

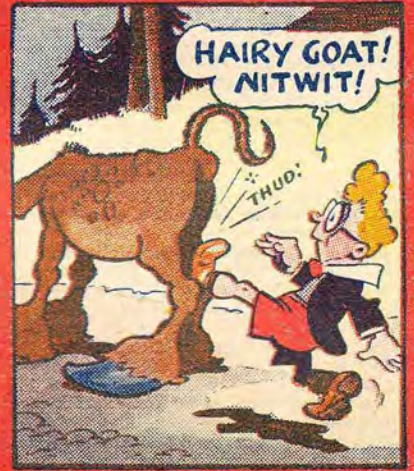
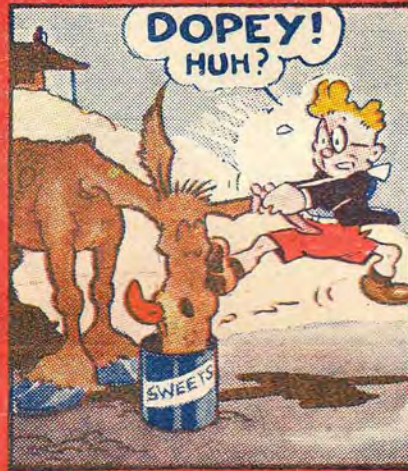
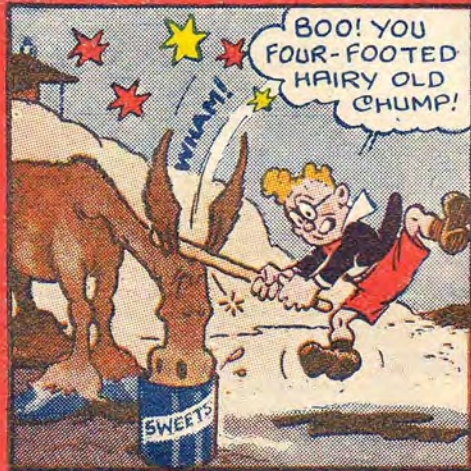
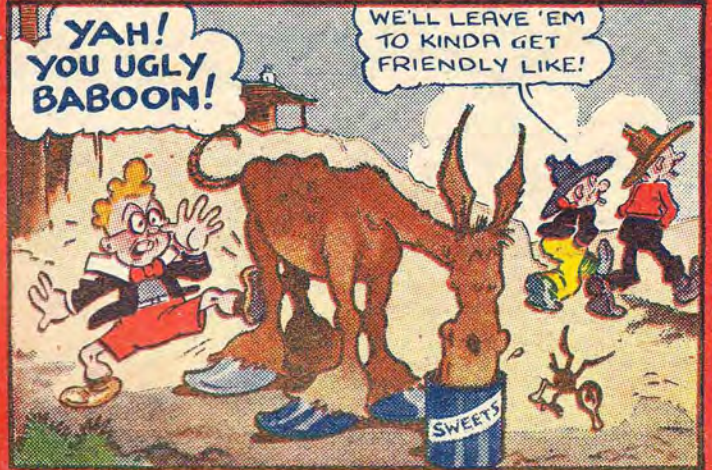


WILL HAY IS INSIDE

The PILOT 2^D

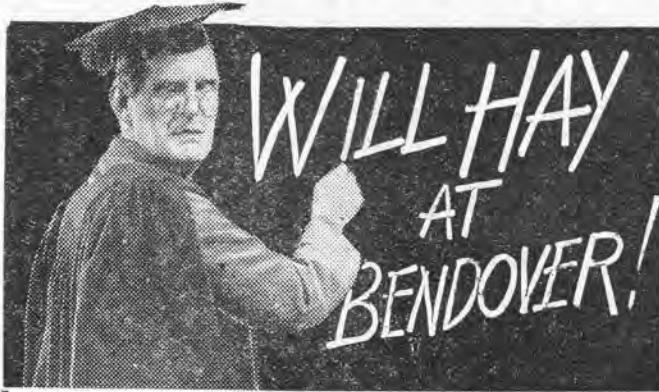
No. 100. Vol. 4. Week ending August 28th, 1937.

