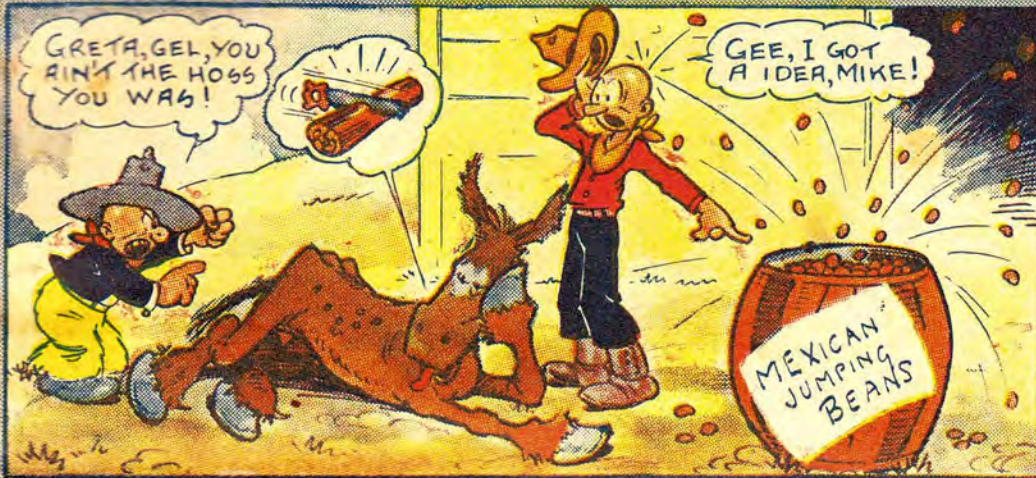


THE STARS : WILL HAY : ALEX JAMES : LEONARD HENRY : STAINLESS STEPHEN : SEXTON BLAKE ARE INSIDE!

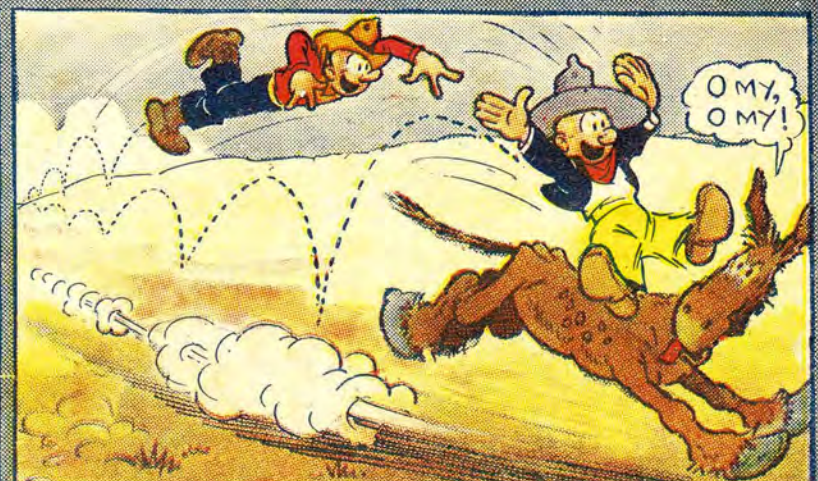
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MEET—
**MIKE,
SPIKE,
&
GRETA**
—THE 3 GOOKS





WILL HAY AT BENDOVER



"MASTER PYKE, you're wanted on the telephone. It's your father—"

Kelly, the porter at Bendover College, looked into Reggie Pyke's study just before morning classes. The cad of the Fourth scowled at him, not because he had a grudge against him, but because he couldn't help it. His face was a big scowl and two ears.

"All right!" he grunted, and went along to the Head's study, where Dr. Shrubbs gave him a brief nod, and informed him he might take the call.

But the artful Reggie did not speak into the telephone until after Dr. Shrubbs had left the study.

"Hallo!" he grunted then, picking up the receiver.

"Is that you, Reggie?" It was the voice of Mr. Dunkley Pyke, his father. "Are you alone? Can I speak to you safely?"

"Sure, dad! Shrubbs's gone out."

"Well, then, I am sorry you have managed to do nothing towards getting Dr. Shrubbs discharged, although you know I shall be appointed Head in his place when he is turned out."

