow, and Monson was sneezing. None of the four looked fit, but their swagger had not departed.

"Did you get home all right, Ponsonby?" asked Bob Cherry sympathetically.

Ponsonby scowled.

"I don't want to talk to you!" he growled.

"Wet out last night, wasn't it?" grinned Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Highcliffians stalked away without replying.

"Those rotters ought to be barred out of the race," said Billy Bunter. "They would be if old Lambe knew what they'd been doing. But old Lambe is a duffer—"

"Shush, you ass!" said Bob Cherry, as Mr. Lambe bore down upon the group with his usual genial smile.

"Oh, really, Cherry, I was only saying that old Lambe— Yaroooh! Yow! Keep your hoof off my foot, Bull, you silly chump!"

"I am glad to see you, my deah young friends!" said Mr. Lambe. "Quite a large attendance—ah—we shall have a greatah success this yah, I think, than last yah—and last yah it was bettah than the yah before. Yaas, I really think this will be a record yah for our flowah show."

And Mr. Lambe rolled on.

The Greyfriars juniors and the Cliff House girls walked round the show while waiting for the important event of the day. Bob Cherry explained how his Glaw de Deejong would have given the other exhibits the kybosh if he had had time to grow it for the show—which, unfortunately, had not been the case.

There was a large refreshment-tent in the grounds, and Billy Bunter would willingly have spent his time there while waiting for the races to start, but Peter Todd collared him as he was making for it.

"No, you don't!" said Peter grimly. "Your mount will have weight enough to carry without tarts and doughnuts packed inside your waistcoat. You won't make much of a show, anyway, but you're going to do your best. Not a tart till after the race."

"Oh, really, Todd—"

"You'll keep with me," said Peter, linking his arm affectionately in Bunter's. "If you try to get away I shall pinch you—thus!"

"Ow!"

"Or thus!"

"Yaroooh!"

"So you'd better stay with me quietly."

And Bunter did.

When four o'clock came round the excitement was great. Half Friardale and the neighbourhood and half Greyfriars and Highcliffe crowded round to see the races. There were quite a number of entries for the principal race, and every competitor had his friends there to cheer him.

Disrespectful chuckles greeted the appearance of Billy Bunter upon his pony. The fat junior frowned majestically.

"Wait a bit, you silly asses!" he murmured. "I'll show you something. Don't biff into me, Coker, you ass!"

"Don't you biff into me!" roared Coker. "You're frightening my geegee with your face! Look the other way!"

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"Gerrup!" said Coker to his steed. "Gee-up! This way, you beast— Oh, I—I say! Stop him! Oh! Ah, hah!"

Coker's steed apparently misunderstood, or else there was something deficient in Coker's management of him, for, as the signal was given, the animal persisted in getting off in the wrong direction.

"Hold him in, Coker!" roared the Greyfriars juniors. "Hold on to his ears! Back-pedal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The—the beast!" gasped Coker. "Come round, you brute! Oh, my hat! Gee-up! Come round!—Yahoh!"

There was a yell of laughter as Coker's steed ran away with him, and Coker, of the Fifth, disappeared in the distance.

But the crowd had no eyes for Coker after the first few moments. The competitors were off—two of them very much "off," and rolling on the grass. Those two were Vavasour and Monson, of Highcliffe, and they picked themselves up and limped away with black scowls, out of the race at the beginning.

Billy Bunter was having considerable difficulty with his "gee" too. The black pony declined to proceed for some reason best known to himself, and several of the crowd yelled at him or rapped him on the flanks to get him to go. And when he went he took the bit in his teeth, and went at a rate that made Bunter's head swim.

"Oh, dear!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "Oh, crumbs! I—I wish I hadn't— Ow! You beast, you!"

Round the course they swept, Ponsonby, of Highcliffe, leading for the moment. Gadsby had tailed off hopelessly, and he snorted and rode off, scowling. But Ponsonby was sticking to it gamely, and looked as if he had a chance.

But not for long. Peter Todd passed him, and then Alonzo. Even Billy Bunter passed him at last, though that was not due to Bunter's efforts, as all his efforts were directed solely to sticking on the back of the careering pony.

Tom Dutton was riding well, and the Greyfriars fellows cheered him loudly. Dutton did not hear their cheering, as a matter of fact. He passed Ponsonby, skilfully eluding an attempt of the Highcliffe fellow to block his course. Ponsonby fell behind, still riding hard, but evidently out of the finish.

"Go it, Greyfriars!" roared Bob Cherry, waving his cap excitedly. "There goes Highcliffe—all out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Peter leads! Pile in, Peter!"

"Dutton's passing him! Go it, Dutton!"

"He can't hear you, but he's going it!" grinned Nugent.

"My hat! I believe Dutton will pull it off! Hurrah! No; Alonzo's passing him!"

"Bravo, Lonzy!"

"If only Uncle Benjamin could see him now!" sighed Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Last lap," chuckled Bob Cherry, "and Peter's leading! Highcliffe are nowhere! Ponsonby will be last man in this innings!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The excitement was tremendous now. Peter and Alonzo and Dutton were easily leading, and Billy Bunter was labouring behind, and after him came Ponsonby and another competitor.

Then came Dutton, shooting ahead—riding with grim determination—and there was a roar as they swept up to the finish.

"Dutton! Dutton! Hurray!"

Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, had finished a length and a half ahead—and after him came Peter Todd, and Alonzo was third.

There was a roar of cheering.

Bob Cherry slapped Dutton on the back as he rolled off his pony gasping.

"Bravo! Ripping—ripping!"

