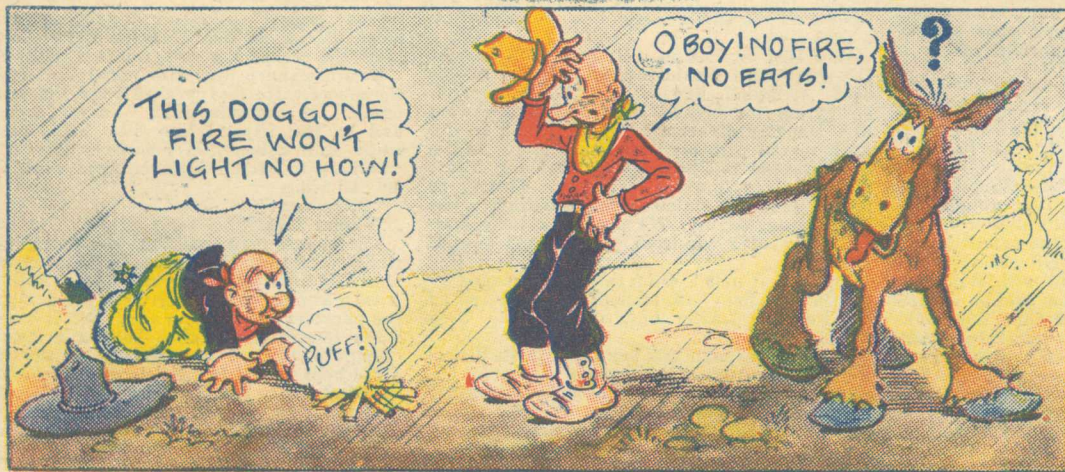
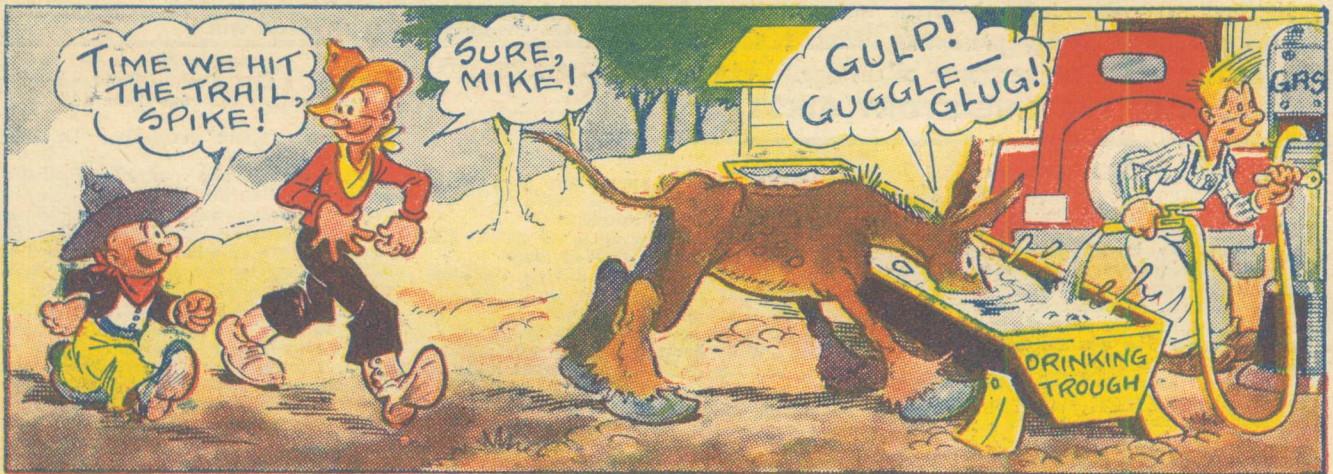


OUR ALL-STAR TEAM: ALEX JAMES : WILL HAY : KEN MAYNARD : STAINLESS STEPHEN : LEONARD HENRY : ARTHUR PRINCE Etc.

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Week
Ending
MAY 1st,
1937.

