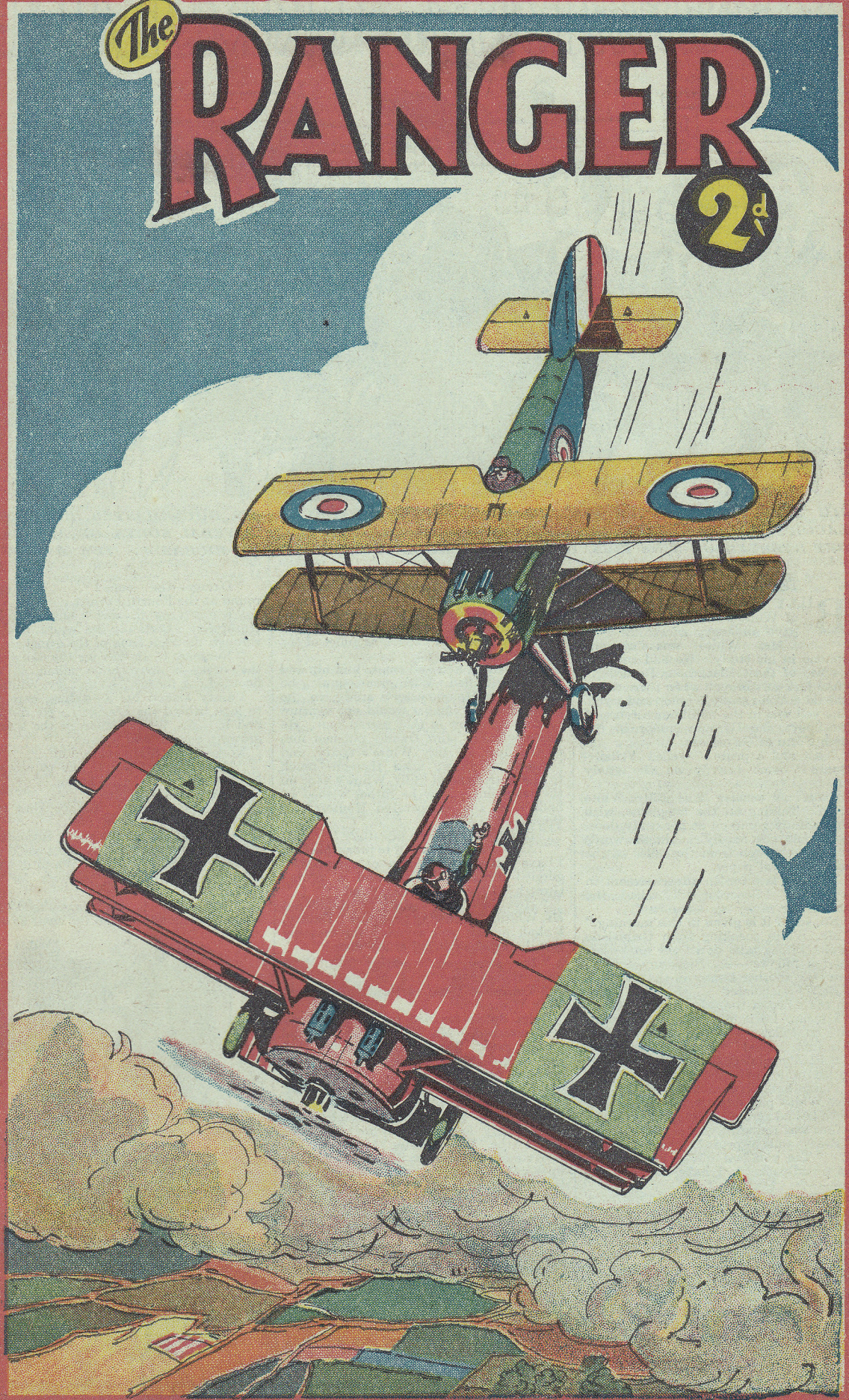


MYSTERY! THRILLS! HUMOUR! ADVENTURE! PRIZES! COLOUR! ALL INSIDE.

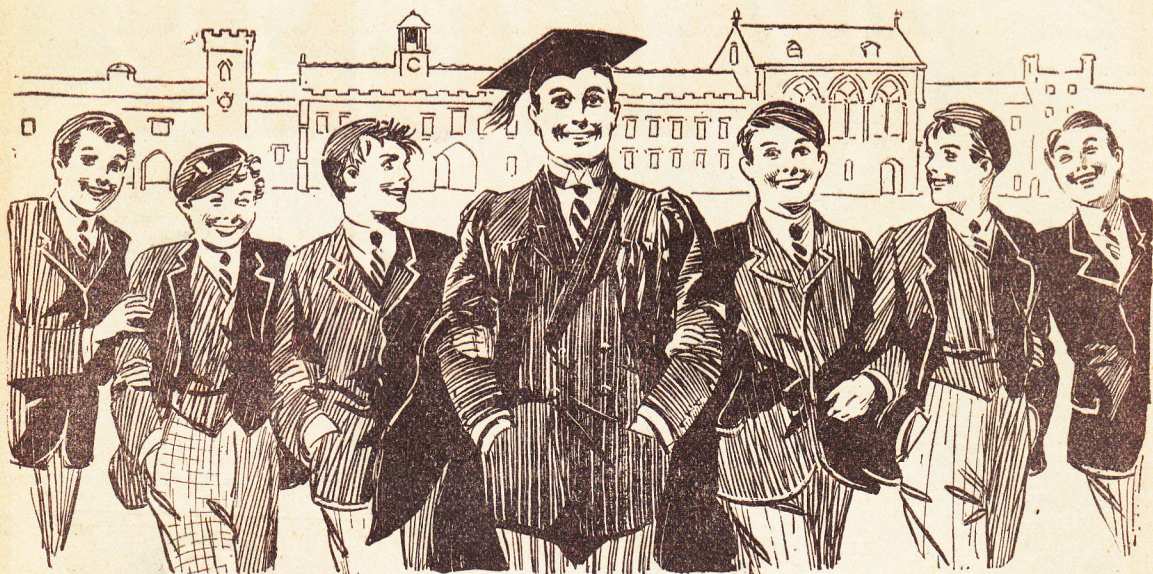
MORE FREE PICTURE STAMPS INSIDE!

