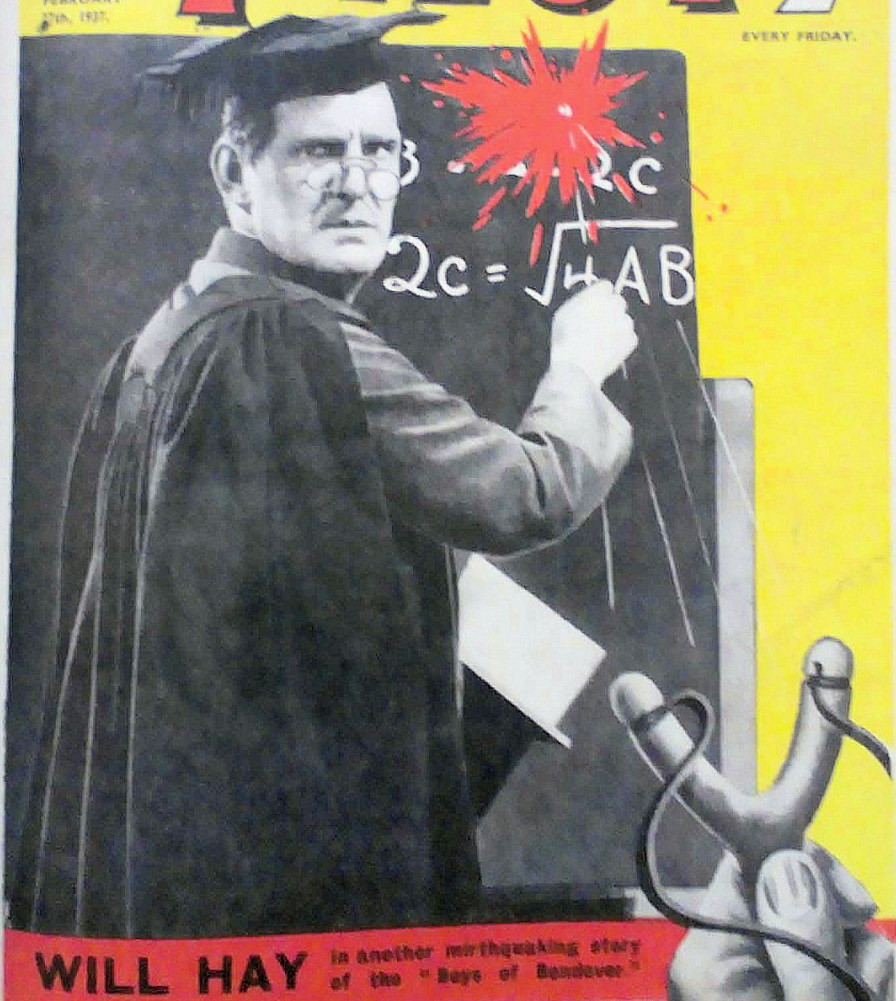


THE STARS — WILL HAY | STAINLESS STEPHEN | ALEX JAMES | LEONARD HENRY & SEXTON BLAKE — ARE INSIDE!

# *The* PILOT 2<sup>D</sup>

No. 74  
Vol. 3  
Week Ending  
FEBRUARY  
27th, 1937.

EVERY FRIDAY.



**WILL HAY**

in another mirthquaking story  
of the "Boys of Bondage."



