

WILL HAY AT BENDOVER—AND 7 OTHER STARS

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# The PILOT

2<sup>D</sup> Every Friday

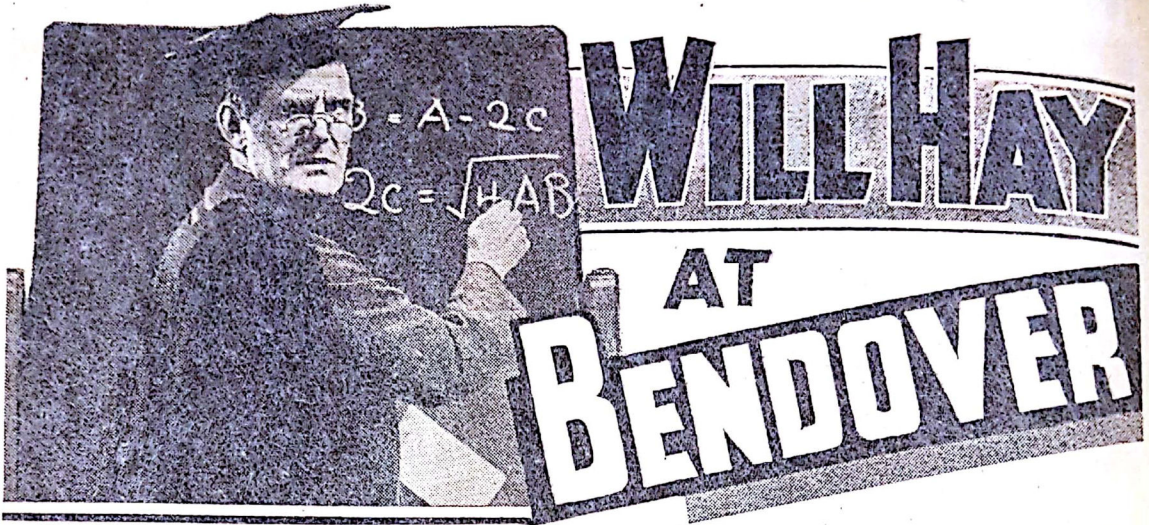


HERE ARE  
THE THREE COOKS

**MIKE,  
SPIKE,  
AND  
GRETA**

WATCH FOR THEM  
EVERY WEEK





(Photo by Courtesy of Gainsborough Pictures, whose latest film starring Will Hay as a schoolmaster will shortly be showing at your local cinema.)

**W**ILL HAY sniffed. He had noticed the pungent aroma as he breezed into the Fourth Form Room at Bendover the last lesson of the morning. Putting it down to somebody burning cabbage-stalks in the school kitchen garden, he had promptly closed the windows. But the aroma had only got worse instead of better.

"H'm! None of you boys burning, I suppose?" he asked, squinting suspiciously at his cheerful pupils. "If the school buildings are afire, we shall have to get—"

"What are?"

Will Hay frowned. "Don't ask idiotic questions, Smart. I said 'if' the school buildings are afire, we shall have to get—"

"What are?"

"The school buildings, of course, you young dummy! Where's the sense in asking 'what are'?"

"I'm not asking, sir; I'm telling you!" exclaimed Jerry Smart patiently. "You said 'if' the school buildings are afire, we shall have to get— And I said 'water,' not 'what are.' See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"H'm! I see. Well, we've had quite enough of that, Smart," coughed Will, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "I've had quite enough of this essence of dustbin perfume, too. If it goes on much longer, we shall all start choking."

"Oh, that's good, sir!"

"Eh?"

"I said that's good, sir," grinned Smart. "Much better than lessons." "Much better than lessons?" Will Hay's voice rose to a yell, while his nose-nippers performed a sudden dive down to his upper lip. "Why, you young idiot, surely you don't think it will be better than lessons if we all start suffocating?"

"Oh, no, sir! But you said that if it went on much longer, we should all start 'joking,' didn't you, sir?"

"Did I?" Will's forehead crinkled up like corrugated iron. "Well, if that's what I said, we'd better let it go at that; and you'd better sit down while you're safe, Smart. Attention, boys, now! This morning we're going to take geography."

"Skittles," at the back of the class, gave a cheer.

"Hurrah! Can we have a snap at your face, sir?"

"Snap at my face?" Will glared indignantly over the rims of his glasses. "Of course you can't! What do you think you are? An Alsatian wolfhound, or a cannibal?"