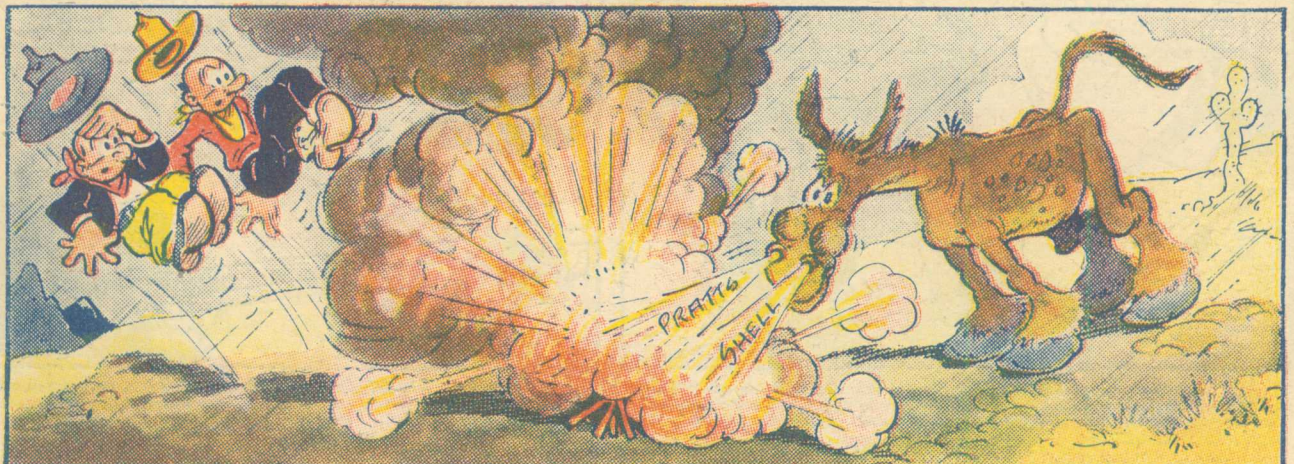
The PILOT

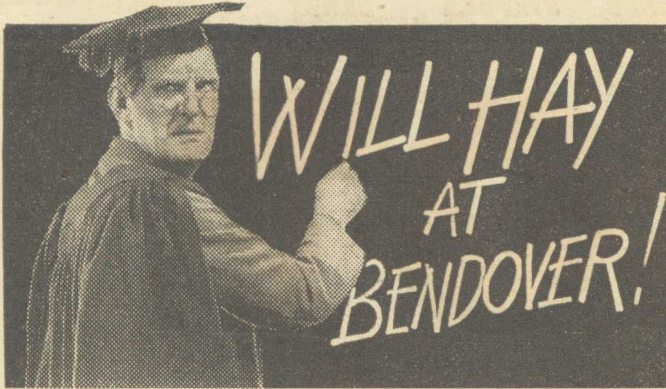
2^D Every Friday



**MIKE,
SPIKE
&
GRETA**

In another
"CRAZY."





SPECIAL to "The PILOT."—Great new picture-strip and story-feature, presenting WILL HAY, the greatest laughter-raiser of the age.
READ THE PICTURE-STORY FIRST!

(By courtesy of Gainsborough Pictures.)

"STOP thief!"
 Will Hay jumped as if he had sat on a drawing-pin. The master of the Fourth was chatting with Kelly, the porter, at the gates of Bendover School, after class. That sudden yell came from the road outside the gates, and was followed by the pattering of running feet.

"That voice," remarked Will Hay, "is reminiscent of a saw establishing contact with a file. Is Mr. Dunkley Pyke paying us another visit?"

Will stepped out of the gateway, and looked along Duddlebury Lane. Coming down the lane was a hatless man, his hair blowing out in the wind. Fast on his track came a bony gentleman, brandishing an umbrella, and yelling at the top of his voice.

"Stop thief! Stop him!"
 Will Hay did not like Mr. Dunkley Pyke. He did not like Reggie Pyke, the bad hat of his Form, and still less did he like Reggie's parent. Least of all did he like the frequent visits Mr. Pyke paid to Bendover School. But Will was not going to pass that appeal unheeded, and he rushed into the middle of the road to cut off the escape of the pickpocket.

The hatless man halted. He glared round him for a way of escape. But with Will Hay in front, and Mr. Pyke close behind, escape was cut off. In sheer desperation, the pickpocket swerved, and shot in at the school gates. Kelly, the porter, coming along to see what was up, met him in full career as he shot in. Kelly went over backwards as if a battering-ram had hit him. The pickpocket stumbled over him, picked himself up in hot haste, and

tore on—his startling appearance greeted by a shout of excitement from a crowd of Bendover fellows in the quadrangle.

Mr. Pyke came panting up to the gates. He brandished his umbrella at Will Hay.

"Fool!" he hooted. "Why did you not stop him? Why did you not seize him? He has robbed me of my pocket-book! Fool!"

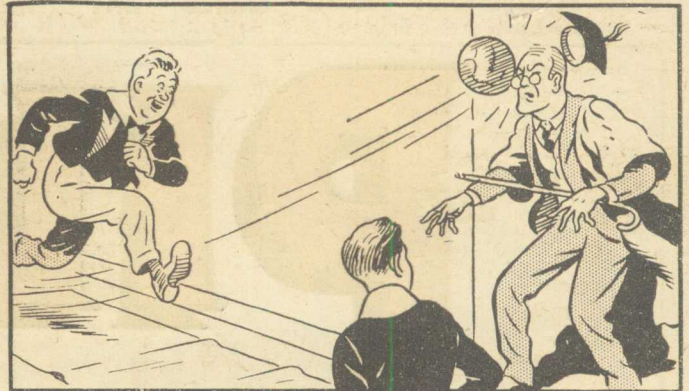
"The same to you, sir, with knobs on!" answered Will genially. "May I inquire whether you are always as polite as that, or are you turning it on specially for me?"

Mr. Pyke did not answer—or heed. He careered in at the gateway after the fleeing pickpocket. Kelly was picking himself up, dizzily, when Mr. Pyke shot in. For the second time, in a matter of seconds, Kelly was strewn on the earth. Over him Mr. Pyke did a nose-dive.