"Rats!" gasped Dutton. "Who was tripping?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby was fourth, and Billy Bunter lumbered in last, his face crimson with exertion and heart, and his spectacles slipping down his fat little nose.

"I say, you fellows," he gasped, "I claim a fresh start. I didn't get off, you know—I claim a false start!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"You can claim a false tart, or a jam tart, or any tart you like," grinned Nugent. "You've done wonderfully, Billy. You didn't fall off once."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Tom Dutton was surrounded by congratulating admirers. He did not hear what they said to him, but he smiled and nodded cheerfully, and accepted the prize from the fat hands of Mr. Lambe, and was led off in triumph by Study No. 7.

The Highcliffe fellows had already departed as Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh put it, they had gone to hide their diminished heads in a back seat.

The triumph of the Greyfriars chums was complete. First second, and third had been Greyfriars fellows, and they could not have asked for more than that.

And the Famous Five were as pleased as Peter Todd & Co. It was a triumph for Study No. 7; but it was a triumph for the Remove, too, and that was all Harry Wharton & Co. cared about.

As the crowd were clearing off, Coker came in sight again, with his charger under control at last. A yell of laughter greeted the panting, red-faced hero of the Fifth.

"It's all right," gasped Coker. "I'm ready now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have they started?" demanded Coker.

The juniors shrieked.

"They've started and finished!" gasped Wharton. "The race has been over a quarter of an hour, you duffer!"

"Oh, my Aunt Judy!" said Coker.

"Pity you didn't get off," chuckled Bob Cherry. "You'd have saved Bunter from coming in last."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Coker departed disconsolate. He confided to Potter and Greene of the Fifth that he had practically won the race, for if he had ridden in it he would undoubtedly have beaten all the other competitors hollow. Whereat Potter and Greene winked into space, and told Coker they were sure of it.

Tom Dutton was the hero of the hour at Greyfriars that day.

Mr. Lambe had congratulated him—and Dr. Locke congratulated him, and Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, shook hands with him and congratulated him.

Bob Cherry roared into his ear that he was as pleased as if his Glaw de Decjong had taken the first prize in the flower-show. Billy Bunter suggested that the prize should be handed over to him, to be repaid out of the postal-order he was expecting that very evening. But Dutton seemed deafier than ever when Billy Bunter made that suggestion, and it was not acted upon.

There was a great celebration in Study No. 7.

Tom Dutton was doing the honours—and the Famous Five came to the feed, and Marjorie and Clara and Hazeldene, and as many of the Remove as could crowd into the study.

Even the great Coker came.

And the great Coker called for a speech, and the suggestion was cheered at once, much to the surprise of Dutton.

"Go it!" said Peter Todd, pushing his deaf chum up from his chair.

"But what do you want me to screech for?" demanded Dutton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Speech!" roared Peter Todd.

"Eh?"

"Speech! Speech! Speech!"

"Oh, speech!" said Tom Dutton. "I don't mind making a speech, but I'm not going to screech, for Coker or anybody else. Ladies and gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, it was a jolly good race, and the best man won—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

And Dutton sat down again.

"Is that all?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Eh?"

"Is that all the speech?" shrieked Bob.

"Sorry—we haven't any peaches—but there's a pineapple—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Dutton was not troubled any further.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Monday, entitled, "Self-Denial Week at Greyfriars," by Frank Richards, and your Editor advises you to make a point of ordering a copy of next week's MAGNET in advance.)

YOU CAN START TO-DAY!

MYSTERIA

— By **SIDNEY DREW.** —**READ THIS FIRST.**

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga the Esquimo, and Prout & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction, there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk which he has picked up in an East-end curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins, and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island inhabited by strange monsters, which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria" in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, which slips out of its secret cave on its mysterious new quest. Ferrers Lord makes for an uncharted island, which he intends to use as his headquarters, and, arrived there, he lands with a party to make the acquaintance of the inhabitants, leaving Prout in charge of the launch. Prout is gazing aimlessly to the north-west when suddenly through the mist he sees, within a league of him, a mysterious island. There are trees upon it—skeleton, leafless trees—but no green verdure or rich browns. It is a spectral land—a land that might well be peopled by lost souls and demons. A sensation of repulsion and horror creeps over the sturdy sailor, but a power that he could not master fastens his eyes upon the nightmare vision. He cannot look away. Like a curtain the mist falls, and the hideous thing is gone.

(Now go on with the story.)

Prout Effects a Capture and a Rescue.

Slowly Prout pinched his leg, and then he bit his little finger, to make sure that he was not asleep. There was perspiration on his forehead. The horizon was clearly marked once more, and not a vestige of the mist remained.

"I've been dreamin'!" muttered Tom Prout shakily. "I must have been dreamin'! By hokey, that's a knock-out—a reg'lar floorer!"

He was still breathing unsteadily. All at once he gave his leg a mighty slap.

"I've got it!" he roared. "It's the floatin' island the chief is lookin' for. A thousand pounds to a sea-biscuit that's it, by hokey! But what a 'orrid place! Scuttle me, I wouldn't care to set foot on that if it keeps on divin' in like a chased duck! Not me, thanks! Where'll it bob up next?"

For a good hour Prout smoked and watched, expecting every moment to see the strange island reappear. Nothing more exciting than a flight of flying-fish rewarded his vigil. The tide turned, and the breeze grew stronger. And then, when the steersman was beginning to feel sleepy, a hoarse voice behind him said:

"Hallo, Jimson!"

If Prout had possessed any hair, it would have jumped up on end and flung his cap off. He rolled off his seat backwards, and, dragging out his revolver, thrust it between his legs.