"Neither sir. I mean, can we take a snap of you—with a camera? Didn't you say we were going to take photography?"

"Geography, you nitwit—geography!" hooted Will furiously. "Don't you know what geography is?"

"No, sir. What is it?"

"Well, it's—er—it's about longitude and latitude. And latitude's what I'm not giving you this morning!" snapped Will. "Let's get on with the washing—I mean, the lesson! Atshoo! Ouch!"

"Oh crickey!"

The fumes were thickening in the Form-room. Even the tough Fourth Formers were beginning to cough. Will Hay clasped his nose with a handkerchief, and tottered towards the class.

"Desks open, everybody!" he roared. "Something's burdig in this room, and I'b goig do find out what!"

The Fourth threw open their desks with a deafening clatter, and the source of the dustbin aroma was promptly seen when a cloud of smoke billowed out from a desk at the back. Will Hay pointed an accusing finger at the owner of that desk.

"So id's you, Smythe, is id? What the dickeds do you think you've got there?"

Smythe frowned.

"Nothing to get upset about, sir. It's a winter-warmer. I'm roasting some chestnuts in it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Brig it do be ad once!"

"I can't, sir!"

"Oh, you can't, can't you?" snorted Will. "Thee-I'll ged id byself! Stad aside!"

He hugged his nose more tightly with his handkerchief, and made a dash up to Smythe's desk. The winter-warmer, which was an old cocoa tin, with holes bored in the

sides, was inside the desk, smoking merrily. Will made a grab with his free hand, and yanked it out. The next instant, he leaped about three feet in the air, yelling fendshily: "Whoooh! Ow—whooop! I'm burned!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's why I said I couldn't bring it out to you, sir," grinned Smythe. "Where there's fire, there is sometimes heat, sir."

"Ow-ow! Water—quick, you young idiot!" hooted Will, hopping about like a cat on hot bricks. "Empty the fire-bucket over it before it sets the floorboards alight!"

"All serene, sir! Leave it to me!" chortled Jerry Smart.

He rushed to the fire-bucket that was hanging against the wall near the door, and returned in a flash with the bucket swinging on his arm.

"Coming over, sir!" he yelled. And the next moment about one and a half gallons of water shot out of the bucket.

Swoosh!

Some of it descended on the winter-warmer, and extinguished the burning rag therein, but a much larger quantity descended on Will Hay.

"Groooogh! Ouch! You clumsy young fat-head! What is all this?"

"What are?" grinned Jerry Smart. "It's what you asked for. What are—I mean, of course, water!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"H'm! I see. Well, get back to your desks—all of you!" barked Will. "Any more nonsense this morning, and there's going to be trouble, my lads!"

He bent down to see if Smythe's winter-warmer had cooled down. By an unlucky chance, Smythe had the same idea at the same moment, and their heads met midway with sufficient force to send Will's mortarboard skimming half-way across the Form-room.

Crack!

"Ow! Look where you're going, sir!" snapped Will, grabbing the winter-warmer. "This little incubator doesn't belong to you now. It's confiscated! See!"

"All right, then, sir. You can have the winter-warmer, and I'll have the chestnuts. They ought to be just right now—if the water hasn't got through the skins."

Will Hay glared. He had had to put up with a good deal of cheek from the Fourth since his arrival at Bendover. But there was a limit.

"So you think you're going to have the chestnuts, do you?" he said grimly. "Well,

EXCLUSIVE TO "The PILOT"!

WILL HAY,  
CHAMPION OF MIRTH,  
IS HERE TO KEEP YOU  
LAUGHING!

your little pie-faced wart, you've made a big mistake! If there's one thing I do bar, it's eating during lessons. I've always put my feet down on it, and I'm not going to allow it now! See?"

He opened the winter-warmer, fished amongst the burnt rag for the chestnuts. He peeled one and popped it into his mouth. "H'm! Not bad!" he grinned.

"My chestnuts!" moaned Smythe.

"Quite good, in fact," mumbled Will Hay, helping himself to two more. "Not, of course, helping getting burnt for, but—"

"That shouldn't have hurt you, sir," growled Smythe. "Even before you touched the tin, you were half-baked!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Will Hay flung away the winter-warmer and grabbed his cane. He yelled, snorting like "That's done it. Bend over!"

An old war-horse, "Bend over!"