The RANGER

2^d



The Fourth Form at GRIMSLADE!



JIM DAINTY HAS OFTEN BEEN CALLED A YOUNG DONKEY BY HIS HOUSEMASTER, BUT THE LAUGHS ON JIM WHEN HE MAKES HIS HOUSEMASTER LOOK SEVERAL SORTS OF AN ASS! GET STARTED ON THIS FULL O' LAUGHS SCHOOL STORY BY FRANK RICHARDS. IT'S A WOW!

The Advertisement.

"BILLY" WHITE, Housemaster of White's House at Grimslade, gave an angry snort.

Mr. White was at the telephone in his study. He had rung up the office of the "Blackmoor Recorder." He had just got through when there came, at the door of his study, a bump and a yell. The yell was in the well-known tones of Fritz Splitz, the German junior in the Fourth Form of Grimslade.

"Peast and a prute!" yelled Fritz. Bump! came heavily on the study door.

It was no wonder that Billy White snorted. Talking on the telephone, with such a shindy going on at his study door, was difficult. He hardly caught the words that came through from the office of the Blackmoor local paper.

"Is it too late for an advertisement in this week's 'Recorder'?" asked the Housemaster.

"No, sir, if it is given in this morning." Mr. White speaking from Grimslade School. Please take down the advertisement, as follows— Bless my soul!"

There was another bump on the door.

"Eh!" ejaculated a surprised voice from the office of the "Recorder."

"I mean, I will dictate the advertisement, as follows— Upon my word, this is intolerable!" Another bump!

"I hardly understand, sir!" came a surprised voice over the telephone.

"Please hold on a moment!"

Mr. White put down the receiver and made a bound across his study to the door. His face was red with wrath.

"Peast and a prute!" came Fritz's yell. "Tat you leaf off to pang me in mein pread-pasket! I have not took tat gake—"

Mr. White tore the door open.

"Oh, grumbs!" gasped Fritz Splitz.

He was jammed against the study door, and Jim Dainty was jamming him there. As the door suddenly opened, Fritz, being deprived of any means of support, naturally fell backwards into the study. Jim Dainty let him go just in time to avoid sprawling over him. Fritz did the sprawling on his own. He landed on his back at the Housemaster's feet, roaring.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jim Dainty, jumping back.

He had been a little thoughtless, that could not be denied. But he was a little

excited. A cake had arrived for Jim that morning. In break, Jim Dainty took a few friends to No. 10 Study to dispose of it. They arrived in time to see the last crumb vanishing down the capacious gullet of the fat German.

They fell on him and smote him hip and thigh. Fritz fled. With great cunning he fled to the Housemaster's study, in the belief that the juniors would not venture to kick up a row in that sacred spot. He miscalculated. Jim Dainty pursued him to the door of Billy White's study, and banged his bullet head thereon—much to the detriment of Billy White's talk on the telephone. Now he rather wished he hadn't, as the exasperated Housemaster thundered at him:

"Dainty! Step into my study!"

"Ach! I am panged in te pread-pasket! I have vun colossal bain in mein napper!" gurgled Fritz. "Peast and a prute! Grough! I have no more te breff!"

"How dare you, Dainty?" thundered Mr. White. "You may go, Splitz! Dainty, I shall punish you severely for creating this disturbance at my study door!"

"I'm sorry, sir," gasped Jim. "I never thought—"

"You must learn to think!" snapped Billy White.

Fritz Splitz crawled out of the study and vanished. Mr. White looked round for his cane. Then he remembered that the advertisement clerk at the "Recorder" office was waiting for him.

"Find my cane, Dainty!" he snapped.

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. White returned to the telephone. Jim Dainty looked round for the cane. While the Housemaster took up the receiver, Jim found the cane and picked it up—and slipped it out of sight behind the big armchair. He was not really keen for Billy White to get hold of that cane!

"Are you there? Is that the 'Recorder' office?" Mr. White was talking into the telephone. "Please take down this advertisement: Lost, on the road between Blackmoor and Grimslade School, a silver wrist-watch. Finder will be rewarded—Are you there? Upon my word!"

Mr. White made the interesting discovery that they had cut off at the "Recorder" office, and that he was talking to empty space.

He snorted with wrath, and jammed back the receiver on the hooks, deciding to deal with Dainty before he rang up again.

"Dainty—the cane!" He spun round at the Fourth-Former.

"I can't see it, sir!" answered Jim truthfully. Certainly he could not see through the high back of the armchair.

"Nonsense! It was on the table—on the desk—it may have fallen to the floor! Look for it!" hooted Mr. White.

Dainty looked for it—taking care not to look behind the armchair. He did not find it. Mr. White joined in the search, growing angrier and angrier.

Yorke of the Sixth glanced in.

"Dr. Sparshott would like to see you in his study, sir!" said Yorke.

Snort from Mr. White.

"Oh! Very well! Dainty, find that cane at once!"

The telephone call to the "Recorder" office had to wait. Dr. Sparshott could not be kept waiting. But Mr. White did not seem to want Dainty to wait for his cane.

"Why, here it is!" exclaimed Mr. White. He looked behind the chair at last.