"I've done my best," grunted Reggie. "But ever since our Form-master Will Hay came here, he's put paid to all my stunts."

"Exactly, and for that reason he must be got rid of first. And I think you can do it at once. Colonel Chatterton, chairman of the board of governors, is going to pay another surprise visit to the school this afternoon, without warning anyone beforehand. If you could get the Fourth Form a little out of hand by the time he blows in, I think—I rather think—Will Hay's days would be numbered."

"By gum!" Reggie Pyke's eyes gleamed. "Leave it to me, dad! I'll pull it off somehow!"

"In which case," went on his father, "there may be a little extra tip in my next letter, you know. Good-bye!"

Reggie Pyke hurried away, with a lopsided smile on his crafty face. This was pie! He loathed Will Hay, and a chance like this was not to be missed.

When the Form lined up for lessons, he spoke about in a hurried whisper to the other fellows.

"Tell you what, chaps! Let's rag the old buffer bald-headed this morning, and if he starts anything, we'll all go on strike this afternoon!"

Jerry Smart, captain of the Fourth, frowned a little.

"Rag him as much as you like! The more the merrier!" he said. "But no dirty tricks on the man. He's a pretty good sort, really!" Pyke sneered.

"He ought to be booted out!" he replied. "He doesn't know anything about anything, and—"

"Good-morning, boys!" chanted a cheery voice from the door. "Now sit quiet for

two minutes while I teach you all I know myself!"

Form-master Will Hay, beaming all over his frontispiece, sailed into the Form-room, his mortar-board aslant on his head, his nose-nippers perched at a precarious angle on his nose.

"Did I hear that beautiful spring bird, the Beaky Pykewart, singing its little song as I came in?" he asked, tapping his nose, and peering over his nippers. "He'll be singing another sort of song pretty soon, the little squirt—H'm! Quite so! What would you like to learn this morning, boys?"

The angel-faced Piper rose, and looked timidly at Will Hay.

"Please, sir, can you teach grammar?"

Will Hay hitched up his nose-nippers and gave him a severe look. He was no longer taken in by Piper's angelic expression.

"You're going to start your backchat, my lad! Well, I'll buy it! Suppose I can teach grammar, what then?"

"Go and teach your grammar to suck eggs!" yelled the Form.

"Yes! No doubt! Most amusing!" Will stared at them, with a frozen grin. "Well, just for that, we'll do a morning's grammar, if it kills me! We'll start with a sentence! Take a hundred lines each!"

"Aaaa-tishoo!"

Reggie Pyke broke into a mighty sneeze, and winked at the others to follow. In a moment, sneezes burst out from all parts of the room. Will Hay rubbed his chin, and grinned dubiously.

"Seems to be catching!" he remarked. "Something else will be catching if this goes on! Pyke, you little squirt, if I hear another hoot from your snoot—h'm!—sneeze, I mean—I'll—"

"Aaaatishoo!" was Pyke's reply. "I—I

think someone's blowing snuff about!" he said surlily.

"Snuff of that!" replied Will. "The next one who sneezes gets six on the pants!"

As he spoke, a bit of dust floated into his nasal organ, and he felt it coming. He gasped and turned red in the face. The Form stopped sneezing and watched him breathlessly.

"Aaa-aaa-aaa—" gasped Will, struggling hard. "Aaaaa-tishoo!"

The sneeze nearly broke all the windows in the room.

The grinning boys watched him as he wiped his eyes, hitched up his nose-nippers, and stared over the Form with a solemn face.

"H'm! Yes! Undoubtedly!" He scratched his chin and grinned. "You little squirts think you've got me, don't you? Smart, my lad, kindly beetle out here!"

Jerry Smart slid out cautiously to the front.

"Take this cane," commanded Will, "and give me six on the pants! When I say a thing, I mean it!"

"You bet your sweet life!" howled Jerry, rolling up his sleeves. "Bend over and touch your toes, then!"

"Lay it on, Jerry!" yelled Reggie Pyke.

"Shut up!" bawled Will Hay. "Next one who speaks gets a tanning!" He turned to Jerry. "Are you ready?"

"You bet I am!"

"Yes; but you shouldn't have spoken, because you're down for a tanning now!" He grinned cheerily at Smart. "Don't worry, my lad! I shall lay it on you just as hard as you lay it on me!"