EVERY FRIDAY



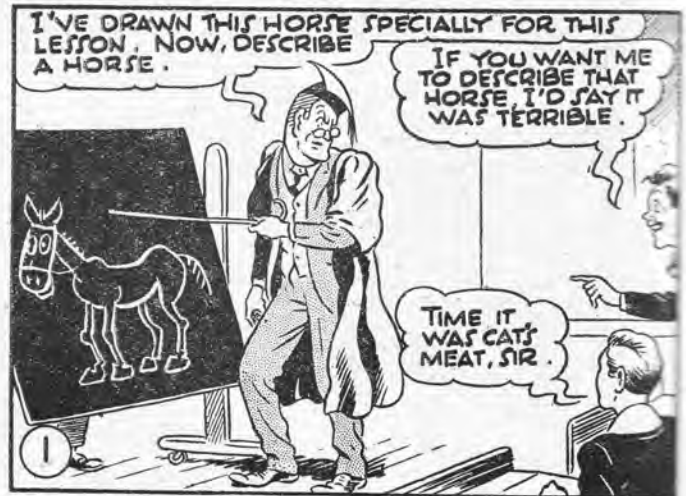
MIKE,
SPIKE &
GRETA
Our Krazy Gang
IN
"The
Last
Straw!"





YOUR TONGUE LAUGH FOR THE WEEK IS HERE. Another ripping complete story starring Britain's prince of laughter merchants WILL HAY!

(By Courtesy of Gainsborough Pictures.)



I AM going to give a lesson—"
 "Oh, lor'!"
 "To Mr. Pyke—"
 "Oh, good!"
 Will Hay grinned with every tooth in his head.
 Since the barring-out at Bendover School had started, there had been no lessons in the Fourth Form. The Bendover Fourth did not seem to miss them. If there was any fellow in that Form with an ardent thirst for knowledge, he never mentioned the fact.
 They had liked Will Hay as Form-master, in the peaceful days of Dr. Shrubbs. They liked him still more in his role of rebel chief, barring out the new headmaster, Mr. Dunkley Pyke.

"No! Not here, here—there, there!" said Will Hay. "We're here, and he's there. Be more careful with your adjectives, Bird!"
 "Oh, my hat! Do you mean adverbs, sir?"
 "I mean that I shall cane you if you interrupt me again, Bird! Ahem! Now, suppose I want to put the wind up the enemy, what's the best way?"
 "That's an easy one, sir!" said Jimmy Carboy at once. "Just walk up to him, holding a newspaper in front of your face—"
 "Eh?"
 "And take it away suddenly—"
 "What?"
 "And let him see your features all at once! That would put the wind up anybody, sir! Scare him stiff!"

Dunkley Pyke feel like a disused remnant left on the counter! Bring me pen, ink, and paper, Smart!"
 The Bendover Fourth gathered round, very curiously, as Will Hay proceeded to write a message. On a sheet of paper he wrote, in large capital letters:

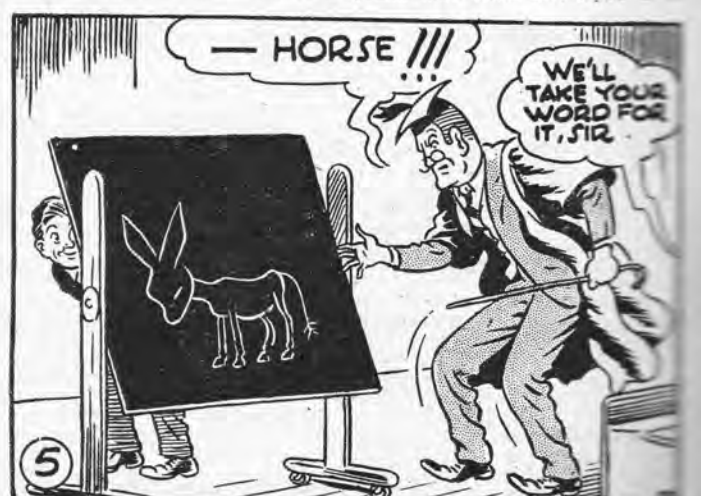
**DUNKLEY PYKE,
 BEWARE!
 AT TEN O'CLOCK PRECISELY YOU
 WILL BE DUCKED IN THE
 FOUNTAIN, IF YOU HAVE NOT LEFT
 BENDOVER!**

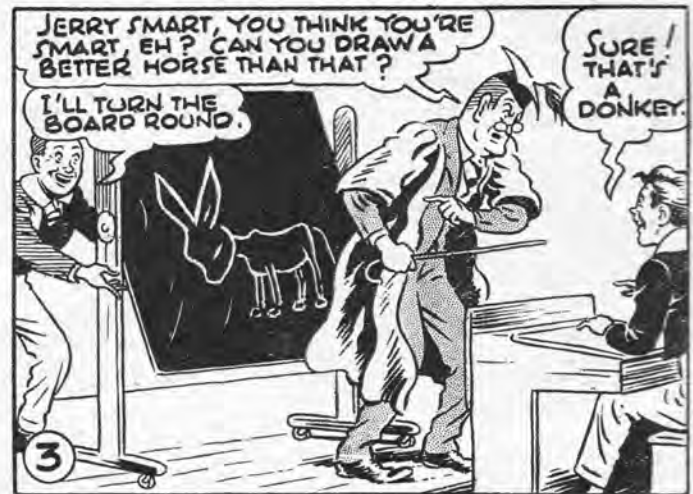
(Signed) W. HAY & Co.

