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The POPULAR

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EVERY TUESDAY,
Week Ending
July 7th,
1920.
New Series,
No. 493.



**COLLARED
in the
TUCK SHOP!**

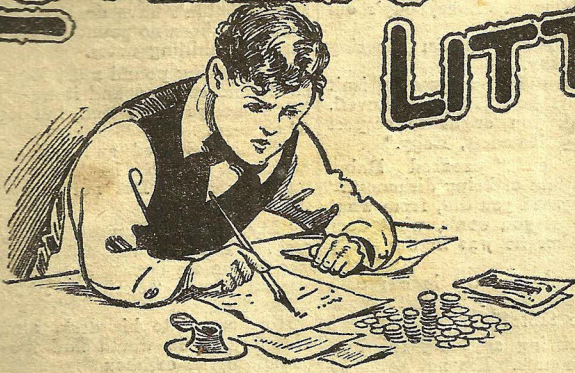
Join the **BIRTHDAY
GIFT CLUB** *Today*

FULL PARTICULARS OF THIS
WONDERFUL SCHEME INSIDE!

THE FATHEADEDNESS OF LOVELL!

If there's a chance of making an ass of himself, and of bringing down a whole avalanche of trouble on his devoted and obstinate head, trust Arthur Edward Lovell to find that chance!

LOVELL'S LITTLE LAPSE!



A ROLICKING LONG COMPLETE
TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO.,
THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

BY
OWEN CONQUEST.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Up Against It!**

AND sevenpence—”
Arthur Edward Lovell murmured the words, and passed his hand over his heated brow.
“And sevenpence—and elevenpence—halfpenny—”

It was a hot afternoon.
The end study was one of the best in the Classical Fourth at Rookwood. It had two windows, with a wide view of the green old quadrangle from one and of the playing-fields from the other. Both windows were open, and let in what breeze there was.

Nevertheless, the end study was warm, not to say hot—indeed, a little stuffy.
Arthur Edward Lovell, in his shirt-sleeves and socks, endured the heat and wrestled with accounts.

Lovell's chums could have told him—indeed, had told him—that he ought never to have taken on the job of secretary and treasurer of the junior cricket club. He really had not a head for figures. His arithmetic was almost a joke in the Form; in maths, he was in a “set” that included fags of the Third.

Arthur Edward Lovell, being one of those fellows who know best, never listened to advice. He regarded himself as an ideal treasurer. He had a little tin box in his desk where he kept the funds, and he always kept that desk locked—excepting on occasions when he mislaid the key.

So Lovell sat and wrestled with accounts, and perspired, and discarded his jacket, and then his waistcoat, and then his boots. His face was red, his forehead damp and corrugated. He gnawed the end of his pen, and he inked his fingers, his accounts, his nose, the table, and most of the articles that lay about on the table.

Lovell was in this happy state when Tubby Muffin blew in.

The door stood wide open, for coolness; and Reginald Muffin's fat figure rolled in unchecked. Reginald Muffin stopped and stared at the sight of the cash on the table.

There were several currency notes, fastened together by an elastic band.

There was a little pile of half-crowns. There was a five-shilling piece. There were some dozens of shillings and sixpences, all in neat little stacks. There was a heap of coppers.

So much cash dazzled the eyes of Reginald Muffin. In the pockets of the fat Classical there was not a single, solitary “brown.”

Tubby, as usual, was stony; and this was a serious matter, for it was getting near tea-time.

The fat Classical, in fact, had rolled along to the end study in the hope of finding the cupboard door unlocked and something in the nature of cake or tarts in the cupboard. He had not expected to find any member of the Fistical Four at home on that sultry afternoon.

Lovell gave him a glare.

“Get out, Fatty!” he snapped.

“I s'ay, Lovell, old man—”

“Buzz off!”

Arthur Edward Lovell was in no mood to be bothered by Tubby Muffin or anybody else. Indeed, he was feeling strongly disposed to kick somebody just then.

“Doing your accounts?” asked Tubby.

“Yes, ass!”

“Let me help you out, old fellow.”

Lovell snorted. If there was a fellow in the Fourth Form worse at arithmetic than Lovell, it was Reginald Muffin.

“Don't be an ass!” he said. “Buzz off!”

“Got 'em a bit mixed?” asked Tubby sympathetically.

He showed no sign of buzzing off. The sight of the money seemed to fascinate the impecunious Tubby.

“No, ass! I suppose I can keep accounts,” said Lovell, with a sniff. Nothing would have induced Arthur Edward to admit that he found his task a difficult one.