He then bent over and touched his toes, while Jerry Smart did a lot of quick thinking. He knew that Will Hay had got him, and he had to admire the slickness of it.

Reluctantly, he gave Will Hay six light flicks with the cane, after which Will returned the compliment, with a grin, and they were all square again. Reggie Pyke whispered to the other fellows who were near:

"Keep on sneezing! He can't wallop the lot of us!"

A tornado of sneezing broke out again.

The boys grinned as Will Hay sat, frozen, at his desk, seemingly at a loss. He couldn't single out any one boy to speak to, for all of them were sneezing; and when he bawled to them to shut up, they merely sneezed all the harder. It was a problem, but problems like that were Will Hay's meat.

"Pyke, you little wart, come out and bend over this stool!"

"Not likely!" snarled Reggie. "You always pick on me! I'm not doing it more than anyone else!"

"H'm! Yes! I see! But I told you to stand out because I like you—ahem! If you don't want to move—" Reggie Pyke slipped out to the front, with a howl. Will grinned at him cheerily. "Now bend over this stool! I shan't touch you until I hear another

**WILL HAY,
FORM-MASTER,
IS IN A CLASS
BY HIMSELF.**



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trouble solo—sneeze, I mean—from the Form. Then you'll get a swipe, and you can settle up with the fellow who sneezed. You follow me?"

Reggie Pyke happened to be one of the biggest fellows in the Fourth, and he was a good deal of a bully as well. He bent over, with a scowl, while Will Hay, cane in hand, waited for another sneeze. Three came along at once.

Whack, whack, whack!

The cane rang cheerily on Pyke's pants.

"That's three from Fragon, Smythe, and Grubb, with love!" chuckled Will. "If you would like to poke them in the snoot—h'm!—damage their features, you'd better do so at once!"

Reggie Pyke sprang to his feet, roaring.

"Stoppit, you rotters!" he bawled. "The next beast who sneezes gets one from me!"

"That," agreed Will, "is the material to administer to them, and with knobs on!"

There was no more sneezing, and Pyke went sulkily back to his place. For a few minutes there was gentle peace in the Form, broken only by a stream of learning from Will Hay. Then an epidemic of coughing broke out. Pyke couldn't be walloped for coughing, so Will would have to find another victim.

"Dear me!" remarked Will Hay, scratching his chin. "Something ought to be done about those colds of yours. Yes!"

He grinned doubtfully at the Form for a moment, then turned and sailed out of the room, followed by a loud cheer. Crossing to the sanatorium, he procured a large bottle of white crystals, marked "alum," and a small teaspoon. He came back to the Form-room and put the bottle on the desk, while the Form eyed it uneasily.

"Line up, you little blisters, and all put your tongues out!" beamed Will, unscrupling the stopper. "What you want is some cough-mixture, and you're going to get it—in the neck!"

The boys lined up with worried looks on their faces. They had never sampled any alum before, but they had an idea that it might prove unpleasant. It did! Smythe had the first dose, and he gave a frantic howl.

"Ooogh! Oh ewubs! Ibe poisoned!"

"Do you a world of good!" beamed Will, putting a little heap of crystals on each tongue. "I bet we shan't hear another cough for hours! Isn't it luvverly? Sip it, drink it, drain it! If you want any more, there's plenty left!"

He was quite right. There wasn't another cough all the morning. He had proved himself too much of a cough-drop!

But there were plenty of moans and groans, and when the Fourth tottered out of class, all Bendover roared with laughter at the story. The Fourth Formers blushed with shame, and slipped away to hide their diminished heads. A jeering crowd followed them as they went.

It was not a happy morning, but Reggie Pyke fancied he could make some use of it.

"RAG him bald-headed!"

Thus Reggie Pyke, to a crowd of the Fourth in one corner of the quad. The Fourth were suffering from a severe dose of Hay-fever, so to speak. Until lately they had had the reputation of being unmanageable. No fewer than five masters had chucked up the job in one term. They were proud of their reputation, and they didn't like to see Bendover cackling at them. Will Hay was on top, and he had to be taught a sharp lesson!

So argued Reggie Pyke, and the majority of the Fourth agreed with him. Even dinner had not been able to take away the fearful taste of alum from their throats.