Will Hay strolled in. He paused to gaze at the scene with genial interest. Kelly, on his back, wriggled like a downtrodden worm, struggling for breath. Across him sprawled Mr. Dunkley Pyke, apparently trying to dig up the quad with his long, sharp nose. In the distance, the pickpocket was streaking away, glaring about him for an outlet. Twenty or thirty Bendover fellows were shouting. Mr. Pyke struggled up. He planted a bony knee on the porter's waistcoat, and heaved himself to his feet.

"Stop that man! Stop thief!" he roared.
 "Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Jerry Smart, of the Fourth. "After him, you chaps! Stop thief!"

The running man was heading for the School Field. But from that direction appeared Dr. Shrub, walking with Mr. Choot, the master of the Fifth. The pickpocket swerved again, the Head and the Fifth Form master staring



1. A grand game of Soccer was in progress in the corridor when Will, the beak, poked his nose around the corner at the wrong moment. Thus the Soccer pill socked Will.

after him, and a dozen fellows whooping at his heels. Mr. Pyke rushed on, and Will Hay followed.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Dr. Shrub.

"Who—what—?"
 "Stop thief!" The roar echoed all through Bendover. "Bag him!"

The pickpocket was attempting to scuttle round the House. But five or six fellows started up in his path, and he swerved again, and cut along by the front of the building, under the study windows.

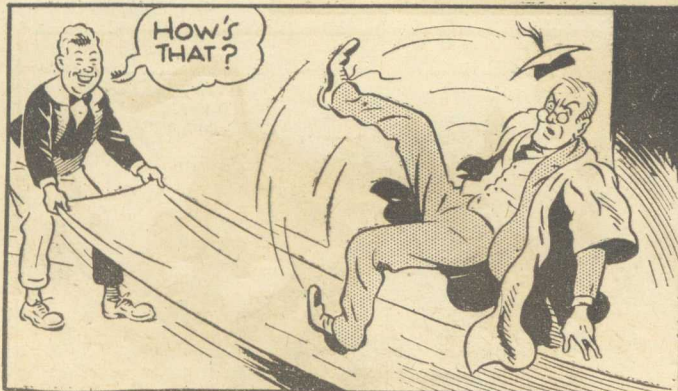
Most of those windows were open, in the balmy summer's afternoon. From some of them, startled faces looked out. From one, a face peered cautiously from behind a curtain. That was Will Hay's study; and the face that peered furtively out was that of Reggie Pyke, of the Fourth Form. Reggie, who certainly had no business in his Form-master's study while Will Hay was out, was alarmed by the uproar in the quad.

"The pater!" breathed Reggie, in amazement, staring at Mr. Dunkley Pyke charging after the pickpocket with uplifted umbrella.

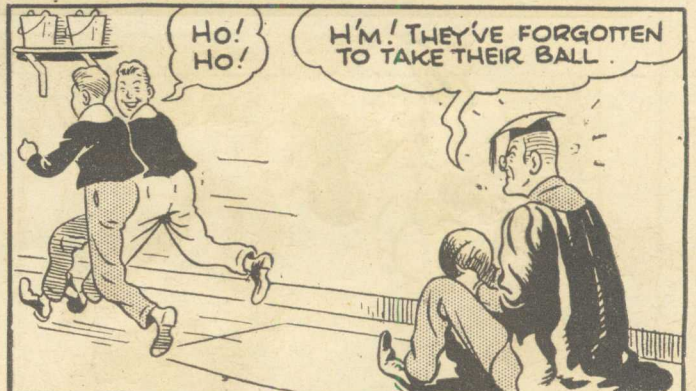
Reggie's sharp eyes also noted Will Hay in the crowd. He disappeared from the window again. He was safe while Will was occupied, and he had slipped into his Form-master's study with a bent pin for the armchair, and was keen to get on with the good work while he had time.

"Stop him!"
 "Collar him!"

The hatless man, panting, tore on under the study windows. But more fellows appeared ahead of him, and he panted to a halt. He stood gasping for breath, while from all sides the pursuers closed in on him. But it was only for a few moments—then he shot away, in a desperate attempt to get back to the gates. Mr. Choot leaped to seize him—and would undoubtedly have got him, but Mr. Pyke, at the same moment, swiped with the umbrella, and Mr. Choot got the swipe! The umbrella

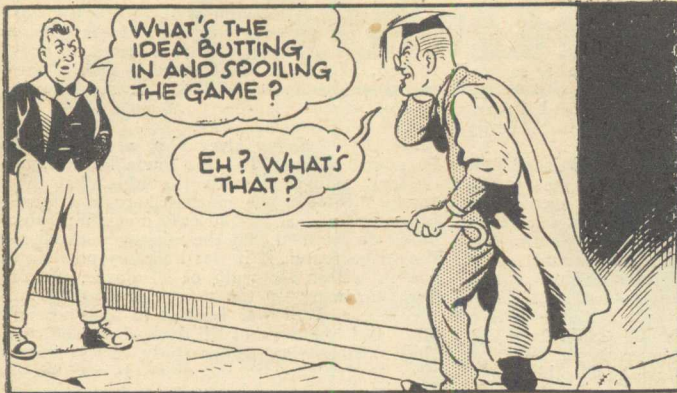


4. Tubby had noticed that the beak was standing on the other end of the carpet, and thought he'd teach Will how to organise a sit-down strike. Grasping his end, he pulled, and Will sat down with a will.



