

THESE STARS WILL : ALEX : LEONARD : STAINLESS : SEXTON
HAY JAMES HENRY STEPHEN BLAKE ARE INSIDE!

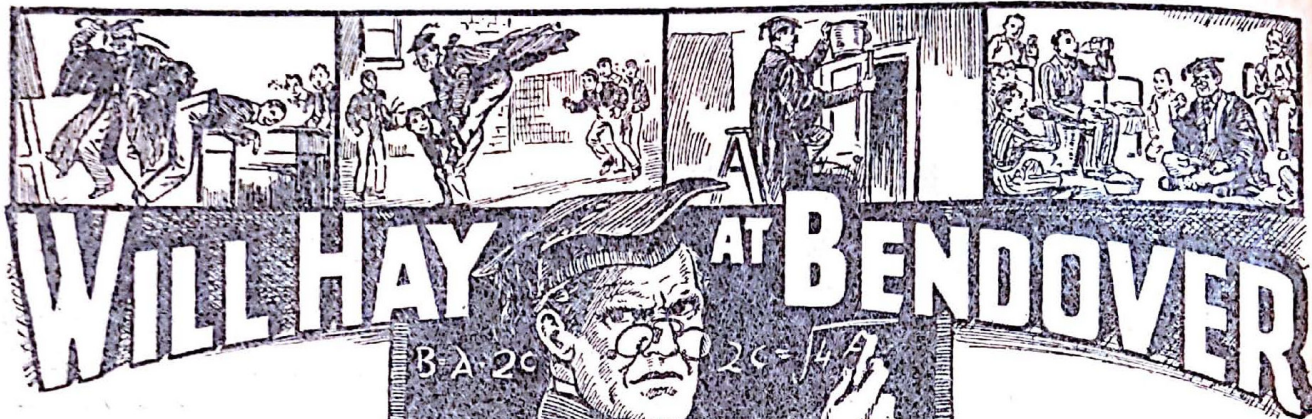
The PILOT

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"Oh, sir, will you please come at once?" exclaimed Reggie Pyke, bursting into Will Hay's study at Bendover College.

The new master of the Fourth Form at Bendover frowned so sharply and suddenly that his nose-pippers slid off their perch and landed on the book he was reading. He replaced them hastily, and frowned more carefully.

Will Hay was reclining gracefully in his armchair, with his feet resting on the study table. It was a strong oak table, and bore the strain nobly. He was reading the book he had lately secured at a bargain price in Duddlebury—"A History of Bendover College, from 1466 to 1937, with Complete Description of Local Topography and all Objects of Archaeological Interest." This snappy title had taken Will's fancy.

He was deep in the chapter dealing with the ancient turret of Bendover College, in the floor of which was a trapdoor, nicely arranged by the old-time Barons of Bendover to take the stranger in. This interested Will Hay, so he was naturally annoyed when Pyke, the sneak of the Fourth, burst in so suddenly.

"What do you mean, Pyke?" he snapped. "How dare you stomp into a buddy—"

"Wha-at?" gasped Reggie. "I mean bump into a study, in that unmannerly manner?" demanded Will Hay sternly. "What is the matter?"

"Garnett's gone out of bounds, sir!" gasped Reggie. "I—I'm afraid something may happen to him, sir, up in the old turret. Dr. Shrubbs put it strictly out of bounds, Mr. Hay. It's very dangerous to climb out of the windows there, sir."

Will Hay lifted his feet from the table, and rose. He shook out the folds of his gown and picked up a cane.

"If you are concerned about the safety of your school-fellow, Pyke, I will excuse you for sneaking," he said. "Even if Garnett has the neck to disregard his headmaster's instructions, I must not allow him to break it. Come with me."

Will Hay hurried from his study with Pyke at his heels. Perhaps he did not observe the sly gleam in Reggie's eyes, for the Bendover Fourth did not think their new Form-master very observant. A long passage led to the turret stair and, at the corner, several of the Fourth were gathered, who all gazed with great interest at Will Hay as he came hurrying up with Reggie Pyke. The latter winked at his pal Fruity Snell as he passed, and Fruity grinned. Blind, apparently, to the wink and the grin, Will Hay started up the turret stair. He looked back as Reggie lingered behind.

"Come with me," he rapped. "I am new here, and have not yet explored this object of archaeological interest. Lead the way!"

"It's straight up the stair, sir!" said Reggie Pyke. "The door's open in front of you on the landing."

"I said lead the way!" remarked the new master of the Fourth, stepping back.

"I—I've got a pain in my leg, sir, the—the stairs are rather too much for me—"

"Which leg?" demanded Will Hay.

"The—the right leg, sir!"