"Jimson's got a knife in him!" growled the voice. "I did it. Ho, ho, ho! Poor old Jimson!"

Prout's skin grew prickly all over. There was a flapping of wings, and a huge, red-crested cockatoo alighted on the rail of the launch and proceeded to scratch its ear.

"By hokey," said Prout faintly, "this must be my bloomin' birthday. Hallo, ostrich, where did you blow from?"

"Go and blow bubbles!" croaked the bird, erecting its fine crest. "How's your poor feet, Tommy?"

"By hokey, the red-headed warmint knows my name," panted the astounded steersman. "Who told you my name was Tommy?"

"Jimson!" croaked the uncanny visitor.

And then, standing on one leg, it gave a splendid imita-

THE GEM LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

tion of a boatswain's whistle, and swore to keelhaul any lubbers found drinking the skipper's rum. After that, in a most husky voice, it informed Prout that he was a pork-faced longshoreman, and threatened to do for him with a marlinspike.

Prout listened, and grinned with delight. The bird, of course, had either escaped from a tramp steamer, or more probably, from some sailing vessel. The steersman's one idea was to capture it. In addition to being a splendid cockatoo, it was a fine talker.

"By hokey," remarked Prout, "you're too good to lose. Mister Dickeybird, come 'ere and kiss me!"

"Pull up your socks, pull up your socks, pull up your socks, and shout hooray!" screamed the bird, flapping its wings. "Who's your hatter?"

The launch was always kept fully stocked with provisions, water, and ammunition, to meet any emergency. Prout opened a locker, and found a tin of sweet biscuits. The cockatoo seemed perfectly tame, but it had had a taste of liberty, and, doubtless, there was ample food for it on the island. It sidled up and down the rail, barking like a dog.

Knowing that such a pet would be welcomed by the crew with howls of pleasure, Tom was most eager to secure it.

"Come, Polly!" he said, tempting it with a biscuit.

"Pretty Poll! Good old Poll!"

"Go and dye your whiskers!" said the bird disdainfully.

"I'm Bill Bailey! Who killed Jimson? Poor old Jimson! Kwa-a-a-k!"

"Come and have a bit of sugar!" pleaded Prout.

"Rats, you boulder!" snapped the cockatoo. "Merrily round the capstan, yo-heave-ho! Who says rum? Hard a-port, you ham-faced lubbers! Kwa-a-a-k! Cheer-o, Tommy! Pull up your socks, pull up your socks, pull up your socks!"

Prout edged cautiously nearer, but the wily cockatoo retreated just as cautiously. Three times in succession the steersman followed it round the launch. He paused to consider when he had driven it into the bows. The bird was too wily for him.

"I'd give a month's pay to have hold of you by the neck, I would!" growled the steersman. "I'd—I'd—will it?"

He fixed his anxious eyes on a huge green wave that was rolling down upon them. It shouldered up high enough to swamp a small steamer. Prout grinned, and held out his hands like a wicket-keeper watching a lightning bowler.

"Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man," chirped the unconscious cockatoo. "Jimson's cold and wet. Ha, ha, ha, ha-a-a! Poor Jimson! Cold and wet—cold and—"

Swish! The big wave broke a yard from the launch, and a squeaking, squealing ball of soaked feathers shot into the steersman's hands.

"Ow! Leggo, you warmint!" yelled the steersman. "That's my thumb, and I want it. Jimson ain't the only one as is cold and wet, I reckon. I thought that would wash you aboard, Sunny Jim. 'Ow do you like the taste of salt water? You can get under 'atches and keep quiet."

Chuckling gleefully, he placed the half-drowned bird in the locker. Presently a little, muffled voice that convulsed the steersman, remarked plaintively:

"Strike a match, somebody. Ain't it 'orrid dark? Good-night!"

"By hokey, I've struck a parrot worth a 'undred quid!" thought Prout. "He can talk like a white man. I'd best not let the beggar catch cold."

Until its feathers were dry there was not the remotest risk of the bird escaping. To make perfectly sure of his prize, Prout tied one of its legs to the thwart; wiped it as well as he could, and left breeze and sunshine to do the rest. During these operations the cockatoo removed a considerable amount of skin from his fingers, and told him repeatedly that he was an ugly lubber who ought to be shot. Once more Prout lighted his pipe and meditated. Little by little, his head sank lower. The pipe slipped from his mouth, and a soft and soothing melody came from the steersman's nose.

Rocked in the cradle of the deep. Prout was slumbering.

"Sail ho! Sail ho! Starboard your helm, Jimson!" The shout awoke the burly steersman. Half awake and half asleep, he tried to manipulate an imaginary wheel. A second later he was dragging at the cable like a man possessed. Five great canoes, each propelled by a dozen paddles, were rushing down upon him, and the cockatoo had given the warning!

He was wide awake now. He jerked a lifebuoy clear, and opened his knife with his teeth. There was no time to haul up the anchor, but there was time to save it and the cable. He slashed through the rope, tied the buoy to it, and flung the buoy overboard. Then he rushed aft. The screw revolved at his touch, the vessel sprang forward. Prout ducked as a shower of spears and clubs whizzed over him. He heard a wolfish yell of baffled rage.

"Pull up your socks! Pull up your socks! Pull up your socks! Hooray!" screamed the cockatoo.

Prout looked over his shoulder and grinned. Paddles were as useless as match-sticks against the screw of the launch. The canoes seemed to be standing still, in spite of the frantic efforts of the savages who manned them.