5. Wallop! "Ow!" He sat so hard that he put his joint out of nose. Will's Hay-tred knew no bounds, as those ladskiss scuttled off, shrieking with mirth. But Will meant to get his own back, yessirs!

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2. "Hi!" yelled Tubby Green. "Don't poke your nose-nippers in where they aren't wanted!" Very rude of him, don't you think?



3. Now Will just Hay-ted saucs. So while he was deciding whether to boil those cheery blokes in oil or write them a stiff note on a piece of cardboard, he ordered Tubby to straighten the carpet.

cracked on the Fifth Form master's head, and Choot, with a fearful howl, spun over.

The pickpocket dodged and ran on. Will Hay was in his path. Manfully, Will grabbed at him, missed his collar, and caught his hair! On that hair, Will's grip closed like a vice, and he held tenaciously. The pickpocket's rush carried him on, with the result that he swung right round Will Hay, who revolved on his heels as the man spun round him. They turned a complete circle before they both tumbled over.

"Got him!" yelled Jerry Smart. Jerry landed on the pickpocket's waistcoat, effectively knocking all resistance out of him.

"Oooh!" gasped Will Hay. He struggled up, blinking, and sorted his nose-nippers out of his collar, and shifted his mortar-board from the back of his neck.

Mr. Pyke came panting up. "Hold him!" he spluttered. "Do not let him escape! Search him—he has my pocket-book—"

"Mr. Pyke," exclaimed Dr. Shrub, hurrying up, "what is the meaning of this? What—"

"That rascal, sir, picked my pocket in Doddlebury Lane!" roared Dunkley Pyke. "He pushed against me as I was walking to the school, sir, and picked my pocket. I struck him with my umbrella as he ran, and knocked his hat off—"

"Urrrgh!" came a gurgle from the man on the ground. "Wurrgh! You get orf of a bloke! I ain't got no blooming pocket-book. Leggo a bloke."

"Stand him up!" hooted Dunkley Pyke. "But hold him—hold him! Take care that he does not break away. Turn out his pockets! Search him! Scoundrel, where is my pocket-book?"

The hatless man stood gasping, with as many hands holding him as could find room. The Bendover fellows were rather enjoying this. It was quite a welcome spot of excitement.

"I ain't touched no pocket-book," asserted

the pickpocket. "I'm an honest man, I am. I never picked no pocket. I jest slips, and falls agin you, and you 'ands out a swipe with that there broolly, and I 'ooks it! I thought you was drunk and dangerous—that's why I 'ooked it—"

"Impudent rascal! Search him!" roared Mr. Pyke.

Many hands searched the captured man. Every pocket was turned out. But no pocket-book came to light. Mr. Dunkley Pyke's face became more and more furious. Whether the man had picked his pocket or not, the plunder was not on him. That pocket-book was gone from Mr. Pyke's gaze like a beautiful dream.

"I will give him into custody!" he roared. "Dr. Shrub, will you telephone for a constable from Doddlebury. He has thrown away the pocket-book, so that it should not be found on him. Without it, he may not be convicted. I am certain he had it when he ran in at the gates. Boys, search for it! It must be found—there are ten pounds in it. I will reward anyone who finds my pocket-book—I will give the finder half-a-crown—that is, a shilling—I mean to say, sixpence!"

"Not a whole tanner, sir!" exclaimed Jerry Smart.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boys," exclaimed Dr. Shrub, "you will oblige me by searching for Mr. Pyke's pocket-book. Probably it is lying somewhere in the quadrangle. Or it may have been thrown in at an open door. Search for it, please. Mr. Hay, will you take charge of that man, and see that he does not escape?"

In a few minutes, the pickpocket—still protesting that he knew nothing about any old pocket-book—was locked in the woodshed, to await the arrival of a constable from Doddlebury. And Mr. Dunkley Pyke, in a state of great excitement, rooted wildly over the quad for the missing loot, assisted by a crowd of Bendover boys.

"OW!" howled Reggie Pyke.

Reggie clapped his hand to his ear and howled a startled howl.

Bending over Will Hay's arm-chair, affixing a bent pin in a favourable position to give the Fourth Form master a surprise when he sat down, Reggie turned a deaf ear to the uproar outside the House. Then suddenly, inexplicably, something smacked his ear, which sent him tottering, his bent pin sticking into his hand as he did so.

"Oh, you beast!" howled Reggie. For a moment he fancied that his Form-master had come into the study unheard, and boxed his ear from behind. But as he stared round, he saw no one in the study. He was alone there, and he fairly blinked in amazement. What was it that had hit him?

Then his eyes fell on an object lying on the floor close by him. It was a fat, bulky pocket-book.