"Give him one in his weskit!" Joe Spadger scrambled up to the window, red with wrath, while the—

"Dainty! You young rascal! You purposely concealed the cane! Upon my word! Bend over that chair!"

"Whack, whack, whack! Whack, whack, whack! Jim Dainty was tough—he had had a good many lickings since he had come to Grimslade, many of them well-deserved. But the exasperated Billy laid on this six with terrific energy, and Dainty yelled.

Having laid on the six, Mr. White tossed the cane on the table, and hurriedly left the study. A moment later the wriggling junior had a glimpse of him from the window, crossing over to Big School with long strides.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Jim, wriggling with anguish. "Oh crikey! Ow! Wow! Oh!"

BZZZZZZZZ! It was the telephone bell.

Dainty did not heed it. Like the young man of Hythe, who was shaved with a scythe, he did nothing but wriggle and writhe!

But as the bell buzzed on, a sudden gleam came into his eyes, and he ran across and took off the receiver. He was aware that Billy White had rung up the "Blackmoor Recorder" about an advertisement, from what he had heard the Housemaster saying into the instrument. And an idea was working in his active brain, to make Billy White sorry for that hefty "six."

"Hallo! 'Recorder' office speaking, Mr. White. You rang me up a short time ago, with regard to an advertisement."

"Right!" said Dainty, in as deep a voice as he could assume.

"We go to press this afternoon, sir. But there is still time, if you can 'phone me the advertisement at once. I will take it down."

Dainty's eyes danced.

"Very good," he answered. "Please insert it in the—hem—'Wanted' column. Large donkey required—"

"Eh?"

"Large donkey required, animal with plenty of spirit preferred. Price no object. Got that?"

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Quite!" stuttered the man at the "Recorder" office. No doubt he wondered what a Housemaster at a public school required a large, spirited donkey for. However, that was not his business. His business was to take down the advertisement, and see that it appeared in the current issue of the "Recorder."

"Must be delivered at Grimslade School on Saturday afternoon, to Mr. White, Housemaster! Got that?" went on Jim Dainty.

"Yes, sir!"

"Very good! I can rely upon this

advertisement appearing this week? It is very—hem—urgent."

"Certainly, sir."

"Thank you."

Jim Dainty rang off. He did not linger longer in his Housemaster's study. He had saved Mr. White the trouble of 'phoning the advertisement; but he did not want Billy White to know how obliging he had been. The bell was ringing for third school as he got out of the House, and he joined the stream of fellows heading for the Form-rooms.

Mr. White, who was mathematics master, had a class in third school, and he did not return to his study after seeing the Head. Jim Dainty wriggled painfully as he went into the Fourth Form room, and he sat rather uncomfortably during third school with Mr. Peck. But he had the consolation of anticipating the appearance of that rather remarkable advertisement in the "WANTED" column of the Blackmoor local paper.

Mysterious!

BILLY WHITE was annoyed.

Billy was not, as all the fellows in White's House agreed, a bad old bean. But he had a temper, and sometimes he let it rip. Now he was very cross.

It was the following day; and the conduct of a good many fellows in his House puzzled, irritated, and annoyed Mr. White.

Fellows looked at him.

In that, of course, there was no great harm. A cat may look at a king! Still more may a schoolboy look at his Housemaster.

But their looks were really peculiar.

Ever since Paget of the Fourth had brought in a copy of the Blackmoor Recorder that afternoon, fellows had looked at Mr. White, whenever they came across him.

They whispered together. Several times Mr. White's ears—sharpened by irritation—had caught the word "donkey." He heard Fenwick of the Fifth say to Croom—"Relation, perhaps," and Croom laughed.

Mr. White gave them a hundred lines each on the spot, which reduced them both to gravity. But it was puzzling, perplexing, and extremely annoying. Fellows were coupling the word "donkey" with the name of their Housemaster. It was neither flattering nor agreeable. And they looked at him—they almost watched him—they gave him queer, odd, wondering looks!

The fact was, that the whole House was amazed.

Paget, looking down the Recorder columns for a football notice, had had his

attention drawn to a remarkable advertisement in the paper, which Jim Dainty happened to notice! In ten minutes, almost all the House knew that Mr. White was advertising for a large, spirited donkey, price no object, to be delivered at Grimslade on Saturday afternoon.

What Mr. White wanted a donkey for was a deep mystery. He was not a riding man; but had he been, he would hardly have mounted an ass for the purpose. Yet there it was—in cold print! What in the name of wonder was Billy White going to do with that donkey, when he got it?

It was an intriguing mystery. It made the fellows wonder whether Billy White was going "batty." It was simply impossible that he could have any use for a donkey at Grimslade School. Yet he seemed frightfully keen on it, for he was advertising that the price was no object. The Blackmoor Recorder circulated far and wide in Yorkshire and Lancashire. It was certain that many owners of donkeys would jump at that offer—price being no object!

The fellows gasped at the idea of the procession of donkeys that was likely to turn up at Grimslade on Saturday afternoon. What the thump could it mean?

If Billy White had seen that advertisement, he would not have been surprised at receiving wondering looks from all his House. But he did not see it—he never looked at the local paper. So he was puzzled and irritated.

"What larks!" said Dick Dawson, in No. 10 Study. "Why, there'll be an army of donkeys come along in answer to this. Dozens."

"But vy for does tat Billy vant a tonkey?" asked Fritz Splitz, in wonder.

"Goodness knows! Can't be going to ride him in the quad! What do you think it means, Dainty?"

Jim Dainty chuckled.

"I think it means that Billy White is going to have a high old time to-morrow afternoon," he said.

"What-ho! Lucky it's a half-holiday to-morrow, what?" chuckled Dawson. "I wonder what Sammy would think of this, if he saw it."