"No lessons this afternoon, chaps!" cried Reggie. "There goes the bell! Stick round the quad or playing fields, and if he wants us, let him blessed well fetch us! He'll have a job!"

"Hear, hear!" cried the Fourth, and they dispersed into little groups. Reggie Pyke leered with satisfaction. Soon Colonel Chatterton would arrive, and when he saw the Fourth in revolt, and Will Hay being ragged, he would have good cause to ask for his dismissal.

The rest of Bendover poured in to classes, casting surprised looks at the Fourth as they

drifted away. Will Hay himself had no idea of it. He sailed pleasantly into the Form-room in his usual overflowing style.

"Good-afternoon, boys! Less noise there, if you please! Now, pay attention, and—H'm!" He stopped, scratched his chin, and looked at the empty desks. "Something wrong with my eyesight! I must have this seen to! The room seems to be filled with large slabs of nothing! Absurd!" He wiped his nose-nippers, and hitched them more firmly on his beak. "Yes! Still the same result! Yet I swear I heard the bell. Perhaps there's something wrong with my earsight, instead!"

He drifted to the window and looked out. Little knots of Fourth Formers could be seen at a distance, some of them kicking a football, others having a quiet and gentlemanly game of conkers. He grinned in a mirthless fashion, and, picking up his cane, sallied forth.

Striding across the football field, he came to a group of half a dozen boys, who were carefully spreading a large tarpaulin ground-sheet on the grass.

"What's the big idea, boys?" he demanded, beaming. "I should say, why this dilatoriness in proceeding to the forum of learning? The class-room, in other words!"

The spectacled Piper touched his cap and said meekly:

"If you please, sir, we were about to try a small experiment in thermo-dynamics for the chemistry class. Would you be so kind as to render us your valued assistance in the trial?"

"Why, certainly! Most interesting! Quite illuminating! What do you want me to do?"

"Just to stand on this ground-sheet for a moment, sir, if you will be so good."

Will Hay cocked an eye at him, and then at Pyke, Sanson, and the others, who were all looking most grave and attentive. "It looks fishy to me," he declared. "But if you really want to learn something for a change, here goes!" And he stepped on to the ground-sheet.

"Up with him!" roared Sanson, grabbing a corner.

Will Hay made a jump, but too late. Up went the ground-sheet, and he sailed into the air with his gown spreading out like a parachute and his toothy grin frozen on his face.

"Most interesting!" he gasped, as he fell into the ground-sheet and was hoisted into the stratosphere again. "A practical lesson on the force of gravity! Oosh! Delightful view from up here! Get ready, lads! I'm on my way down!"

Up and down he went, a dozen times, rising

higher each time and bouncing about on the ground-sheet as he came down. A crowd of Fourth Formers flocked round and cheered. But a fussy old gentleman, with a monocle who had just stepped out of a car, glared with angry astonishment.

"What—what—" he gasped. "Tossing their Form-master, dash it! Pretty state of things, what?" And he strode over to the crowd.

"Boys! Stop that at once! Stop it—you hear me?"

"Cave!" howled Smythe. "It's Colonel Chatterton!"

They dropped the ground-sheet and backed away. The colonel strode forward, frowning. Unfortunately, he didn't notice Will Hay up in the clouds, so he was just in the right place to break his fall when he came down.

Cra-ash!

"Ooogh! Good gad! I'm a dead man!" howled the colonel, as Will flattened him into the turf. "What's hit me, dash it?"

"Merely me, colonel!" replied Will, with a toothy grin. "So glad you've dropped in for me to drop on. You came just at the right moment. I might have hurt myself if you hadn't been there! Let me stick you together again, as good as new!"

He picked the colonel up and scraped mud off him, while Reggie Pyke looked on breathlessly. This was absolutely "jam" for Reginald. If Will Hay didn't get the boot after this, he'd give up trying.

The colonel emerged from the mud, stuck his eyeglass into his eye, and gave Will Hay a glare that threatened to burn holes in him.

"So this—is this—the way you manage a Form, dash it!" howled the colonel. "Instead of giving 'em lessons, I find 'em tossing you in a blanket on the playing fields. I thought as much! I'm glad I came here this afternoon—"

"So am I!" agreed Will, slapping him on the back. "Bit of luck, I call it! If you hadn't come here sticking your beak in—h'm!—on a welcome visit to the school, I should have dropped on the half a pound—ground, I should say!"