Smythe, the master of the Fourth proceeded to the cheery, scowling furiously, obeyed. And treat his Form to a five-minutes' exhibition of trousers-dusting that drew howls of pain and wrath from his victim.

"And that's that!" said Will, rubbing his nose thoughtfully, as he sat down at his desk again. "Now it about time we did some work. Take grammar, Smart!"

"Yes, sir. Where shall I take it?" inquired Jerry innocently.

Will quizzed at him over the top of his nose-nippers.

"Any more of that, young Smart, and I'll give you something that's smarter. Now tell me what is wrong with this sentence: 'This morning, I rid with bike.'"

"Oh, that's easy, sir!" grinned Jerry. "You couldn't have rid your bike this morning because you took it to be repaired yesterday."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"O boy! O boy! O boy!" chortled Tubby Green.

Will Hay pecked at pursed lips with finger and thumb while he thought over that answer, and before he had reached a decision about it, the bell rang, signifying the end of morning classes. There was a wild rush as the Fourth headed for freedom, and Will Hay was left to reflect over it on his own.

**A**FTER dinner that day, Will Hay toddled along to Duddlebury village to collect the bike he had left at the repairer's.

Having paid the bill, he mounted the old boneshaker and pedalled a wobbly course through the rural lanes back to the school.

Little did he dream, as he wheeled the old bike down the path leading to the cycle-shed, of the storms that lay ahead on this particular afternoon.

Beaming toothily, he trundled the boneshaker into the cycle-shed—cheerfully omitting to notice that he nearly knocked over a junior who was standing back in the shadows. He parked the machine, trotted out again, and absent-mindedly locked the door behind him, and pocketed the key, thereby making it impossible for anybody else to get in or out of the shed. Then he ambled back to the School House.

Waiting for him at the door was Dr. Erasmus Shrubb, the headmaster of Bendover. His good-natured, scholarly face was clouded with worry.

"Hay, I've been waiting for you," he began. "Something terrible has happened—something utterly ghastly! And it's all your fault!"

Will Hay's nose-nippers pitched sideways. "My fault?"

"Yes, your fault! What made you go and upset the son of the wealthiest parents we have on our books?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you!" exclaimed the Head wrathfully. "You've upset young Smythe—and his parents are worth a million!"

"Oh, Hay scratched his chin.

"Oh, Smythe! H'm, I see! H'm, yes! I did come him in class. I admit it. The young fellow was cheeky. What about it?"

"What about it?" almost wept Dr. Shrubb.

"Everything about it, of course! There will

be a dreadful scandal when the news leaks out young Smythe has run away to sea!"

"To see what?" blinked Will.

"To see nothing!" snorted Dr. Shrubb impatiently.

"Well, that won't take him long. He ought to be back by tea-time," beamed Will. "I shouldn't worry about it if I were you, sir!"

Dr. Shrubb breathed hard.

"Understand this, Mr. Hay. Smythe has run away from school because of your treatment of him. He has left a note behind to say that he's going to get a job on a ship. Now do you understand?"

"Oh!" gasped Will. "Why didn't you say so at first, sir? And what are we going to do about it?"

"What are you going to do about it? Is the question!" barked the Head. "You're the one who drove him to take this course, Hay. It is your responsibility to bring him back."

Will Hay's brow corrugated.

"H'm! I see! I suppose he didn't mention what sea he was running away to? I mean there are such a lot of them. There's the Atlantic and the Mediterranean and the Serpentine—"

"Don't you worry, sir; I'll fetch the young scamp back. Leave it to me."

He ambled down to the gates, cogitating deeply. Smythe had run away to sea, and he had to get him back. Well, he could do that all right once he found him. But how the thunder was he to find him?

He put the problem to a group of Fourth Formers who were standing outside the porter's lodge, debating on what they should do with themselves for the afternoon.

"Smart! Gowing! Havers! Skittles! Attention! Listen, boys! I want your help. Smythe has skedaddled—ahem!—I mean, has run away."

"You mean he's done a bunk, sir?" grinned Jerry Smart.

"Skedaddled or done a bunk, he's gone—gone to sea, boys!" explained Will Hay. "And I've got to find him."

"Why not swim after him, sir?" suggested Gowing brightly.

"Talk sense, Gowing! The question is— which way would Smythe go to get to sea after he left Bendover?"

