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INSIDE ?

The POPULAR

2¢



Week Ending April 19th, 1930.

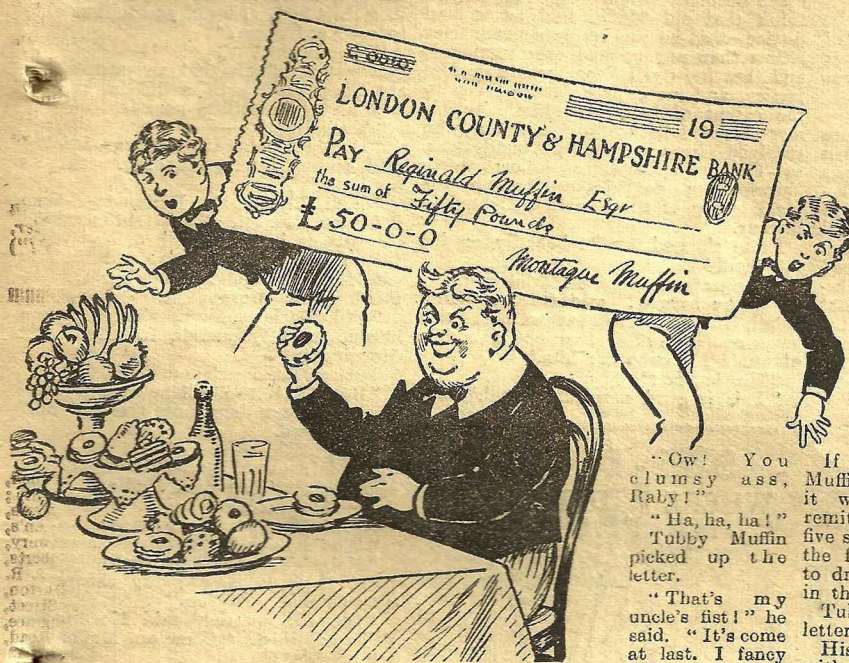
EVERY TUESDAY.

No. 536 (New Series).

WEALTH COMES TO TUBBY MUFFIN, THE PENNILESS!

ROLLING IN MONEY!

BY
OWEN
CONQUEST.



Tubby Muffin gives the Chums of Rookwood something to talk about when he gets a cheque for Fifty Pounds!

"Ow! You clumsy ass, Muffin! Raly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tubby Muffin picked up the letter.

"That's my uncle's fist!" he said. "It's come at last. I fancy you fellows

If this especial letter from Captain Muffin contained a remittance at all, it was extremely unlikely that the remittance would exceed the sum of five shillings. So Jimmy wondered why the fat junior was taking the trouble to draw general attention to the letter in this way.

Tubby Muffin had not yet opened the letter. He was groping in his pocket.

His fat and grubby hand came out with a shilling in it.

"Look!" he said. "Three to one in doughnuts, Morny, and I can pay if I lose—see?"

"Great gad!" said Mornington, in astonishment.

"Backing out now?" grinned Muffin. Mornington stared at him. All the Classical Fourth fellows who were on the spot stared at Muffin, too. He had succeeded in astonishing the natives, so to speak.

"I mean it," said Muffin. "I'll bet you three to one in doughnuts that there's more than ten pounds in this letter."

"Gammon!" "Money talks!" said Muffin loftily, holding up the shilling.

"What on earth is the fat duffer driving at?" exclaimed Peele. "I don't believe Captain Muffin has a tenner in the world. I don't suppose his yacht would sell for more than seven-ten."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I'm speaking to you, Morny! Three to one in doughnuts—"

"Rats!" said Mornington. "I won't make a bet with you, in doughnuts or anything else; but if there's a tenner in that letter I'll stand you a dozen doughnuts in the school shop, and if there isn't I'll jolly well kick you. Is that a go?"

"Done!" said Muffin, at once. "Well, my hat!" exclaimed Peele.

"Mind, I don't say it's a banknote," said Muffin cautiously. "If it's a large sum, my uncle would have sent me a cheque—see? I'm fairly certain it would be a cheque, as he would have registered banknotes, and this letter isn't registered."

"Open it, fathead!" said Mornington. "I mean it about the kick, you know. Don't let him dodge away, you fellows."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tubby Muffin inserted a fat and grubby thumb into the flap of the envelope, that being his elegant method of opening a letter.

The Letter From Uncle!

"ANYTHING for me?" Tubby Muffin asked the question.