“I'll tell you what,” said Tubby brightly. “You're fagged, old fellow. You'd handle this much better after tea. Let's have tea, and then pile into it together.”

Lovell grunted. He wanted his tea, and a cup of tea would have revived him for his task, he felt. But he was determined to get through his task.

“I'll get the tea,” went on Tubby. “I'll cut down to the shop and get the stuff, and—and everything.”

“And pay for it?” asked Lovell sarcastically.

“Well, no,” said Tubby, “I happen to be short of ready cash, old chap. But you've got plenty of money there.”

“You silly ass!” roared Lovell. “Do

you think I'm going to use the club funds to stand a study feed?”

“Well, there's a lot of it,” said Tubby, “and you say some of it's yours. Besides, you can make it up again.”

“Get out!”

“Well, look here, old chap,” said Tubby. “Lend me ten bob out of all that money—”

“Lend you ten bob!” ejaculated Lovell.

“Yes; and I'll square to-morrow. You can put off paying some bill or other till I square. Is that all right?”

Arthur Edward Lovell did not seem to think that it was all right. He jumped up from the table.

Tubby Muffin stretched out a fat hand towards the pile of half-crowns. He seemed to have an impression that Lovell was going to accede to his extraordinary request.

“Good man,” he said. “Of course, I'll square to-morrow—or—the next day. Shall I take some of these half-crowns, Lovell? Come to think of it, you may as well make it a pound while you're about it. That will be eight half-crowns—and, I say—Whoooooop!”

It happened so suddenly that Tubby Muffin hardly knew what had happened. But he found himself extended in the passage, and he had a feeling that he had landed there with a considerable concussion.

Lovell glared at him from the doorway.

“Now cut!” he roared.

“Ow!”

“Buzz off, you fat chump!”

“Wow!”

“If you want me to kick you along the passage, just wait till I get a boot on—”

“Yow-ow!”

Tubby Muffin did not wait. He rolled hurriedly out of reach, and bolted into the box-room at the end of the passage, the nearest refuge. The box-room door slammed after him with a slam that rang like a thunderclap along the Fourth Form passage.

Dick Oswald looked out of Study No. 6.

“Hallo, Lovell! You look warm!”

“Br-r-r-r-r!”

“Come in and have a cup of tea, old bean—I've just made it,” said Oswald.

“Thanks, old chap! That's just what I want,” said Lovell, and he crossed into No. 6.

Lovell had laboured long over his accounts, and he was warm and dry and thirsty. He felt that he was entitled to take off a few minutes for a refreshing cup of tea.

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Being entitled to do so, he did so. It was natural that over the cup of tea, and the buns that accompanied it, there should be a little chat, and that chat should refer to cricket. As it happened, Arthur Edward Lovell had been cultivating a late cut, of which he was rather proud, but the beauty of which was hidden from the other fellows. Lovell told Oswald all about it, at considerable length, hardly listening to Oswald's remarks about bowling.

And so it was that the accounts remained unfinished, and Lovell had almost forgotten their troublesome existence, when Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome, ruddy from the cricket, came tramping in to tea.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Arithmetic!

LOVELL—
"It's Tubby!"
"You fat bounder!"
Jimmy Silver & Co. expected to find Lovell in the end study. They hoped that he had finished his accounts and got tea ready. Both hopes proved illusory.

Lovell had not finished his accounts and had not got tea ready. He was not even there.

But Reginald Muffin was there.

Reginald Muffin was hanging over the table, eyeing with greedy eyes the currency notes, and the coins that glimmered in the sunlight.

He gave a jump as the three juniors entered. He faced round with a red face.

"I—I haven't touched it!" he gasped.
"You fat bounder! What are you doing in this study?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"I—I came to help Lovell with his accounts—"
"Get out!"

"I—I say, Jimmy—"

"That duffer Lovell has gone out and left the cash spread all over the table," said Raby. "I think that's about the limit!"

"I—I was looking after it for him," gasped Tubby. "That—that's why I came in."

"Look here, you fat chump, have you been meddling with that money?" asked Newcome suspiciously.

"Nunno! I—I haven't—"

"Well, travel!" said Jimmy Silver.

Tubby Muffin, with a last longing glance at the cash, travelled. Jimmy Silver frowned as he looked at the table. Lovell had left the money there, open and unguarded; and this seemed unusually careless even of Lovell. Any fellow might have come along and helped himself; and it was only too clear that Reginald Muffin, whose ideas on the subject of meum and tuum were a little mixed, had been thinking of helping himself. It really was too bad of Lovell.

"The ass!" said Jimmy.