"By hokey!" said Tom, addressing the bird. "You're worth tons of sugar, messmate. Blest if you ain't worth a solid gold cage. Ha, ha, ha! Let's go back and make 'em wild! We're hot stuff, ain't we? Ease off a bit, and we'll look at 'em."

It was like a donkey attempting to chase a greyhound. The canoes swept round and made for the bay. At that moment a figure appeared on the edge of the cliff. A glance told Prout that it was Barry O'Rooney.

"Pull up your socks! Pull up your socks! Pull up your socks, Jimson!" screamed the bird.

Prout fired his revolver into the air, and waved his cap. To his relief, he saw the Irishman answer the signal. Instead of scrambling down the goat-path, Barry started to run along the edge of the cliff. A puff of smoke burst from the prow of the nearest canoe. A report followed. Barry fell forward convulsively, and Prout saw no more of him.

"Now it's my turn, you painted fiends!" he hissed. "I'll show you what one white man can do!"

He caught the tiller between his legs, and stood erect. He could steer that way as well as any other, and his hands were free. He levelled his rifle, but before he could fire, a man in the first canoe, the very man at which he was aiming, dropped backwards. Cr-ack! sounded a faint report. Then all five canoes were scuttling seawards, and four men appeared on the cliffs.

"Where's Barry?" groaned Prout, for he loved the merry Irishman. "If they've downed him, I'll— Five of 'em! Hurrah!"

Barry had merely stumbled when the old gas-pipe gun had been fired at him. Greatly relieved, Prout steered the launch into the bay. They were waiting for him.

"Come along, old slowcoach!" said Ching-Lung. "We thought you were dead."

"Jimson's dead," said a sepulchral voice. "Poor old Tommy!"

This graveyard remark concentrated the attention of everyone upon the bedraggled cockatoo. He looked a sad and weary bird. Prout explained all about it.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"Blown off a vessel, I expect," said Thurston. "He's a beauty."

"Home!" said Ferrers Lord.

With a strong tide behind her the launch raced along merrily. Within an hour she was lying beside the Lord of the Deep. Hal Honour was pacing the deck, and Maddock raised a cheer. The silent engineer lifted his eyebrows inquiringly.

"Nothing," said the millionaire. "The natives have heard rumours of the island, but that is all."

"They have not seen it?"

"I think they have, Honour, but they are dumb on the point. Their old chief looked scared when I mentioned the matter. Some of them are coming aboard to-morrow. Probably we shall learn more then."

Ching-Lung Gets Wet—Mysteria Once Again.

Prout's cockatoo immediately became the centre of attraction. The carpenter promised to build a cage at once. Huge was the delight when, in return for this kindness, the bird referred to Joe as a "wall-eyed weevil."

"What are you going to call him, Tommy?" asked Maddock. "He wants a name of some sort, souse me! Have you got a name—eh, red-top?"

"I'm Jimson! I'm Jimson!" shouted the bird. "Hallo, Tommy! How's your poor feet?"

And as James Jimson the cockatoo was written down in the ship's books, rated as an able seaman, and, as such, entitled to man's privileges, including a kit, free board and lodging, certain allowances of rum and tobacco, with pension to follow for good conduct and faithful service.

"All hands may go ashore!" thundered Prout's mighty voice.

"Hooray!" came the lusty response; and there was a rush for the launch.

"To-morrow mornin', by hokey," thundered Prout, "and not afore!"

The steersman, seeing thirty furious men bearing down on him under full sail, left the neighbourhood without delay.

"I wouldn't a-thought it on him!" said Maddock. "There's a mean, low, dirty trick for any sea-cook to play on his pals! Souse me, I'd like to grab 'im by the whiskers and bang his 'ead agin that binnacle!"

Screams of laughter from the stern sent the disappointed men to find out what was happening. Gan-Waga, with a small mast and sail attached to his corpulent waist, was floating like a cork on the water. He was towing Ching-Lung. His Highness, cleverly balanced in a foot-bath, fanned himself gracefully, and blew kisses to the grinning men. To warn any traffic of their terrible danger of being run down and sunk, Ching-Lung used a motor-horn.

"Aho! Phwat vissil is that?" shouted Barry.

"The Fried Eel and Taters!" cried Ching-Lung.

"And phwat's your cargo, may Oi ax?"

"Strait-waistcoats and padded cells for dotty Irishmen!" replied his Highness of Kwai-Hal.

Gan-Waga, with a big cigar in his mouth, emitted a cloud of smoke. The motor-horn gave a hoarse "honk-honk," and, catching the breeze, the strange craft began to move at the terrific pace of a knot an hour.

"Behold that magnificent craft, the Fried Eel and Taters, as she appeared when winning the America Cup last September," said the prince. "Sir Thomas said he never saw anything like it, and I believe him. Gentlemen, we won that cup in a canter, running on three legs. We could have done it on one leg—fact. Ain't it easy? Now we're going to tack. Tack, you lubber! Why don't you tack?"

"Nots gotted a hammers to knock de tack in wid, Chingy," gurgled the Eskimo. "I getting bad 'nough thirsty."

"Have a drink, then!" said Ching-Lung.

Gan-Waga opened his capacious mouth, and Ching-Lung squirted a stream of lemonade into it from a syphon, extinguishing the cigar and almost choking Gan. As the prince had to aim over the sail, the clever shot was loudly applauded.

"Och! Splindid—splindid indade!" cried Barry. "Oi cudn't have done ut much better meself. Ut was a soine— Spa-hoo! Whoosht! Ugh! Phwat the— A-a-ah! Oi'll— spa-spoohoicht—Oi'll—"

As he drifted slowly past Ching-Lung had directed the sticky stream on the Irishman. Barry took half a pint of lemonade between the eyes, and coughed and raved like a maniac.