"I knew you were a fool when the Head engaged you. I said so at the time. Listen to me, Mr. Hay! You think yourself no end of a big gun, but—"

"You're going to fire me! Large joke!" beamed Will. "We old friends must have our bit of fun, mustn't we, colonel!"

"You'll come with me to the headmaster," snorted Colonel Chatterton. "And these boys



"This will do you a world of good, boys," beamed Will Hay, putting a little heap of crystals on each boy's tongue. But these crystals were alum, and it was Will Hay's novel way of putting a stop to the Fourth's "epidemic" of coughing.

who were tossing you, dash it, shall be flogged forthwith, till they can't see straight."

"See you?" requested Will politely, hitching up his nippers. "Now get a load of this, colonel—or perhaps I should say, make a careful note of this exclusive explanation. I told the little—the boys—to do that stuff with the ground-sheet, because we were making an experiment in thermo-dynamics, attempting to prove that the passage of a human body weighing 13 kilowatts through the line of the gravitational arc would be sixteen-point-eight degrees latitude south of the cycloid equinox!"

"Indeed? I'd like to know what that means!"

"So would I!" beamed Will politely. "So would I! Well, shall we let the boys off, colonel? I mean, boys will be men—when they're old enough! You see the point?"

"I refuse to waste any more time on you. If you admit that it was all your doing, sir, I shall let the boys off and see that you get what you're asking for—the sack, sir, by gad! Come with me to the Head!"

"Quite! Quite! That will be delightful! After you, colonel!"

Will Hay sallied away after the snorting colonel, leaving Reggie Pyke rubbing his hands with glee.

Dr. Erasmus Shrubbs looked up from his desk in surprise as they came in, and his face lengthened as he listened to the colonel's complaint.

"Dear me! I'm sorry to hear this," he replied. "Mr. Hay has been by far the most successful master I have had for the Fourth Form. Until he came, they were absolutely unmanageable, but he has succeeded in keeping them in order splendidly."

"Tush!" snorted the colonel. "Tush!" he went on, making his meaning clearer. "We've had a lot of weaklings as masters of the Fourth. The boys are no worse than any other boys. I'd soon have 'em toeing the line, by gad! I demand this man Hay's instant dismissal!"

"Nothing like speed, sir," remarked Will, rubbing his chin. "Instantly—at once—on the jump, is that it, sir? Which reminds me—I seem to smell the work of that little Pyke beetle in this business. Did Mr. Dunkley Pyke know you were coming to-day, colonel?"

"Ah! And likewise ha! There was a telephone call for Reginald this morning. So that accounts for the coke in the milkonut! Well, he certainly seems to have put one over on me, the little wart!"

The colonel swelled up. "If you are alluding to the son of my old friend Pyke, allow me to tell you that a finer or more manly youngster doesn't exist."

"We can't be thinking of the same one," replied Will, frowning. "The one I mean has a face like a tadpole and six thousand pimples. A most unfortunate accident of Nature! Well, well! It seems that I have been awarded the push, and all that remains is to push off. Good-bye, Doctor!"

"Stay! Colonel, may I beg you to reconsider—" began Dr. Shrubbs weakly.

"Never, sir, never!"

"The Fourth is such a difficult Form to manage—"

"Stuff!" barked the colonel.

"No other man has managed to do it—"

"Don't talk nonsense, sir, by Jove!" roared the colonel. "Why, I could do it myself! You wouldn't see them ragging me, sir! No, or even trying it! I know how to handle boys."

"Oh, yes, that's easy!" agreed Will. "You handle them by the ears, if you can get hold of them; or by the neck if you can't. It's surprising how easy any job is to do when you haven't got to do it!"

The colonel's jaw set squarely.

"Very well!" he fussed. "You doubt my word! Assemble your Form in their classroom immediately, and I will take this afternoon's class myself!"

"H'm! Yes!" pondered Will, rubbing his chin and grinning. "But they won't rag a governor of the school, so it's a safe bet from your point of view—"

"If they won't rag me, they won't rag anyone!" boomed the colonel. "And if they do rag me, I—I'll give you back your position,

sir, by Jove! Lend me a gown and mortar-board, Doctor!"

Will Hay sallied away to the quad, where he found his Form gathered together discussing the incident. He gave them a grim glare over the top of his nose-nippers.