"Very good! I will now give you a pain in the left to match—"

"Wow!" yelled Pyke, as the cane sang on his trousers. "Ow! I say—wow!"

"Can you manage the stairs now?" asked Will Hay.

"I—I—I'll try, sir!" gasped Pyke.

"That's right," said Will Hay encouragingly. "Try, you little toad—I mean, my little man! If at first you don't succeed, suck aniseed! I will follow you, Pyke! Any little assistance I can render—"

Whack!

"Wow! It's all right, sir!" gasped Reggie, and he bolted up the stairs to the turret landing. Will Hay followed him, leaving the bunch of Fourth Formers grinning at the foot of the stair.

On the landing, Reggie Pyke halted. Before him was the low arched doorway of the turret-room. It was a room with loophole windows, giving a wide view of the surroundings of Bendover College.

"Lead on, Macduff!" said Will Hay.

"It—it's straight in that doorway, sir!" stammered Reggie Pyke. "Walk straight in, sir."

WILL HAY

Is the star who makes you

Laugh and keeps you

Laughing. In all these yarns

Hilarity is the keynote,

And all "PILOT" readers will enjoy these

Yarns of Bendover . . . they're unique!

"I think I said lead on," remarked Will Hay. "Go into that room, Pyke, and tell Garnett to come out at once."

"Oh crickey!" gasped Reggie. "I—I think Garnett's gone, sir! I—I think he must have gone while I was calling you, sir."

"We must make sure," said Will Hay, shaking his head. "He may be hiding behind the door, Pyke. Go in—"

"I—I'm sure he's not there, sir!" howled Reggie. For the life of him, he dared not step into that turret-room.

"Let us make assurance doubly sure, my bonny boy!" said Will Hay. "Five minutes ago, you were deeply anxious for Garnett's safety. You appear to have lost your anxiety on his account. Revive it, Pyke, revive it! Your deep concern for a boy who recently punched your nose does you credit, Pyke. Don't fall from this high standard! Get on with it."

He gave Reggie a push onward.

The arched doorway was narrow. Reggie Pyke clung to both door-posts with his hands. The ancient oak floor of that turret-room looked innocent enough—as firm and solid as any other floor at Bendover. So it was, when a certain bolt at the doorway was in position. But when that bolt was not in position, part of it was wont to tilt up like a seesaw, and shoot anyone who stood on it into the cell below. And Reggie Pyke knew what had happened to that bolt, because he had the best of reasons for knowing!

"I—I say, sir, I—I can see all over the room, and he's not there!" howled Reggie Pyke. "I—I can't see anything of him in the room, sir."

"Then he must have hidden himself," said Will. "Go in and look for him."

Reggie had an inspiration.

"L-l-let me tie my shoe-lace, sir!" he gasped.

He stooped in the dusky arch of the doorway. In a groove in the floor was a long iron bolt—recently oiled. Reggie fumbled with his shoe-lace with one hand—with the other he pushed the long bolt back into its crevice under the floor. All was safe now, and Reggie gasped with relief as he rose.

"I am waiting, Pyke," said Will Hay. "You are tasting my wine—I mean, wasting my time. Perhaps a spot of swiping may help you—"

Whack!

"Ow!" howled Reggie, as he bolted into the turret-room.

The floor, now that the bolt was fixed, was firm as a rock. Will Hay did not follow, but smiled cheerily after Reggie from the doorway. "Look for him, Pyke!" he advised. "Take your time! There is no hurry! You may remain here and continue the search until prep!"

Will Hay jerked the door of the turret-room shut, turned the key in the lock, and put the key in his pocket. He descended the turret stair, and smiled genially as he met the gaze

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of the juniors below. From above, came a loud sound of hammering on an oak door, and a yelling voice.

"Let me out! I say, let me out! I ain't going to stick here for two hours! Oh crileky! Let me out of this, will you?" ejaculated Jerry Smart.

"Oh crumb!" he locked him in the turret-room, sir?"

"That," said Will Hay, "is precisely what I have done, Smart! Your excellent school-fellow Pyke is deeply anxious about Garnett, who appears to have hidden himself in the turret-room. This is very much to his credit, Smart, as he does not like the boy Garnett personally. I am bound to encourage this. I shall allow Pyke to continue the search till prep."

With that, Will Hay bestowed a kind nod on the juniors, and billowed away. A roar of laughter from the Fourth Formers almost drowned the banging from the turret-room, and the master of the Fourth ambled back to his study, and resumed his armchair and his book with a cheery smile on his face.

"THAT old donkey—"
"Eh?"
"That interfering old ass—"
"What?"