"Oh, Chingy, yo' haves tickles him!" bleated Gan-Waga. "Ho, ho, hoo! Butterfuls 'nough, Chingy! Shall I sings?"

"No!" roared thirty voices.

Barry dashed to the port-side, where a couple of buckets

stood. He slung them over and filled them. Then he walked across the deck, a bucket in each hand.

"Pardon me," he said. "Is that vessel of your'n insured?"

"It is insured for sixty thousand pounds of—er—of mud," said Ching-Lung. "We are sailing now from Timbuctoo to Manchester. We had one narrow escape of being shipwrecked against a lamp-post, but luckily we found one night policeman who was not asleep. He had toothache, poor fellow. We mistook the lamp for the Eddystone Lighthouse. My word, it was a near thing!"

The amused sailors tittered.

"Then, bodad, Oi reckon yez met wid some gales and bad weather?" said Barry, keeping the buckets out of sight.

"Weather!" said Ching-Lung. "Oh, ginger-nuts! He talks about the weather! Why, the very first day we were blown clean out of the water and stove in against the moon! We pasted up the leak with a bit of sticking-plaster. When we came down we—"

"Oi mane wet weather," interrupted Barry. "Did ut rain a lot?"

"It rained so hard, my dear fellow, that we had to put diving-suits on to keep from being drowned. Some of the drops were bigger than footballs. I've got a few at home which I stuffed and put in glass cases. And the lightning! It was sheet lightning and forked lightning mixed, you see. We caught it with birdlime, and made toasting-forks and sheets of it. But the snow—oh, the snow!"

"And the nicebugs, Chingy," put in Gan—"not forgetting the nicebugs, Chingy."

"Oh, you shut up, and bake your silly icebergs!" said Ching-Lung. "You're a ship, so you can't talk. It's time to light the lamp."

A lighted tallow candle dropped over the little sail into Gan-Waga's mouth. Gan uttered a contented gurgle, and began to chew it.

"My poor frind," said Barry O'Rooney, "yez have had a harrd toime. Oi cud shed salt tears of grief to think of ut. Storms shall rage and billows roar afore yez see your native shure. This is the worrat place for sthorrms in the wurld. My own Uncle Payther—he had a squint and a wooden leg, and was by perfession chief cook on an airship—was shipwrecked just here. The skoy was blue, and the buttherfloies were singin' swately. The shine sun—Oi mane, the shine shun—at laste, the sun shine—the sun shone—got it at last, bodad!—loike a turrip in the blue vault abuv. Oi niver seed a blue vault above. Oi've seed plinty of black wuns; but that's poetical, which is the same as balmy. Well, all at wance Uncle Payther sings out to the chafe mate: 'O'Gorman,' he says, 'yez bow-legged son of a biled limpet,' he says, 'it's goin' to rain.'"

"How did he know that, souse me?" asked the bo'sun, with a grin. "Was he a prophet?"

"No; he was a cannibal in a menagerie, but he got the sack for ateing up the rubber-skinned man whin the proprietor was fixin' the whiskers on his brother, the bearded lady from Borneo. Och, just as he said the wurds down came the rain loike this!"

Barry suited the action to the words. Like lightning he shot the contents of both buckets over Ching-Lung. The overloaded footbath sank like a stone.

"Look—look! It's there again, by hokey—it's there again!"

Prout had come on deck once more. His shrill, startled voice checked the shrieks of mirth. The men sprang round and gazed in the direction of his outstretched, shaking hand.

There was the ghastly island—this time due south!

It was Mysteria—The Cook has Reason to Think Well of Ching-Lung, and Better Reason to Alter His Opinion.

For an instant—and only for an instant—every man on deck caught a glimpse of that eerie and amazing vision. Before their strained eyes it sank away into nothingness. They turned and looked at each other, almost in consternation. Ching-Lung, as expert in the water as a seal or a salmon, had also seen it as he hung from the cable. He glanced round and laughed.

"Don't lose the bath, Gan," he said.

Gan-Waga bobbed up, showing all his splendid teeth.

"Got him, Chingy!" he grinned. "Not loses him. Ho, ho, hoo! Mans de boatlifes! Helps! Ooh! Helps! Helpses—helpses!"

Then Gan seized Ching-Lung's pigtail in a death-grip, and his Highness disappeared. The marvellous Eskimo came to the surface on the other side of the vessel, carrying the bath on his head. There was no laughter—there was no cheering. Gan scrambled on deck and sat down.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"Look—look!"

For the third time Prout saw Mysteria, and it was well named. The island was bathed in crimson light. And-wonder of wonders!—it did not float on the sea, but in the air. It faded from crimson to yellow, from yellow to grey, from grey to nothing. Like Vanderdecken's famous phantom ship, it could swim on the seas, in the air, or in the clouds.

The men stood spellbound.

"Well, Rupert, what now? What do you think of our island? And you, Ching? Now, you sceptics!"

Ferrers Lord's deep voice brought the startled crew to their senses.

"A mirage," said Ching-Lung.

"A mirage," added Thurston.

"As you say—a mirage. It is just the weather for such things." The millionaire laughed. "But, Rupert, you unbeliever, there was never a mirage without a substance. You cannot take a photograph without a subject. When Nature chooses, she can turn herself into a big camera. She has done so to-day. All the same, like puny man, Nature cannot photograph a thing that is not there!"

"Then," said Thurston, "you were right, and I was wrong. We have seen Mysteria."

"No. We have seen her shadow, old chap, not her substance. Still, the substance exists. Is that enough to satisfy you, unbeliever?"