But when, that morning, he called them together in the hall of the Head's house, which the schoolboy rebels had barricaded, and were holding against all comers, they had a suspicion that he was "coming the beak," as Dicky Bird expressed it. His first words were quite alarming! So there was general relief when it transpired that the lesson he was going to give was only for the benefit of the new headmaster! In fact, the Bendover Fourth were ready to back him up all along the line.
 "Go it, sir!" encouraged Jimmy Carboy.
 "Listen to me! Green, stop chewing that toffee, and listen!" rapped Will. "Is this a time to choose for chews?"
 "I'm listening, sir!" gasped Tubby Green. "I'm all ears, sir!"
 "No, no; not all!" said Will. "Very nearly, perhaps, but not all! You exaggerate, Green! Your ears are hardly twice as large as any others in the Form. Now, listen-in, all of you! We're up against Mr. Dunkley Pyke, over in the School House—"
 "Hear, hear!" chirruped Dicky Bird.

Will Hay gazed at that bright member of his Form. From the rest of the Bendover Fourth came a merry chortle.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Ha, ha!" echoed Will. "A hit—a very palpable hit, as our old friend Shakespeare remarks. I can also make hits, in my own way. Like that, for instance!"
 Whack! went his cane.
 "Yoo-hoop!" roared Jimmy.
 "—and like that!"
 "Yaroooh!"
 Jimmy Carboy dodged up the staircase. Will Hay grinned genially and resumed his discourse.
 "Now, you little ticks—I mean, now, my dear pupils—I will elucidate," he went on. "If you want to put the wind up the enemy, let him know what you are going to do, just when you are going to do it, and then get on with it, and do it on time! That's the way to rattle him! That's the way to keep him on the jump! That's the way to make him cringe! That's how we're going to make

Will glanced at his watch.
 "Ten to twelve!" he remarked. "In ten minutes the school will be out, reading the notice, and Mr. Pyke will not be long in spotting it. Open the front door, Straw, and keep on guard while I sally forth."
 The front door was opened, and Will scanned the quadrangle with a keen eye, over his nose-nippers, before he ventured out. All Bendover, except the Fourth Form, was in the Form-rooms, Mr. Pyke taking the Sixth as usual. Nobody was to be seen but Kelly, the porter, leaning on his lodge, at the gates.
 Will Hay billowed down the steps of the Head's house, and breezed across to the granite fountain in the middle of the quadrangle. With a dab of gum on the paper, he stuck it to the rim of the fountain, where it was sure to meet many eyes, as soon as the school came out. Then he started back.
 "Look out, sir!" yelled Dicky Bird, from the door.
 Kelly, the porter, was coming across from his lodge at a run. Kelly was scheduled to receive a pound note from Mr. Pyke if he





succeeded in bagging Will Hay, the Form-master who had been sacked by the new Head, but who declined to leave Bendover. Kelly thought he saw a chance of fingering that pound note.

"Oh, my hat and umbrella!" ejaculated Will, as the burly form of the school porter cut between him and the Head's house, barring his retreat to the rebels' stronghold.

"Gotcher this time!" grinned Kelly; and he grabbed at Will Hay's billowing gown.

The next moment his sinewy arm was round Will, and he was yanking him away towards the School House! But the next, the Bendover porter uttered a fearful yell, let go Will Hay, and hopped clear of the ground.

Will cut back to the Head's house at top speed, watched by the breathless crowd in the doorway. He billowed cheerily up the steps.

"Yaroooop!" Kelly was roaring. "Ow! Ooooh! Wow! Yawp! Oooop! Whoop!"

"Gather round, my infants!" grinned Will Hay. "Song and dance by Mr. Kelly—no charge!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Dicky Bird. "I thought he had you!"

"So did he!" agreed Will. "And so he might have if I had not taken a needle with me. One application seemed to satisfy Mr. Kelly."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Bendover Fourth. "He got the needle!" smiled Will. "Never saw a man look so thoroughly as if he'd got the needle."

"Ha, ha, ha!" The Bendover rebels roared as Kelly went back to his lodge, wriggling like an eel as he went.