"That—that—that—cackling old colonel—"
Will Hay raised his eyebrows. He had drifted into Dr. Shrubbs' study, and he found the headmaster of Bendover in a state of un- wanted excitement. The Head was striding with to and fro, his very whiskers bristling with wrath, his complexion almost purple. He seemed on the point of grinding his teeth; and was, in fact, only restrained by remembering that they were an expensive set.

"My dear sir," said Will Hay, "why the excitement? Whence the worry? Where- fore?"

Dr. Shrubbs tried to calm himself.

"My dear Hay," he said, "I can trust you! You are aware of the scheming of Dunkley Pyke, the parent of that little tick in your Form, to push me out of my post here? You are aware that he is backed up by Colonel Chatterton, the chairman of the governing board? You are standing by me now, Hay?"

"At the moment, no," said Will. "To be exact, I am standing in front of you—"

"Pooh! I mean, you are helping me in this struggle—"

"To the last lot in the shocker, sir!" said Will Hay earnestly. "I mean to say, the last shot in the locker. Is there a new move on the part of the enemy, sir? Trust me to put paid to it!"

"I trust you, Hay!" said Dr. Shrubbs. "I will trust you with anything."

"You could trust me, sir, with a five-pound note," said Will Hay. "If you feel disposed to do so, I—"

"Let us keep to the point," said the headmaster of Bendover hastily. "I have heard from Colonel Chatterton, Mr. Hay. He is coming down to the school to-morrow. That is not all! I have received a letter also from Mr. Dunkley Pyke, informing me that he is calling to see his son to-morrow. They will be here at the same time, Hay! There is something behind this—I cannot tell what. But I am sure of it."

Will Hay nodded thoughtfully.

"I cannot prevent the meeting here," said Dr. Shrubbs. "The chairman of the governing board can, of course, butt in whenever he chooses. As for Mr. Pyke, if he desires to see his son, I cannot stop him."

An unvarnished statement on the part of Mr. Pyke," said Will Hay, shaking his head. "How could anyone possibly desire to see that little blighter? There is something on, sir!"

"I am sure of it!" said Dr. Shrubbs. "Yet what can the scheme be? What is Dunkley Pyke plotting now? The colonel is an ass, sir, but Dunkley Pyke is a rascal—a scheming rascal! Somehow he intends to wind that old donkey round his finger while they are here together. But how, Hay, how?"

"That will want some thinking out, sir!" said Will. "Leave it to me. Brains will tell, sir—brains will tell!"

The master of the Fourth left Dr. Shrubbs' study and strolled out of the House. He glanced at a crowd of his Form playing leap-

frog in the quad. Reggie Pyke, with his hands in his pockets, was lounging by the wall, watching the other fellows, with his usual sneering expression. Nothing in the way of healthy exercise had much appeal for Reggie Pyke. Every now and then Reggie tilted back his head to glance up at the clock tower of Bendover. Will Hay gave him rather a stern glance. He would never have been surprised to learn that that dubious member of his Form had some disreputable appointment to keep outside the school.

"Play up, Pyke!" shouted Tubby Green.

"Tuck in your tuppenny!"

"Rot!" answered Reggie, with a shrug of his narrow shoulders. He gave another glance up at the clock tower, and walked away to the school gates. He was passing out when he felt a tap on his shoulder and looked round, scowling, at the smiling face of Will Hay.

"Going somewhere special, my boy?" asked Will genially.

"Oh, no, sir! Only for a stroll!" said Pyke, his little, sharp eyes watching his Form-master's face furtively.

"Excellent!" said Will. "Then we will take a little walk together, Pyke. Come, my boy. Shall we walk as far as Duddlebury?"

"I—I—I was going the other way, sir!" stammered Pyke.

"What's the odds so long as you're happy?" agreed Will Hay. "Let us go the other way, by all means."

"I—I—I—" stammered Reggie. "I—I mean, I—I—"

"A constant repetition of the first personal pronoun conveys no particular meaning, to my mind," said Will Hay regretfully. "Perhaps you will be a little more explicit, Pyke."

"I—I mean, I—I've got some lines to do for the Head, sir, and—and I—I think I'd better not go out. I—I'd forgotten them."

"Go in and do your lines, by all means!" said Will Hay. "You may show them to me before taking them to the Head, Pyke—I shall hope to see some improvement in your handwriting. Do not forget, my boy."

With a cheery nod, Will walked on—leaving Reggie Pyke with an almost demoniac expression on his face—and wishing that he had invented some other excuse for dodging that walk with Will Hay.

Will walked very thoughtfully down Duddlebury Lane. Like Dr. Shrubbs, he was sure that Dunkley Pyke meant mischief by tinning his visit to catch the colonel at Bendover. But what? For the life of him, Will could not see how Dunkley Pyke was going to further his scheme for stepping into Dr. Shrubbs' shoes, simply by spending an hour or two at the

school while the chairman of the governors was there.

