

COMPLETE STORIES FOR YOUNG AND OLD.

PLUCK

GRAND SCHOOL TALE.

1^d

THRILLING ADVENTURE STORY.



THE KNEELING LOFTUS PUT ON A QUENCHLESS SMILE!

NO. 176, VOL. 8, NEW SERIES.

Author of the tales of Tom Merry,
appearing every week in the
"GEM" Library.

READ THIS FIRST.
The train containing the boys of St. Winifred's slowed down alongside Ferndale Station platform, "You bouncer! Why didn't you yell?" Locke, a Fourth-Former, shouted the question to Clive Lawrence—a new boy, but one in no way shy or constrained. "What was there to yell about?" asked Clive. Locke sniffed. "Oh, of course, you don't know; you're a new kid. We're at daggers drawn with the Fifth at St. Winnie's, and Kendal and Keene, who are standing over there, are the heads of the Fifth." Clive joins the party of Fourth-Formers, and is told to share a study with Fisher and Locke. Courtney, a bully, takes Clive for "fag," and sends him on an errand to the Jolly Seaman, a public-house in the village. Clive arrives at his destination, and is shown into a back room and told to wait for a Mr. Napper. He falls to sleep before the fire, and is awakened by the sound of voices. Concealed as he is by the high-backed chair, he overhears a plot between Napper and a German to get possession of the clue to a hidden treasure, which Trelawny, the Captain of St. Winifred's, holds. Having discharged his errand, Clive returns to the School. He makes fun of Kendal and Keene, who retaliate by pelting him with eggs. (Now go on with the story.)

"The—the beasts!" sputtered Clive. "I—I never expected that."

"Neither did we," said Fisher, "or we should have stopped them. It's a bit thick, even for a joke on a new kid the first night of the term."

"Take me somewhere where I can get a wash," he exclaimed; "I'll settle up with those bounders afterwards."

Fisher kindly helped him down off the table. The clowns led him away, leaving the whole hall shouting with merriment.

"Take him into the bath-room, Locke," said Fisher, "and I'll go and get him a clean collar. He wants one. Ha, ha!"

Clive was soon plunging his face into steaming water, and he succeeded in getting rid at last of the signs of Kendall and Keene's kind attentions. As he towelled his face Fisher rejoined him with the promised clean collar.

"You look better now," he exclaimed. "But, I say, you did give it to the Fifth a treat, you know, and I really think we got the best of it. It was a bit rough on you."

"Oh, I don't mind!" he said. "It was a bit rough, and it was dirtier than any trick I should care to play on anybody, but I dare say we'll give Kendal and Keene change back presently. Is it all off?"

"Yes," said Fisher, surveying him critically. "There seems to be a slight eggy flavour to your curly locks, but perhaps a hard brush will get that out. Here you are!"

"We shall be a bit late for supper," said Fisher. "There

Locke and Clive followed him quickly enough. They were hungry, and they wanted supper.

On the first night of the term, usually generous at St. Winifred's, sometimes cold pudding, as well as bread and cheese.

Pyo looked at them at the tables already pretty well filled. 'They came up to the Fourth Form table. "Hello, you new kids, you look a bit cleaner now," he said. "I'll be back for you kids. I suppose

remarked. "There isn't much left for you kids if you're not hungry!"

AND "CAPTAIN MACKAY'S FORTUNE." IN "PLUCK,"
A Thrilling Story, dealing with the
legendary detective John Smith.