Second lesson had finished in the Fourth Form-room, and the Classical Fourth had come out for "morning quarter." Jimmy Silver & Co. had stopped at the letter-rack, as well as several other members of the Form, among them Reginald Muffin.

"Anything for me, Jimmy?" repeated Muffin.

Really, there seemed no reason why Tubby Muffin should not have ascertained for himself whether there was a letter for him that morning. As a rule, Tubby was very keen on his correspondence; he lived in constant, hopeful expectation of remittances that seldom arrived.

On the present occasion, however, Tubby gave place to the other fellows and did not display his usual eagerness.

"Can't you look, lazybones?" asked Jimmy Silver, who had taken down a letter from home and was about to open it.

"I say, Lovell, is there a letter for me?" asked Tubby, without heeding Jimmy Silver's question.

"Look and see!" answered Lovell, who was scanning the rack for a letter addressed to Arthur Edward Lovell.

"I'm expecting a letter from my uncle, you know," said Tubby. "You fellows remember Captain Muffin—you remember you had a holiday once on his magnificent yacht—"

"I remember we were paying guests once on his rolling tub," said Lovell.

"Here's a letter for you, Fatty," said George Raby taking down a missive and tossing it to Muffin. "Catch!"

Tubby Muffin caught the letter with his fat little nose.

couldn't guess what's in this letter!" "A postal-order for sixpence?" asked Peele of the Fourth.

"Or three penny stamps?" asked Gower.

Tubby Muffin sniffed. "Something better than that," he said. "A fiver at least, I expect."

"Bow-wow!" "Perhaps a tenner—"

"Perhaps!" chuckled Newcome. "But there's a lot of perhaps about it, Tubby."

"And perhaps more!" said Tubby Muffin. "You see, I mentioned to my uncle that I wanted a new bike and some other things."

"Ha, ha, ha!" There was a general chuckle.

The Rookwood Fourth heard a great deal about Tubby Muffin's wealthy uncle, but on the subject of the avuncular wealth there were many doubts in the Rookwood Fourth.

On that subject only one thing was certain, and that was that none of the wealth ever found its way to Rookwood.

"You can cackle," said Reginald Muffin disdainfully. "Wait till you see what's in the letter."

"Anybody offer Muffin threepence for all the banknotes that are in his letter?" inquired Mornington.

"No fear!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"If I were a betting chap," said Tubby, "I'd bet three to one that there's more than ten pounds in this letter."

"If I were a bettin' chap, I'd take you on—if you had anythin' to pay your bets with!" chuckled Mornington.

Jimmy Silver looked rather curiously at the fat Classical.

As a rule, when Muffin received a remittance over and above his allowance, it was for the humble sum of five shillings or half-a-crown. Never in his fat career had he been known to possess such an amount as five pounds. He talked airily of fivers and tenners, but he had never been able to exhibit such articles.

The juniors gathered round him quite curiously.

For once—which seldom happened—Muffin was the centre of attention.

Muffin drew out a folded sheet.

He unfolded it.

Within was an engraved slip of paper. And as Tubby Muffin held it up for the general inspection there was a buzz of astonishment.

It was a cheque.

Every eye was glued on it. There were fellows in the Classical Fourth who sometimes received quite generous remittances from wealthy and affectionate relations. But it was safe to say that no fellow at Rookwood had ever received so generous a remittance as this. Seeing was believing, of course, but really the juniors could scarcely believe their eyes as they gazed at that attractive slip of paper and read the words:

"LONDON COUNTY & HAMPSHIRE BANK, LTD.

PAY—Reginald Muffin, Esq.,

THE SUM OF—Fifty pounds.

£50.

MONTAGUE MUFFIN."

Muffin's Windfall!

"FIFTY pounds!"
"Great Scott!"
"Great Christopher Columbus!"

"Phew!"

"Gammon!"

"Look at it!" grinned Muffin.

"Let's look!" ejaculated Cyril Peele.

"Let's have a look at it, Muffin, old fellow."

A minute before Cyril Peele would have addressed Muffin as Fatty, or fat-head, or ass. The mere sight of the cheque had changed Muffin into an old fellow, in Cyril Peele's estimation.

Peele fairly grabbed the cheque. He devoured it with his eyes.

"It's genuine!" he said.

"Great pip!"

The cheque passed from hand to hand.

Muffin stood grinning complacently. For once he was the cynosure of all eyes, for once he shone with the reflected glory of the avuncular wealth.