"Yes," said Rupert quickly.

"And you, Ching?"

Ching-Lung squeezed the water out of his pigtail.

"Me always savee, nevee therose notice," the prince lisped in pidgin-English. "Allee lightea puttee a cigalottee in my facee, Lupelt, lighterlily cigalottee, got ma hands too much chop watee. Now I smokee—smokee. Oh, pip! Hal's going to talk. He must be ill!"

The silent engineer took the pipe from his mouth.

"Why Mysteria? Why not the mirage of some fixed, ordinary island?" he asked.

"Did you see it, Hal?"

Honour shook his head.

"That's why you asked the question. We did see it. It was Mysteria."

"I didn't see a lot of it," said Ching-Lung; "but it looked a healthy sort of place for spooks. I believe I've got slightly damp. Who's got a bit of blotting-paper? It strikes me I'm always getting wet on these occasions. Oh, dear! They've sunk our beautiful boat, the pigs!"

"Bashed her to bitses, Chingy," said Gan-Waga. "I goin' fishings agains. Dere lots of kippers down belows!"

"Catch a brace for me, then, Blubberbiter," remarked his Highness. "I'm going to put on some togs with less juice in 'em. See you in the morning!"

While others played or lounged, there was one man on the Lord of the Deep who had always got to get through his usual amount of work, and that was Herr Schwartz, the cook. He frequently appeared on deck, however, to smoke a hasty cigarette and take a breath of air. He was just coming up when Ching-Lung was going down.

"Oh, good grac— Ooh! Look out—look!" gasped Ching-Lung. "I'm slip—"

With a howl, he shot down the ladder into the chef's arms. Unable to withstand the shock, the cook lay down hastily on his back. A cold, clammy feeling crept over him as the moisture out of Ching-Lung's clothing soaked in. Tenderly the prince raised the fallen knight of the gridiron, and hugged him to his wet bosom.

"Tell me you're not hurt," he said anxiously. "Where is the pain? Oh, let me support you! How clumsy I was! In your back, did you say? Let me— Oh, tell me I have not injured you!"

"Dunder! Led me go!" yelled the chef. "You haf make me all vet like ein sponge. I get vetter. Led me go!"

"But—"

"Blitzen! Dake off me your handts!" shrieked Schwartz. "I am soak! Go away mit you!"

By this time he was as saturated as a mop in a bucket of water.

"Poor fellow!" said Ching-Lung. "I am delighted! I thought I had injured you. You cannot understand the relief I feel. But I have wetted you, I fear. A wetting is a mere trifle, chef, and perhaps this will dry you!"

The cook's little eyes bulged out of his chubby face. There was a tinkle of gold, and Schwartz saw five damp sovereigns lying glistening in his palm. He pocketed them, but was too astounded and delighted to utter a word of thanks.

"Mind you don't catch cold," said Ching-Lung. "Be very careful!"

And then he calmly extracted the sovereigns and walked away, leaving a trail of water behind him.

"Plentiful!" grinned the chef. "Vife bound for dot leedle spill. Dot Brout und Maddock dell der lies. Der Shinamans is der pest man on de ship. Ach, I see! Dey not vant

me do know him. Vife bound for dot! Ach, lofely—ach, peautiful! I duple town and get vet all der days for dot, and all der nights. Led me look at der bretty shiners. A-r-r-r-r!"

The chef's jaw dropped, and he put his finger and thumb into his waistcoat-pocket. He felt no gold. All he felt was a piece of saturated cardboard. He drew it out, and clutched his damp locks in rage and horror as he read the following neatly-printed notice:

"This ticket will pass bearer into padded cell of nearest lunatic asylum. Run all the way."

A moment later, a wild-eyed, dishevelled, damp, and furious German rushed into the galley, shut the door, and danced a war-dance, with a big carving-knife in his hand. As he danced he swore in German what he was going to do to Ching-Lung.

Later in the day Gan-Waga, to his intense grief, discovered his dog-fish a corpse. The fish Gan had given it to eat had not agreed with it; or else, disgusted at having to live in a tub, it had died out of sheer bad-temper. Gan buried it 'neath the sad sea waves, and tied a piece of crape round his neck as a token of sorrow for the deceased.

"Don't cry!" said Barry, who had witnessed the funeral. "Restrain thim scaldin' tears, bhoy, or, bedad, yez'll bile your face. Come hither, and Oi'll woipe your oies on this mop! Shall Oi make yez a tombstone, and write an epitaph?"

"What are neppitaffs, Barry?" asked Gan, with a sigh.

"Whoy, ut's a thing yez put on tombstones—generally a big loi—telling about the corpse, d'yez see? Now, supposin' yez was dead, Gan—no such luck, Oi fear!—Oi'd carve some-thin' loike this on your gravestone:

'Just down below,
Loies an Eskimo.
A jolly good job
That same is so.
He'd a wooden nob,
And brains of dough.'

"That's the kind of thing Oi mane—somethin' truthful and touching yez, wid real poethry in ut. Shall Oi wroite wan for the dog-fish?"

With tears of gratitude in his eyes, Gan-Waga pressed Barry's hand.

"Butterfuls!" he lisped. "But no uses nows. I chucked poor fishdoses away."

"Troth, phwat does that mather? Yez can tack ut up on the wall as a memorial. Sure, in the rabbit-hutch of my ould home at Ballybunion there's a memorial up to my uncle, Admiral Sharmus O'Rooney, and he isn't burried there at all, at all!"

"Was he the admiral of a coal-barge, souse me?" asked Maddock, who had been listening interestedly.