"I know, sir!" spoke up Skittles. "He'd go down to the river and hire a boat. You told us yourself in geography that every river finds its way down to the sea."

A toothy smile flashed across the Fourth

Form master's wrinkled features. He fairly beamed on Skittles.

"Good for you, my lad! Remember to go up one in class to-morrow morning! Now I must be off."

"Please, sir, can we come, too?" asked Smart, as Will Hay turned to go. "You may need help before you've finished."

"Thank you, Smart! The more the merrier! Hurry up, boys!"

The four grinning juniors fell in beside their master. A short walk down the lane and across a field brought them to the river. Here master and boys climbed into one of the school boats, and soon the boys were bending their backs to the oars, whilst Will Hay steered. In his preoccupation he steered the boat into a shallow tributary of the river before twenty minutes had passed.

"We're going well, boys!" he said breezily. "It's a case of a long pull and a strong pull, and we'll soon catch up with that young scamp Smythe. Lemme see—the current is getting faster hereabouts, though the river is getting narrower. Strange," he added, tapping the side of his nose thoughtfully—"very strange!"

"It's the right way, sir, anyway—I'm sure of that," said Smart, with a sly wink at his pals. "Now I come to think of it, it gets narrower farther along."

"That's right!" supplemented Gowing eagerly. "The tide runs along quite fast there. They've got a notice up—'Danger.'"

Will Hay nodded approvingly.

"Do you think it's safe, then?"

"Safe enough for us, sir," grinned Smart. "Some of the older chaps go canoeing there sometimes; shooting the rapids, they call it. Who minds a little danger, anyway?"

"Nobody, my boy—nobody!" snapped the Fourth Form master. "If shooting the rapids gets me nearer to Smythe, then we'll shoot 'em, by all means!"

The boat travelled along at a spanking pace, and the farther it went the easier it became, till the stage was reached when they were travelling along quite comfortably without the aid of oars at all.

"Take it easy, boys!" declared Will breezily.

"We shall reach the sea in no time if we keep on at this rate!" said Jerry Smart. "I fancy I can smell the ozone already."

"Fathead! It's only the pigsties over there on the bank!" grinned Gowing. "My hat! The water's getting a bit choppy!"

"Choppy" hardly described it. The boat



"Ow-wow! Water, quick—before the floorboards catch fire!" yelled Will Hay, dropping the winter-warmer as if it were a hot brick. "Coming, sir!" yelled Jerry Smart, and the next moment about a gallon and a half of water shot out of the bucket—most of it descending on Will Hay instead of on the winter-warmer.

was speeding along now, and the water was fairly roaring. Will Hay saw, with a violent start, a watermill looming up out of the distance, with a seething strip of water racing past it that aroused memories of the Niagara Falls.

"H'm! Reminds me of the time I went down the water chute at Margate, boys," he yelled, above the roar of the stream. "I suppose—you're quite sure it's safe, Smart? I don't see that 'Danger' notice Gowing mentioned."

"That's all right, sir. We passed it five minutes ago," yelled back Gowing cheerfully. "I hope you can swim, sir?"

"Swim?" Will Hay's mortar-board took a header over his nose. "What do you mean—swim? We're not going swimming this afternoon, are we?"

"Depends on the boat, sir!" howled Jerry Smart. Then the din drowned all further attempts at conversation.

Four grinning juniors sat tight and waited for the thrill. Will Hay sat in the stern, his hair slowly rising on his pate as the noise grew louder and the pace hotter. He had been prepared to go through a lot to get Smythe back from the sea, but going through a raging torrent like this was no joke. Squinting through his steel-rimmed specs, he saw a fearful mix-up of sky, fields, and boiling waters. A huge water-wheel rushed at him, then leaped away again. The Fourth Form master was dizzily conscious of boyish voices cheering, and everything rushing round and round.

"Tell 'em at home, lads, that I was the last to leave the ship!" he bawled. Then he closed his eyes, as the boat was struck by something that seemed to be a mixture of cyclone, hurricane, and tidal-wave, all rolled into one.

But the boat had not, as Will Hay supposed, succumbed to the torrent. The worst was already past, and when, a few seconds later, he opened his eyes to squint out on the world again, it was to find Jerry Smart prodding him in the waistcoat.

"We've done it!" yelled Smart. "We've shot the rapids!"