Often and often—times without number, in fact—had Muffin told the fellows about his rich uncle, and the generous affection entertained by that relation for his nephew Reginald—and always the Fourth Form fellows had understudied "Doubting Thomas."

Often and often had Muffin declared that he was down in Captain Muffin's will for large sums—sometimes ten thousand pounds, sometimes as much as fifty thousand, according to the expansiveness of Muffin's imagination at the moment. And not a fellow in the Classical Fourth would have been willing to give him so much as a stick of toffee for his great expectations.

But now—

"Well, my only hat!" said Jimmy Silver. "You're a lucky bargee, Muffin. Even Gunner doesn't get tips like this."

Tubby purred with pleasure.

He was vindicated now.

The most dubious of the Doubting Thomases of the Fourth could scarcely doubt the existence of the Muffin wealth, when a sum like this arrived for Reginald Muffin.

Gunner of the Fourth, heir of Gunner's Hardware, Limited, had never been known to possess such a sum.

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A tip of fifty pounds!

It really was overwhelming. No wonder envious glances were turned on Reginald Muffin. No wonder Cyril Peele decided—without even stopping to think that old Muffin had never had justice—that he was really a much finer fellow than anyone had ever supposed; and that he, Cyril Peele, would do him justice, and more than justice, even to the extent of honouring him with his most devoted friendship. A fellow who received cheques for fifty pounds was, in Peele's opinion, a fellow worth knowing—an acquaintance whom the black sheep of the Fourth delighted to honour.

Peele slapped Muffin heartily on his fat shoulder.

"Congrats, old man!" he said.

"Lucky bargee!" said Gower. "Dash it all, if you ever want to part with your uncle, Muffin, I've got a couple of aunts I'll swap for him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is good news all round," said

SWI - I - ISH ! WHERE DID THE INK COME FROM—and Who Got It?



Beilby, the Cad of Calcroft, got the Ink clean in the Eye! He didn't know that the Topper he Bashed with his Fist, contained Ink—Oh, Dear, No! But this is only one of the many Rollicking Incidents from "HIGH JINKS AT CALCROFT!" a Rib-cracking Yarn of School Adventure in Next Week's Issue!

Valentine Mornington "Muffin will be able to square all his little debts now."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Putty of the Fourth. "That will be a windfall for all the Form."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tubby Muffin's face clouded a little.

"Of—of course!" he stammered.

"But—"

"No buts when you've got fifty quids in your fat paw!" said Newcome.

"But—" stammered Muffin.

"You owe me eighteenpence!" said Jones minor.

"And me five-and-six!" chuckled Putty. "That's for this term—I've forgotten how much for last term and the term before."

"But—"

"Five bob in this direction," said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

"But—"

"Blessed if he isn't as full of butts as a billy-goat!" exclaimed Lovell.

"Don't forget my four-and-six, Muffin!"

"But—"

"Cash up!" grinned Flynn. "You only owe me sixpence, but you can

spare a tanner out of that cheque! It will leave you forty-nine pounds nine-teen-and-six."

"But—" Muffin gasped. "I—I haven't cashed the cheque yet. I've got to cash it first. Any of you fellows able to cash it for me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was no likely that any member of the Classical Fourth would be able to cash a cheque for fifty pounds.

"You, Jimmy—"

"If you'll take six shillings for it," said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "That's my limit."

"Well, I'll get Mr. Dalton to change it for me after class," said Muffin. "He can pay it into his bank and give me the money. I say, we've got time to cut down to the tuckshop before the third lesson, Morny."

"Old Kettle won't be able to cash a cheque for fifty pounds, fathead," said Mornington.

Tubby Muffin grinned.

"But old Kettle will be able to hand over the dozen doughnuts you owe me," he answered.

"Oh!"

"A fair catch!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "You owe Muffin a dozen doughnuts, Morny."

Mornington made a grimace.

"Who'd have thought it?" he said.

"Nobody!" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"But there it is—a giddy cheque for fifty pounds. Pay up."

"Oh, I'll square!" said Mornington, still astonished. "Come on, Muffin you fat bouncer!"

Muffin smiled round at the juniors.

"You fellows come along and whack out the doughnuts," he said generously. "I shall be in funds when—when I've cashed my cheque. Come on, the lot of you."

"Good old Muffin!"

