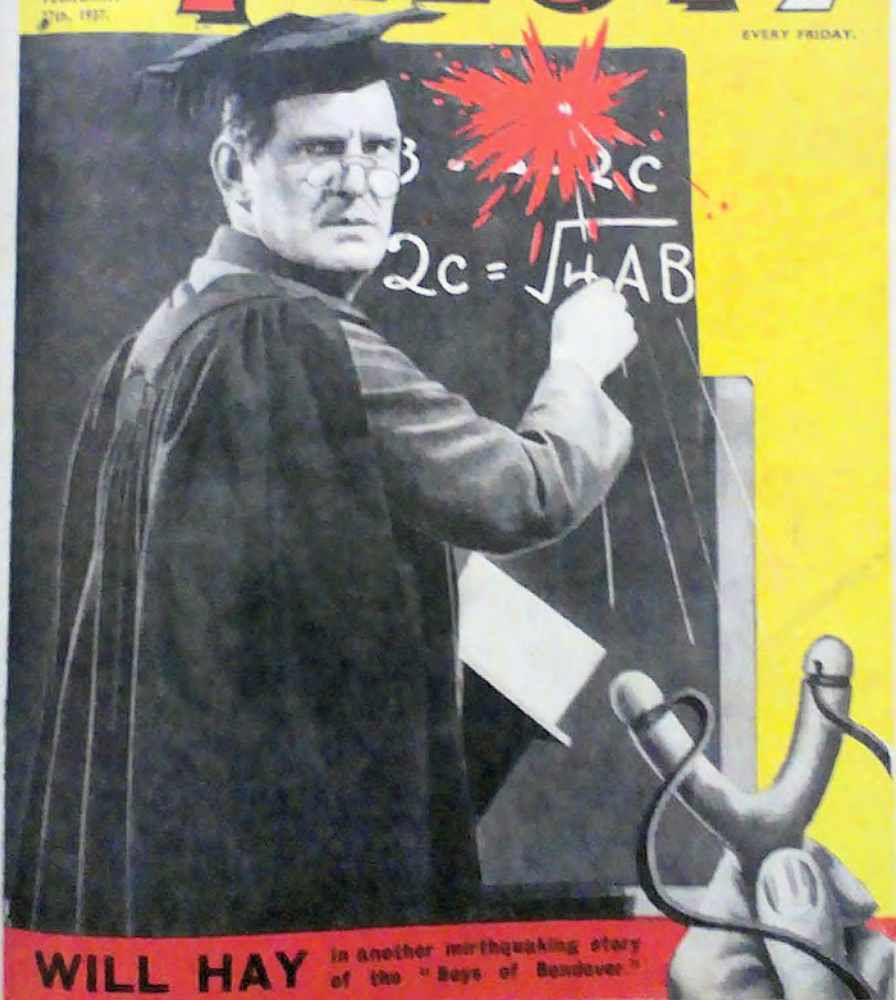


THE STARS — WILL HAY | STAINLESS STEPHEN | ALEX JAMES | LEONARD HENRY & SEXTON BLAKE — ARE INSIDE!

The PILOT 2^D

No. 76
Vol. 3
Week Ending
FEBRUARY
27th, 1927.

EVERY FRIDAY.



WILL HAY in another mirthquaking story of the "Boys of Bendover"

"He began clearing his throat. "we will answer—that is, we will commence in a proper manner. Have you any question of an interesting which requires an answer or

will answer with good nature as he has been beamed with; then—

"He answered the murmured suddenly. "I have no objections along to my study. I have

"He answered kindly, the wrong gown; "I have no objection to wearing the wrong gown;

"He answered to Dr. Struth, "I have no objection to wearing the wrong gown; "I have no objection to wearing the wrong gown;

"He answered the skipper of the Form and the skipper of the Form; "I have no objection to wearing the wrong gown; "I have no objection to wearing the wrong gown;

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"The man Shadd is up!" shouted the bookie, pushing his way past the porter and strutting swift glance round the circle, and will now turn to exchange the supervision of a wink with Reggie Pyle. "I've got something important to tell you, teacher," said the flashily dressed little bookie, turning to Will. "My name is Shadd, but in case you don't know."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Quick work!" said Will, as the junior handed over a thin wad of notes. One—two—three—

he counted, his eyes upon a slip of paper, which read: "Willie the Weeper—

20 to 1." A note which told him that Willie had won the three o'clock at a very nice price.