"Good! I only hope we've killed 'em for all time!" yelled back the Fourth Form master viciously. "Shooting's too good for rapids like those. They deserve something lingering, with boiling oil in it. Now we'll take our bearings."

He jammed his mortar-board back on his head again and set the nose-nippers a little nearer his eyes, and looked ahead.

"Can't see the sea yet, sir?" grinned Smart. "H'm! Can't even see the river past the bend we're coming to. But we'll get there all right, my boy, we'll get there!" said Will cheerfully.

They turned the bend—then Smart gave a sudden yell.

"Look out, sir! We're coming to something."

But the warning was too late. There was a terrific crash, as the boat struck an immovable object that stopped its further progress. The boys were flung into each other's arms. Will Hay, not so lucky, was flung right out. He felt himself describe a graceful semicircle through the air. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, expecting to dive into the water. But his expectations were not realised. Instead of finishing up in water, he finished up on a grassy mound, with a bump that shook every ounce of breath out of his body.

Bump!

"Whoooooop!"

"Goal!" chortled Jerry Smart from the boat, and the Fourth Formers yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Will Hay sat up and blinked round him dazedly. What had happened to the river? He could see the pool of water into which they had turned after they came round the bend—but there it seemed to end altogether.

Four grinning faces popped up over the bank.

"Ah! There you are, then!" said Will Hay. "What I want to know is, what was it we hit?"

"The end of the river, sir," chuckled Jerry Smart.

The Fourth Form master squinted sternly through his steel-rimmed specs.

"Don't be idiotic, Smart. The end of a river is where it joins the sea. How the thunder could we hit that?"

"Give it up, sir. This must be a different kind of river," grinned Smart. "I'd forgotten about it, but I've just remembered it now. This river doesn't empty into the sea. It empties into a drain."

Will Hay sat up with a jerk.

"A drain?" he hooted.

"Yes—a drain!" said Smart. "That was the grating of the drain that we hit just now. It runs all down one side of the pool, and the water goes through it to the Duddlebury Reservoir. Afraid you took the wrong turning, sir. We shan't get to the sea this way after all!"

**W**ILL HAY blinked. All sorts of inexpressible emotions were depicted in his pursed lips and wobbling chin and agitated eyebrows.

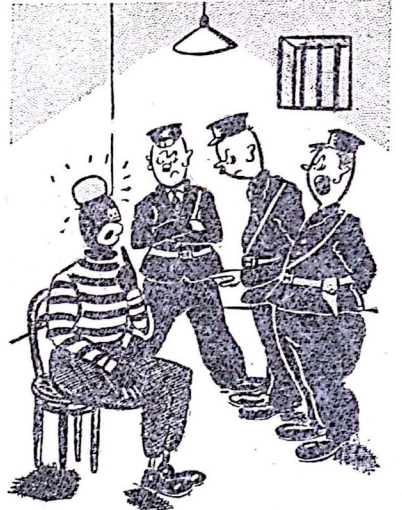
"Mean to say, we've been through all that," he hooted, pointing vaguely up the river, "only to finish up at the entrance to a drain?"

"That's right, sir! Jolly good job, too, if you ask me."

"Jolly good job?" echoed Will fiercely.

"Why, you cheeky young scamp, I'll—"

"If we'd got anywhere near the sea, we'd—"



Chief Warden: "Now, Rastus, come clean!"

have properly been in the soup!" said Smart frankly. "Catch me taking a boat-trip to the sea with you steering!"

"What! What!" Will Hay's eyes rolled ferociously. "Look here, Smart, are you trying to be saucy?"

"Ob, no, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Will Hay staggered to his feet, glaring.

"Strikes me this conversation had better cease!" he snapped. "If we go on talking long enough, we shall start getting personal, and then we might hurt each other's feelings. I'm going off on my own now—to find Smythe and bring him back from the sea."

"You're not!"

"Eh?"

"You're not. We shan't let you!" said Smart. "You've done enough for an old 'un. We're going to see you safely back to Bendover and then we'll look for Smythe ourselves. Won't we, you chaps?"

"Oh, rather!"

"You won't!" snorted Will. "Think I'm going back to Bendover without Smythe? See you later, boys—yow-ooooop! Hi, wharrer you doing? Leggo my arms!"

But Jerry Smart and his pals were deaf to

the voice of the master. They had come to the conclusion that their Form-master had done quite enough for the afternoon, and they were more. So they grabbed him by the shoulders and arms and marched.