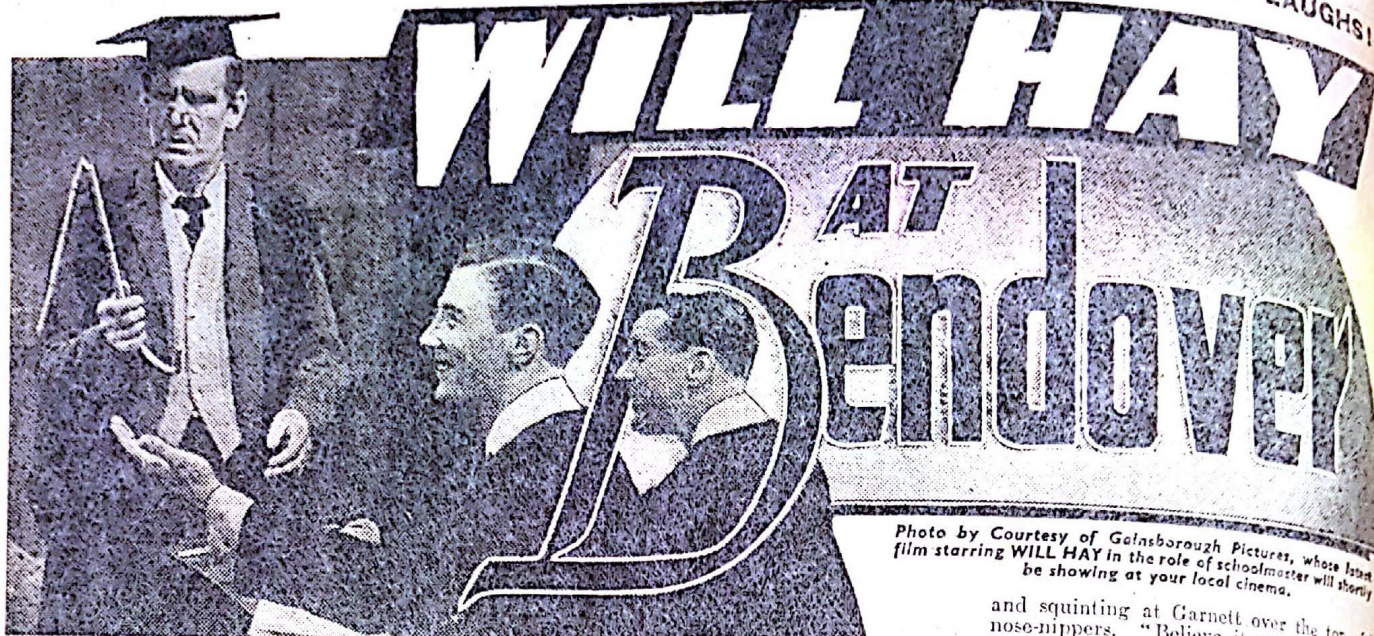


Photo by Courtesy of Gainsborough Pictures, whose latest film starring WILL HAY in the role of schoolmaster will shortly be showing at your local cinema.

**T**HE peaceful countryside about Bendover College was dozing in the warm morning sunshine.

So was Schoolmaster Will Hay.

The gentle buzzing of the bees mingled with Will's deep breathing, and all was at peace in the little world of Doddlebury. Will, opening one sleepy eye, settled himself more comfortably against the haystack and gazed up at the blue, cloudless sky.

"Peace, perfect peace," he murmured poetically. "A day of sweet thoughts—"

"Listen to me, you little rat!" came a threatening voice from the other side of the haystack. "I want dough! I've waited long enough. And if I don't get it by to-morrow, I'm coming up to the school! You'll look a bit sick when that new master of yours—Will Hay's his name, ain't it?—gets to hear that one of his boys is gambling!"

There was an unpleasant leer upon Mr. Shadd's big moon of a face. In fact, everything about Mr. Samuel Shadd, bookmaker, was unpleasant. He towered over young Garnett, of the Fourth Form at Bendover. But, even so, young Garnett was not afraid. He faced up to the bookie with determination.

"Look here, Shadd," he said quietly. "Last term I was fool enough to have a bet with you. I listened to that little reptile Reggie Pyke, who introduced me to you. Those days I had more money than sense. But I don't back horses any more—see?"

"I see," sneered the bookie. "You're going to tell me next that you've joined the Band of Hope. Listen! I want that ten quid you owe me."

"I paid you!" interrupted Garnett. "I paid you last term, and you know it! And I'm not paying you again—see?"

The bookmaker winked.

"Well, you'll find it hard to make your blooming master believe that you paid me, or that you don't back horses now. But you can take this from me, Mister Eric Garnett," said the bookmaker, "unless I get ten quid from you by twelve o'clock, I'm coming up to the school!"

"This is blackmail!" exclaimed young Garnett. "You think I'll pay you twice rather than risk a show-down at the college. Well, you're mistaken! You're not getting another ten quid out of me, and that's final—"

"O.K. with me!" said Mr. Shadd. "You can expect me up at the school this afternoon. That big lallapalooza—Will Hay—will be interested. I've heard from Master Reggie Pyke that he's a sap!"

"He's not such a sap as Reggie Pyke thinks," said Garnett. "Anyway, leave him out of it. He's a master of Bendover, and entitled to respect."

"Oh, yeah?" drawled Mr. Shadd. "Well,

we'll see. So-long, Master Garnett! You won't be wearing your old school tie this time to-morrow. You'll be fired. I— Ooooooh!"

He broke off with a wild yell and staggered back, clapping his jaw where young Garnett's fist had smitten it.

"If I'm going to be fired," exclaimed the youngster, "I'll at least know I've left you a keepsake, you dirty blackmailer! Hold that!"

Smack!

Will Hay, now wide awake and vastly interested, nodded brightly to himself as he heard a second thud and a gasp. He remembered that the lanky, raw-boned Garnett packed a hefty punch in each fist.

"You young devil!" howled the flabby bookmaker, staggering back. "That settles it! I'll be up at the school—you wait! I'll fix you!"

"Beat it, before I rock you again!" snapped Garnett. "And don't be sure you can fool Mr. Hay; he's not such a sap as he looks!"