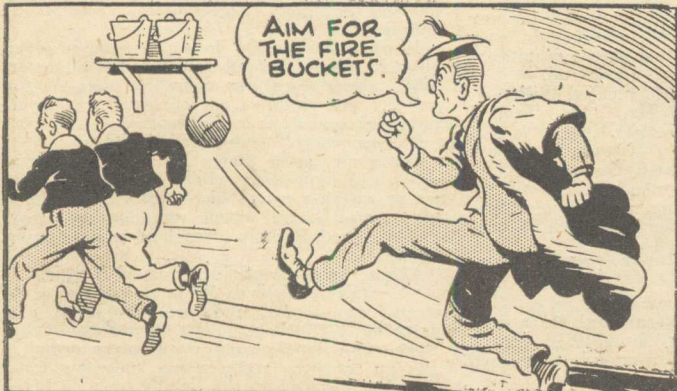
"Oh crickey!" gasped Reggie.

He jumped up, clutching up the pocket-book. He knew what had happened now. He knew his father's pocket-book by sight. The pickpocket, seeing his escape cut off, had thrown away his plunder, so that it should not be found on him when he was caught. It had whizzed in at the open study window, and dotted Reggie on the ear.

Reggie rubbed his ear with one hand, clutching the pocket-book with the other. He stepped to the window, and, taking care to keep in cover of the curtain, peered at the scene outside. He watched the crowd, at the distance, till it broke up—Will Hay marching the captured man off to the woodshed, Mr. Pyke and a crowd of Bendover fellows hunting up and down for the pocket-book. Reggie grinned, and backed from the window again.

"By gum!" murmured Reggie, his fishy eyes gleaming.

Nobody, it was clear, knew that the pocket-book had been thrown through that window. Had not Reggie been there, it would have lain



6. "Boomph!" The way that ball whizzed at the fire-buckets standing on a near-by shelf, you might have thought that the beak was still turning out for the Narkover eleventh eleven.



7. And—swoosh! Those merry funsters got their spirits well dampened as the buckets crowned them well and truly. So Will got the last laugh—and does so again in the rib-tickling yarn starting below his portrait on the previous page.

on Will Hay's carpet till the master of the Fourth came in. Any fellow but Reggie Pyke would have gone out at once to announce that he had it safe. Not so, Reggie! For one thing, Pyke of the Fourth did not want to own up that he had been in his Form-master's study without leave. For another, Reggie's cunning brain grasped what this might mean—to him and to his worthy parent.

“By gum!” repeated Reggie. “If this doesn't dish that blighter Hay, and get him booted out of Bendover, I'll eat the cane he dusted my pants with this morning! By gum! This is better than sticking a pin in his chair, blow him!”

His eyes danced. If only Will Hay could be turfed out of Bendover School, it was plain sailing for Mr. Dunkley Pyke, in his scheme to step into Dr. Shrubbs' shoes. Will Hay might be an ass, as all the Bendover Fourth thought him, but he stood between Dunkley Pyke and the success of his scheming. Will Hay thought it was brains—Reggie thought it was fool's luck; but whatever it was, there was no doubt that Will was a thorn in the side of the schemers. This, properly worked, would put paid to Will Hay.

Grinning, Reggie looked round the study, with the pocket-book in his hand. He was looking for a hiding-place.

He jumped to the grate. There was no fire in the study; the weather was too warm for fires; but the fire was laid. It had been laid weeks ago, and never lighted. A safer hiding-place Reggie could not have hoped for. Will Hay, it was absolutely certain, would never investigate the fire-grate. Neither on a warm summer's day was he likely to light a fire. Grinning gleefully, Reggie unpacked knobs of coal, shoved the pocket-book into the middle, and replaced the coal knobs. The pocket-book was hidden completely from sight, to remain hidden until a search revealed it.

Then Reggie Pyke slipped cautiously from the study. His pal, Fruity Snell, met him as he went grinning down the passage.

“Oh, here you are!” said Fruity. “Where have you been, old man? Haven't you heard that your pater's here? He's lost his pocket-book.”

“First I've heard of it,” drawled Reggie. “Where is he, Fruity?”

“Rooting up and down the quad!” grinned Fruity. “He thinks the pickpocket chucked it away, while he was running.”

“I'll go and help!” said Reggie. He strolled out into the sunny quad. Mr. Dunkley Pyke sighted him and glared.

“Where have you been?” he hooted. “Why are you not here, assisting me, Reginald? My pocket-book has been thrown about somewhere by a thief. Ten pounds in currency notes, besides many important papers—”

“Money in it, father?” asked Reggie. “I say, suppose some fellow picks it up and sticks to it?”

“Good heavens!” ejaculated Mr. Pyke, aghast at that awful possibility.

“You sneaking little toad!” roared Jerry Smart. “Think any man at Bendover would stick to it? I'll boot you when your pater's gone!”

“I wouldn't put it past that rotter Hay!” sneered Reggie. “Where is he now? He seems to have got out of sight.”

“Oh, shut up!” snapped Jerry, and he marched off in disgust.

“This way, father!” said Reggie, in a low voice. “I've got something to tell you.”