"The amount's right—but only just!" he beamed, palming the slip and handing the money to the amazed bookie. "That makes

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

"State!" nodded Shadd, working at Reggie Pyle. "Y'know, teacher, it's true that a mug is born every minute."

"So I've heard!" nodded Will, repeating over his nose-pickers at the boy's face of Reggie Pyle. "But a fellow would have to get on fairly to catch you!"

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

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

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

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

They were hearing the porter's lodge when they heard a paper-box approach.

"Three o'clock result—paper!"

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

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

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

"Bad news, you call it!" snorted Shadd, waving the newspaper under Will's nose. "Willie the Weeper rumped 'nms at twenty to one!"

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

REGGIE-PYKE was out early next morning—so early, in fact, that at seven o'clock he was ringing the bell of the Railway Hotel in Doodlebury.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Like 'im!" snorted the bookie. "You knock me! I always love any mug who sneaks me up a catcher for twenty snackers! Like 'im!"

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

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

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

"And how are you going to do that?"

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

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

"You leave that to 'im, once I've got this quid—or my father will—with pleasure!"

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

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

"Good-morning, boys!"

"Good-morning, sir!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reggie Pyke gasped.

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

"I—I—I—" stuttered Reggie.

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



"Who said time hangs heavy on the hands?"

Licking his lips in apprehension, Reggie Pyke sat down, and lessons proceeded. But throughout the morning Will 'Ay kept asking a suggestion of great importance to

"What was the little wart up to? What game has he got on with our mutual friend Mr. Slinny Shadd?"

He was soon to know.

GENTLEMEN," said Colonel Chatterton, later in the morning. "I have a suggestion of great importance to put to you!"

A meeting of governors was being held at Bendover, and the colonel, in his capacity as Chairman of the Board, was addressing individual with an eagle eye and an egg-shaped head, and he talked he made a martinet, he was the bitter enemy of penny snipestakes and gambling of all descriptions;

"My suggestion," Chatterton went on in his snarl, "concerns Doctor Shrub and the matter of the Fourth Form!"

"Will 'Ay!" chanted the governors, making a note upon their little pads.

"Will 'Ay!" echoed Colonel Chatterton, holding his shiny head. "Shrub's getting too old for his important post, and this man

Hay is little better than a—"

"Who told you that?" demanded Silas Heather, a stout, red-faced man with a white necktie, who was sitting at the point. "Don't listen to that tattle-man!"

"It isn't tattle-man!" cried Chatterton, purring at such a display of respect. "I got my information from the father of one of Will 'Ay's boys."

"Boy, eh?" snarled old Heather. "Please!"

"Pyke" answered the chairman, a little definitely. "He is the son of Doodlebury, a very old friend of mine."

"I'd give this young Pyke a flogging every day and two on Sundays," declared old Heather. "On that grounds do I declare word of a little end to his career."

"It is only right that he should see I am going to suggest that my friend Doodlebury replaces Dr. Shrub as headmaster of Bendover."

"Oh, ho!" chuckled old Heather, raising his hands together. "So that's the way nothing against the character of Will 'Ay!"

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

"What's this?" he growled, peering to his chair back and striding heavily across the carpet. He picked up the paper and scanned it out, his shrewd eyes staring back at the inscription:

SAM SHADD,
Commissioner Agent.

Scrawled across the billhead was the following: Received of Sam Shadd the sum of £200 winnings on Willie the Weeper, (Signed) WILL 'AY.

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

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

"What have you got there, Heather?"

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

"As Chairman of the Board I insist upon seeing that note!" snapped Chatterton.

"Hand it to me at once!"

"There you are!" growled Silas Heather, handing the receipt across the table. "We don't treat it with the contempt it deserves!"

"I think differently," replied Chatterton, having glanced at the paper, and he pushed it back with a snarl. "I always supposed that this Hay person was a scoundrel, and therefore a bad influence! A huffer of other horses!" A shudder ran through the colonel's lean frame. "A cheat at Bendover, low-down bookmaker! A master at Bendover! Where's Dr. Shrub! Will go and fetch him up in an appearance. I'll go and fetch myself!"

"Please do," said old Silas Heather, who had fully, and the moment the telephone was put in the room he picked up the receiver and asked for Mr. Shadd's number.

"The bookie's throaty voice came over the wire."

"Who wants me—who is it?"

"This is the Board of Governors of Bendover College," Mr. Heather informed him.

"It appears that a member of your staff has been doing business with you," said Shadd.

"Yes, that's right," came the answer. "Will 'Ay's the name—and the money touched me for twenty snackers."

Silas Heather frowned.

(Continued on page 227.)