Mr. Shadd did not wait to hear more. He shuffled off, muttering dire threats. A moment later Garnett came moodily round the other side of the haystack. Despite his brave words, he thought he could expect little else but expulsion if Shadd carried out his threat and came up to the school. There was a worried expression on his face as he mooched round the stack, his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets. He did not notice his Form-master at once, for Will was stretched out in the shadow of the stack, his eyes closed, his mouth wide open, his nippers perched precariously upon the tip of his nose.

He appeared to be fast asleep, and Garnett, with a sigh of relief, hoped to creep off without disturbing him. In that moment, however, Will opened his eyes.

"Can that be Garnett," he murmured, "or am I seeing things?"

"Yes, it's Garnett, sir," said the junior, turning back.

"Extraordinary!" murmured Will, with a slow shake of his head. "An amazing coincidence! D'you know, Garnett," he went on confidentially, "you'll never believe it, but I've been dreaming about you!"

"Really, sir?"

"Positively!" declared Will, closing one eye

## EXCLUSIVE TO "PILOT"

You'll get the best laugh of the week out of this peppy yarn, starring Will Hay, the one-and-only schoolmaster of screen, stage, and radio fame. He's the sort of schoolmaster you'll like to have at your school—yessir!

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and squinting at Garnett over the top of his nose-nippers. "Believe it or not, I dreamed that a low-down—er—a pal of yours called me a sap and a lallapalooza. But don't be any sleep over that," he went on, rising and putting an assuring hand on Garnett's shoulder. "This man Shadd is a tricky customer. He's a blackmailer, and wants a severe lesson. Between us, Garnett, my lad, we'll give him that lesson!"

Garnett's eyes brightened. "Then you know everything, sir?" he said hopefully. "You heard us talking, of course. The man pestered me to meet him here. He called it my last chance. Sometimes I think he was put up to blackmailing me—"

"You mean by that little wart—ahem!—our mutual friend Reggie Pyke, eh, my lad?" asked Will Hay shrewdly; and, although Garnett refused to give an answer to the question, the master of the Fourth knew he had hit the right nail on the head. He went on as if speaking to himself: "Reggie Pyke is a bad egg, I fear. By the time he grows up, he'll smell like a Chinaman's breakfast!" Aloud he added: "So you've seen the folly of your ways, have you, Garnett? You don't back the gee-gees now?"

"No, sir. On my word, sir! I just had that one bet with Shadd last term, like a fool, and when I had paid him I swore I wouldn't back horses again!"

"You are wise, my lad. I remember back in—er—however, maybe we can teach this Shadd person where he gets off—that is to say, we can teach him a lesson; prove to him, in our own original fashion, that blackmail doesn't pay. Garnett, I've got an idea!"

"Have you, sir?" piped up Garnett.

"I have. Lend me your ears, as Oliver Cromwell said—"

"Wasn't it Shakespeare's Brutus in 'Julius Caesar,' sir?" asked Garnett.

"You should know, my lad—you should know," chided Will Hay. "After all, you have one of the cleverest masters in the school to teach you. Anyway, lend me your ears while I an idea unfold. And if it doesn't teach Mister Clever Shadd that he can't do that there 'ere with a Bendover boy, I'll eat my blackboard!"

**"G**OOD-AFTERNOON, boys!"

"Good-afternoon, sir!" cried Will.

"Here we are again!"

Without exercising his customary caution he sat down on his high-backed chair in the Fourth Form Room. He did not know it then, but the seat of that chair and the back rail had been smeared liberally with a patent glue. Will Hay was beaming cheerfully as he propped over his nose-nippers and proceeded to roll the roll. That task done, he rapped on the desk for silence. As he leaned forward, he knew that the seat of the chair had been glued for his gown held fast.



"Boys," he began, clearing his throat, "we will kick off—er—that is, we will commence in the usual manner. Have you any question of the general interest which requires an answer or elucidation?"

His face beamed with good nature as he looked over his nose-pinchers; then—  
"Goodness gracious!" he murmured suddenly. "Smart, kindly go along to my study. I have just realised I am wearing the wrong gown; the faces of the Fourth fell alarmingly. Young Smart, the skipper of the Form and one of its liveliest practical jokers, was openly horrified, for it was he who had smeared the chair with glue."

"And, Smart," added Will Hay, slipping out of the gown without standing up, "take this gown along to the Doctor, with my apologies."

"I—I—can't, sir," said Smart, colouring to the roots of his hair, and he snatched at the gown. There was a rending sound, which brought Will Hay round with a jerk. Then a grim smile played round the corners of his mouth. For the gown had split in two. One half of it was in Smart's hands; the other half remained glued to the chair.

"How interesting! How quaint!" murmured Will Hay. "Dr. Shrubbs will be pleased, I'm sure. That gown will cost you anything up to two snackers, Smart. Really, you know, you should be more careful and less smart, Smart."