“I must find that pocket-book! I—”

“I tell you it's important!” hissed Reggie. He lowered his voice to a cautious whisper.

“We've got Hay now—got him on toast!”

Mr. Dunkley Pyke gave his hopeful son a long, long look. His eyes gleamed. Even ten pounds in the missing pocket-book weighed little in the scale against getting Will Hay on “toast.” He gave a nod, and followed his son under the old Bendover beeches.

Breathlessly Reggie whispered what happened, and Mr. Pyke gave a great start. He stared blankly at the rascal of Bendover.

“You get me?” breathed Reggie. “Nobody knows it went in at Hay's window. Nobody knows I was there. It's hidden in a safe place—behind the coals in his grate. Who hid it there?”

“Hay!” breathed Mr. Pyke.

“Hay!” grinned Reggie. “See? He picked it up, got it to his study, and hid it. What?”

“But he has not been in the House, so far, since—”

“Wait till he's gone in, of course. I'll manage that somehow. Once he's been in his study he's fixed!”

Dunkley Pyke breathed hard and deep. This was the goods! Once Will Hay was in his study, the thing was fixed. Some excuse had to be found for a search, that was all. That would be easy to find. Easy or difficult, Mr. Pyke would find it. The search would reveal the pocket-book, concealed in Will Hay's grate. What was everyone going to believe? Even Hay himself would never be able to guess how it had got there. Nobody else would have any doubt on the subject. The sack, in disgrace, for Will Hay—and then for Dr. Shrubbs!

“Reginald,” said Mr. Pyke, “you are a clever lad! Not a word to a soul. Hay must be got into the House as soon as possible, and then I will speak to Dr. Shrubbs.”

“I fancy,” said Reggie complacently, “that



Smash-and-Grab Merchant: “Ow! Just my luck! It's unbreakable glass!”

that beast Hay is going to be sorry that he dusted my pants this morning!”

WILL HAY breezed up to Mr. Pyke in the quad. Up and down and round about, Bendover fellows were looking for that pocket-book—though they were not, probably, thinking of the munificent reward Mr. Dunkley Pyke had offered.

“Have you found it, sir?” bleated Will. “I have not,” yapped Mr. Pyke, “and I begin to suspect, very strongly, that it is useless to search for it further. I begin to suspect, Mr. Hay, that it has already been picked up by some dishonest person who has kept it.”

Will Hay adjusted his nose-nippers and blinked at Mr. Pyke. Then he rubbed his nose thoughtfully with his forefinger.

“How do you do it, Mr. Pyke?” he inquired at last.

“What? How do I do what?”

“I mean to say, it isn't natural for a man to be such a rotter,” explained Will gently. “It must be acquired. You must have trained for it.”

“I want no insolence from you, sir!” hooted Mr. Pyke. “Neither do I require your assistance! I have not asked you to join in this search, and you will oblige me by minding your own business, Mr. Hay!”

“Oh, quite!” assented Will. “But you have made it my business now, sir! I shall search for that pocket-book until it is found, to prove to you, Mr. Pyke, that there is no dishonest rascal at Bendover—I mean, in residence; I do not refer to visitors.”

And Will breezed away.

Mr. Pyke glared after him, as if he could have bitten him. He had made himself particularly offensive, with the idea that Will would throw up the matter there and then—instead of which, he had only made Will absolutely determined that the missing pocket-book should be found, if it was humanly possible to find it, within the walls of Bendover. So far from throwing up the matter and going into the House, Will was booked to hunt up and down and round about till dark—hours off, yet. And until he went to his study, it was impossible to get on with the plot. It was useless for the lost pocket-book to be found hidden there if Will could prove that he had not been in the study since it was lost.

“Boys,” Will Hay called to a crowd of the Fourth, “play up! That blinking—I mean, that bothering pocket-book has got to be found! Evil-minded persons might suspect that it has been pinched at Bendover if it is not found. Don't bother about tea—”

“Oh, I say!” gasped Tubby Green.

“If the pocket-book is found by a boy of my Form, the Fourth shall have an extra half-holiday to-morrow!” announced Will Hay. “I will search as hard as anybody! I will not rest till it is found, if it is to be found at all! Now, then, play up, boys!”

The prospect of an extra holiday spurred on the Fourth Formers. The search was renewed with the greatest keenness. In every likely and unlikely spot, the juniors rooted after that elusive pocket-book. From a distance, Mr. Dunkley Pyke watched them, with a lowering brow and a glinting eye. He had to keep up a pretence of searching; but what he was anxious for was the end of the search—and to see Will Hay go into the House.

Nothing, however, was farther from Will Hay's thoughts. With his mortar-board aslant, his gown billowing behind him in the breeze, Will led the searchers, blinking and peering through his nose-nippers in every direction. Reggie Pyke watched him as sourly as his parent. Will had to be got into the House somehow! Nothing could be done till then. And Reggie, thinking hard, got the idea at last.

“If you please, sir!” squealed Reggie. “I say, I've been told that the man ran along by the ornamental pool, sir! Do you think he may have thrown it into the water, sir? I think I saw something lying near the edge. Will you, please, come and look, sir?”