"Mein gootness! I vonder vat he vill tink when he sees te tonkeys!" grinned Fritz.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The next morning—Saturday morning—they had heard of it over in Redmayes House. Ginger and Co., of Redmayes, were as interested and mystified as the White's fellows. Ginger Rawlinson called to Jim Dainty, on the way up to Big School.

"I hear your brother's coming to Grimslade, Dainty."

(Continued on page 137.)



—other donkey merchants yelled and shouted, and the donkeys brayed and pranced. Mr. White grasped at the blue-spotted gentleman to keep him out. Mr. Spadger grasped him in return, and they struggled and wriggled in the window, amid shrieks of laughter.

THE FOURTH FORM AT GRIMSLADE!

(Continued from page 123.)

Jim looked round, puzzled. "Eh! I haven't a brother," he answered. "What do you mean, father?"

"Isn't your Housemaster advertising for him?" asked Ginger.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bacon and Bean. Ginger's head was in chancery the next moment; and both the rivals of Grimslade were rather breathless and flustered when they arrived in school.

In break that Saturday morning, there was only one topic among the juniors of both Houses: Mr. White's extraordinary desire to possess a donkey!

Ginger Rawlinson explained it on the theory that the Housemaster of White's was anxious to gather his relations about him—an explanation that made the Redmayes fellows roar. Sandy Bean declared that what White really wanted was a new fellow in his House, and that the newcomer wouldn't be noticed among the rest!

All the fellows made up their minds to be on hand that afternoon to see what happened. All other engagements were washed out. Dr. Sparshott, taking a walk during break in the quad, noticed that there was a lot of excitement, and wondered what was the cause of it. But even Sammy Sparshott, keen as he was, remained in blissful ignorance of what was on.

Mr. White, at dinner in his House, wore a grim frown. He sat at the high table with the Sixth Form men of his House; and he saw—he could not help seeing—that these seniors regarded him with an almost fascinated interest. They looked at him—every time he glanced up or round, he found a wondering eye fixed on him.

At the lower tables, juniors kept on turning their heads to look at him—and turned them back quickly if his eyes flashed in their direction. Mr. White was getting into the state of a volcano on the verge of eruption.

"Yorke!" he rapped out suddenly.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped the House captain of White's, with a guilty blush, as the Housemaster's sharp eye transfixed him.

"Is there a smut on my nose, or anything of that kind?" inquired Mr. White, in a sulphurous tone.

"Oh! No, sir!"

"Then I should be glad to know what all this means," said Mr. White.

"All what, sir?" stammered Yorke. "All this staring and whispering! Explain!" hooted Mr. White.

It was difficult for Yorke to explain. How could he tell his Housemaster that nearly all Grimslade was wondering whether he had gone "batty"? He couldn't.

"Well, sir, you—you—you see—" stammered Yorke.

"What?"

"It—it—it—it's only—the—the fellows wonder what—you are going to do with a donkey if you get one, sir," stammered Yorke.

"They wonder what I am going to do with a donkey, if I get one!" repeated Mr. White, like a man in a dream. "Are you in your right senses, Yorke?"

"I—I—I hope so, sir," Yorke hoped that Mr. White was, too; but he did not mention that!

"If you are in your right senses, Yorke, your answer can only be intended for an impertinent jest. Take five hundred lines."

"Oh, my hat! I—I—mean, yes—certainly, sir!" gasped Yorke.

Dinner passed off in an electric atmosphere. Fellows were rather glad to get away; especially the senior men at Mr. White's table. They felt that Billy was getting dangerous. A man who handed out five hundred lines to a fellow who answered a question put to him, was a man to be given a wide berth, if possible.

Mr. White went to his study in a sulphurous mood. He stared from his open

window at a crowd of fellows, in the wintry sunshine in the quadrangle. All of them were talking, most of them were laughing, and continually they glanced towards his study. The fat voice of Friedrich von Splitz floated to his ears; the podgy Rhinelander not having noticed that his window was open, and that he was standing thereat.

"Tat Pilly is as mat as a hadder," said Fritz, with a fat chuckle. "Mein gootness. Vat vill he do mit vun tonkey? I tink tat he is mat!"

"Splitz!" roared Mr. White from his window.

Fritz spun round like a fat humming-top.

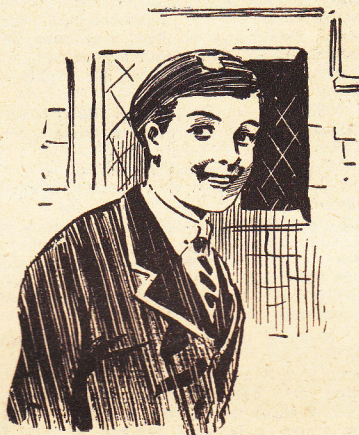
"Ach! I say notting, sir; I tink not tat you are mat!" he gasped. "I do not tink tat you are as mat as neffer vas, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come to my study at once, Splitz!" said Mr. White, picking up a cane.

But he dropped it again the next moment, and forgot the existence of Fritz Splitz, as he stared in amazement in the direction of the gates. In the gateway of Grimslade appeared a man in a blue-spotted neckerchief and a billycock hat, leading a donkey by a halter.

The gates of Grimslade stood wide open on a half-holiday; and the blue-spotted gentleman walked in, leading the donkey, and looked round him. There was



JIM DAINTY

Didn't think much of Grimslade when he first arrived there; in fact he tried to get himself expelled. But—he likes Grimslade now—as much as YOU do!

a roar from all sides, and a crowding of Grimslade fellows towards the newcomer. Evidently this visitor was calling in answer to Billy White's advertisement.

"Arternoon, gents! Called to see Mr. White! Where's the covey to be found?" asked the blue-spotted gentleman.

A dozen fellows pointed out White's House.