He watched the discomfited Smart make his way out of the Form-room, and, hiding a grin behind his hand, Will Hay addressed the Form. "Let me see. I was saying—there is any question requiring an answer or elucidation?"

"Yes, sir!" cried Piper, a chubby-faced boy with spun-gold hair and china-blue eyes. "I am in doubt about a sentence I found in a book of travel."

"What d'you mean—you're in doubt about a sentence?" demanded Will, looking a shade uneasy. "You mean, I take it, that you're in doubt about the particular language?"

"Yes, sir!" nodded Piper. "That's right, sir! If you would kindly write the sentence upon the blackboard—"

"An excellent idea!" beamed Will, striding across to the board and posing expectantly, chalk in hand. "Pay attention, everyone! Perhaps this is where you're going to learn something; you never know! What's the sentence, Piper?"

"Yez Siam anaz!"

Will nodded and chalked on the blackboard: Yez Siam anaz.

"What language is that, sir?" asked Piper. Will gave a short, amused laugh; there was a pitying look upon his countenance as he looked round at his eager-faced scholars.

"You don't know a little thing like that?" he scoffed lightly. "Why, that's Siamese, of course! Any fool can see that! Siamese."

"But what exactly does it mean, sir?" pressed the angel-faced Piper.

"Exactly what it says, you idiot?" rasped Will. "Yez Siam anaz! Yez Siam anaz! Yes, I am an ass! Yes—" He broke off, smiled with set teeth, and squinted over the top of his nose-pinchers. "If I thought you were trying to take a rise out of me, my lad, I'd dust your pants until they smouldered and burst into flames! I—"

He stabbed a glance to his left, and found Kelly, the school porter, standing in the doorway.

"Well, what is it, Smelly?" he asked brightly.

"There's a gent by the name of Shadd to see you, sir," returned the porter, grinning a sour smile, for he didn't enjoy being addressed as Smelly. "He says he's got an important business to discuss concerning one of your boys."

"You don't say!" beamed Will, with a knowing side-glance at Garnett. "Interesting, very! Send this man Shadd up."

"The man Shadd is up!" shouted the bookie, pushing his way past the porter and strolling into the room. At the same time, he shot a swift glance round the class, and Will saw him exchange the suspicion of a wink with Reggie Pyke. "I've got something important to tell you, teacher," said the flashily dressed little bookie, turning to Will. "My name is Shadd, just in case you don't know."

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Shadd!" beamed Will. "What's biting you? Er—that is, I understand that you have business with one of my scholars?"

"You bet I 'ave!" nodded the bookie, looking ugly. "Young Garnett owes me a tenner over a bet, and 'e won't cough up the dough! I told him I'd come up if he didn't pay, and 'ere I am. 'Ow about it?"

"Quite!" nodded Will. "A debt of honour is a debt of honour. Garnett, I am shocked! Stand up! Backing horses at your time of life! Disgraceful! By the way, Shadd," went on Will Hay, lowering his voice, "if I should fancy anything for the three o'clock at Epsom—"

"You're on," grinned the bookie. "But about this tenner—"

"Of course!" beamed Will. "How forgetful of me! Are you in a position to settle this debt of honour, Garnett?"

"Yes, sir," answered Garnett, catching the meaning gleam in Will's eye. "I've some money up in the dormitory."

Mr. Shadd blinked. He hadn't expected this. Neither Will Hay nor Garnett seemed worried.

"Nip upstairs and get it!" ordered Will, glancing at his watch and nodding his head. "Don't be all day about it!"

Will noted with satisfaction that the time was now two minutes past three.

Garnett was back in very good time, even though he had paused long enough to put a telephone call through to the village to inquire the result of the three o'clock race.

"Quick work!" said Will, as the junior handed over a thin wad of notes. One—two—three—"he counted, his eyes upon a slip of paper, which read: "Willie the Weeper—20 to 1." A note which told him that Willie had won the three o'clock at a very nice price. "The amount's right—but only just!" he beamed, palming the slip and handing the money to the amazed bookie. "That makes

everything square between you and Garnett? I will deal with the boy myself."

"Sure!" nodded Shadd, winking at Reggie Pyke. "Y'know, teacher, it's true that a mug is born every minute!"

"So I've heard!" nodded Will, squinting over his nose-pinners at the foxy face of Reggie Pyke. "But a fellow would have to get up early to catch you!"

"Bet your life, teacher!" agreed the bookie. "There are no flies on Sammy Shadd! Do you still want to have a bit on the three o'clock?"

"Thanks for reminding me!" beamed Will. "Very nice of you, I'm sure! I'll have a pound on Willie the Weeper!"