A few minutes later a bell rang, and Bendover school poured out. Many glances and grins were cast towards the rebels' stronghold; but the Sixth Form prefects, as usual, kept the crowd at a distance. Gunter of the Fifth

was the first to spot the paper gummied on the rim of the fountain, and his shout brought a crowd of fellows round it. Then the angular, bony form of Mr. Dunkley Pyke was seen issuing from the School House. With a frowning brow the new headmaster of Bendover School strode up to see what was going on.

He glared at the notice on the fountain. He glared at it as if he could hardly believe his eyes. There was a sound of chuckling and chortling round him.

"Ducked in the fountain—"

"At ten o'clock—"

"Old Hay's let him know what he's going to do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Pyke. "How dare you laugh at this—this—this unexampled impudence of a master I have dismissed! Silence! Gunter, take a hundred lines—Wilkins, take a hundred lines—"

The Bendover crowd scattered, leaving Mr. Pyke alone with the message from Will Hay. He glared at it again, glared across at the Head's house, where the windows were crammed with grinning faces, and then glared at the paper once more. Then he scraped it off the granite, scattered the fragments to the summer breeze, and stamped angrily back to the house.

But half Bendover had seen that message—and the other half soon heard of it—and the whole school wondered breathlessly whether Will Hay would keep his word, and whether, when ten o'clock struck, Mr. Dunkley Pyke's long legs would be thrashing the water in the grauite basin! And Mr. Pyke himself felt a deep misgiving, as he wondered, too!

NOBODY at Bendover School was anxious to go to bed that night. The rebel Form, barricaded in the Head's house, were a law unto themselves. But all other Forms at Bendover had to

toe the line. Second and Third, Shell and Fifth, would gladly have stayed up, to see whether Will Hay carried out his threat of ducking the new headmaster in the fountain—and enjoying the sight if he did!

Prefects, whose duty it was to see lights out in the various dormitories, found it quite difficult to shepherd their flocks to bed. As for the prefects themselves, there was no bed for them—at ten o'clock that night they were booked to enjoy, or otherwise, the company of Mr. Dunkley Pyke!

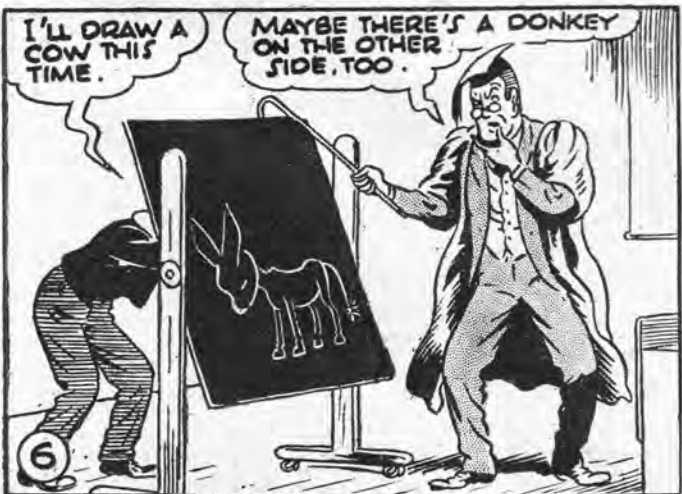
Ducking in the fountain was not an idea that appealed to Mr. Pyke in the very least. If ever a man deserved to be ducked, Mr. Pyke did; but, like many people in this wicked world, he disliked the idea of getting what he deserved. That night, till ten o'clock was safely past, Mr. Pyke was not going to be left alone for a single minute!

At ten, Mr. Pyke was going to be sitting in the old Head's study, with the light on, and Crocker, Stuckey, Parker, and other hefty Sixth Form men sitting with him—all ready for Will Hay if he happened!

Members of the staff, with whom the new Head was far from popular, declined to share in the vigil. Only one master was willing—and that was Monsieur le Bon, the French master. But Mr. Pyke had no use for Mossoo Bong—he was uneasy and nervy already, and did not want an excitable Gaul squeaking alarm every moment. Mossoo Bong made the offer, but Mr. Pyke did not enthuse.

"No!" he said. "Several prefects will remain with me—that will be sufficient."

"But perhaps zey go to dormit, zat is to say snooze!" said Monsieur le Bon. "And zat 'Ay, he is one drole—he go to catch you by one surprise, and zen—voila, you are one duck in a fountain! I zink it more better zat I vatch viz you, sair! I am on an alert—I jump at a sound—if so mooch as one mouse stir, I give ze alarm—"



Which was exactly what Mr. Pyke did not want. He was jumpy enough already!