Barry snorted his contempt.

"But why he not burrieds dercs, hunk?" inquired the Eskimo.

"Arrah, 'tis a sad sthory," said Barry O'Rooney, wiping a tear away. "Faalin' bold wan noight in the dog-days, he thried to loight the drawing-room foire wid a barrel of gunpowdher. He always had a weakness for doin' things too quick. Oi got a teligram from the nixt parish a bit later axing me to come and take wan of his boots off the church steeple because they said it stopped the weather-cock from going round. Never shall Oi forget the last wurrds that fell from his lips. 'Oi've come out widout my parachute,' he says, 'but Oi can't sthoph—Oi'm a floying-machine now!' he says. 'Good-boi!' And, would yez belave ut, the landlord swore ut was a thriick to dodge the rint!"

Ben Maddock silently shook his head, and offered Barry a sea biscuit.

"Wear it as a medal," said Prout. "By honey, you've won it, Irish! You'll not tell a better lie nor that in a month of Mondays!"

"D'yez mane that yez doubt my wurrd?" asked Barry fiercely. "Go to Bill Bailey, and he'll tell yez the same."

Ting! sounded the bell, and Prout stepped over to the telephone.

"Yes, sir!"

A grin expanded the steersman's mouth as he listened. Then his look became serious.

"What's the fun, Tommy?" asked Maddock.

"Dunno," said Prout. "It's Mr. Rupert speaking. Perhaps it ain't fun. Me and you and Barry has to go down and wait in the saloon. I reckon the chief wants to speak to us."

(Another long instalment of this splendid serial
next Monday.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 286.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"SELF-DENIAL WEEK AT GREYFRIARS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.

SPECIAL NEW FEATURE!

Greyfriars Lyrics

BY

"The Magnet" Library's Own Rhymester.

No 1.—HARRY WHARTON.

The praise of Wharton I extol,
The ever-famous leader,
Whose grit and courage thrill the soul
Of every MAGNET reader.
Who made his Form a fighting force,
And worked some wondrous "whcezes";
Upon whose frank and fearless course
Adventure often seizes.

When Harry came to Greyfriars School
He made a bad impression;
Like Saul of old, he "played the fool,"
And paid for each transgression.
Although by Wharton's timely aid
A boy was saved from drowning,
He checked the friendly offers made,
And could not keep from frowning.

But now the past is blotted out,
His character is sounder—
A ripping sportsman, splendid scout,
And jolly good "all-rounder!"
To say his patience never fails
Would be absurd and silly;
Such models only dwell in tales
Of "perfect little Willie."

The person is amiss, I fear,
Who tenderly supposes
That Harry Wharton's school career
Is like a bed of roses.
Black sheep abide in every fold,
And this is no exception;
The Bounder figures, as of old,
In many a base conception.

On one occasion Smith excelled
In cunning (woe betide him!)
Through him poor Harry was expelled,
And several more beside him.
Bob caused the biter to be bit
(He's cuter than Alonzo);
And Smith showed no desire to sit—
The doctor laid it on so!

Since Smithy's vain attempt to score
His manner has been quiet;
No doubt when things are straight once more
He will again run riot.
But Harry Wharton's glorious fame,
He never will diminish;
For those who always play the game
Are victors at the finish.

May Wharton's great and good renown
Be present with us ever!
The friend of fellows who are "down,"
Courageous, strong, and clever.
Who by his just and manly rule
Will win the admiration
Of British boys in shop and school
For many a generation!

The Subject of Next Monday's Lyric
will be
BILLY BUNTER.



WHOM TO WRITE TO:
EDITOR,
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
EVERY WEDNESDAY
AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor
is always
pleased to
hear from
his Chums,
at home or
abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"SELF-DENIAL WEEK AT GREYFRIARS!"

By Frank Richards.

In our next splendid, long, complete tale of the boys of Greyfriars, the chums of the Remove Form decide to raise a fund for the benefit of the new Cottage Hospital which is to be erected by Lord Mauleverer's uncle. It is agreed that, all the usual forms of raising money in the school being "played out," recourse should be had to the most rigid self-denial. Lean times, therefore, ensue for the "self-denying" juniors, of whom Peter Todd is one of the most enthusiastic. Billy Bunter by no means approves of the idea, especially when his long-expected postal-order arrives, and Peter has a strenuous time trying to persuade him to fall into line! Altogether,

"SELF-DENIAL WEEK AT GREYFRIARS!"

is provocative of a great deal of fun, and also of a good round sum in aid of the Cottage Hospital.

OUR NEW FEATURE.

In devoting a column on page 27 to a new feature—viz.,

"Greyfriars Lyrics"—

I have been guided, as usual, by my desire to leave no stone unturned in the effort to make the good old "Magnet" Library ever more and more attractive to its vast and steadily-growing circle of readers. I have no fear but that "The Magnet" Rhymesters' bright and clever little verses will win immediate popularity with all my chums.

THIS WEEK'S "GEM" LIBRARY.

Next Wednesday's issue of our grand companion paper, "The Gem" Library, is one which I am confidently expecting to create a considerable sensation, and to do a great deal to still further increase that splendid story-paper's immense popularity. Besides Martin Clifford's great, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co., entitled

"Friends Divided!"

No. 286 of "The Gem" will contain the opening chapters of a wonderful new sporting serial—

"The Corinthian!"

This grand yarn deals with the brave doings of "the Fancy"—as the boxing fraternity were termed in the days of the old-time prize-ring—and has been specially written for our companion paper by Brian Kingston, a gentleman who adds to his exceptional talents as a story-writer, the most expert knowledge of every phase of the noble art of self-defence.