It was a matter that needed some hard thought. Will Hay turned from the lane, by a gap in the hedge, and sat down in the thick grass, under a shady beech, to think it out. He leaned back against the massive trunk of the beech, and took off his mortar-board and fanned his face with it—it was a warm day. For ten minutes or more, Will put in hard thinking—and that unaccustomed exercise tired him a little. He nodded. He nodded again.

He was nodding into a doze when he was suddenly startled by a grating, grinding sound, which might have been made by rusty machinery badly in need of oil. But Will knew that it was not that. He had heard that it grating noise before, and he knew that it was the voice of Dr. Shrubbs' rival, Mr. Dunkley Pyke.

Will Hay sat up. He glanced round, but the thick trunk of the beech hid the man who was speaking from his sight. It also, naturally, hid Will Hay from Mr. Dunkley Pyke's sight. Mr. Pyke, evidently, had stepped through the gap in the hedge as Will had done a quarter of an hour ago, and was leaning on the other side of the beech.

"The slack young rascal!" Mr. Pyke was saying. "Why is he not here? If I am a few minutes late, that is no reason why Reggie should be!"

Will Hay winked at a passing bee. Mr. Pyke, who was booked to visit Bendover on the morrow, was here, in the vicinity of the school, to meet his hopeful son! That was the appointment that Reggie had to keep—delayed by the lines Will Hay had left him to do. No wonder he had not wanted his Form-master to walk with him!

"Bother the boy!" went on the grating voice. "I will—Oh, here he comes!"

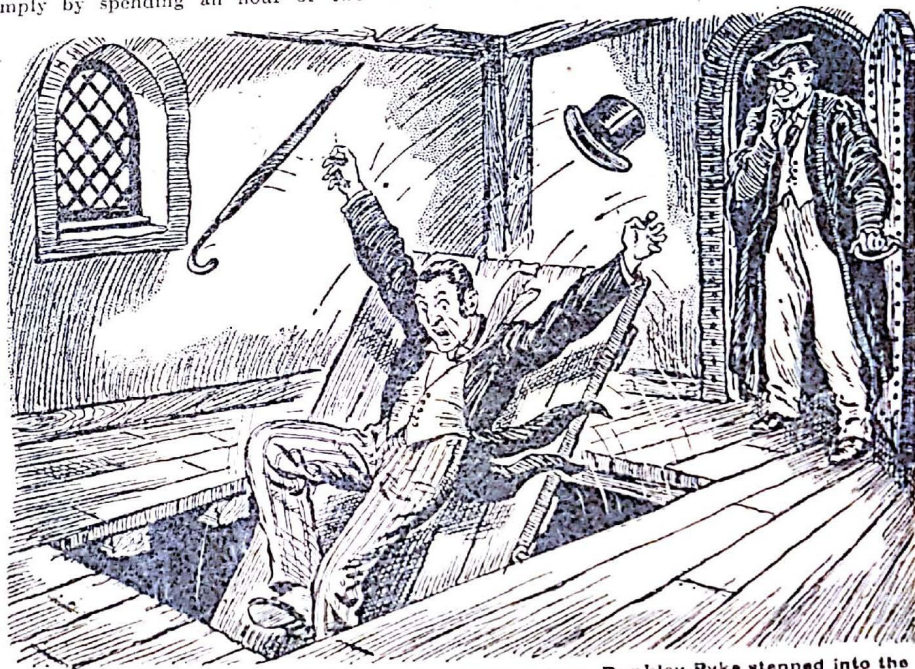
There was a sound of scrambling in the hedge.

"You're late, you young rascal!" rapped Mr. Pyke.

"Not my fault!" came Reggie's sulky voice. "That beast—that silly ass Will Hay made me late! I told the brute I had lines for the Head, to get rid of him—and he told me he would look at them, so I've had to do them! I say, pater, you'll sack that silly fool the minute you become headmaster of Bendover, won't you?"

"Rely on that!" came the grating voice. "Will Hay will leave Bendover so quick it will make his head swim. Now, Reggie, listen—I must not linger about here."

Will Hay winked up at a swallow!



Never suspecting that he was being lured into a trap, Dunkley Pyke stepped into the room. Next moment the flooring tilted under him and down he went into the secret cell. "Happy landing!" murmured Will Hay, from the doorway.

"Why couldn't you leave it till to-morrow, then, when you're coming to the school?"

"I'll tell you why, Reginald! You've got to get busy before I arrive to-morrow. You told me in your letter home of the trick you tried to play on Hay—sending him into a room with a hidden trap in the floor. He did not discover the trap?"