The bookie regarded him with pitying eyes. "It's still true about a mug being born every minute," he said. "That animal doesn't stand a dog's chance!"

"I don't suppose it does," returned Will. "Willie's a racehorse, not a whippet. Allow me to see you off the premises, Mr. Shadd! Maybe we can find out the result of the race before we part!"

They were nearing the porter's lodge when they heard a paper-boy approach.

"Three o'clock result—pa-aper!"

"I'll get you the result, teacher," smirked Mr. Shadd. "Here, boy—"

He took the newspaper, squinted casually at it, then blinked—and blinked—and blinked!

"What's the trouble, Shadd?" asked Will, squinting into the bookie's lowering countenance. "Bad news?"

"Bad news, you call it!" snorted Shadd, waving the newspaper under Will's nose.

"Willie the Weeper romped home at twenty to one!"

"Ah, then you owe me twenty pounds," Will reminded him, "and you can pay up now! A debt of honour is a debt of honour, as we've agreed!"

"I'll pay up!" growled the bookie. "But you'll 'ave to give me a receipt for the dough!" he added artfully.

"Delighted, my dear fellow!" declared Will, not realising why the bookie wanted his signature. "Anything to oblige!"

Having carefully checked the wad of notes, he scrawled his name upon one of the bookie's billheads; then, still beaming, he squinted over the top of his nose-glasses and gave a vigorous nod of his head. "Yes, you were certainly



"If I'm going to be fired," exclaimed young Garnett, "I'll at least know I've left you a keep-sake! Hold that!" Snatch! Will Hay, resting on the other side of the haystack, chuckled approvingly, as Garnett's clenched fist caught the rascally bookie a wallop under the chin.



right!" he declared, stuffing his winnings into his hip pocket. "Indubitably!"

"What d'you mean by that?" snarled Sam Shadd suspiciously.

"You were right when you said a mug is born every minute!" explained Will. "You follow me?"

**R**EGGIE PYKE was out early next morning—so early, in fact, that at seven o'clock he was ringing the bell of the Railway Hotel in Duddlebury.

"I want to see Mr. Shadd!" he said to the tousle-haired, sleepy-eyed boy who opened the door to him. "I'll go up!"

He ran up the stairs, crept along the first-floor landing, and burst into a bed-room without troubling to knock at the door.

The occupant of the bed sat up like an infuriated jack-in-the-box, his greasy hair standing on end.

"What the heck are you doing 'ere at this hour, you little lugworm?" demanded Sam Shadd, with a torrent of abuse. "What's the big idea?"

"I thought you'd be pleased to see me, you dirty crook!" sneered Reggie Pyke. "Why didn't you meet me last night, as arranged? I've come for my half of the tenner we bluffed out of Garnett. I knew he'd pay up. Fork out, Shadd, or I'll blow the gaff!"

"Oh, yeah?" drawled the bookie, with a wolfish grin.

"Oh, yeah!" mocked Pyke. "Cough up my fiver!"

"I haven't got a fiver in the world, you little slug!" snarled Sam Shadd. "Willie the Weeper came 'ome at twenty to one, so I had to 'and over Garnett's tenner to Will 'Ay, and another one with it! Twenty beautiful quid! Now 'op it, you little rat, before I turn nasty. I'll—"

"Listen, Sam!" cut in Pyke, a gleam of excitement in his cunning eyes. "You're not trying to bluff me, are you? I mean, Will Hay did actually win twenty pounds on Willie the Weeper?"

"Course 'e did!" growled the bookie. "I can prove it! I made 'im give me a receipt for the dough—"

"Oh, good egg!" cried Pyke, in evil glee. "We've got the rotter just where we want him, old man! You don't like him much, do you?"

"Like 'im!" snorted the bookie. "You bet I do! I always love any mug who knocks me up a catcher for twenty smackers! Like 'im!"

"Then, listen!" ordered Pyke, dropping his voice to a confidential note. "Give me that receipt, and I'll have him booted out of Bendover in about two shakes of a gnat's rudder. How do you like that?"

"Grand!" grated the bookie vindictively. "But what 'ave you got against this Will 'Ay?"

"Lots!" There was an ugly glint in Pyke's mean little eyes as he snarled the word. "Him and old Shrubbs! I hate 'em both! Will Hay's always making me look a sap in front of the class, and old Shrubbs is doing my father out of a job as Head! With that receipt, Sam, I'll have 'em both booted out of Bendover before the day's out!"

"And how are you going to do that?"

"Leave it to me, old man!" leered Pyke, tapping the side of his snub nose. "Stand on little Reggie!"

"O.K.," grinned Shadd, reaching for his trousers, which were flung across a chair by the bedside. "The receipt's yours. I only made the sap sign for his dough so that I could 'old it over him later on."

Reggie Pyke winked.