They marched him across the fields and into a lane, and they held him in a vice-like grip while they waited for a bus. When the bus came along, they lifted him aboard bodily and sat him down in a seat and kept hands as well as eyes on him all the way back to Bendover. When the old school hove in sight, they formed around him and ran him off again. Then they rushed him through the gateway back to the School House.

The Fourth Form master struggled furiously, as they drew near the house, but Jerry & Co. were more than a match for him. Up the steps they went and into the hall, which they crossed at a spanking pace. Then they came face to face with Dr. Shrubbs and a lady and gentleman.

"Mr. and Mrs. Smythe!" said Dr. Shrubbs. "Here is your boy's Form-master—Mr. Hay! I am sure he has been successful in his search. You have found young Smythe, Hay?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" panted the master of the Fourth, squinting round anxiously for the nearest exit. "I found him all right. I— I found him to be missing!"

"What?"

"Nice weather we're having lately, aren't we?" gasped Will. "Sorry I can't stop! Yooooop!"

Smythe's mother, who had been nursing a grievance against Will Hay ever since she had heard of her son's disappearance, unexpectedly stepped out and dealt him a whang on the mortar-board with her umbrella.

"You wretch!" she exclaimed. "You have driven my poor boy away. It's all your fault, I'd like to—!" She waved her broom again.

That did it for Will. He did not stop to explain. With a yell, he wheeled round and ran for it, anywhere to get away from this truculent lady with the umbrella.

Back across the hall and down the steps he went like a champion on the cinder track. The Head followed close on his heels, and after him came Jerry Smart and the boys, with Smythe's dotting parents tailing off in the rear. Will Hay kept on running. He headed for the cycle shed, his intention being to ride out of Bendover and keep out until the wilelike Mrs. Smythe had gone.

The cycle shed loomed up through the trees. The Fourth Form master groaned as he saw it. Usually at this hour in the afternoon it was deserted; but, for some reason, on this occasion there was quite an army of boys swarming outside it.

Then the jingling of a key against some loose change in his trousers pocket suddenly reminded him of something. He gave a violent, convulsive start.

"The key! I remember now! I put the dashed thing in my pocket as I came away! I suppose the lads are all trying to break in to get their bikes out."

But there was more in it than that. As he drew nearer the shed, fishing the key out of his pocket while he ran, he heard a furious banging from within, and the sound of a voice that was somehow very familiar.

"Lemme out, you idiots! Can't you bust the door in? I've been here for hours—that chump Hay locked me in and walked off with the key!"

"Now, where have I heard that voice before?" Will asked himself. "Somehow it strikes a familiar chord. I feel that if only I knew his name, I should place him immediately—who's in there, boys?" he finished up aloud, as he drew up, puffing and blowing, outside the door of the cycle shed.

A dozen eager voices answered the question—and the answer made Will Hay jump.

"Please, sir, it's Smythe!"

Will Hay stared dazedly at the crowd. "Smythe? Eh? Say it again, boys—no, don't trouble!" he said hurriedly, as his pursuers came into sight through the trees. "Of course it's Smythe! I ought to know."

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"Blake, what the dickens have you been doing?" he roared.

"Make 'em love to the House cook; she let me use her gas stove," Blake replied serenely. "Rabbit pie, shape, thought you'd like to start on that first. The other's for afterwards. Have a good game?"

The new boy, they noticed, was still in shorts and blazer, but in place of football boots he wore sturdy rubber-soled shoes.

"Rabbit!" His roommate flopped helplessly into a chair. "But, great Scott, kid, you shouldn't have done all this! Why, you must have used—"

"But! Didn't eat much—I only bought the jam and sausage," Blake replied carelessly. "You had the sardines already, and I cadged enough flour from cooky to make the doughy stuff. Come on! Pile in while it's hot!"

"But the eggs!" gasped Murray, sitting down. "The beautiful scrambled eggs!"

"The rabbit!" bleated Dawson. "Where'd you get that?"

"Why, on the downs, of course," replied Blake, mildly surprised. "The gorse is swarming with 'em, so I knocked a couple over with my catapult. And the eggs are curlews' eggs—I found quite a colony near the cliff's edge. Surely you've snaffled them before for yourselves, before to-day?"

The others gulped. All had spent several terms at Claverdon, but never dreamed of replenishing their larders except from the tuckshop.