"Come on, Neddy!" said the blue-spotted gentleman.

He led the donkey towards White's House. Mr. White, hardly believing his eyes, leaned from his study window.

"Here, my man! What do you want here? What does this mean?"

"You Mr. White?"

"Yes. What—?"

"'Ere's the moke, sir! Jest the moke for you, sir!" said the blue-spotted gentleman. "Twenty pun, sir, and he's yours! Price no object, you says, sir—but I'll tell you that moke's cheap! Youn for twenty pun, sir."

Mr. White gazed at him stupefied. He seemed utterly at a loss for words—which, in the circumstances, was really not surprising.

Donkeys for Sale!

JIM DAINTY & Co. crowded round the man with the donkey. Other fellows crowded round, by dozens, by scores. Both Houses swarmed before Mr. White's study window. All Grimslade—except Jim Dainty—wondered

what on earth Billy White wanted a donkey for, and what the thump he was going to do with one when he got it. They were keenly interested. They wanted to know! Now, they supposed, they were going to learn! But they weren't!

Mr. White only gazed, as if petrified, at the man with the donkey. Certainly he was not thinking of buying that donkey. He was too astounded to speak. His astonishment astonished the blue-spotted man. It was Neddy's owner who broke the silence.

"Well, what about it, sir?" he asked. "You think this moke will suit you, sir?"

"Suit me!" gasped Mr. White. "Suit me! Are you mad?"

"Hey?"

"What do you mean by coming here?" shrieked Mr. White. "How dare you bring that—that creature into the school? Take it away at once."

"Take it away?" repeated Neddy's owner blankly. "Why, you ain't looked at it yet, sir! I've walked this here moke all the way from Blackmoor. I've come early! Mean to say you've bought a donkey afore I got here?"

"Upon my word! I—I—"

"I dessey you'll ave a good many offers, sir, price being no objick, but jest you step out and look at this here moke."

"I will do nothing of the sort! You must be out of your senses! I have no intention of buying a donkey!" gasped Mr. White.

"Hey? You ain't buying a donkey at all?"

"Certainly not! You must be insane to suppose such a thing! Go away at once."

"Well, my hat!" gasped Ginger Rawlinson, and he tapped his forehead significantly. Fellows had wondered whether Mr. White had gone a little "batty" when he advertised for a donkey! Now there really seemed no doubt of it, when he stated that he had no intention of buying a donkey at all.

The blue-spotted man did not go away. A rather ugly look came over his rugged face.

"You brought me here for nothing?" he demanded. "Changed your mind, or what? This here won't do for me, sir."

"Go away!" roared Mr. White. "Take that animal away at once."

"If it's the price, sir, you'll find Joe Spadger a reasonable man. What about fifteen pun?"

"I do not want a donkey!" raved Mr. White. "I cannot imagine why you suppose so for a moment. Go away."

"Why, you blooming howl, you!" exclaimed Joe Spadger. "If you don't want a donkey, what did you say you wanted a donkey for, I'd like to know, and give a man a long walk for nothing, hey?"

"I did not—I never—" gasped Mr. White.

"Walked all the way from Blackmoor," hooted Mr. Spadger. "Three mile, if it's a hinch! Now you says, says you, that—"

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" yelled Ginger. "Here comes another."

There was a yell from the Grimslade crowd as another man and another donkey appeared in the gateway.

This time the man was riding the donkey. He was a small man with a large nose and a shiny complexion. Old Sykes, the porter, stared at him, but let him pass. Sykes had seen that advertisement in the local paper, and it was not his business to intervene in a Housemaster's transactions with donkey-merchants.

He pointed out White's House to the newcomer, and the rider trotted over towards the house, the staring crowd making way for him.

"'Ere, you!" shouted Mr. Spadger. "You're too late, Ikey! I was 'ere first! I'm selling this gent a donkey."

"Zat is for ze shentleman to say!" answered Ikey, slipping from the donkey's back. "Vere is Mister White? You are Mister White, sir? Vill you please look at zis donkey? He is vun ferry good donkey, sir."

"Go away!" roared Mr. White.

"Vat? Look at zis donkey, sir! I give you sheap price—"

"You can it, Ikey!" hooted Mr. Spadger. "This gent is buying Neddy! Now, sir, let's come to business. If fifteen pun is too much for you—though you says, says you, that price is no objick, says you—make a hoffer, sir! What are you giving for this here moke, sir?"

"Go away! I am not buying any animal whatever!" shrieked Mr. White. "If anyone has told you so, you have been deceived. Go away."

"That ain't good enough," snorted Mr. Spadger. "Not arter I've walked three miles if it's a hinch. Make it ten quid!"

"I would not take the animal at a gift! Go away."

"Then what, sir, do you mean by advertising for a donkey if you blooming well don't want a donkey?" roared Joe Spadger.

"What! I—I did not—I—I never—" stuttered Mr. White. "You—you must be insane! Go away! I will have you removed."

"I'd like to see the covey what would remove me," said Mr. Spadger, clenching his hand in a very warlike manner. "Making a fool of a bloke! You step outside, sir, and I'll show you what's what!"

"My goot sir," said Ikey persuasively. "If you vill look at zis donkey—"

"I will do nothing of the sort! Go away."

"Zen vy you advertise for a donkey?" hooted Ikey indignantly. "You waste my time for nozzings, is it?"

"The old codger don't know his own mind, Ikey," said Joe Spadger. "Making out he wants to buy a donkey and then making out that he don't! Giving a bloke all this trouble for nothing!"

"I—I—I did not! I—I—" Mr. White was growing a little incoherent.

"My giddy, goloshes!" gasped Ginger Rawlinson. "Here they come!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A man in a fur cap appeared in the gateway, leading three donkeys in a string. Evidently, there was no shortage of donkeys in the vicinity, and there were going to be plenty of answers to the advertisement in the "Blackmoor Recorder."