"You leave that to me. Once I've got this mug Hay sacked, I'll give you your twenty quid—or my father will—with pleasure!"

"It's a deal!" grinned Shadd, and the receipt changed hands.

Reggie Pyke's fat face was wearing a cunning smirk as he made his way back to the school, and that smirk was still well in evidence when Will Hay breezed into the classroom for morning school.

"Good-morning, boys!"

"Good-morning, sir!"

"And a very nice morning, too!" declared Will, his gown billowing as he strode to his

desk and seated himself. "Most of you are lie-abeds, hugging the sheets until the last moment; but we're not like that, are we, Pyke?"

Screwing up one gimlet orb, he squinted over his nose-nippers and watched Reggie's plump cheeks turn a deep shade of red.

"I don't know what you're getting at!" growled Pyke, his smirk giving place to an ugly scowl.

"Then I will enlighten you, my lad," beamed Will. "Like myself, you were abroad at an early hour this morn, before the fields were properly aired, and the scarecrows yawning in the sunrise!"

"Oh!" gasped Reggie. "I didn't see you."

"No! I'm not surprised, my lad," remarked Will Hay. "But I saw you, and I saw you enter a pub—er—that is, a low-down tavern. Do I have to remind you, Reginald Pyke, that a public-house is out of bounds to a Bendover boy?"

Reggie Pyke gasped.

"I don't think you have taken to looking on the wine when it is red," went on the Form-master reprovingly. "I rather fancy you called to see a certain gentleman who thinks that a mug is born every minute. Do I make myself clear?"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Reggie.

"Before the morning is over, Reginald Pyke, I propose to dust the seat of your pants with this"—Will Hay held up a cane. "Kindly report to me after last lesson."

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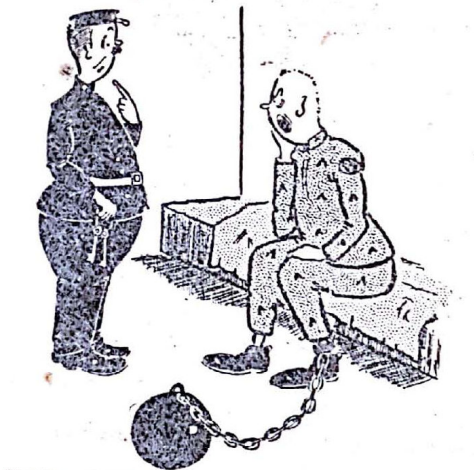
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"Who said time 'hangs heavy on the hands'?"

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Hay is little better than a butterfly, a fellow who gives his boys far too much rope.

"Who told you that?" demanded Silas Heather, the Chairman of Duddlebury Grange. "The last time I was a yeoman, it was his rule in life to go straight to the point. 'Don't listen to a lot of

"It isn't little-tattle!" raised Colonel Chatterton, purpling at such a display of respect. "I got my information from the father of one of Will Hay's boys."

"Boy, eh?" snorted old Heather. "Name please!"

"Pyke!" answered the chairman, a shade defiantly. "He is the son of Dunkley Pyke, a very old friend of mine."

"I'd give this young Pyke a tanning every day and two on Sundays," declared Silas Heather. "On what grounds do you suggest we get rid of Will Hay? Is he fired on the word of a little cad who sneaks to his father?"

"It is only right that Reggie should go to his father," snapped Colonel Chatterton. "Pyke replaces Dr. Shrubbs as headmaster of Bendover!"

"Oh, ho!" chorled old Heather, rubbing his hands together. "So that's the milk in the coconut! Well, Mister Chairman, you're nothing against the character of Will Hay—"

He broke off as a faint rustling sound came from behind him, and on looking round he saw that a slip of paper had been pushed under the door.

"What's this?" he grunted, pushing his chair back and striding heavily across the carpet. He picked up the paper and smoothed it out, his shrewd eyes staring hard at the read the inscription:

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SAM SHADD,

Commission Agent.

Scrawled across the billhead was the following: Received of Sam Shadd the sum of £20, winnings on Willie the Weeper. (Signed) WILL HAY.

At the bottom of the bill was another statement, written in bold black letters: "Will Hay is a born gambler, a disgrace to the school. Sack him!"

A thunder-cloud upon his brow, old Silas was about to slip the paper into his pocket when the rasping voice of Colonel Chatterton rang through the room.

"What have you got there, Heather?"

"Nothing much," answered old Silas. "Anyway, it isn't cricket to take any notice of a sneaking skunk who doesn't sign his name!"

"As Chairman of the Board, I insist upon seeing that note!" snapped Chatterton. "Hand it to me at once!"

"There you are!" growled Silas, flicking the receipt across the table. "We ought to treat it with the contempt it deserves!"