"The chump!" agreed Newcome. "I suppose there isn't any beastly thief in the Fourth, of course. Still, I—"

"Still, a chap ought to be careful with money," growled Jimmy. "We were duffer to back up Lovell when he put up for treasurer. Only he was so jolly keen on it."

"Where the dickens is he" asked Newcome.

"Goodness knows!"

Jimmy Silver stepped into the passage and shouted.

"Lovell! Fathead! Lovell! Ass! Lovell!"

Arthur Edward Lovell looked out of THE POPULAR.—No. 493.

Oswald's study. He stared at the captain of the Fourth.

"Hallo. What are you yelling about?" he asked. "Is the study on fire?"

"You silly ass!" said Jimmy. "You've left a stack of money lying about on the table—"

"Oh, I forgot! I mean, I was just coming back," said Lovell, coming across to the end study. "It's all right! I just dropped in to see Oswald. The money's safe enough. Everybody's out of doors, too."

"We found Tubby Muffin gloating over it," said Raby.

"Well, if you did, I suppose he isn't a pickpocket, is he?" snapped Lovell. "I don't think you ought to suspect Muffin of being dishonest, Raby."

"You silly owl!" roared Raby. "Who suspects him of being dishonest?"

"Well, I supposed you did, from what you said. But if you don't, what does it matter whether he was in the study or not?"

"We've come in for tea in our own study," growled Raby. "Shift your rubbish off the table!"

"I'm not shifting anything till I've finished my accounts. I'm not going to get my accounts mixed because a greedy ass wants to guzzle!"

"Oh, let's go and stick Oswald," said Jimmy Silver resignedly. "Anything for a quiet life. I hope you'll be done in time for prep, Lovell."

"Not likely," said Raby, still sarcastic. "This is going on till bedtime, and Lovell will bring his jolly old accounts up to the dorm to finish them."

"Look here—" roared Lovell.

"Oh, come on!" said Jimmy Silver.

The three juniors quitted the end study, and found hospitality in Study No. 6 with Oswald and Flynn. Meanwhile, Arthur Edward Lovell sat down to finish his accounts.

He wrestled with them manfully.

Items of expenditure were totalled up at last, and items of revenue were totalled up, and it only remained to subtract the smaller sum from the larger, the remainder being the cash in hand, now stacked on the study table.

Arthur Edward Lovell applied himself to his final task. And his final sum worked out as follows:

	£	s.	d.
To subs, etc.	-	-	11 10 6
Expended	-	-	7 15 4
Balance, cash in hand	4	15	2

"That's all right," said Lovell, after going over it twice. "Now, there's four pound fifteen-and-two-pence here in cash— But I'd better count it. Nothing like being careful."

Lovell counted his cash.

"Three ten-bob notes—that's thirty bob—eight half-crowns—that's two pound ten—five bob bit—that's two pounds fifteen. Fourteen shillings—no, fifteen—sixteen—no, fifteen, that's right; that's three pounds ten. Eight six-pences—that's four bob—three pounds fourteen. Fifteen pennies—no, sixteen—sixteen pennies is one-and-fourpence—that makes three pounds fifteen-and-fourpence. Twopence is mine, so that makes three pounds fifteen-and-two-pence."

Lovell paused.

"There's a two-shilling bit, but that's mine. I remember getting it in change, and I know I had two-and-two-pence altogether. That makes three pounds fifteen-and-two-pence, instead of four pounds fifteen-and-two-

pence. Where's the other blessed pound?"

Lovell was annoyed.

A whole pound seemed missing, somehow, and he was very anxious to finish before his comrades came back. He did not want any feebly humorous remarks on his system of keeping accounts.

He was puzzled as well as annoyed.

A shilling or a half-crown might have rolled to the floor, but a whole pound in silver couldn't have done so. He knew there had been no pound notes, and only three ten-shilling notes.

The missing pound must have been in silver and coppers, and it was therefore large enough to be seen, but it was not to be seen.

Lovell displaced and replaced every article on the table in the search for the missing pound. But not a single coin turned up.

"My hat!" murmured Lovell, in dismay. "I know I had all the money; it was in the tin box." A bright thought struck him. "Perhaps I've left it there!"

He jumped to his desk, almost convinced that he would find the missing pound in the cashbox.

But the box was empty.

Lovell searched through the desk. It might have dropped out somehow. But it hadn't!

"My hat!" ejaculated Lovell. "That villain Muffin!"

He caught his breath.

There was no need to search further.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Serious Affair!

WHAT'S up?"

Jimmy Silver & Co. asked that question with one breath, as they came back into the end study after tea.