"Very funny!" he said, grinding his teeth. "A most amusing little joke, yes? Next time you want to toss-up for sides, don't use your Form-master, or there'll be trouble! Buckets of it! Now bumble into the Form-room, as quick as you like! You understand?"

"You're not our master now! You've got the sack!"

"True, my perishing Pyke, quite true! I've got the—ahem!—I have decided to resign my position at this college, but there is much to be said to you first, and I want you in that Form-room in two shakes of an eel's pigtail. Now get going! I shall be there myself in five minutes, and if you aren't all in your places by then, I'll stuff you down your own throats and make you swallow yourselves. That's a tip!"

And he strode away, frowning grimly.



Landlord: "Look here, I want my money!"
Tenant: "That's okay. I thought you wanted mine!"

"DON'T go!" Reggie Pyke was openly mutinous. "There's no need to take any notice of him. He's got the sack!"

"That'll be all from you," replied Jerry Smart uneasily. "He's a brick! He wouldn't let old Chatterton flog us, though we begged and prayed for it. If Hay's got to go, I vote we give him a good send-off!"

"Hear, hear!"

Reggie Pyke sneered. Practically all the Form were sorry for what had happened, and he wasn't going to get any more backing for his schemes. Luckily it wasn't necessary, since Will Hay had already got the sack; but Reggie Pyke had a mean and spiteful nature. He wanted to rag and rag and keep on ragging till Will Hay had gone.

As the Form moved in to class, he cut across to the matron's room and borrowed one of her old black dresses with a blouse and skirt. He then dashed up to his study, hooked out a tin basin, and filled it with ink from all the bottles he could find. While he was doing so, the rest of the Form had gone into the classroom. Will Hay was there, and he frowned at them grately over his nose-nippers.

"Wrong number!" he exclaimed. "One missing! Why, it's the bright and beautiful Pyke!" He snarled mercilessly and picked up his cane. "Anyone know where he is?"

"No, sir!" answered Smart. "We saw him cutting away towards the matron's house."

"Indeed? Well, I think, before I go, I'll get some of the dust out of Reginald's clothes with this little dry-cleaner! It will do him more good than a month at the seaside. Now, you little lugworms, behave yourselves! Colonel Chatterton's coming to take this lesson himself, and if you rag him, he'll have you stood up against a wall and shot. Yes, sir, by gad! Now sit quiet and wait for him, while I go and fish for Pyke!"

He ballooned out of the room, swishing his joy-stick pleasantly. The Form sat and waited for him like model youths. None of them wanted trouble with the colonel.

The door opened, but the newcomer was Reggie Pyke, not the colonel. He carried a tin basin full of ink, and he glared at the Fourth Form fellows truculently.

"Look here," he snarled, "I'm going to fix up a booby trap for Will Hay. If any man's got anything to say about it, he'd better say it now. Don't all speak at once!"

Since Reggie Pyke was one of the biggest fellows in the Form, they didn't speak at all; but a slow grin travelled from face to face. They weren't expecting Will Hay back, but they were expecting someone else, so they chuckled gleefully as Pyke stood the tin basin on top of the door and took an old sack out from under his jacket.

"Now we'll give Mr. Will Hay a proper send-off!" sneered Pyke.

Even as he was speaking, heavy footsteps were heard outside. Next moment the door was pushed open.

Clang! Crash! Swoosh!

"Urrrrrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Reggie Pyke, as a figure in gown and mortar-board, as black as a nigger at midnight, stood and gurgled on the doormat.

"Gug-great Scott! Who is it?" gasped Smythe.

"Urrgh! Grooo-hooop! Wha-a-at's this! Good gad! Hooop!" gasped Colonel Chatterton, who was quite unrecognisable for the gallon of ink which adorned him.

"Let me give you a hand, Mr. Will Hay!" chuckled Reggie Pyke, and, lifting the sack, he brought it down over Colonel Chatterton's head and shoulders, tying it swiftly about his waist. "Come on, you men! We've got him! He can't do anything to us, because he's sacked!"

"You silly ass! You'll be expelled!" howled Smythe.

"Rats! He isn't a master here now! He's been booted out! I'm going to make him look a fool!"

"Urrgh-wooch-wooh!" came a stifled howl inside the sack.