"Thank you, no!" he said. "I will not trouble you, Monsieur le Bon."

"But zat is no trouble," urged Mossou Bong. "I like not zat my chief be one duck in a fountain."

Mr. Pyke, having started his career at Bendover by sacking a member of the staff, other members were not feeling wholly easy in their minds. Mossou Bong's uneasiness on that score made him "grease" to the new Head. Mossou Bong did not care much who was headmaster so long as Adolphe le Bon continued to be French master. Hence his devotion to Mr. Pyke. If he helped to save the new Head from that ducking, he felt that it would strengthen his position. But Mr. Pyke, who was not of a trusting nature, probably knew the exact value of Mossou Bong's devotion, and he did not want his vigil shared by an excitable, portly gentleman who was as nervy as a hen on hot bricks.

"Thanks—no!" he said, and that was that. And he went into his study and shut the door.

"Bete—sclerat—chien!" murmured Mossou Bong. In his self-communings, Mossou was able to state his real opinion of the new Head. "Sort of a dog! Species of brute! I zink I like to see you one duck in a fountain. But I zink zat I vatches all ze same, and zen for me zere is no sack like for zat 'Ay!'"

At half-past nine, when all the rest of Bendover had turned in—unwillingly—prefects of the Sixth began to arrive in the Head's study. Crocker, the captain of Bendover, came first, followed by Stuckey, Parker, Smith major, and a couple more. Reggie Pyke followed them in; the only member of the Fourth Form who was not backing up Will Hay.

Chairs had been provided, and the half-dozen seniors sat down—exchanging derisive and derogatory glances when Mr. Pyke was not looking at them. Sixth Form prefects had, in duty bound, to back up their headmaster—though what they were thinking of Mr. Pyke would have startled and offended him, had they mentioned it.

Dunkley Pyke was decidedly nervy.

His eyes were almost continually on the clock. As the minutes ticked by, his uneasiness intensified. There was no doubt that Will Hay's latest move had put the wind up the tyrant of Bendover. He told himself, again and again, that there was no danger. If that unspeakable villain, Hay, intended to make any attempt at ten o'clock, he would not have warned him and put him on his guard! Moreover, Kelly had been posted to watch the rebels' stronghold, in the deepening darkness, with the promise of a handsome reward if he spotted Will emerging, and grabbed him. And even if Will dodged Kelly, and came, the force in the Head's study was more than sufficient to handle him, and any of his followers who might accompany him. There was absolutely no danger—yet, as the minutes crawled by, Dunkley Pyke grew more and more uneasy, more and more nervous—and the prefects more openly derisive.

"It's all serene, pater," said Reggie Pyke at five minutes to ten. "It's all gas—he won't come! Yoo-oo-hoop!" added Reggie in a roar, as the paternal paw smacked his head.

Mr. Pyke was listening intently—his nerves on the jump. Reggie's remark, intended to reassure, had only the effect of irritating him. Mr. Pyke, who had caught some of the glances among the prefects, would have liked to smack their heads all round. That he could not do. But he could smack Reggie's—and he did—hard!

"Ooooooh!" roared Reggie, rubbing his ear. "Wow! I say—yoooooohoop!"

"Silence!" barked Mr. Pyke. "How dare you make a noise! Did you hear a sound, Crocker?"

"I heard Pyke howling!" said the Bendover captain.

"Do not be impertinent, Crocker! Did you hear a sound outside the window?" yapped Mr. Pyke.

The door was locked; the window fastened; but with the fatal hour so close at hand, Dunkley Pyke's nervous system was getting rather ragged.

"No, sir!" grunted Crocker. "Even if Hay's there, I don't think he will butt through a shut window; and if he does, we'll bag him. He's rather an old ass, but he's not likely to ask for it like that."

"Silence!" snapped Mr. Pyke.

He stepped to the window, drew a corner of the blind aside, and peered through the glass. The summer night was not dark; but it seemed dark as pitch, from the light inside.

"Turn off the light, Reginald!" yapped Mr. Pyke.

Reggie sulkily switched off the light. With the study in darkness, Mr. Pyke was able to see through the glass into the deep dusk outside. He gave a convulsive start at the sight of a shadowy form.

Someone was there! Except for Kelly, posted at the Head's house across the quadrangle, nobody should have been out. It was not Kelly. Who was it? Mr. Pyke hardly needed telling that!

If that iniquitous villain Hay came, he had

Prof. Barnacle Offers Prizes



FOR GOOD
JOKES

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Grandpa (very bald): "Why doesn't grass grow on a busy street?"

Jimmy: "Because it can't push its way through concrete!"