It was clear at a glance, from the look on Lovell's face, that something was up—something serious.

Lovell looked grimly at his study-mates.

"You fellows think I can't do arithmetic," he said, rather aggressively. "Well, count that money yourselves. We've got to be sure about it."

"Anything wrong with the accounts?" asked Raby.

"Nothing," said Lovell disdainfully. "As soon as there's something wrong with my accounts I shall chuck up the job. It's not likely to happen, I hope."

"Then what's the matter?"

"Count that money?"

"That's soon done," said Jimmy Silver. He counted the cash on the table. "Three pounds fifteen-and-two-pence."

"Sure?" asked Lovell.

"Would you like Mr. Dalton or the Head to go through it?" asked Raby, who seemed in a sarcastic vein that afternoon. "A sum like that is a bit steep for the Fourth Form."

"You may as well be serious, Raby. This is a serious matter," said Lovell.

"Blessed if I see it!"

"There's a pound gone."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You've lost a pound?" exclaimed Newcome.

"I haven't lost a pound, Arthur Newcome."

"You said it's gone."

"It's gone because it's been taken," answered Lovell. "The money was there when I went across to Oswald's study for tea, and it ought to have been there when I came back. It wasn't."

"Phew!"
 "I know you fellows never touched it, of course," said Lovell.
 "Thanks!" said Raby.
 "It's clear enough, of course. That fat idiot Muffin was in here when you came in from cricket. You said you found him gloating over the money."
 "And you said he wouldn't have touched it," rejoined Raby.
 "I thought he wouldn't, of course."
 "And I jolly well know he wouldn't!" said Newcome.
 "I'm afraid he would," said Lovell.
 "You see, the fat idiot asked me to lend him some of it, though I told him it was the club's money. The silly ass

The Fistical Four hurried from the study. They wanted to find Reginald Muffin, and they wanted to find him quick.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. After Muffin!

IF Tubby was in possession of funds, the tuckshop was his likeliest destination, and they resolved to look there first.

"There he is!" exclaimed Lovell, as the four burst into Sergeant Kettle's little shop, in the secluded corner of the quad behind the trees.

There was Muffin!

There was a gurgling roar from Tubby.

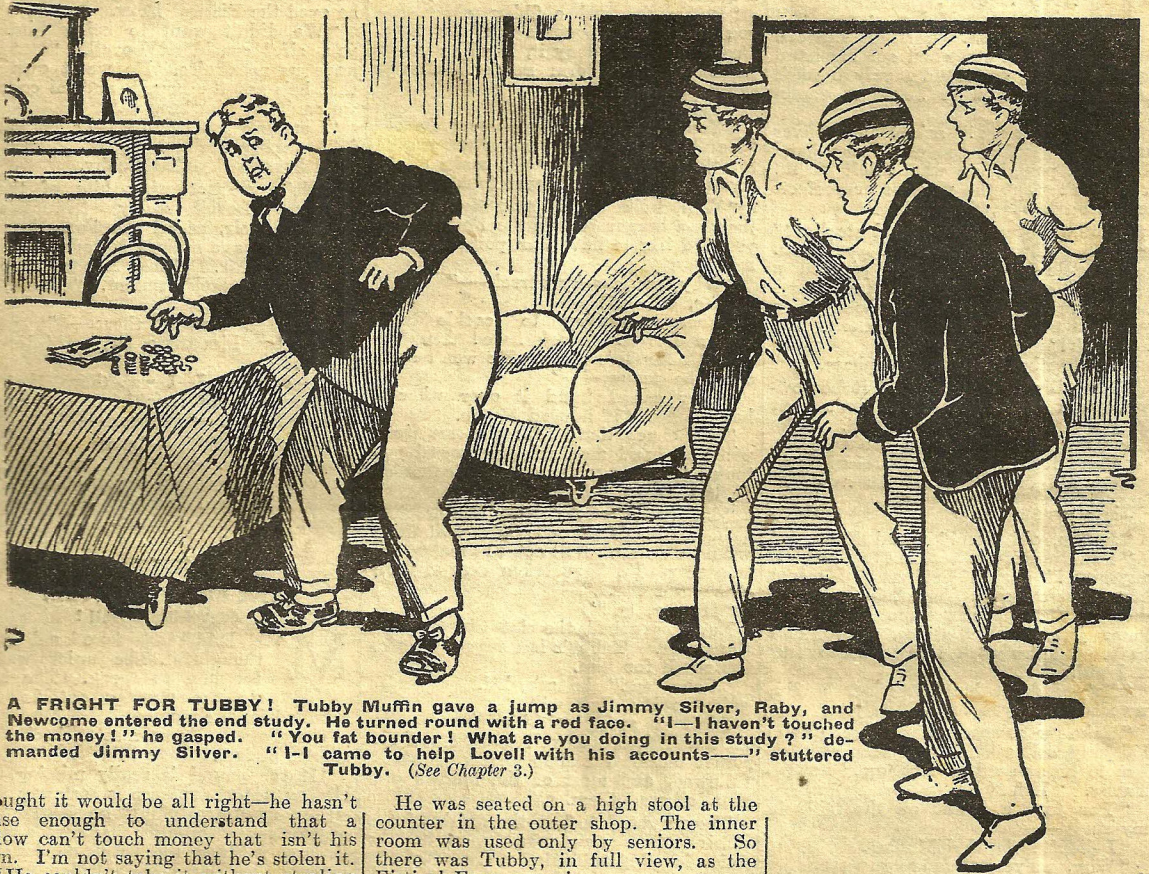
Nearly a whole jam-tart was in his capacious mouth. Tubby was accustomed to taking in his stores in bulk.