"Oh, no! Hadn't a suspicion! I shoved the bolt back, pretending to tie my shoelace, as the silly fool made me go in first—"

"Could you get Dr. Shrubbs to walk into that room after lunch to-morrow?"

"Oh, my eye!" said Reggie. "Easily! I could spin him the same yarn I spun that duffer Hay. The bolt's supposed to be kept fastened, and he wouldn't be expecting anything. But, I say, the Head would be shirty—"

"That would not affect you, Reginald, as, if all goes well, he would not continue to be Head!"

"How's that, pater?"

"Cannot you see? Colonel Chatterton will be at the school to-morrow, to see Dr. Shrubbs. By sheer chance, of course, I am on the spot. Dr. Shrubbs is not there to receive the colonel. He cannot be found! There is no explanation—no hint of what he means by such extraordinary conduct. Is Colonel Chatterton likely to guess that Dr. Shrubbs is sitting in a cell under a trapdoor in a floor?"

"He, he!" chorled Reggie. "Not in a month of Sundays."

"You see the result! Bendover is left without a headmaster. Colonel Chatterton feels insulted because the headmaster has chosen to disappear. Nothing can be heard of him, but, being on the spot, I offer to carry on in his place. The colonel is already my warmest supporter—he will jump at it. Once I am in the position of headmaster, Reginald, with the colonel's support on the board, it will not be easy for Dr. Shrubbs to shift me again."

"Oh crumbs!" cackled Reggie. "But, I say, old Shrubbs will explain when he gets out of the cellar—"

"Perhaps he will not be believed, Reggie, and I shall certainly cast doubt on such a fantastic story. Moreover, he will not get out in a hurry. A few days in a cellar will not hurt him. If he does, I am, of course, sorry; but, in the circumstances, it cannot be helped. Meanwhile, there will be a report spread about that he has been seen at certain race meetings, which will account for his otherwise inexplicable absence—"

"This," said Reggie, "is real genius! You'll be Prime Minister some day, pater, if you ain't run in first!"

"When Dr. Shrubbs reappears, with an absurd and improbable story of having been shut in a cellar, I hardly think the governors will believe him," said Mr. Pyke. "Now, I rely on you, Reginald. This looks to me like a winner, if you do your part."

"You can put your shirt on it, guv'nor!" said Reggie. "I say, though, can you let me have a ten-bob note?"

"I cannot!" answered Mr. Pyke tersely.

"What I mean is, I may not be able to get old Shrubbs to walk into that particular room— Oh, thanks! I thought you could manage it, pater! Leave it to me to snaffle the Shrubbs bird!"

Reggie Pyke walked back to Bendover, plus a ten-shilling note, with a smile on his face. Mr. Dunkley Pyke walked to the station, minus a ten-shilling note, with a frown on his face. Will Hay, sitting on the farther side of the beech-tree, with his mortar-board resting on his knee, winked at the mortar-board.

"DISMISS!" said Will Hay, at the end of class the following morning.

He smiled brightly at the Fourth Form as they obeyed the order with alacrity. It was a half-holiday at Bendover that afternoon, and the juniors were looking forward to it—most of all, Reggie Pyke. So was Will Hay. The master of the Bendover Fourth had happy anticipations for that afternoon.

"One moment, Pyke!" he added. "Stay!" The bad hat of the Fourth lingered unwillingly, while the rest went out. He watched Will Hay furtively and suspiciously.

"Pyke," said Will Hay, "I have noticed

certain stains on your fingers. I fear that you are addicted to smoking. Turn out your pockets on my desk!"

Pyke drew a deep, hard breath. He hesitated to obey, and cast a longing glance at the door. A gentle grip fixed on his extensive ear.

"Wow!" squealed Reggie.

"I am waiting!" remarked Will Hay.

Sullenly and savagely, Reggie turned out his pockets. Scowling, he laid a packet of cigarettes on the Form-master's desk. Will Hay shook his head sadly.

"I feared it!" he said. "I feared it, Pyke! Now, I shall not come you for this, Pyke. I prefer you to meditate on the frowns of your conduct, and to make better resolutions for the future. Will you spend this afternoon in meditation, Pyke?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" exclaimed Reggie eagerly. "Certainly, sir!" He could hardly believe that he was getting off so cheaply.

"Very good," said Will Hay. "Meditation is the thing—meditation in some quiet, secluded spot, far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife, as the poet so feelingly puts it! You like this idea, Pyke? You prefer it to a caning?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Reggie.



Father: "Never let me catch you smoking my cigarettes again, you young rascal—smoke your big brother's!"