"I think differently," rasped Chatterton, having glanced at the paper, he thumbed the bell-push at his elbow. "I always suspected that this Hay person was a gambler, and therefore a bad influence! A barker of race-horses!"

A shudder ran through the gallant colonel's lean frame. "A client of a common, low-down bookmaker! A master at Bendover! Ugh! Where's Dr. Shrubbs—why doesn't he put in an appearance. I'll go and fetch him myself."

"Please do," said old Silas Heather thoughtfully, and the moment the colonel had left the room he picked up the telephone and asked for Mr. Shadd's number.

The bookie's throaty voice came over the wire.

"Who wants me—who is it?"

"This is the Board of Governors of Bendover College," Mr. Heather informed him. "It appears that a member of the school staff has been doing business with you, Mr. Shadd."

"Yes, that's right," came the answer. "Will Hay's the name—and the blighter touched me for twenty nickers."

Silas Heather frowned.

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up with interest when Ellis returned with Merrill. But something of the gloating died out of Mr. Crunting's tone and manner when he rather over-awed page-boy corroborated Alex's statement.

"If you ask me, sir," volunteered the page, "I'm roving over the assembled Form, Master Jarvis can tell you what happened to the impot."

Dad Jarvis started and blushed guiltily.

"Jarvis? What has he to do with it?" snapped Mr. Crunting.

"I dunno, sir, 'cept that I saw him sneak into your study directly after I'd come out. He got something under his jacket when he came out. I know that, 'cause I was a bit curious and followed him to his own study."

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Crunting, whilst his piercing eyes rested accusingly on Dad Jarvis.

"What have you to say, Jarvis?"

"It's true, sir!" exclaimed Dad, in a panic.

"I didn't go near your study, sir. I know nothing about James' impot, sir. If you think I've destroyed it—"

He bit his tongue, realising rather too late that he was betraying himself.

"Who said you destroyed it?" snapped Mr.

Crunting, glad to find a victim. "Who suggested that it has been destroyed?"

But before Jarvis could answer, the page-boy's piping voice split the silence.

"So that's what Master Jarvis was up to, was it?" he shrilled. "I followed him to his study and heard him lock the door."

The schemer of the Fourth shivered and his face blanched. He was sorry now that he had given young Merrill such a disdainful glance on passing him in the passage. Evidently it had drawn unnecessary attention to him.

"I—I only did it for a joke, sir!" he concluded. "I—I thought you'd make James write it all out again. I—"

His voice trailed off and his eyes dropped in shame as he felt Alex's grim, contemptuous glance turned upon him.

"Jarvis, I am shocked at your rascality," snapped Mr. Crunting. "But for the page-boy's testimony I might have been guilty of a miscarriage of justice. James," added Mr. Crunting, "you are completely exonerated."

"Thank you, sir," said Alex, with a breath of relief.

"As for you, Jarvis, you will be severely caned; you will write out double the impos-

sition you destroyed, and you will be gated for a month."

"Oh, sir!" Dad Jarvis felt himself wobbling at the knees. He was conscious that the Form condemned him for that dirty trick and was fearful lest they should connect the burning of the impot with the burning of Mr. Crunting's stamp album. But he had something else to think about when Mr. Crunting started in with the cane. The master of the Fourth laid it on good and hearty, and such was Jarvis's misery and anguish that even James restrained his very natural impulse to give the cad of the Fourth a hiding. For the moment, Dad Jarvis had had enough; once again his evil plotting had recoiled upon his own head. Already the "thinking" fellows in the Fourth were beginning to doubt whether, in punishing Alex James for the burning of Mr. Crunting's stamp collection, they had punished the right fellow.

Only time could prove. Yet already there was talk of lifting the sentence of Coventry.

Alex is slowly but surely getting his rights, but there is still a stiff fight ahead for him. Follow the adventures of this wizard footballer in another enthralling yarn next Friday.

## WILL HAY AT BENDOVER

(Continued from page 508.)

"In the name of Colonel Chatterton, our chairman, I request your presence at the school while we investigate this dreadful affair."

"What name did you say?" came a wild yell from Mr. Shadd. "Colonel Chatterton—tall lean bloke with a big beak? Strewh! I've been waiting to see him for months. I'll be over—pronto."

Silas Heather replaced the receiver and stroked his chin.

"It would appear that there's a surprise for our esteemed chairman," he remarked.

At that moment the door of the board-room opened and Colonel Chatterton, now accompanied by Dr. Shrubbs and Will Hay, entered.

"Beautiful drop of morning!" observed Will chattily. "It's good to be alive, 'pon my word it is! Grand cricket weather! A bat in the hand is worth two in the belfry!" as the poet

Eaton St. Pancras put it! I—er—you were saying, colonel?" he broke off politely, squinting at the chairman over the top of his nose-tippers.

"I've not said a word yet!" rasped Chatterton. "Don't you ever stop talking?"