"Ow! Groogh! Oooch!" he spluttered. "You rotters! Ow! Wharrer you ragging a chap for? Oooch! I'll jolly well lick you all round! Mmmmm!"

"Look here!" roared Lovell. "We want—"

"Don't shout it out here!" said Jimmy Silver hastily. "Come out of the shop, Tubby. We want to speak to you quietly."

"Shan't!" roared Tubby. "Grooo! I don't want to speak to you! You're



A FRIGHT FOR TUBBY! Tubby Muffin gave a jump as Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome entered the end study. He turned round with a red face. "I—I haven't touched the money!" he gasped. "You fat boulder! What are you doing in this study?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "I-I came to help Lovell with his accounts—" stuttered Tubby. (See Chapter 3.)

thought it would be all right—he hasn't sense enough to understand that a fellow can't touch money that isn't his own. I'm not saying that he's stolen it.

"He couldn't take it without stealing it, I suppose?" said Newcome.

"Well, no; but I fancy he's got some fatheaded idea in his thick head that he's only borrowed it—you know what a fool he is," said Lovell.

"Of course, we shall have to go into this," said Jimmy Silver, with a deeply troubled brow. "Muffin's quite fool enough to do it. He can't keep the money—but we don't want to show him up as a thief all over Rookwood, when he's only a potty ass!"

"Just what I was thinking," said Raby; "and we don't want to tell all Rookwood how accounts are kept in this study, with money lying loose about the room for any chap to pick up if he wants to."

Lovell breathed hard. "We don't want a lot of fuss," he said. "The fellow's a fool, not a thief. We want to get the money back, and thrash him, and let the matter end."

"That's right," said Jimmy Silver. "We'd better look for Muffin—"

"And pretty quick, too, or the cash will be gone to the tuckshop," said Newcome. "You know Muffin!"

"My hat! Yes—come on."

He was seated on a high stool at the counter in the outer shop. The inner room was used only by seniors. So there was Tubby, in full view, as the Fistical Four came in.

He had a plate of tarts before him and a glass of ginger-beer at his elbow, and seemed to be enjoying his podgy self.

There were a dozen other fellows in the shop. Jimmy Silver & Co. pushed their way through without ceremony; there was not a moment to waste. Tubby was already spending money.

"Here! Whom are you shoving, young Lovell?" shouted Adolphus Smythe of the Shell indignantly.

"You, you ass!" snapped Lovell. "Can't you see for yourself?" And with another shove he sent Adolphus against the wall, spluttering with indignant wrath.

A moment more, and the Fistical Four were round Muffin.

If they had had any doubts, those doubts were solved now. Tubby was piling into tuck; and well they knew that he had been "stony" earlier that afternoon, for he had made attempts to raise a small loan from each and every member of the Co.

Four pairs of hands were laid on Reginald Muffin, and he came off the high stool with a crash.

beasts! Rotters, in fact! I haven't finished my tarts!"

"Don't be a silly ass!" whispered Raby. "We want a pound from you!"

"I'm not lending you a pound, Raby. You refused to lend me sixpence this afternoon."

"You silly owl!" gasped Raby. "I mean—"

"I don't care what you mean!" Tubby Muffin staggered to his feet. "Leave a chap alone when he's having his tea. Don't you try bagging my tarts, you rotters! Go and eat coke!"

"Look here!"

"Oh, shut up!" howled Muffin. "I don't want to have anything to say to you. You're beasts—especially you, Lovell! I despise you! If you think I'm going to stand you tea, now I'm in funds, you're jolly well mistaken. See?"