“Lead on, Macduff!” said Will Hay genially. “Show me the spot!”

He followed Reggie to the edge of the ornamental pool. He blinked at the sheet of water, glimmering in the summer sunshine. It was not easy to see through the glimmer, but Will Hay bent over the edge and scanned it carefully.

“Point out what you saw, Pyke!” he said, over his shoulder. “Where—” Oh, my only hat and sunshade! Yoo-hoop!”

Splash!

It was quite neatly done. Reggie, pressing close to point, barged into his Form-master. Will, already leaning over the edge of the water, had simply no chance. He overbalanced, and went in headlong.

“Oooooooooooh!” spluttered Will Hay.

He went right under for a second, and scrambled, splashing wildly, to his feet, the water washing round his knees. He grabbed his mortar-board, which was floating away, and jammed it on a drenched and dripping head.

“Quite an accident, sir!” gasped Reggie.

“Urrghh!” gurgled Will Hay. He came scrambling out of the pool, drenched and dripping. “Such accidents should not occur, Pyke! I will take your word—ugggh!—that it was an accident, and you may take my word that I will give you the licking of your life—wurrghh!—as soon as I get dry! Ooooh!”

Will Hay started for the House, squelching water at every step, and Reggie grinned. He

(Continued on page 119.)

WILL HAY AT BENDOVER.

(Continued from page 100.)

was not worried about that promised licking. Will Hay had to go to his rooms now, and once he had been in his study, his goose was cooked! He would not be in a position to lick Reggie or anybody else when a horrified Dr. Shrubbs had sacked him for theft!

Reggie strolled away to join his worthy parent. Their eyes met. Mr. Dunkley Pyke smiled—a grim smile!

"Hay's going in now, pater!" murmured Reggie. "I fancied I could work it—what?"

"Reggie," murmured Mr. Pyke, "you are a bright lad? When that pocket-book is found hidden in Hay's grate, I will give you one of the pound notes!"

"Now you're talking!" agreed Reggie.

And they smiled after Will Hay, squelching unhappily away to the House. Dr. Shrubbs met him as he squelched in, in surprise and horror. "My dear Hay," he gasped, "what has happened? What—You are wet—"

"Dampish, sir!" gasped Will. "I have tumbled into the pool, sir, with the assistance of a boy of my Form!"

Will Hay tottered on. He left a wet trail up the corridors. He reached his study and tottered in; passed through the study to the bed-room adjoining, and sneezed wildly as he went. Mr. Dunkley Pyke, in the quad below, heard the sneezes that echoed from the open window of Mr. Hay's study, and grinned. Hay was in his quarters now, and his fate was sealed! A little delay, to allow time for hiding the pocket-book, and then—

"**N**ONSENSE!" roared Dr. Shrubbs. He glared at Mr. Dunkley Pyke. "Sir—" hooted Mr. Pyke.

"I repeat, stuff and nonsense!" thundered the Head of Bendover. "I have every confidence in Mr. Hay! How dare you make such a suggestion, Mr. Pyke! I repeat, how dare you!"

"And I repeat," hooted Mr. Dunkley Pyke, "that I saw Mr. Hay stooping by an ivied wall, and that it appeared to me, sir, that he picked up something—"

"Nonsense!" "I make no accusation, sir, but I demand a search of Mr. Hay's quarters! I have a right to be satisfied, sir! And if you refuse me, I will call in the aid of the police! I will not be robbed, sir! It is for you, Dr. Shrubbs, to decide whether you will order this search, or whether—"

"To satisfy you, sir, I will request Mr. Hay to allow me to search his rooms in your presence!" snorted Dr. Shrubbs. "I am quite aware, sir, of your vindictive feelings towards this member of my staff. But I will not leave it in your power to say that the remotest suspicion attaches to that member of my staff, Mr. Pyke! A search shall be made—"

"That," said Mr. Dunkley Pyke, "is all I ask! If my pocket-book is found in Mr. Hay's possession, or hidden in his rooms—"

"It will not be found, sir!" thundered Dr. Shrubbs. "The search shall be made, to put an end at once to your base suspicions, and for no other reason! Follow me, sir! So vile an accusation—"

"At present, sir, I make no accusation. I only say that a search of Mr. Hay's quarters should take place to establish the facts. If he is an innocent man, Dr. Shrubbs, he can have no objection!"

"And he will have none! You shall see for yourself!" snapped the headmaster of Bendover contemptuously. "Follow me to Mr. Hay's study, and the matter shall be put to

the test this very instant, sir! The search shall take place under your eyes, and the result, sir, will be that you will offer Mr. Hay your apologies for your base insinuations!"

"This language, Dr. Shrubbs—" "Pah!" snorted the Head of Bendover. "Come with me at once!"

Dr. Shrubbs swept away, with rustling gown, bristling with anger and indignation. After him stalked Dunkley Pyke.

As they neared the door of Will Hay's study, a sound came to their ears from that apartment.

It was a loud and prolonged sneeze. Dr. Shrubbs tapped at the door.