"The mor th merrier!" chuckled Jim Dainty.

"But what on earth's White's game?" gasped Dick Dawson. "If he doesn't want a donkey why did he advertise for one?"

"Perhaps he doesn't know he did!" grinned Jim.

"What? Dawson jumped. "How the dickens—oh, my hat! Is it a jape?"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Dawson.

The fur-capped man came in with his three donkeys. Mr. White's eyes almost bulged from his head at the sight of him. If the Housemaster had really wanted a donkey, he would have had plenty to choose from. The fur-capped man stared round, and spotting two donkeys already on the scene, hurried to the spot. Evidently he feared that he was too late to do business.

"You Mr. White, sir?" He touched his fur cap to the Housemaster. "I hope you haven't bought your donkey yet, sir. I've brought three along for you to look at, sir."

"Certainly I have not bought a donkey," yelled Mr. White.

"That's good! Pick out your animal, sir!" said the man in the fur cap brightly. "I ain't saying anything agin them donkeys you've been looking at—but I do say that my mokes are as good value as you'll get for your money, sir."

"Go away!"

"Eh! Not without you looking at the donkeys, surely, sir! I've brought these donkeys along from Middlemoor for you to pick out—"

"I do not want a donkey! Leave these premises immediately and take your animals with you."

"I don't ketch on, sir," said Fur Cap, puzzled. "If you want a real good donkey—"

"I do not! Go away!"

"The old codger don't know his own mind, that's the trouble!" hooted Joe

Spadger. "Advertises for a donkey, he does, and then says, says he, he don't want a donkey, says he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Grimsladers.

"Silence!" roared Mr. White. "How dare you? This is not a laughing matter! Disperse! As for you—you—you persons, depart at once! Take those animals away immediately! Immediately."

The donkey merchants had arrived in good humour, in the hope of doing business at Grimslade. But they looked very bad-tempered now. All three of them talked to Mr. White at once. They talked long and they talked loud, telling him what they thought of him, amid shrieks of laughter from the Grimslade crowd.

Slam!

Mr. White closed his study window on their eloquence. He fairly staggered away from the window in a state of bewilderment. But the slamming of the window did not, as he hoped, dismiss the donkey merchants. In intense indignation they shouted to him to come out. Mr. Spadger seemed specially keen for him to "step outside," as he termed it. Obviously there was going to be a case of assault and battery if Mr. White did step outside. He stayed inside.

"Hee-haw, hee-haw!" The donkeys, catching the excitement, joined in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw!"

Crash! Mr. Spadger rapped on the study window with his knuckles. It was rather an emphatic rap, and the pane went west. Fragments of glass flew over the study, and Mr. White gave a startled gasp. Through the broken pane, Mr. Spadger glared at him ferociously.

"What about it?" roared Joe Spadger. "I asks you, as man to man, what about it?"

"Go away!" gasped Mr. White.

"Look out—here they come!" yelled Dawson.

More men, with more donkeys, came in at the gates. They led their donkeys over to White's House, inquiring for the gent that wanted to buy a donkey. Evidently there were going to be plenty of callers that afternoon.

"Nothing doing 'ere, mates!" roared Mr. Spadger. "The old cove says he ain't going to buy a donkey at all, arter advertising for a bloomin' moke, and bringing a bloke three mile if it's a hinch. Well, I'm going to be paid for my trouble, I am. Fair's fair, I says! Says he don't want a donkey at all, says he!"

Crash! Crack! Spatter! Another pane of Mr. White's study window went. Mr. White jumped to the telephone.

"Go away!" he shrieked. "All of you go away at once, or I will ring up the police."

"Pleece!" roared Mr. Spadger. "Pleece—when I comes to do business like you advertised, you old fool you! I'll tell you this, sir, there won't be a lot left of you for the pleece to pick up and sort out, if you don't 'and out something to a man for wasting his time, and chance it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go away! Upon my word, are you all mad?" shrieked Mr. White. "I—I order you to go away at once."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Instead of going away, the enraged Mr. Spadger grasped the sash, and dragged it up. His head and shoulders and blue-spotted neckerchief were inserted into the room. He brandished a knuckled fist at the horrified Housemaster.

"Now, you silly old codger—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. White gave the blue-spotted gentleman a shove back. There was a roar of wrath from Mr. Spadger, as he bumped on the quad. He was on his feet again in a twinkling and scrambling headlong through the window to get at Mr. White. The other donkey-merchants gave him yells of encouragement.

"Go for him, Joe!"

"Knock his silly 'ead off!"

"Give him one in his weskit!"

Joe Spadger scrambled up to the window, red with wrath, while the other merchants yelled and shouted, and the donkeys brayed and pranced. The Grimsladers rocked with merriment.

Mr. White grasped at the blue-spotted gentleman to keep him out. Mr. Spadger grasped him in return, and they struggled and wriggled in the window, amid shrieks of laughter. Mr. White grabbed and shoved desperately. He had the advantage of position; but on the other hand, Ikey and Fur Cap were bunking up Mr. Spadger from behind. The combat raged wildly.

There was a yell from Ginger Rawlinson.

"Here comes Sammy!"

And in the midst of breathless excitement, Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade, came striding on the scene.

Just Like Sammy!

"STOP this!" Sammy's voice was not loud, but deep.

"Order, please!" barked Sammy. "Now, what's this about? Don't all speak at once!"

But the indignant donkey-merchants did all speak at once—except Joe Spadger, who was too busy with Mr. White to speak at all.

"Silence!" roared Sammy. "Stop that, I tell you!" He grabbed Ikey with one hand, Fur Cap with the other, and hooked them away from Mr. Spadger. Then he took the blue-spotted gentleman by the back of his neckerchief. "Get down!"