Lovell breathed hard. "Will you come out where we can speak to you quietly?" he demanded.

"No, I won't!" retorted Tubby.

"Then you can have it here!" exclaimed Lovell savagely. "Hand over

the pound you pinched from my study, club will make you treasurer. How was I to know that that fat villain would dodge into my study and pinch the money?"

Tubby Muffin's fat jaw dropped, and he blinked at Arthur Edward speechlessly. From the other fellows, crowding round the scene, there came a buzz. Evidently there was no hope now of keeping the incident dark, as the Fistical Four had intended. Openly and publicly, Reginald Muffin had to come up for judgment.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Brought Before the Beak!

"HAND it over!"
Tubby Muffin was still speechless. Arthur Edward Lovell stretched out his hand for the pound, but Muffin only blinked at it. He seemed to be in a dumb-founded state.

"Muffin, you ass!" said Jimmy Silver anxiously. "For goodness' sake hand over the pound, or what's left of it! You don't want the masters or prefects to get on to this, do you?"

"Muffin's been pickin' and stealin'?" grinned Townsend of the Fourth. "Fat little blighter! He pinched a cake out of my study the other day. Look here! if he's taken money, you ought to take him to Mr. Dalton. It's too thick!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Topham.

"The silly owl would call it borrowing," said Newcome. "We don't want to get him flogged or sacked. The Head doesn't know him as we do."

"Hand it over, Muffin!" said Lovell. Reginald Muffin found his voice at last.

"Yah!"

"Muffin, old man!" urged Raby.

"Yah! Rotters! I never pinched anything!" gasped Tubby. "I might have borrowed a few bob. But I didn't. Those beasts came in, as you know jolly well. Besides, I wouldn't have. I knew you'd make a rotten fuss if I did. Yah!"

"If you don't hand it over, Muffin, we shall take you to Mr. Dalton."

"Take me as soon as you like. Yah! I'll jolly well ask Dicky Dalton whether I'm to be accused of stealing!" howled Tubby. "Yah!"

"You took a pound off the table in my study—"

"I didn't!" howled Muffin.

"Why, we've just found you spending the money!" exclaimed Newcome.

"I wasn't!"

"Look here, Muffin—"

"Putty of the Fourth lent me two bob!" howled Tubby Muffin. "He's had a remittance to-day, and he stood me two bob not ten minutes ago. You can ask him. Yah!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"I never went near your study!"

"We found you there!" hooted Raby.

"I—I mean, I never touched the money!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "I wouldn't! I hope I'm an honourable chap!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look here! What's all this about?" exclaimed Conroy. "If Muffin's pinched money, it's jolly serious. But has he?"

"No!" howled Tubby.

"It looks certain," said Jimmy Silver. "Lovell was doing his accounts, with the club's money on the table. He went out of the study and left it there."

"My hat! What a way of doing accounts!"

"That's not your bizney, Conroy!" snorted Lovell. "If you can do accounts better than I can, perhaps the

club will make you treasurer. How was I to know that that fat villain would dodge into my study and pinch the money?"

"I never did!" shrieked Muffin.

"We found him in the study, Conroy," said Jimmy Silver. "He was hanging over the money, and after that Lovell found that there was a pound missing. It looks clear enough. And we all know Muffin."

"We do!" assented Conroy. "Tubby, old man, the best thing you can do is to own up and keep clear of Mr. Dalton."

"I haven't touched it!" shrieked Tubby. "I tell you I wasn't—I mean, I never did—"

"But you're such a fibber, old man—you roll out whoppers all the time. Anyhow, if you deny it, it will have to go before the Form master. Better think twice."

"Yah!"

"You fat duffer!" exclaimed Lovell. "Don't you know that you'll get sacked for this? The Head won't make allowances for you being a born fool!"

"Well, I like that!" said Muffin. "If there's a bigger fool in the Fourth than you, I'd like to have him pointed out to me!"

"Why, you cheeky barrel—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at!" roared Lovell. "Look here! I'm fed-up with Muffin's cheek. He won't hand over the money—"

"How can I hand it over when I haven't got it?" howled Muffin.

"Oh, chuck that! For the last time, will you hand me back the pound you took from my study?" demanded Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Yah!" hooted Tubby. "If there's a quid missing, I expect you've had it. I wanted the fellows to make me treasurer I'd have taken care of their money for them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell grabbed the fat Classical by the collar. Tubby's last suggestion was too much for him.

"Come on!" he growled. "You're going to Mr Dalton!"