And quite a little army of the Classical Fourth walked down to Sergeant Kettle's little shop behind the beeches, with Reginald Muffin and Mornington—where the doughnuts were duly disposed of before the bell rang for third lesson.

On the Make!

THE following day Reginald Muffin enjoyed the limelight, of which he had hitherto enjoyed little; now he basked in it.

A fellow who had a cheque in his pocket for fifty pounds was a fellow a good deal out of the common.

Every fellow in the Classical Fourth had seen that cheque on Monday; by Tuesday every fellow in the Modern Fourth had seen it also.

By Tuesday afternoon it had passed from hand to hand all through the Lower School. Fags of the Third and Second had gazed at it admiringly; Shell fellows had stared at it.

The cheque was already celebrated throughout the Lower School; and Muffin enjoyed the celebrity.

He was growing more and more popular.

Fellows whom he hardly knew remembered what a fine chap Reggie Muffin was, and how much they liked him, and how pleased they were with his conversation and sprightly manners.

Instead of having to seek a victim, as it were, when he desired to exercise his fat chin, Muffin found respectful attention whenever he opened his mouth.

Peele & Co.—who had first realised

what a boon and a blessing Muffin's friendship was—saw, with sour looks, his growing popularity. They would have preferred to keep entire possession of Muffin, so attached to him had they become. But other admirers of Reginald were not to be denied. Leggett, of the Modern Fourth, who had never been known to part with a sixpence if he could help it, was discovered standing Muffin tarts in the school shop. Townsend and Topham, the dandies of the Classical Fourth, who would never hitherto have deigned to touch Muffin with a barge-pole, now addressed him with marked civility. If Muffin were at a loss in the Form-room, there was always some devoted pal at hand to whisper to him; indeed, Peele was "lined" that afternoon for whispering to Muffin when Mr. Dalton asked him a question. But, as Peele said afterwards, it was a pleasure to go through it, for the sake of a pal like Reggie.

Peele was not pleased to see his pal Reggie showing the wonderful cheque all over Rookwood. All the Lower School had seen it; and Peele dreaded that a prefect of the Sixth might come to hear of it. Certainly had a Sixth Form prefect learned that there was a cheque for fifty pounds in the hands of a junior, that prefect would have taken action immediately. Reginald Muffin would have been marched into the Head's study with his cheque, to explain the matter to Dr. Chisholm. Peele had not thought of that catastrophic possibility at first; but, now that he had thought of it, he was anxious; and he would have preferred to see Muffin much more reticent on the subject of the wonderful tip from his uncle.

But reticence was not one of Muffin's qualities.

Since the arrival of Captain Muffin's cheque, Peele & Co. had discovered many fascinating qualities in Tubby, but they had not discovered reticence among them.

Tubby, indeed, seemed to care nothing for the risk of having that whacking cheque taken from him and returned to his uncle by the headmaster.

Peele warned him of the danger, but Muffin gave no heed.

Either from motives of swank, or some other reason best known to himself, Muffin kept his cheque in such prominence that it really seemed that it was likely to pass out of his hands before it could be cashed.

Peele was quite relieved when Tuesday evening came and the catastrophe had not occurred. On Wednesday afternoon there was to be an excursion to Latcham, where the handsome cheque was to be turned into currency notes. At all events, that was the intention of Peele & Co., and Muffin had assented.

At the hour of prep that evening Reginald Muffin did not sit down to work as usual in Study No. 2, with Putty of the Fourth and Higgs and Jones minor. Both Higgs and Jones minor were ready to help him with his prep, in a most obliging way; but Muffin was not in need of help.

"I'm going to cut it," he told his study-mates. "I can't be bothered with prep."

"Fathead!" said Putty. "You'll be ragged in the morning in the Form-room if you cut it."

"I've got an appointment," said Muffin loftily. "There's a party in Peele's study, and he's asked me."

Muffin blinked at him.

"Silly ass!"

"Yah!"

Muffin rolled along the passage to the first study, which belonged to Peele and Lattrey and Gower. Jimmy Silver, & Co. were coming up the stairs, and they met Muffin outside Peele's study. The captain of the Fourth dropped his hand on the fat junior's shoulder as he was opening Peele's door.

"Muffin, old man, what's the game?" asked Jimmy Silver quietly.

Jimmy was well acquainted with the manners and customs in Peele's study.

and a box of matches, and Cyril Peele was shuffling a pack of cards.