"Not till I've knocked 'arf this covey's teeth down his neck!" bawled Mr. Spadger.

In spite of that defiance, Mr. Spadger got down from the sill. Sammy's iron grip on his neck was not to be denied. He rolled off the sill, and sat down with a bump.

"My eye!" he spluttered. "My blinking eye! You lay 'ands on me! Wait till a bloke gets up, that's all!"

"Certainly!" said Dr. Sparshott politely. "Quite a pleasure!"

Joe Spadger scrambled up. His face was crimson and his eyes blazing. He clenched his hands and rushed at the headmaster of Grimslade.

"Look out, Sammy!" shrieked Ginger.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sammy was looking out. No doubt Mr. Spadger expected to mop up the earth with a schoolmaster. He did not know yet that this particular schoolmaster was an athlete and a boxer. He discovered it the next moment.

Something that might have been the hind hoof of his own donkey, but which was in reality the schoolmaster's fist, jarred on Mr. Spadger's jaw, and he went backwards, heels over head. He hit the quadrangle with a terrific concussion. Sammy smiled down at him genially.

"Oh, lor!" Mr. Spadger sat up, and felt his jaw tenderly, apparently to ascertain whether it was still there. "Oh, crimes! 'Ere, you keep off! I don't want any trouble with you, sir! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Very good!" said Dr. Sparshott. "Now, what's the trouble? What does all this mean?" He gave Mr. Spadger a helping hand up. "Silence, all of you—let this gentleman explain!"

Mr. Spadger—still holding his jaw—explained volubly. Sammy Sparshott listened in utter amazement. So did Billy White, gasping at his study window. Sammy signed to the eloquent Mr. Spadger to ring off, and turned a sharp, inquiring eye on the Housemaster.

"White, if you inserted such an advertisement—"

"I did not!" shrieked Mr. White. "Why should I? I assure you, sir—"

"'Ere it is!" Mr. Spadger groped in a pocket and produced a crumpled newspaper. "Look! 'Ere! 'Ere it is—that's wot's brought me three mile if it's a hinch."

Sammy looked. His face grew grim. He held up the paper for Mr. White to look, and Billy White seemed about to faint. He stared at the remarkable advertisement in the "Blackmoor Recorder." He blinked at it, he goggled at it. He seemed unable to believe his eyes. "It's a trick!" he gasped at last. "An absurd practical joke! I never—never—"

never inserted that advertisement, sir! Some practical joking scoundrel—”

“I understand!” said Sammy. His keen glance shot over the crowd of laughing faces. They seemed to linger, for a second, on Jim Dainty. Then he gave his attention to the donkey-merchants.

“Gentlemen! It is all a mistake—a joke that has been played on Mr. White! No donkey is required here.”

“Wasting a man’s time—”
“Three mile if it’s a hinch—”

Dr. Sparshott interrupted the chorus that was beginning.
“I regret that your time has been wasted. Five shillings will be given as compensation to every one of you. Let that end the matter.”

It did end the matter—for the donkey merchants. Nine times five shillings were handed over to nine different dealers in mokes, and they led their braying charges away. And Sykes was ordered to lock the gates immediately, and to inform any subsequent callers that the matter was closed, and no more donkeys were required at Grimslade.

Sammy Sparshott went into Mr. White’s study, crossed to the telephone, and called up the “Blackmoor Recorder” office. He left the crowd in the quad yelling with laughter. The mystery was cleared up at last; Billy White was not, after all, “batty.” It was only a joke on Billy! The Grimsladers shrieked over it.

“But who did it?” gasped Ginger Rawlinson. “Who pulled Billy’s leg? It’s the jape of the term—ha, ha, ha! But who did it? You know, Dainty?”

Jim Dainty chuckled.
“I fancy I can guess,” he answered. “But I’m not giving the chap away! I’m keeping that awfully dark!”
“Can’t keep it too dark!” chuckled Dawson.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

But Jim Dainty was not able to keep it so dark as he hoped. Sammy Sparshott was on the trail of the unknown practical joker.

After a talk on the telephone with the “Recorder” office, Dr. Sparshott had a talk with Billy White. Mr. White’s mind was a blank on the subject of the japer. But Sammy’s mind wasn’t, after a few questions. He sent a fag to call in Dainty of the Fourth.

Jim Dainty arrived in the study with an inward uneasiness.

“Did you send for me, sir?” he asked meekly.

“I did, Dainty!” barked Sammy, his keen grey eyes on the innocent face. “I am not going to ask you whether you played this absurd trick on your House-master. That wouldn’t be cricket! But—” He paused.

Jim paused. Sammy was not the man to give a fellow the choice between condemning himself, and telling untruths.

“But,” resumed Dr. Sparshott, “I have learned certain facts from the ‘Recorder’ office. They would never have taken in such an extraordinary advertisement on the phone, but for the fact that Mr. White had already been speaking to them over the telephone with regard to the insertion of an advertisement.”

“Indeed, sir!” murmured Dainty. “Evidently, then, this trick was played by some boy who knew about Mr. White’s telephone call to the ‘Recorder’ office.”

“Evidently,” agreed Billy White.

“You were in the study at the time, Dainty!”

“W-w-was I, sir?”
“Mr. White tells me so. And I think you must have remained in the study after Mr. White left, and received the telephone call intended for him!”

“Indeed, sir!”
“I shall ask no questions,” barked

Sammy. “That is how the matter appears to me. There is no proof. To cane you, Dainty, would be an act of injustice.”

“Yes, sir!” assented Jim.
“But,” went on Sammy, “there are times, in my opinion, when an act of injustice is necessary. Will you lend me your cane, White?”