"So do I," said Will Hay. "How pleasant it is, my boy, to be able to please all parties! Now, come with me, and I will lead you to a quiet, secluded spot, where your meditations will not be interrupted till tea-time."

With a hand on Pyke's collar, Will led him out of the Form-room and down a corridor. He stopped before an iron-studded door—that of the punishment-room—and inserted a key into the lock. Reggie gave a squeal of alarm.

"I—I—I say, sir, you're not going to put me in punny?" he gasped.

"You get my meaning exactly!" said Will Hay. He threw open the door. "What quieter and more secluded spot could be found for the meditations that are to occupy you this afternoon?" He pushed the dismayed Pyke in. "Your dinner will be sent in to you, Pyke. I shall come and let you out for tea. You may begin your meditations immediately!"

"I—I—I say, sir," yelled Reggie—"I say—" He stuttered with dismay. Locked in "punny" for the afternoon, how was he going to entrap Dr. Shrubbs in the turret? The whole scheme was knocked on the head if he was not at liberty that afternoon. "I—I—I say, sir, I—I'd rather be caned! I would, really! I say— Oh, you beast!"

Reggie ended with a dismal howl as the door was shut on him and locked.

After dinner, Will Hay breezed into Dr. Shrubbs' study. He found the Head reading after his exertions at lunch, and looking worried and gloomy.

"Colonel Chatterton will be here at three o'clock, Mr. Hay," he said. "That would matter little—I can manage him on his own. But at half-past three, Mr. Pyke arrives; they will be together, and— Dr. Shrubbs shook his head glumly. "That man means mischief, Hay! He has some dastardly trick up his sleeve! I don't get it, but I am sure of it— What the dickens are you doing, Mr. Hay?" broke off the Head testily.

"Cracking a Brazil nut, sir!"

"Is this a time for eating nuts, Mr. Hay?" hooted the Head.

"But I am not going to eat the nut, sir," said Will Hay mildly. "I am removing the shell, sir, to get at the kernel, but not to eat it, I assure you. It is destined to serve a useful purpose—nothing less than to save me from departing from the straight and narrow path of veracity this afternoon, sir."

"I do not understand you in the least, Mr. Hay."

"I have heard that remark before, sir," said Will Hay regretfully. "Boys in my Form have made that very remark when I have been teaching them mathematics. But no matter! I trickled in to assure you that you may enjoy the improving conversation of Colonel Chatterton this afternoon without bothering about Mr. Pyke. Owing to certain arrangements made by his son, I believe he will not be seeing the colonel at all."

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Shrubbs.

He sat down again, looking much brighter, and Will Hay drifted out of the study.

A footer match was beginning on Little Side. The House was deserted. Will Hay trickled along the corridor that led to the turret stair. He mounted that stair, and found the door of the turret-room wide open; but he did not step into that room. The bolt was visible in the groove under the arch as Will stooped and peered through the dusk of the doorway. Reggie Pyke had already made his preparations there during morning break, and by now he should have been leading Dr. Shrubbs into the trap. Will Hay smiled. That part of Reggie's programme had been cut. Keeping carefully outside the turret-room, Will spun the shelled nut across the floor to the farther side.

Then he descended the stair and strolled across to the sports field, and watched the game with one eye, keeping the other on the gates. He was rewarded at last by the sight of a tall, angular figure striding in. Colonel Chatterton had arrived.

The colonel strode away to the House and disappeared. Then the master of the Fourth lost his interest in the game, and walked down to the gates.

Half-past three was chiming from the clock-tower when Mr. Dunkley Pyke blew in. Will Hay stepped forward, with a graceful bow.

"Mr. Pyke, may I ask you—"

"You may ask me nothing, Mr. Hay!" yapped Dunkley Pyke. "I have a very low opinion of you, sir! I disapprove of you! I—"

"You flatter me, sir!" said Will Hay. "But I was going to ask you whether you have seen anything of Dr. Shrubbs?"

Mr. Pyke came to a stop, his fishy eyes glistering. He had had no doubt that Reginald would carry out his part of the scheme. This looked like it.

"Dr. Shrubbs?" he repeated. "Is he not in the school? Do you mean that he is absent, Mr. Hay?"

"I mean, sir, that if you expect to see Dr. Shrubbs this afternoon, a disappointment is in store for you," said Will Hay. "Colonel Chatterton is here, sir. If you would care to see the 'kernel'—"

"Certainly I should!" said Dunkley Pyke. "It is very singular—very extraordinary—that Dr. Shrubbs should be absent when a governor of the school has called to see him! Please take me to the colonel at once!"

"Pray come with me, sir!" answered Will Hay politely. "The 'kernel' is, at the present moment, in the turret-room. A very fine view

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WILL HAY AT BENDOVER.