"And—and did you cook all this yourself, Blake?" breathed Dawson, as his host lifted the soft crust of the pie.

"Sure! It's really only camp-cooking, you know—easy and quick. That is, if you've done it all your life," Blake added to himself, realising then that what was a commonplace to him seemed more of a miracle to his guests. With a grin, he filled the teapot—and the feast began.

After that, the guests forgot to ask further questions. They just sat and ate in a sort of happy dream, devouring pie-crust that melted on their tongues, munching sausages, egg and tomato, before working steadily through to salad, scones and tea. Faces grew red and shiny. Little Blenkinsop unbuckled his waistcoat and wished that he, too, wore only a footer shirt. There was not a word spoken until suddenly the study door crashed open.

Lorraine and Whicker, the hefty owners of Study No. 4, glared jealously at the feasters.

"Here, Bull Bristow, what's your game? We know it's the new kid who's cooked all that grub, and you've blooming well punched him!" blared Lorraine. "Say, Blake, you belong to Study No. 4! And if you can cook like this, we want our share, too—"

Blake's answer came pat. Scarcely deigning to look up, his right arm moved swiftly.

"There's your share!" he observed, and a fiendish yell rang out as a hot, buttered scone sprang itself neatly over Lorraine's features. At the same moment Bull and Murray rose—and rushed!

"Slam! Slam! Neither Lorraine nor Whicker paused for any further share in the new boy's feed. They knew the reputation of Bull and Murray as fighters, and they fled to their study as fast as they could.

"That's finished them," asserted the Bull, sitting down again. "Pass the jam, young Blenky!"

Blenkinsop obeyed hastily, then blinked at his host.

"I—would better be careful of those two from Study No. 4, Blake—they're awful rotters and greedy beasts, too," warned the little junior. "What's more, they're very pally with two more beasts in the Sixth—Corbett and Batston-Broune. Keep an eye out for all of them, won't you? They'd think nothing of making you supply them with feeds, and—"

Blake grinned down at him amiably.

"Thanks for the tip, kid. They'll be sorry if they make me feed them," he chuckled. "Here, try this pie next. It's what French blokes call the piece de resistance!"

Actually, the perfectly cooked pie which Blake then produced was an Eccles cake—an irresistible compound of currants, apples, and lemon peel, baked and heavily sweetened. A great cheer greeted its arrival, and only Blenky hesitated.

"Oh dear! I—that looks grand, Blake, but—but I've had toothache on and off for a week," he stammered. But then, catching the Bull's baleful eye, the little junior added recklessly: "Still, dash it, I'd sooner have toothache for another week than miss this!"

"Blakey, don't you ever get the sack from this school while I'm in it!" chortled Murray—too busy with spoon and fork to notice the sudden sharp look Blake gave him in return.

It was a distinctly well-fed party that passed a hearty vote of thanks to the feed-provider before tottering down to prep at last. Afterwards, his praises trumpeted abroad in the Common-room, Blake found himself a popular and sought-after figure.

He was, however, aware that he could look for nothing but trouble in future from Lorraine and Whicker. But their scowls left him cold. Other and more serious troubles were crowding on his mind, and in his cubicle that night he gave them free rein.

Having rigged up some "window defences," Sexton Blake peered cautiously out whilst un-

lacing his shoes. His eyes, with a clear view across the quad to the ruined abbey on the downs, narrowed into speculative slits.

Black and sharp, the rugged outlines of the ancient pile stood out against a starry sky. It was upon one corner, high up amidst gaunt turrets, that Blake's gaze rested.

"And a very nice observation post you've chosen, too, my scarred friend!" the mystery boy mused grimly. "But you're not so clever as I thought, or you wouldn't have left the butt of a French flag lying up there for me to find this afternoon. And you should have dusted on the dents left by your knees and elbows!"

Blake smiled, a still, cold smile.

"Another thing, Dr. Lanchester would have skinned you for using binoculars with the sun flashing dead on the lenses," he muttered, reaching for his pyjamas. "I'll admit that it didn't mean anything when I first spotted the flash yesterday afternoon, but, putting two and two together, it's what gave me the clue to your hide-away this afternoon! So, if you're up there now, mister, stay there! Because to-night, when the moon gets up, I'm taking another look round those ruins, and we'll have a little scouting match all on our own."