Reggie Pyke caught hold of the helpless figure and propelled him out of the room easily enough. Along the corridor he went to the nearest bath-room. There he took the key out of the door and pushed the colonel inside. Then he untied the sack and nipped out of the room.

"Good gad! Rascals! Villains! Scoundrels! That young villain Pyke—" The colonel gasped as he removed the sack. He was about to charge back to the classroom and give Reggie Pyke the tanning of his life, when he saw that he was in the bath-room.

He needed a bath!

"I'll have a bath while I'm here—groooh!—and then, by Jove, I'll make an example of that young lobster!" he gasped, taking off his inky coat and trousers and turning on the water.

The door opened slightly, and Reggie Pyke peered in. He grinned as he saw his victim, in his underwear, bending over the bath, then he hooked the colonel's jacket and trousers out of the room and dropped the matron's skirt and blouse on the floor in their place. After which he quietly shut the door.

For a long, long time there was heard the sound of scraping and rubbing, accompanied by a fine display of good soldierly language, as the colonel wrestled with the finest quality blue-black ink. Then came the sound of a brisk towelling. And then came a burst of

(Continued on page 23.)

ALEX JAMES' SCHOOLDAYS!

(Continued from page 12.)

whole wretched business makes me feel sick! But he's going from Cragston—that's one comfort. And neither the headmaster, nor Crunting, nor the whole board of governors will make me change my mind. Neither will I explain to them my reasons for revoking the scholarship fund."

His misgiving broke off as the tinkling note of the telephone echoed through the study.

"Yes, yes," snapped old Baillie tersely. "Who is it? What do you want?" Then suddenly his voice and his manner changed, as he recognised the caller as his grandson, Dod Jarvie. "Oh, hallo, Dod! Yes, you're right, I wrote to the young scoundrel yesterday. Yes, I've told him that he'll be leaving Cragston at the end of term. No, no, I didn't explain—didn't trouble to explain. After all, if he's got any sense he'll know the reason."

At the other end of the wire, Dod Jarvie's eyes were gleaming with triumph. The simple plan he had set in motion was already bringing electrifying results. Alex James was as good as doomed—as good as gone from Cragston Academy. Never would he be able to clear himself in the eyes of Baillie Jarvie.

"I'm—I'm sorry, in a way, sir," said Dod Jarvie, "that I've been the one to bring that rather double game—his hypocrisy—to your notice. I never have liked the cad—didn't like him from the moment he came to the academy. But I thought it my duty to send that letter to you, without mentioning a word to any-

"You've nothing to reproach yourself about," came back Baillie Jarvie's answer. "I must confess that at one time I did imagine you disliked the boy because you were merely jealous of him. I can see now that I was mistaken—he's a double-dyed young scoundrel, not fit for any Cragston boy to know, least of all to mix with my grandson—my heir. No, Dod, you did your duty—an unpleasant duty, maybe—in sending that letter to me. Thank goodness, you found the young scoundrel out. The matter is now closed, as far as you and I are concerned. I will not see the boy again. I will hold no further communication with him. It shall be, from now on, just as if no such person as Alex James ever existed. Good-bye, my boy—good-bye!"

Dod Jarvie was rubbing his hands in evil triumph as Mr. Crunting re-entered his study, having left it courteously, whilst Jarvie spoke to his grandfather. The Form-master gave him a shrewd, penetrating look.

"You appear to have heard some good news," remarked Mr. Crunting dryly. "I hope and trust it does not spring from the knowledge that Alexander James is leaving us—I hope and trust not, Jarvie. Your antipathy, enmity, towards that unfortunate boy has come home to me very strongly since I heard the tidings regarding his near departure from Cragston."

"No, sir!" Jarvie's eyes were wide and his glib tongue found lying words enough springing to his aid. "I—I've not heard from my grandfather that my grandson who has been very ill, is out of danger and fast recovering. Thank you, sir," he said demurely. "It was kind of you to allow me to use your phone."

He walked out of the study, too silent-footed and furtive for Mr. Crunting. The master stared staring at the closed door, with pursed lips and a thoughtful frown.