(Continued from page 604.)

of the surroundings of Bendover may be obtained from that room, Mr. Pyke. The kernel has been there more than half an hour."

"Show me the way at once!" snapped Mr. Pyke.

"This way, sir!"

With his gown billowing in the breeze, the master of the Fourth led the way. He did not look at Dunkley Pyke; but he was aware of the gloating grin of satisfaction on Mr. Pyke's crafty face. They arrived at the turret stair, and Will Hay pointed upward.

"If you will ascend that stair, Mr. Pyke, the turret-room will be before you, and you will see the 'kernel' near the window?" he said.

"Very good!" snapped Dunkley Pyke.

He whisked up the stairs, and stepped into the arched doorway of the turret-room. That it was the room in which his hopeful son had attempted to trap Will Hay, Mr. Pyke was not yet aware. He was going to guess it very soon, however. Glancing into the room, he saw the kernel of a Brazil nut lying on the floor near the window, without, however, heeding it. Naturally, it did not occur to Mr. Pyke that that was the "kernel" to which Will Hay had alluded. That was not Will Hay's fault—he had said "kernel" plainly enough, and if Mr. Pyke mistook it for a different word of the same pronunciation, that was his look-out. He stepped into the turret-room to look for the kernel that was not there! What happened next quite surprised Dunkley Pyke.

Will Hay, following him up the stair, looked on with genial interest. A wild and startled yell floated from Dunkley Pyke, as the floor tilted under him, and he shot downwards. His hat flew in one direction, his umbrella in another, as he landed, sprawling, on a pile of straw, which Will Hay had thoughtfully placed there overnight to receive him, in the cell under the floor.

"Happy landing!" murmured Will Hay.

The floor shot up into its place when Mr. Pyke's weight was off it. It resumed the horizontal, and looked as innocent as before. Will Hay pushed the bolt into place, securing

it, as from below the floor came a series of frantic howls, muffled by thick oak, which died away as Will Hay closed the door and went down the stair.

Five minutes later the master of the Fourth was watching the game again; while, in Dr. Shrubbs' study, the Head was enjoying, uninterrupted, the ample flow of Colonel Chatterton's conversation. The Head was feeling relieved and cheerful: Will Hay was feeling pleasantly bucked. What Mr. Dunkley Pyke was feeling like was quite another matter.

REGGIE PYKE scowled like a demon in a pantomime as the door of "punny" was unlocked and Will Hay smiled in.

"I trust," said Will mildly, "that you have benefited by meditations in this quiet and secluded spot, Pyke. But we must not over-do it, my boy—we must not over-do it! I regret that I am a few minutes late in releasing you, but I felt bound to show Colonel Chatterton respect, as chairman of the governors, by seeing him off—"

"Has—has the colonel gone, sir?" gasped Pyke.

Will Hay raised his eyebrows.

"Were you interested in his visit, Pyke? Yes, he has gone—he is, at this moment, stepping into his train at Duddelbury—"

"Oh!" gasped Reggie. "Where's my father?"

"Mr. Pyke?" asked Will Hay. "I have not seen him, laddie, since he went up to the turret-room some hours ago—"

"What?" yelled Reggie. He jumped clear of the floor, staring at Will Hay in horror. "He—he went up to the tut-tut-turret-room?"

"He did, Pyke! A magnificent view of the surrounding country is to be obtained from the windows of the turret-room—My boy, you should not brash so rudely past your master! However, I will excuse you."

Reggie Pyke flew down the corridor. Will Hay strolled away to the headmaster's study, where he found Dr. Shrubbs looking quite merry and bright.

"I have had quite a pleasant talk with

Colonel Chatterton," he said. "Old donkey as he undoubtedly is, he is not so bad when that rascal Pyke is not with him. Oddly enough, Hay, Pyke has not called, after all. I wonder where he is—"

"I think, sir, that Pyke, of my form, has now gone to look for him," answered Will Hay. "I have an impression that he will find him in a bad temper—a very bad temper! Dear me, that certainly looks like it!" added Will Hay, pointing to the quad.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Dr. Shrubbs, staring from the window.

Reggie Pyke came bolting suddenly out of a doorway. After him flew an infuriated figure, brandishing an umbrella, which descended on Pyke of the Fourth with a terrific whack.

Whack, whack, whack, whack! rang the umbrella, and Reggie's yells of pain rang across the quad. The boys of Bendover stared blankly at the startling sight of Reggie Pyke dodging and twisting and yelling under the smites of the parental umbrella. Dr. Shrubbs gazed spellbound.

"What—what—what can this mean?" he he gasped.