Smiling again as he thought of the window-catch in Study No. 13, which he had tampered with successfully whilst the great feed was cooking, Blake made up his bed again under the bed. In less than a minute he was asleep.

But due to his early training, Blake acquired the knack of waking up just when he wanted to. The school clock had hardly struck the first boom of midnight when he was awake again, alert in a moment—just the time he wanted.

Outside, a new moon sailed serenely in a blue-black sky—and no fresh attempt had been made on his window. Blake slipped on footer togs and rubber shoes again. Again he armed himself with the powerful catapult and leaden slugs.

Then, soundless as a shadow, he took two strides towards the cubicle door.

The Shell slumbered. Blake's eyes, however, were hard, his ears cocked like those of a prowling fox. Another step—and then the silence was shattered.

"Help! Keep it off! Help!"

Through the night came the cries, in scream after throbbing scream! Faint, yet horribly clear—the shrieks of a boy delirious with mortal terror!

*There have been sensational happenings since Sexton Blake arrived at school—and there are even greater thrills in store. Do not miss next week's powerful chapters of this super-story.*

## WILL HAY AT BENDOVER.

(Continued from page 556.)

oughtn't I? I locked him in by mistake, didn't I?"

"Yes, sir! That's what he's been saying!"

"Ha, ha!" The Fourth Form-master was beaming toothily now; he surveyed the approaching pack with a mild and cheerful interest. "Ha, ha! What have we here? The Head, if I mistake not! And—bless my soul!—Mr. and Mrs. Smythe, as I live! Mind that umbrella, madam!"

"Wretch!" began Mrs. Smythe.

"Madam! Calm yourself!" Will Hay adjusted his nose-moppers and wagged his forefinger toothily at the outraged parent. "You want your son. I have him!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I kept him back as a pleasant surprise," beamed the Fourth Form-master.

Mrs. Smythe lowered her broily.

"Oh!" she gasped. "Then he didn't go to sea?"

"To see what? Oh, but, yes, he did!" chuckled Will Hay. "He went in to see about a bike! Now watch your humble servant—and you will notice, madam, that I have nothing concealed up my sleeve!"

With a flourish, he inserted the key in the door of the cycle shed.

There was a click as he turned the lock. Then there was a crash as the door flew open

and struck the nose of Mr. Smythe, who was leaning forward to see what happened. A moment later, Smythe of the Fourth rushed out.

"About time, too!" he yelled. "I went in to get a bike to cycle down to the coast, and—oh erikay! Pater! Mater!"

"Sunny boy!" trilled Mrs. Smythe, as she clasped her young hopeful to her bosom.

"And that's that!" remarked Will Hay, beaming on the Head. "Always glad to be of service, sir!"

"Hay! My dear fellow!" Dr. Shrubbed smiled affectionately at the Fourth Form-master. "How ever did you manage it?"

"S easy, sir, 's easy!" beamed Will. "Yes, Mr. Smythe?"

"Mr. Hay, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart," said Mr. Smythe. "I can see you're a man of my own kidney, and I hope you'll be a long liver at Bendover, and I am sure that you and my son will now be great friends."

"Of course, of course!" breezed the Fourth Form-master. "There's nothing like friendship. We'll be as thick as thieves, won't we, Smythe?"

"All right, sir," grinned Smythe, "I accept your apology!"

It was a great time for Will Hay of Bendover. In a few minutes all the school seemed to have learned that he had performed the feat of stopping Smythe from running away to sea. Admiring crowds followed him every-

where, and everybody wanted to talk to him. But Will himself was more anxious to talk to four Fourth Formers.

He found them at last, having tea in Jerry Smart's study.

"I'll! Having tea, boys?" he coughed.

"Oh, no, sir!" grinned Smart. "We're having a noughts-and-crosses tournament."

"Then what are the cups and saucers for?"

"To shy at the chap who wins the tournament!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, boys—er—just as well to keep quiet about our little trip this afternoon, eh?" asked Will Hay anxiously.

"No fear!"

"Er—" Will Hay glared indignantly. "Mean to say you're not going to keep it to yourselves?"

"No fear!"

"Look here, if you start shouting this all over the school—"

"No fear!"

"Er? What the dickens do you mean—! No fear!"

"No fear of our giving the game away, sir!" grinned Smart.

And Will Hay nodded and beamed toothily again and went on his way rejoicing.

*Another riot of laughs in next week's exciting story of WILL HAY and the bright boys of Bendover.*