With a swing of his sinewy arm Arthur Edward Lovell hooked the fat junior out of the shop. His comrades followed, and most of the fellows present followed them.

They wanted to see the finish of the affair—which was possibly to be the finish for Reginald Muffin also. Nobody attached any importance to Tubby's denials. And if he was adjudged a thief it was improbable that there would be much mercy for him. Obtuse or not, the fat Classical knew very well that he ought not to touch money not his own.

Quite a little army of Classical fellows marched up to the House. Tubby in the lead in the midst of the Fistical Four.

On the way Jimmy Silver hoped that Muffin would see reason, and realise that the best way out of the affair was by owning up. But Tubby did not seem to see it.

The "army" arrived at the door of Mr. Richard Dalton's study. Jimmy made a last appeal to the fat junior.

"Now, Muffin, before we go in to—"

"Yah!"

"For your own sake, Tubby," urged Raby.

"Rats!"

Arthur Edward Lovell, out of all patience, knocked at the Form master's door. The quiet voice of Mr. Dalton bade him enter.

Mr. Dalton was talking cricket with Bulkeley of the Sixth in the study when the Fistical Four entered with Reginald

Muffin. Master and prefect stared at the invaders in surprise.

Round the half-open doorway congregated a dozen of the Fourth and some of the Shell. There was a buzz of excitement from the passage, which was plainly heard in the Fourth Form master's study.

"Well?" ejaculated Mr. Dalton. "What is all this? What does this mean, Silver?"

Jimmy looked at Lovell. It was for Arthur Edward to explain. Arthur Edward proceeded to do so with somewhat breathless emphasis.

Mr. Dalton's brow grew stern as he listened. He eyed Tubby Muffin, and he eyed the Fistical Four.

"We didn't want to bring him to you, sir," concluded Lovell. "But he gave us no choice. He won't own up that he's got the pound, and, of course, we can't let him keep it."

"Certainly you cannot, if he has taken it!" said Mr. Dalton.

"I haven't!" yelled Tubby.

"We're not accusing him of theft, sir," said Lovell hastily. "Muffin's a born fool, sir, as all the Form knows. You must have noticed it yourself, sir."

"Hem!" Mr. Dalton's face twitched, a little, and Bulkeley smiled. "Muffin, do you deny this?"

"Yes, sir. I wasn't there—"

"We saw him there, sir," said Jimmy Silver.

"I—I mean, I—I was there—that is, in a manner of speaking," stammered Tubby Muffin. "I—mean—"

"You will find it better to tell the truth, Muffin. Did you, or did you not take money from Lovell's study?"

"No!" gasped Tubby.

And there was a pause.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Just Like Lovell!

MR. DALTON looked very thoughtful. The juniors waited for him to speak. The buzz in the passage outside was subdued for the moment.

The Fourth Form master broke the silence at last.

"If the pound is really missing, the circumstantial evidence is certainly very strong against Muffin," he said. "His own utterly unreliable character adds to it, and justifies the suspicion to some extent. But is it established beyond doubt that a pound is actually missing, Lovell?"

"Quite, sir."

"It appears that you left a certain sum on your study table. What was the amount?"

"All there was in the cash-box, sir," said Lovell. "When I counted it afterwards there should have been four pounds fifteen and twopence. But there was only three pounds fifteen and two."

"That is not very clear, Lovell. Had you not counted it before Muffin came to the study?"

"No, sir. I counted it after doing the accounts. It was only the balance of cash in hand," explained Lovell.

Mr. Dalton raised his eyebrows.

"Did you know exactly how much cash there was in the cash-box?"

"Oh, no, sir: I hadn't done the accounts for some time. I put the money into the cash-box as it came in, a bit at a time."

"That is a very irregular way of keeping accounts, Lovell. You should have known the amount to the last farthing, and it should have been entered in writing in an account-book."

Lovell suppressed an indignant snort. "That's my system, sir. Only I don't do the accounts every day, what with cricket and lines and things. I made up the accounts this afternoon right up to date."

"Then it appears that it was an unknown sum that you took from the cash-box in the first place."

"More or less, sir; but that doesn't make any difference."

"It may make a great difference, Lovell. If you were ignorant of the exact amount of money, how can you possibly tell that any is missing?"

Lovell smiled the superior smile of knowledge.

"That's all right, sir. It's in the accounts. I had so much in hand last time I did the accounts—since then I've received so much—expenditure so much—balance, cash in hand. The balance ought to be four pounds fifteen and twopence. It's plain enough."

"You are quite sure that your calculations are correct?"