"I gather, sir, that Mr. Pyke is displeased with Reginald's arrangements for this afternoon," said Will Hay, shaking his head. "I get that impression, sir. This certainly looks like it."

Reggie Pyke, yelling frantically, fled out of gates, and after him flew Mr. Dunkley Pyke, still smiting. It was an hour later that Reggie crawled in, alone, looking as if he found life a weary burden, hardly worth the trouble of living.

That evening, fellows passing near the Head's study, where Dr. Shrubbs sat with the master of the Fourth, heard a series of loud chortles and chuckles proceeding from that apartment. They concluded that Will Hay was telling the Head a very funny story, to make him laugh like that! They were right—he was!

There's no limit to the laughs in these yarns of Bendover. Look out for another "side-splitter" next week, featuring the funniest Form-master in the world—WILL HAY!

ALEX JAMES' SCHOOLDAYS.

(Continued from page 612.)

how, had been tampered with. He made a hasty examination of Huntley's boot, and saw plainly enough that the stitches holding the sole on to the upper of the boot had been slashed with a keen instrument.

"There's foul play here!" he muttered to Huntley. "Your boots have been tampered with. Get off and change 'em, for goodness' sake—and don't be all day!"

With Huntley and Vic Ellis off the field the game once again turned in favour of the Sixth, Jamie Montgomery himself bursting through the defence and slamming in a shot which half-broke Fatty Hunter's fingers as he gallantly tried to hold the shot.

"Two all! Up the Sixth!"

But the troubles of the Fourth were not over yet. Before half-time came round, six players had had to leave the field to get fresh boots. Who had tampered with the boots now became the topic of discussion—but, save Dod Jarvie, no one was in a position to say; and he, for very obvious reasons, was keeping very quiet about it.

Alex started the second half with a delightful dribble which took him within shooting range. Then, when everyone, including the Sixth Form goalie, expected him to shoot, Alex tapped the ball behind him and slightly to his left, to where Vic Ellis, pounding up at full pace, took it in his stride and banged it goalwards. It was the type of shot which the

best goalie in the world cannot stop; it caught the Sixth Form custodian off his balance and out of position. Ruefully he gathered up the spinning leather and punted it up-field disgustedly for the restart.

"Three—two!" The hopes of the Fourth rose again, and the playing fields echoed to a storm of voices calling upon Alex James to "do it again." But the Sixth had something to say about that. In a surprise, tearaway attack, Jamie Montgomery, moving up with the forwards, beat man after man, and swung out a whizzer of a pass to his outside-right. Back came the ball, hard and low and fast, beating Fatty to the wide.

"Three—all!"

Great excitement held the spectators. The match was proving to be a "thriller" indeed, and eyes began anxiously to look at watches as time sped by. Then a groan went up from the Fourth when, ten minutes before time, Alex James' boots suffered a similar fate to those of Martin, Huntley, and the rest. Both soles were flapping loose, making it dangerous to run, let alone kick at the ball. And, squatting on the touchline, Alex feverishly wrenched off his boots. His sweat-hazed eyes saw the Sixth swarming into the Fourth goalmouth. This was not the time for any Fourth Former to go off the field; every man was needed if the Sixth were to be kept out.

With a wrathful yell, Alex shielded the burst boots to a youngster on the touchline, and ran back into the field of play in his stockinged feet. He "reported" to the referee, and at his signal to go ahead, Alex, like a

young human battering ram, charged into Montgomery, who had the ball at his feet and was about to shoot for goal. Over went the skipper of the Sixth, his opportunity gone for ever. With a rueful smile, he saw Alex dribble another Sixth Former, slip the ball to Martin, who, racing away like the wind, banged it into the net.

It was the winning goal—the last kick of the match, for an instant later Mr. Glory was whistling "full-time." The Fourth had won—the midgets of the Lower School had beaten the mighty stalwarts of the Sixth. No wonder pride and joy made Alex's face glow like a young full moon as followed by the rest of his tired but jubilant team, he went up to Baillie Jarvie to receive the coveted trophy.

"All we want now to make a real day of it, Fatty," he told his pal in the changing-room, "is to find out the rotter who tried to ditch us—the cad who slit our boots. What wouldn't I give if I knew his name."

"Yes," granted Fatty; "but that's only half of what I'd like to give him. It's a mystery."

And a mystery it remained. Dod Jarvie saw to that; but he found no satisfaction in the dirty trick he had played. As had been the case of so many of his precious schemes, the result was different from what he had expected.

The Fourth had won; and Alex James, his hated enemy, was more of a hero than ever!

Alex James and Dod Jarvie are in the limelight again next week. Read how Dod Jarvie makes another attempt to disgrace his enemy and how Fatty Hunter comes to the rescue.

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