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to come by the window. The house was locked, bolted, and barred. And outside the window a shadowy figure lurked. Mr. Pyke's heart jumped into his neck. He turned back into the darkened room.

"Crocker—Stuckey—he is there!" he breathed.

"Rot!" came a voice—the speaker indistinguishable in the gloom.

"How dare you!" hissed Mr. Pyke. "I tell you he is there! Look!"

The whole party crowded to the window, pulling away the blind. Crocker gave a low whistle as he discerned the shadowy figure.

"Well, my hat! He's asking for it!" he murmured.

"Stand ready!" hissed Mr. Pyke.

Really, he seemed to expect a crash of glass, and to see Will Hay come billowing in! But nothing of the kind happened. The shadowy figure disappeared in the gloom, close by the wall. But it was still there—Dunkley Pyke knew that it was still there! It was yet two minutes to ten—no doubt the enemy was waiting for the exact hour to strike. Mr. Pyke panted. He had come! There was no doubt that he had come! Mr. Pyke had spotted him! And this was a chance, now that he was spotted, of seizing the scoundrel.

Mr. Pyke drew a deep, deep breath.

"Listen to me—all of you!" he breathed. "The villain is waiting—waiting for the clock to strike. How he intends to get at me, I can not guess; but you can see that he is there. I will open the window quietly. You can see where he stands, close by that buttress. You will jump out, as soon as the window is open, and seize him. Do you understand?"

"O.K., sir!" grinned Stuckey.

Mr. Pyke's eyes gleamed like a cat's in the dark. This was sheer good fortune! He was going to forestall the enemy, and Will Hay, who had come to shear, would be shorn, so to speak. Silently, without a sound, he opened the window. It was an easy jump to the ground. A jump, a rush, and that lurking shadowy figure by the buttress would be seen and secured. Dunkley Pyke fairly gloated.

"Quick!" he breathed.

Crocker and Stuckey jumped out together, and fairly bounded to the buttress. Their grasp closed on a shadowy figure and dragged it down, with a terrific bump, to the earth. There was a startled howl, muffled as a fall was squashed in the mould. Four more prefects jumped and bounded. Six pairs of hands were on the shadowy one now. He wriggled and gurgled in many clutches. Dunkley Pyke, grinning with glee, peered eagerly from the window.

"Hold him!" he panted. "Secure him. Don't let him escape! Keep him safe!"

"We've got him!" chuckled Stuckey. "I've got a knee on the back of his head."

"Urrrrrghh!" came gurgling from the prisoner. With Stuckey's knee on the back of his head, his face was gouging into the mould, and it seemed to impede his utterance. His unfortunate mouth was nearly full of earth.

"Drag him to the window!" hissed Mr. Pyke. "Drag him in! Take care that he does not escape! Drag the scoundrel in!"

Six pairs of hands swung the prisoner to the window. He was rather heavy, but many hands made light work. He went sprawling and bundling in, and Mr. Pyke grasped him and dragged. He bumped on the study floor, the prefects scrambling in with him and after him, still gripping him. Horrible gurgles came from him as he sprawled on the carpet.

"Switch on the light, Reginald!" panted Mr. Pyke. "We have him now, the rascal, the scoundrel—he is in our hands!"

Reggie switched on the light.

"Urrghh! Gurrghh!" came from the wretched prisoner, wriggling in many groans. "Wurrgh! Name of the name of one dog—urrgh! Mon Dieu! I ask, vat is to happen! I demand to know vat is all zis? Mais, mon affreux—tout a fait affreux, je vous en Urrrrrghh!"

"That ain't old Hay!" yelled Reggie in amazement.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Stuckey.

Mr. Pyke jumped almost clear of the carpet in his amazement. He had captured Will Hay—at least, he was certain that he had. But it was Mossou Bong who was sprawling on the floor, gripped by the prefects, spitting mud. Mr. Pyke gazed at him like a man in a dream.

"Old Bong!" gasped Stuckey.

"Old Froggy!" stuttered Crocker.

"What—what—what—" articulated Mr. Pyke. "What—what—"

The amazed prefects released Monsieur le Bon. He sat up, panting for breath, still clinging mould from his mouth.

"Urrgh! I demand, vat is it zat you spluttered Mossou Bong. "I keep vatch myself by zat window. I vatch for zat 'Ay, tout d'un coup—all of one sudden, I am seen—I am overturn—my nose he is push in ze earth—my bouche he is cram viz mud—one sits on a back of my head—urrghh! I demand to know vy for I am seize and overturn while zat I vatch for zat 'Ay!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Crocker.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the prefects.

"He, he, he!" cackled Reggie.