"No, sir!" answered Will, with a sad shake of his head. "As a baby, they fed me upon a mixed diet of birds' seed and gramophone needles."

"Silence, you—you—"

"Call me Will, sir!"

Colonel Chatterton breathed hard and deep.

"Listen, Mr. Hay!" commanded the colonel. "I am about to bring a most serious charge against you, a charge which, if proved, will necessitate your leaving Bendover within an hour! As I say, a most serious charge!"

"No leg-pulling, now!" laughed Will, shaking a playful finger under the chairman's beaky nose. "If this is a practical joke—"

"Joke! Joke!" exploded the colonel.

"You'll dashed soon find that it isn't a joke, sir! Mr. Hay," Chatterton went on, pointing at Will, "is it your habit to bet upon the results of horse races? Think well before you answer my question!"

"I have a humble bob on the gee-gees occasionally," confessed Will, without shame.

"Sir!" thundered Chatterton, thumping the table with a bony fist. "Betting upon race-

horses is the curse of the country! Betting is a sin which should be punished by the law of the land! Yet you, a master at this great Public school, have the brazen impudence to stand there and admit that you are a gambler! You have nerve enough to confess that you back racehorses—"

"I'd gladly have backed an elephant to put one over on Mr. Slimy Shadd," announced Will, though he realised he was in a tight corner. "He tried to rough-house one of my boys, colonel. He played the old soldier, colonel—er—that is he attempted to blackmail a poor lad, and he called me a lallapalooza."

"There you are, gentlemen!" added Colonel Chatterton, his beady eyes glinting with a malicious light. "A self-confessed gambler, a disgrace to the school! I demand his resignation." He broke off and his mouth gaped open wide, for the door of the board-room had suddenly opened and Sam Shadd appeared.

"Found yer, 'ave I, you old twister!" shouted Shadd's husky voice from the doorway, and he strode into the room. "Found yer, 'ave I?" he repeated, leering across the table at Colonel Chatterton, who sat like a man turned to stone. "You, a governor of this school, and I didn't know it! You've owed me a hundred quid since last Derby Day, and if you don't cough up the dough right now—"

"Per-per-please, my dear fellow," stuttered the colonel, coming out of his trance. "it—it was quite an oversight on my part, I assure you! I went abroad—"

"Yes, and forgot to pay me my hundred nickers!" leered the flashy little bookie.

"I am an officer and a gentleman, my good fellow!" cut in Chatterton, peeling off ten "tens" from a thick wad of money. "Take this—and good-day to you."

"The same to you—with spikes on!" grinned Sam Shadd, pocketing the hundred.

"The meeting is closed, gentlemen," said Colonel Chatterton, trying to look calm and dignified. "As to this—er—regrettable incident, I trust there is no need to tell you that I know absolutely nothing about the Derby Day bet! The intrusion of that low-down book-maker came as a complete surprise to me!"

"I'll bet it did!" said Will.

"It is, of course," explained the colonel, "a case of mistaken identity. But I paid the hundred pounds, rather than the good name of the school should be besmirched! Let us forget the painful incident. Er, Mr. Hay!"

he called, as Will, his shoulders shaking with merriment, strolled off towards the door.

"Sir?" called Will, turning a purple face to the warrior.

"You look as though you're going to have a fit!"

"I've just had it, sir!"

The colonel, adjusting his monocle, stared hard at Will; and Will, squinting over the top of his nose-tippers, stared hard at the colonel.

"I should like to have a word in your ear, Mr. Hay!" said the latter, with a wintry smile. Walking round the table, he took Will by the arm and led him into the corridor. "I need hardly impress upon you the need of absolute silence with regard to this business!" he said, lowering his voice. "The story must not get about! I have, I think, made myself quite clear upon the subject of betting! I loathe and detest it!"

"So would I," returned Will, "if I'd lost a hundred quid on Derby Day! Come clean, colonel!" he grinned, squinting into the warrior's purple countenance. "You know you like a little flutter as much as the next man! That was a nice win I had over Willie the Weeper, wasn't it?"

"A beauty!" agreed Chatterton, his eyes alight with enthusiasm. "Twenty to one, oh? How did you manage to spot it?"

"Inspired information!" declared Will, with a knowing wink. "I knew it was a winner before I backed it! I get a good thing now and again!"

"Got anything for to-morrow?"

"It just happens that I have, colonel," answered Will, dropping his voice to a whisper and looking mysterious. "I'll let you into a stable secret, but you mustn't breathe a word to anyone else! You understand?"

"Yes, yes," whispered Chatterton, with an eager nod. "What is the animal?"

"Clothes-line," said Will, a finger to his lips.

"You advise me to have a good bet on Clothes-line?"

"Sure thing!" nodded Will. "Put your shirt on it!"

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