"Quite," said Arthur Edward Lovell confidently. "You know I'm pretty good at arithmetic, sir."

"On the contrary, Lovell, I am very far from satisfied with your ability in that direction."

"Oh, really, sir—"

Lovell suppressed his indignation. It really was too bad of Mr. Dalton to take the same view as Fourth Form chaps in these matters.

"Let me see the account in question," said Mr. Dalton.

"I've got it all here, sir. That's the final balance," said Lovell, laying a paper on the table.

Mr. Dalton looked at it.

He looked at it again.

He seemed scarcely able to believe his eyes.

"Upon my word!" he ejaculated.

It was quite an interesting balance of accounts. But the arithmetical ability it displayed was not really striking.

	£	s.	d.
To subs, etc.	-	-	11 10 6
Expended	-	-	7 15 4
Balance—cash in hand	-	4	15 2

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at their Form master. They had not seen Lovell's precious balance of accounts, but they could see now that there was something amiss with it. They had taken it for granted that Lovell had known how much money was on the table when he declared that a pound was missing from the amount. It dawned upon them now that they had taken a little too much for granted.

"You'll find that all right, sir," said Lovell, wondering why Mr. Dalton looked so queer.

"Is it on this, Lovell, that you have accused Muffin of taking a pound from your study?"

"Certainly, sir! A pound is missing—"

"Look at it, boy! You have subtracted seven pounds fifteen shillings and fourpence from eleven pounds ten shillings and sixpence. Does that leave four pounds fifteen and twopence?"

"Certainly, sir!"

There was a chuckle in the passage. "In doing this exceedingly simple sum," said Mr. Dalton, "you have forgotten to carry one pound to the pounds column."

"Eh?"

"The result should be not four pounds fifteen and twopence," said Mr. Dalton, in a grinding voice.

"Wha-a-a-t!"
"My only Uncle John!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Lovell picked up the paper and looked at it. Slowly a wave of crimson overspread his face.

Now that his little error was pointed out, even Arthur Edward Lovell could see it.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"So it appears," said Mr. Dalton grimly, "that there is not a pound missing at all, as you have the required balance of three pounds fifteen and twopence."

"Oh! Yes! Ah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the crowded passage.

Tubby Muffin grinned.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome looked at one another, wishing that the floor of the study would open and swallow them up. Arthur Edward Lovell stood crimson and dumb.

"Muffin," said

Mr. Dalton, "you are completely cleared. It is a silly and childish mistake on Lovell's part. Lovell, you will take a thousand lines of Virgil. Silver, I recommend you and your friends to select a new treasurer. You may go."

And the juniors went.

Outside the study Arthur Edward Lovell spoke no word. He tramped away with a burning face through a crowd of yelling juniors. For once even Arthur Edward Lovell had nothing to say for himself.

Loud and long the Classical Fourth of Rookwood roared over it. Lovell could see nothing whatever of a comic nature in the episode. But the other fellows could, and they roared.

Lovell had bagged a thousand lines. He considered this a much more than adequate punishment for what was, after all, only a small arithmetical error, which any fellow might have made. His three comrades, on the other hand, regarded it as inadequate. They considered it necessary to add to it. Lovell had made an egregious blunder, he had made a howling ass of himself, and he had made the end study look foolish.

The Co. were not satisfied, and they proceeded to make their dissatisfaction

clear. That evening yells of anguish were heard from the end study.

Fellows who looked in were treated to the interesting view of Arthur Edward Lovell bending over a chair in the grasp of Raby and Newcome, while Jimmy Silver laid on a fives bat.

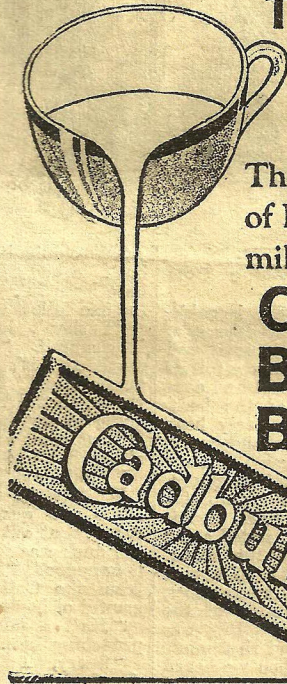
Arthur Edward Lovell was getting what he really had asked for. Stern justice was administered. It was, in the opinion of Arthur Edward's comrades, just what Arthur Edward wanted. And he got it.

And even then Lovell was not pleased, which again was just like Lovell.

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's splendid long story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, entitled: "THE HEROISM OF CLARENCE CUFFY!")

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