Only Mr. Pyke did not laugh. He glared at the unfortunate Monsieur le Bon as if he could have bitten him.

"You—you—you fool!" he gasped. "You—you—you idiot! You—you—you unspeakable!"

blockhead! Throw that meddling fool out of this study!"

"Mais je dis—yaroooh!—zat you let go viz me—laissez-moi, donc— Mon Dieu! Name of one dog—"

Reggie opened the door, the prefects heaved, and Monsieur le Bon finished his remarks in the passage, with the door banged after him.

In the excitement, no one had noticed ten o'clock striking from the clock tower; but it had struck. Ten had come and ten had gone, and Will Hay, in spite of his written word, had neither come nor gone. Nothing had happened, except to Mosso Bong! And nothing did happen, and Dunkley Pyke, in great relief, came to the same conclusion as his hopeful son Reggie—that it was all "gas."

"THE telephone, sir!"

Toots, the page, put his head into the Sixth Form room, in second school the following morning. Nobody noticed specially that it was five minutes to ten that morning when Toots' chubby face dawned on the Bendover Sixth. But it was!

Mr. Pyke, who was taking the Sixth in Greek, yapped with impatience. He was in the very act of catching Crocker in a difficult passage in Sophocles, so naturally he did not like being interrupted.

"I've took the call, sir," said Toots, "and he says, sir, that Colonel Chatterton would like to speak to you, sir."

"Very well!" snapped Mr. Pyke. Colonel Chatterton being chairman of the governing board, the new headmaster could not think of passing the call unheeded.

Toots disappeared, and Mr. Pyke laid down his book with an angry grunt. He left the Sixth Form Room, and rustled down the passage to the Head's study. In that study the receiver was off the telephone, and he picked it up and yapped:

"Mr. Pyke speaking!"

"That old Pyke?" came a cheery voice, recognisable as that of Richard Bird, of the Bendover Fourth.

Mr. Pyke gave a snort of fury. Evidently it was not a call from the chairman of the governors. It was a call from the telephone over in the Head's house.

"You young rascal!" hooted Mr. Pyke.

"You old rascal!" came Dicky's cheery answer. "Did you think it was old Chatterbox? I only said he would like to speak to you. I've no doubt he would. Don't you think so?"

Without answering that question, Mr. Pyke slammed the receiver back, and rose from the chair. As he did so there was a slam of a door and a click of a key, and Mr. Pyke's eyes almost popped from his head as he stared blankly at Will Hay, the master of the Fourth.

"Huh-huh-huh-Hay!" he stuttered.

Will smiled, with a genial nod.

"Right on the wicket!" he assented. "I was behind the door when you stepped in, my dear sir!" He gave a nod towards the study clock. "Three minutes to ten, sir. Doubtless you have not forgotten what is scheduled to occur at ten o'clock!"

Dunkley Pyke clenched his hands with fury. Really, he had almost forgotten, as nothing had happened at ten the night before, and he no longer doubted that it was all "gas." He had taken it for granted that "ten o'clock precisely" meant ten that night. So had all Bendover. Now it appeared that he, and all Bendover, had taken a little too much for granted. Will Hay, it seemed, had meant ten in the morning. And here he was—at ten in the morning! Bright and cheery, he grinned at Dunkley Pyke with his whole set of teeth.

"You—you—you—" gasped Dunkley Pyke.

All Bendover was in the Form-rooms. The Sixth were out of hearing. Kelly was snoring in his lodge after his night-watch. Dunkley Pyke was fairly caught. He glared round him, grabbed up a chair, and rushed at Will Hay.

As he did so, four sudden faces appeared from four different spots in the study—Jimmy Carboy's and Jerry Smart's from behind the desk, Sammy Straw's and Tubby Green's from the screen in the corner. Four pairs of hands grabbed Mr. Pyke before he had taken two strides, and he went over backwards with a crash, the chair falling on his features.

"Got him!" grinned Jimmy Carboy.

"Help him out of the window!" chirruped Will Hay. "We have only a few minutes. It is close on ten, and we must not fail to keep our appointment. We are due at the fountain at precisely ten."

Dunkley Pyke landed on the ground under the study window. Will Hay & Co. landed with him. They were smiling. Mr. Pyke was not!

"Villain! Wretch! Groogh! Release me! I will not—ooogh!" Dunkley Pyke struggled and wriggled like an eel.

"Walk, my dear sir, walk!" suggested Will Hay. "With more time at our disposal, no doubt we could carry you; but time presses."