“Here, sir!”
“I shall be obliged, Dainty, if you will bend over that chair!”

“Oh!” gasped Jim.
“I am unwilling,” said Dr. Sparshott—

“whack!—to commit an act of”
“whack!—injustice! But”—whack!—

“there are times, as I have said, when”—whack!—“it is”—whack!—“necessary. There is no proof”—whack!—“that you played this trick, Dainty, no proof whatever! Nevertheless”—whack!

“whack!—nevertheless, I think that if you get a jolly good licking”—whack!—

“such a thing will not be likely to happen again!” Whack! “I think it very improbable”—whack! whack!—“that such a prank will be repeated, after this act of flagrant injustice, Dainty.” Whack!

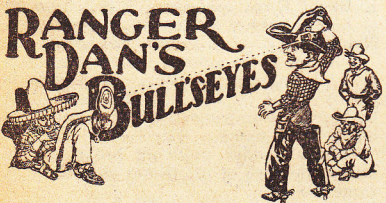
Whack! “What do you think, Dainty?”

Sammy yowled up, with a genial grin.

“Ow! Yow! Yow! I—I—I think so, too, sir!” gasped Jim. “Oh, erikey! Ow!”

It was some hours before Jim Dainty felt inclined to sit down again, after his interview with Sammy. But, somehow, that act of flagrant injustice on Sammy’s part did not make him dislike Sammy. When he had recovered a little, it made him chuckle!

(There will be another rollicking school story of the Grimslade chums next week. Don't miss it, buddies. Popular Frank Richards also writes a long complete story, featuring Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, every week in “The Magnet.”)



VERY SAFE.
First Traveller: “Where I come from we have the safest railway in the world. A collision on our line is impossible.”
Second Traveller: “Impossible? How’s that?”
First Traveller: “We’ve only got one train!”
(A Torch has been awarded to N. Kingsnorth, 2, Nelson Road, Dartford.)

PUTTING HIM OFF!
Schoolmaster to pupil: “Jones, if you do not improve I shall ask your father to visit me.”
Jones (a doctor’s son): “I shouldn’t if I were you, sir. My father charges half a guinea a visit!”
(A Pocket Wallet has been awarded to B. Starling, 35, Northampton Road, East Croydon.)

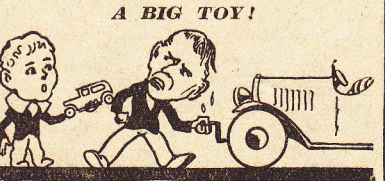
HE WASN’T WORRIED.
Fortune-teller: “Your prospects are not good, and a dark man stands in your path.”
Client: “Well, I’m very sorry for him. You see, I drive a steam-roller.”
(A Pocket Wallet has been awarded to P. Lambert, 55, New Street, Kippax, nr. Leeds.)

DISCOVERED.
Watter (hinting at tip): “And how did you find your steak, sir?”
Customer: “Oh, I just moved one of the potatoes, and there it was underneath.”
(A Penknife has been awarded to N. Patmer, 26, Vicarage Road, Hastings.)

ABOUT TURN!
“Your ticket,” said the railway inspector to the sleepy passenger, “is for Manchester, and this train is going to London.”
“Great Scott!” exclaimed the passenger. “Does the driver know his mistake?”
(A Conjuring Outfit has been awarded to W. Lovelock, 723, Ordnance Road, Tidworth.)

OFF THE MARK!
“Any animal with four legs,” said the teacher, “is a quadruped. Anything with two legs, is a biped. Now, can anyone tell me what a zebra is?”
“Yes, sir,” responded one boy eagerly. “A ‘striped’!”
(A Torch has been awarded to H. Taylor, 10, Kenyon Lane, Middleton, Manchester.)

NO WATER.
Friend: “I hear they have had a drought where your brother lives.”
Companion: “Yes, I’ve just had a letter from him, and the stamp was stuck on with a pin!”
(A Torch has been awarded to S. Blackwell, Viewlands Avenue, Westerham Hill, Kent.)



A BIG TOY!
The small boy had been playing with his clockwork motor-car, when a car stopped in the roadway alongside. The driver jumped out, went round to the front, and started to turn the starting handle.
“I say, mister,” said the small boy interestedly, “how far does your car go when it’s wound up?”
(A Grand Prize has been awarded to C. Hoskin, Bell Block, Taranaki, North Island, New Zealand.)

A GOOD ATTEMPT.
Teacher: “Now, Tommy, give me a word ending with ‘ous,’ like dangerous—meaning full of danger; hazardous—full of hazard.”
Tommy: “Please, sir, pious—meaning full of pie!”
(A Grand Prize has been awarded to R. Wood, “Prairie Lands,” Forbes, New South Wales, Australia.)



VERY CARELESS!
Wife (inspecting newly-papered room): “You did splendidly with the wallpapering, Henry, but what are those lumps on the wall?”
Husband: “Great Scott! I forgot to take down the pictures!”
(A “Hornby” Train Set has been awarded to A. Skimmin, 3, Leigh Road, Gravesend.)

NOT HELPFUL!
New Tenant: “The roof is so bad that the rain comes through on my head. How long is it going to continue?”
Mean Landlord: “What do you think I am—a weather prophet?”
(A Penknife has been awarded to J. Alford, P.O. Cottage, Turton, Worcester.)

BACK TO WORK.
Warder (unlocking door of cell): “C’mon, Bill, you’re wanted!”
Convict (an expert safe-breaker): “What for?”
Warder: “The governor’s safe’s stuck again!”
(A Pocket Wallet has been awarded to R. Winnall, 32, Peel Terrace, Stafford.)

Send your joke to “Ranger Dan,” THE RANGER, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). The sender of every joke published will receive a handsome prize.