"The Corinthian!"

breathes throughout the romantic atmosphere of the Prince Regent's days, when the famous bucks and dandies lorded it in fashionable London, and when the prize-ring flourished under the patronage of the highest in the land. My advice, then, to every one of my "Magnet" chums is—don't on any account miss reading.

"The Corinthian!"

beginning in this week's "Gem" Library.

AN INTERESTING QUESTION.

One of my readers, A. J. S., of Bradford, who states that he is very interested in everything appertaining to flying, writes me a long and interesting letter mostly dealing with this subject. He asks me to tell him why a flying-machine cannot be constructed exactly like a bird, having the same wing-action; and, further, ventures the opinion that sufficient attention has not been paid to the study of the flight of birds in connection with the science of aviation.

Well, in reply to A. J. S., I can only say that I am not an expert in aviation matters, but I can assure him that the problem of bird-flight has been studied by clever scientists for generations with a view to the construction of heavier-than-air flying machines. Machines have actually been built with wings working in the same way as a bird's, but they have never attained much success. The Wright brothers made the most exhaustive study of bird-flight before producing the first really successful aeroplane.

If my Bradford chum takes up the study of bird-flight, he will pick up some very interesting information.

PLAIN TRUTHS ABOUT THE STAGE.

By an Actor.

Schoolboys are not the only ones who delight to read "The Gem." I read it, and often, when I have a long time between "calls," I sit down and renew my acquaintance with school life.

Recently I have noticed that our Editor has gone to the expense and trouble of procuring special articles of an instructive nature, so that Gemites might have the great advantage of reading some actual experiences, and having things explained by those who understand the subject thoroughly. Well, I thought to myself, "Is there anything I can do to help?"

I came to the conclusion that, as I knew more about the stage than most Gemites, I would sit down and tell the truth regarding the many pitfalls that lie in the way of such as want to go on the stage.

There are two great qualities necessary to any degree of success on the stage. These are—talent and patience. If you have not the first, you need not read any more of this article. Without talent, you will waste years of your life, and make an enemy of many long-suffering managers. You may have a very high opinion of your own ability—indeed, you may possess talent of a sort, but the talent which managers are always looking for is the *best*. You may amuse your friends, and you may be a clever boy or girl, and yet fall very far short of the standard set up by the experienced and business-getting manager.

Agencies are the recognised mediums of procuring engagements. These agencies are of two kinds—genuine and fraudulent. I will deal with the latter first. A certain class of men and women find, after a time, that they cannot procure any more engagements. They are wrong somewhere, and find that they have either lost their voices, or that the public are beginning to realise that these people never did possess a voice. Anyway, they cannot make a living on the stage. So, from long experience of such affairs, they know how very anxious most boys and girls are to procure a place behind the footlights. They trade upon the ignorance of the boy or girl with a bit of money, so these birds of prey open an "agency." Soon, along come the people who think that they can either sing, dance, or act. Now, it does not matter one jot whether the candidate can do any or all these things. The dishonest people who conduct the bogus agency will tell all who have money that the world will be one day staggered by the beauty of his or her voice, or that the acting only needs a little professional touch to make Sir H. Beerbohm Tree leave the stage in despair.

(More "Plain Truths About the Stage" next Monday.)

The Editor

MADE HIM RESIGN.



1. "There's that chap making love to my daughter again!" growled the crusty old father. "I'll put a stop to this once and for all!"

2. Then he fetched his fishing-line and hauled up the sign, and when he let go—yes, exactly!

NEAT—WHAT!



This is Miss Prettylips, our new typist, with her patent sunshade fishing-rod.

GAVE HIMSELF AWAY!



1. Mr. Pincher at the fancy dress ball was a tremendous success as Sir Walter Raleigh. "What a pity he is slipping away!" said everybody. "He looks splendid! Exactly like the character. Marvellous!"

2. But his reason for doing so was quite clear when a moment later he mot good Queen Bess. He did not cast down his cloak, but his courtly bow was a treat to everybody who saw it

BEE-UTIFUL!



Jimmy Bee: "Well, here's a bit of luck! I've actually found a hat with real flowers in it."



1. "Silly fellow!" said Blinker. "It would take more than a house on fire to make me run like that. I can't understand people who get excited at the least little thing."

2. But when he was informed that it was his house that was on fire, and that the man he saw running was going to fetch the fire-engine—well, Blinker ran, too!



"Hallo, old man, are you leaving?" "Yes; I'm going off in a huff!"

A SHOCK FOR THE COPPERS.



1. "Men," said the inspector, "Chelsea Bill, the Boy Bandit, must be captured at all costs. Away and discover him at once!" "Ay, ay, sir!" said P.-c.'s A1 and A2.



2. So the gallant constables awayed, resolving to take the Boy Bandit, or perish. They didn't know that Chelsea Bill had hidden in the tree-trunk.



3. And when he came out to give himself up, the gallant guardians of the peace hopped it promptly—beating all records.

UNFAIR COMPETITION,



Hawker No. 1: "Look 'ere, I don't understand 'ow yer can sell yer brooms cheaper than I can! I don't mind a-tellin' yer that I steals the stuff I makes 'em wiv!"
T'other Hawker: "Well, yer see, matoy, I steals mine ready made!"

UNDER POLICE PROTECTION.



"Come in under the verander, Bill outer the wet!"

SMART.



HOW MUGGS & HIS MINOR OBTAINED A NICE APPLE PIE



Teacher: "Now, Jimmy, give me an example of something transparent."
Jimmy: "A ladder!"