Mr. Pyke decided to walk. He walked quite quickly. He disliked fountains, but he hated needles. Four grinning juniors marched him to the fountain, with Will Hay billowing behind. The rebels were cranning the windows of the Head's house, staring across and grinning. At the granite rim of the fountain, Mr. Pyke struggled wildly, yelling at the top of his voice.

"If—you—if you dare! Leggo! Help!"

Splash!

"Gug-gug-gug-gug! Uuuuuuuuuugh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the windows of the Head's house.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in another roar from the windows of the School House, where every Form-room echoed to Mr. Pyke's frantic yells, and every fellow, from the Sixth to the Second, had jumped out of his place and rushed to look into the quad.

From the clock tower came the chiming of ten. The chimes mingled with the yells and howls and gasping splutters of Mr. Dunkley Pyke, wallowing in water in the big granite basin.

All Bendover gazed, and all Bendover roared. Masters and prefects, seniors and juniors, gazed and roared, as Dunkley Pyke splashed and wallowed, and wallowed and splashed. Will Hay smiled genially at a drenched, dripping, infuriated face in the fountain. Dunkley Pyke grabbed at the rim and held on, glaring at him with watery rage. His bony legs thrashed the water into foam.

Will Hay raised his mortar-board politely, and turned away with his chortling pupils. It was no time to linger. Already some of the prefects were making for the door, and Kelly was staring out of his lodge. Dunkley Pyke splashed and wallowed and spluttered—ducked at ten o'clock precisely, as Will had warned him—if that was any comfort. From the porter's lodge came Kelly, at a rush; from the School House came Stuckey, running—as the door of the rebels' stronghold opened and closed again with a bang after Will Hay & Co. Ten o'clock, once more, had come and gone—and so, this time, had Will Hay!

It looked like being a regular riot when Dunkley Pyke got a bruiser to help him fight the rebels. But once Will Hay got going it turned into a riot of laughter and you'll get the laugh of a lifetime when you read all about it, next Friday.

THEY CAME TO SPY!

(Continued from page 520.)

detective of Baker Street," quavered Operative No. 53, now genuinely alarmed.

"The same!" snarled Herman Freebuzzle. "A man I would hate to meet in the capacity of foe man—a man for whom I have a very wholesome respect. And you say he gave you a lift last night? Ach?" For a moment real terror lit up his face, then slowly his geniality returned. "I am getting afraid for nothing. If Sexton Blake suspected you last night, Operative No. 53, he would never have allowed you out of his sight. I am imagining troubles where no troubles exist. This man Blake, I remember, is connected with the Football Association. 'Tis doubtless upon some matter connected with the Rovers that he has called to see me."

"But he mustn't see me—"

"Most decidedly will he not see you, Operative No. 53," smiled Freebuzzle genially. "Here, come this way"—he led him to a door of a chamber, no larger than four feet square, and hurriedly pushed him inside.

He chuckled evilly to himself as he closed the door and re-seated himself. Never would Operative No. 53 emerge from that tiny chamber again alive. Even as Adolph, the hunchback, was admitting Sexton Blake, a poison gas, odourless, but deadly powerful, was being pumped into that chamber, swiftly robbing Operative No. 53 of his senses—of his dreams of promotion and riches—of life itself. Vainly he beat upon the door and yelled at the full strength of his lungs, little realising that the room was hermetically sealed, and that it was sound-proof. In one hand he still clutched the black felt hat which contained the precious plans, and, possessing it, Operative No. 53, despite his agony of mind and body, could not yet realise the ruthless, diabolical trick that had been played upon him.

In the gigantic schemes of Herman Freebuzzle, Operative No. 53 was just a cipher, a pawn, to dispose of when and how he liked. His work was done—the man knew too much—was too vain and self-centred to be of further service to his country. He must die!

His gaze swivelled from the door which shut off Berrand's death agonies from view of mortal man, and beamed upon Adolph.

"Show Mr. Blake in, Adolph!"

The genial smile on the detective's face matched that on the podgy features of his host as Freebuzzle rose to greet him. Yet a keen observer would have noted the involuntary twitch which came to Blake's nostrils as the faint aroma of a Turkish blend of cigarette reached their sensitive fibres.

"Sit down, Mr. Blake," beamed Herman Freebuzzle. "Adolph, some glasses."

Again Blake's sensitive nostrils twitched. Again his mental recesses conjured up a picture of a certain young dude. It was a long shot, but Blake decided that Berrand had been in this very room a few moments before him.

"And what, Mr. Blake, brings you to this rather outlandish spot?"

The detective's reply made Freebuzzle stiffen involuntarily.

"Secret Service work. And in connection with it I desire your co-operation. I want to make your house my headquarters!"

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