"That boy Jarvie is a born liar," he told himself sharply. "I ought to have dusted his pants more often than I have." He sighed, conscious that in the past he had been much too lenient with Dod Jarvie on account of his relationship with so high and important a personage as old Baillie Jarvie, local magistrate and senior governor of the academy—"the boy Alexander James is worth a dozen of his sort—two dozen, in fact. I'm sorry that youngster is leaving us."

But was Alex leaving Cragston Academy? Already Fatty Hunter was stepping into the strange web of entanglement Fate had chosen to throw round the lives of Alex's friends and foes; already the faithful Fatty was



Referee: "Come on, Basher, get your coat off!"

Basher: "Not on your life. Everybody's saying he'll knock me cold."

planning a scheme which would keep Alex at Cragston, despite Baillie Jarvie's revoking of the fund which had endowed the scholarship—despite the evil, despicable, cunning scheme of Dod Jarvie.

Not a word of what was in his mind did Fatty mention to Alex. He knew, did Fatty, that Alex would never countenance anything that savoured of charity. All that concerned Fatty Hunter, however, was to keep his pal at Cragston Academy.

And the plump, easy-going Fatty could be very determined when he chose.

He chose to be determined now!

What are the plans of the faithful Fatty? How can he keep his pal at Cragston? You will find the answer in another enthralling instalment of this "best-of-all" school stories next Friday.

WILL HAY AT BENDOVER.

(Continued from page 4.)

language which couldn't possibly be printed on anything except fireproof asbestos!

"What the dooce— Where are my clothes! A skirt, dash it! What the blazes— A b-b-blouse? Suffering shell-holes, where the thunder are my clothes?"

For twenty minutes a large quantity of words poured out of the bath-room, then the door opened, and an extraordinary figure appeared. A face as red as the sunset, a white moustache bristling with fury, and an ancient black skirt and blouse like Charley's Aunt. A grinning face appeared round the corner, as Pyke took a peep at the result.

The grin soon disappeared!

"Coc—Coc—Cook—Colonel Chatterton!" gasped Reggie faintly. "Oh crickey! I've got the colonel!"

"Pyke!" The colonel's infuriated roar knocked lumps out of the ceiling. "Come here, boy! Come here, villain! I want you!"

Long before he had finished speaking, Reggie Pyke was doing 40 m.p.h. towards the wide open spaces, gasping with horror as he went. The colonel shook a furious fist after him, and then waddled away to the Head's study.

In that apartment Will Hay was saying good-bye to the old Doctor.

"I'm afraid nothing can be done, Mr. Hay," sighed the Doctor. "The colonel is apparently successful in taking your boys, and— What—what—what—"

The door opened and Colonel Chatterton came in. Will Hay wiped a grin off his face and stroked his chin gravely. The Head's eyes popped with amazement.

"Colonel Chatterton! My dear sir—"

"I've been ragged!" hooted the colonel, shaking his fist wildly. "I've had ink mopped over me—I've been encased in a sack, sir—my clothes were taken away, sir—I found these instead—I, an officer in his Majesty's Army, must appear in public in a skirt, sir—" He choked with fury.

"My dear madam—h'm!—I mean, colonel," beamed Will Hay. "it's most becoming, I assure you. It suits you splendidly."

The colonel nearly burst. "Pah!" he howled. "That young villain Pyke—"

"Oh, come, come!" bawled in Will Hay. "A finer or more manly youngster doesn't exist. You said so yourself, or I am misput?"

"Flogged!" hooted the colonel. "He must be flogged, sir, within an inch of his life—half an inch, sir! By Jove, I won't leave this place till I've seen it done!"

"Excellent idea," beamed Will Hay, rubbing his hands. "Most not undecidedly! Well, if you've finished with my Form, I'd better go and get on with my work, yes?"

"Take it out of 'em!" bawled the colonel. Five minutes later Will Hay sailed breezily into the Fourth Form classroom.

"Now, boys, geometry, from Noah's Ark to Joan of Arc."

"But, sir," said Jerry Smart, "I thought Colonel Chatterton was going to take us because you've got the sack!"

"Wrong guess!" beamed Will toothily. "I'm going to take you because Colonel Chatterton's got the sack! Get going, my little Smart, before I make you smart a lot—if you follow what I mean."

Will Hay has got his job back and will be back again next week to make you laugh. Be a real pal and pass the tip to your pals to read these bright, Bendover yarns featuring the world's funniest Form-master—WILL HAY!

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