"Atchooh!" came from within. Will Hay was in his study. He had finished drying and changing, but evidently he had not finished with the result of that plunge into the pool. It sounded as if Will had a cold, and not a nice one. "Ay-tishoooh! Ooogh! Come in! Atchooh!"

Dr. Shrubbs opened the door of the study and stepped in. Dunkley Pyke followed him in.

"My dear Hay," began Dr. Shrubbs, "I am sorry to disturb you, as you seem to be suffering from a cold—"

"Urrghh! A slide gold in by dose, sir!" gurgled Will. "But come in, sir—bray gub id!"

Will Hay, enveloped in a warm dressing-gown, sat in the armchair before a fire.

Not till winter came again had Will expected to start a fire. But circumstances alter cases, and Will was feeling shivery after his dip.

Mr. Dunkley Pyke stopped dead. He gazed at that roaring fire. Reggie had hidden the pocket-book in the midst of the packed knobs of coal in that grate—as safe a place as could be imagined on a warm summer's day, when fires were undreamed of. But now—Mr. Dunkley Pyke gazed at that leaping, flaming, roaring fire as if it fascinated him. A pocket-book that had cost a pound, ten pounds in currency notes, and a wad of important papers were in the midst of that roaring fire—already reduced to ashes!

"Mr. Pyke desires—" began Dr. Shrubbs.

Dunkley Pyke found his voice. He did not want a search now. It was useless to search for an article that had gone up in smoke!

"Oh, no! Not at all!" he gasped. "Pray say no more, Dr. Shrubbs! Pray let us leave Mr. Hay to himself!"

He backed out of the study, and Dr. Shrubbs, puzzled, but relieved, followed him. Will Hay was left to huddle over the fire. The door closed.

"You withdraw—" demanded Dr. Shrubbs, in the corridor.

"Oh, quite!" gasped Mr. Pyke. "I—I must see my son! I—I understand that he pushed his Form-master into the pool, and caused him to light that fire—I mean, to catch that cold. I must see Reginald, and chastise him!"

When Mr. Pyke found Reginald, he quite surprised that hapless youth. No doubt Reggie deserved the terrific slapping Mr. Pyke bestowed on him. No doubt Mr. Pyke drew some consolation from it. Reggie drew none whatever.

Next morning, Will Hay's cold was better. He was feeling well enough to give Reggie that promised licking. And Reggie of the Fourth, who had heard it said that honesty was the best policy, really began to wonder whether there might not, after all, be something in it!

(Sunny days are here again but you can make them even brighter by getting your weekly dose of laughs from Will Hay. Look out for another side-splitting combined picture-strip and story, next week.)

ALEX JAMES' SCHOOLDAYS

(Continued from page 107.)

passage. But the voices died away as Alex James was seen to push his way through the throng.

"What's all the commotion about?" he demanded.

No one offered a reply; Alex stared from one face to another, saw the amazement, compassion, suspicion—every expression, before he, too, stared at the chalked message.

The colour drained from his face, leaving him ghastly white. His eyes narrowed, and the veins stood out on his forehead; his fists opened and shut, opened and shut involuntarily.

"A wangle—Hunter's money—a wangle—a wangle—"

The message seemed to burn with letters of fire in his bewildered brain.

"A wangle—scholarship you won—a wangle—Hunter's money—uncle and guardian—a wangle—Fatty Hunter—a wangle—a wangle—a wangle!"

The words went round and round his harassed brain with hammer-like force. "A wangle"—that phrase shouted and clamoured louder than all the rest—"A wangle—a wangle!"

The crowd of juniors, not liking the deathly silence with which Alex greeted the discovery, began to melt away. Alone, bewildered, savagely angry and resentful, Alex stood gazing at the chalked message.

His heart told him, in advance that what he read there was true. Back into his mind now came many little recollections which pointed to its being true. In that first moment, overwhelming anger against Fatty Hunter consumed him. His best friend had deceived him, played him for a fool—offered him charity—had wangled his scholarship.

Of the high and noble motive which had prompted this state of affairs, Alex thought nothing then. He had been humbled in the eyes of all Cragston—humbled and made to appear ridiculous by one whom he had counted his best friend—

It was while he was standing there outside the door, unable to take his eyes off that enlightening message, that Fatty Hunter came along and joined him. In his turn, Fatty blanched—and started back, as if stung.

His secret was out—his precious secret was a secret no longer. It was chalked up for all the Cragston world to see!

"Alex—" he began softly; whereat Alex wheeled on him, fists clenched, eyes blazing with anger.

"Is this true?" he snapped. "Is it true? Tell me?"

Fatty Hunter could find no words to form his reply.

"Then it is true—it is true!" hissed Alex. "Oh, you rotter! Scheming to make me accept your charity, and then allowing the world to know of it. Hunter, I could smash you for this!"

He gave Fatty a bitter, venomous look, and entered the study. Fatty turned away, the picture of despair.

(Now that he has revealed Fatty's secret, Dod Jarvie seems to have struck the final blow against Alex James. But little does he know that the hour of reckoning is at hand . . . his own downfall and the triumph of Alex. Read about them in next week's unforgettable chapters of this enthralling story.)

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