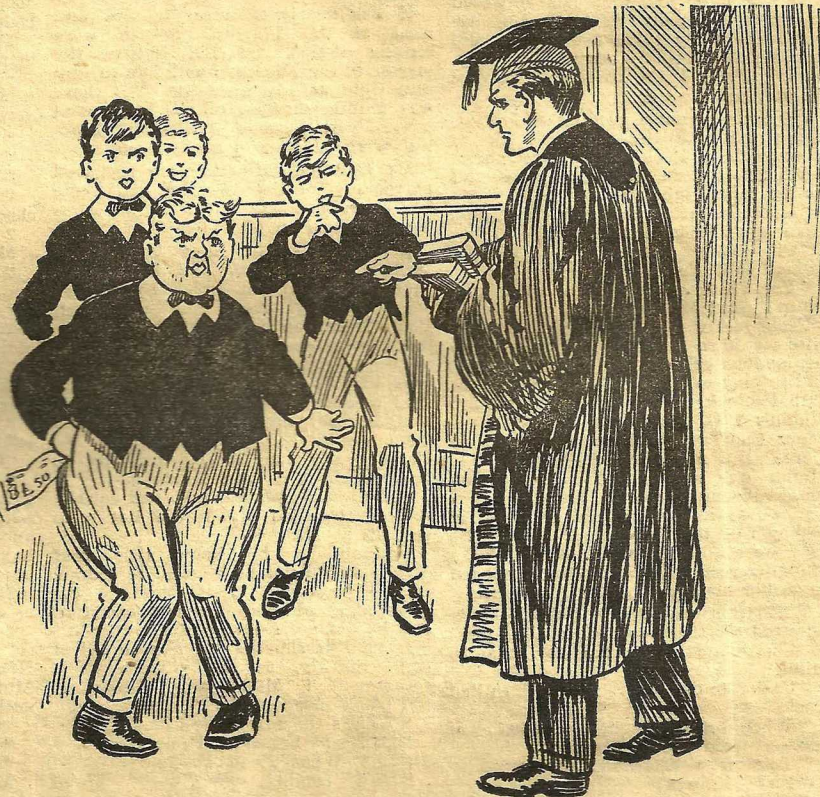
"Oh, here you are, Muffin," he said. "Roll in, Reggie, old chap. You're not wanted here, Silver."

"I think a prefect is wanted here," growled Jimmy Silver.

Peele sneered.

"Are you going to tell tales to a prefect?" he asked

"Look here, you mind your own business, Silver!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin indignantly. "Nothing to do with you, you know."



Mr. Dalton stopped, his eyes on the cheque that Tubby hastily slipped behind his back. "Show it to me at once, Muffin!" said the Form-master.

"It's a little party with Peele," he said.

"What about prep?"

"Oh, blow prep!" said Muffin independently

"And what are you going to do in Peele's study?" demanded Arthur Edward Lovell gruffly.

Muffin winked a fat wink.

"Oh, we're keeping it up, you know!" he said.

"You fat duffer!"

"That means that you're going to play nap or banker with Peele and his gang!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Why not?" said Muffin airily. "I'm a bit of a dog, you know. You fellows are rather fossils."

"You silly chump!" hooted Raby.

"Oh, can it!" said Muffin disdainfully. "Why shouldn't a fellow—a rich fellow—see life a little, what? You fellows go and dig at Virgil in your study—I've got something better to do."

And the doggish Muffin opened Peele's door and rolled in.

Jimmy Silver glanced in after him with a frowning brow.

There was no sign of prep in Peele's study. Evidently no work was to be done there that evening.

On the table lay a box of cigarettes

"Muffin, you ass—"

"Go and eat coke!"

"You're every sort of a silly idiot, kid!" said Jimmy. "But don't be a shady blackguard, too. Can't you see that those rotters want to get a whack in your uncle's cheque?"

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you fat image?"

"He, he, he! I can take care of myself, Jimmy Silver," said Muffin. "Don't you worry! You mind your own business! I'm no end of a dab at banker."

"You fat chump!"

"Yah!"

"Shut the door after you, Silver," said Peele. "Would you mind clearin' off to some study where you're welcome?"

"You're not welcome here, you know," said Gower.

"Not the least little bit in the world," said Lattrey. "Take your face away with you, like a good chap."

"He, he, he!" cackled Muffin.

Jimmy Silver gave the black sheep of the Fourth a grim look. Arthur Edward Lovell gave a snort.

"Mop up the cads!" he said.

"Just what I was thinking," said