...that's where they'd gone when they escaped from
...that night.
So there I went with Howe Garrett, only to find I was
...all that happened after that."
You know all that happened after that."
But how did you discover Herman Holt's hiding-place?"
Well, after Garrett was caught, Lyman's gang gave up
...in hunting for them I tumbled across one of
...and tracked him to that island where he
...two pals, and
...stores for Holt.
...there a piece, but Holt didn't show up, and,
...trying his luck at Elvey's, I went there
...he hadn't turned up. However, I was lucky
...find Mr. Scriven instead, which was just as well."
Gail then told how he had noticed Herman Holt on the
...the attack, firing his revolver not at the men, but
...their heads, and though there was a struggle, it seemed
...the men were only making a big noise for effect.
...he had seen Holt lifted and thrown into the
...water, but he had the bag of money still clutched in his
...hand.
If the men had wanted it, they'd 've secured it, you can
...be added.
By the time all this was told, the launch had made con-
...progress, and Lee was putting her straight across
...the river a mile below Blue Grove, when he heard the loud
...of a steamer's whistle, and immediately after a
...rounded a bend ahead of them.
The smoke was pouring from her funnel. She was evi-
...ly running at full speed.
A few seconds later another, but larger boat, crammed
...men, appeared, also, going as fast as her screw could
...her.
It was from this boat that the whistle proceeded.
"That's the Phoenix, from Memphis," cried Lee, "and
...one in front is Lyman's boat!"
No need to shout to Crim Gail to go at full speed.
The river was here nearly a mile wide, and they were on
...the opposite side to the two coming down stream.
"We're too light to try to run him down," cried Lee,
...we can hang on to him and see what leaden persuaders
...will do!"
It was quickly evident that they had been seen, for fresh
...clouds of smoke poured from the small tugs' funnels. They
...could hear the throb of the engines.
Nearer and nearer they raced, but the tug had the inner
...bend of the deep bend, and it became evident that they
...would pass them.
Garrett and Scriven both opened fire, but it seemed to
...have little effect. The Phoenix continued to whistle deafen-
...ingly, but gradually lost ground, unable to travel so fast as
...the smaller boats.
Crim Gail piled on the steam till it seemed as if the
...engine would leap from the boat, and slowly but surely they
...began to creep up.
They could see two men on board Lyman's craft, one
...steering but scarcely visible, the other feeding the furnace
...and attending to the engines with ceaseless care.
Garrett and Scriven opened fire, but without effect, when
...suddenly their ears were almost split with a terrific roar, a
...great cloud of smoke and steam shot upwards from the tug
...they were chasing, carrying with it fragments of wood, iron,
...and various articles.
Then came an awful silence, followed by a rain of debris
...which fell into the water all around them for a few moments,
...till that also ceased, and nothing but the cloud of smoke
...which still hung like a pall over the spot, showed where
...the tug had been.
The boiler, unable to stand the terrific strain, had burst,
...and Lyman, the river pirate, with his wretched companion,
...was hurled to instant death.
What became of the rest of the gang was never known.
They disappeared completely, together with the plunder
...As for Herman Holt, he was handed over to the sheriff at
...Brazos, and after making full confession of his crime, went
...to enforced seclusion in the State penitentiary.
Of course, those people in Brazos and Memphis who had
...accused Jim Lee of being the author of the outrages were
...very too eager to make up to him.
But Lee wasn't having any.
"You may be changin' your minds again if any more
...trouble arises, boys," he said, "and I'll be tempted to string
...me up before I can look round. I guess it's a bit too rich
...for my blood, and I'll leave you while your feelings are
...freely."
He was as good as his word, and it was many years
...before Howe Garrett saw him again.

THE END.

Two long, complete stories again next Saturday.
Please order your copy of **PLUCK** in advance.)

NEXT SATURDAY: "LYNCROFT'S VENTRILOQUIST."
A Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of
Spies, the Tower & Co., by H. Clarke Hook.

Buy "The Union Jack"—Every Friday, 1d.

"Aren't we?" said Fisher, dropping into the seat next to Pye, and calmly taking possession of that young gentleman's neatly-filled plate of cold beef. "This will suit me."

"Will it?" howled Pye. "Hand me over—"

"Oh, rats! I'm hungry!"

"So am I. I tell you—"

"Silence there!" exclaimed the Fourth Form master, who was at the head of the table, with a frown. "Silence! A certain amount of licence is allowed on the first night of the term, but I cannot allow disputing in the dining-hall."

"But—"

"You should know better, Pye. You will go up to the dormitory without any supper if you say another word."

Pye relapsed into silence, but he was in a state bordering on frenzy as he watched Fisher calmly devouring his plate of beef. As it happened, there was no more meat left, the hungry juniors having made too hearty a raid on it to leave any for the late comers, and the latter had to content themselves with bread and cheese—excepting Fisher. Fisher was enjoying himself. But he wasn't selfish. He passed half his slices of beef on to another plate for Locke, who generously passed on a couple of slices to Clive Lawrence.

Pye's feelings may be better imagined than described as he watched his property being thus disposed of.

"You beasts!" he said, in a shrill whisper. "You rotters! How dare you scoff up my supper like that! I'll—"

"Are you speaking again, Pye?" said the Form master, glancing down the long crowded table with a severe expression.

"Yes, sir. Ain't we allowed to speak on first night, sir?"

"You are not allowed to quarrel. It appears to me that you were whispering threats to the boy next to you—to Fisher."

"Oh, no, sir; I was only—I was only—"

"Well," said the Form master grimly, "you were only what?"

"I was only calling him a beast, sir," said Pye meekly.

There was a chuckle along the table.

"Then you had better reserve your polite epithets for a more suitable time and place, Pye, unless you wish to commence the term with a hundred lines of Virgil," said the master of the Fourth severely.

"Yes, sir," said Pye, outwardly calm and submissive, but inwardly raging.

Clive was sitting opposite him at the table, and Pye looked daggers at him as he saw the beef disappearing down his throat.

"That's my beef, you beast!" said Pye, in a low tone, and keeping an expansive smile upon his face as he spoke for the benefit of the Form master. "That's my beef you're wolfing, you horrid, greedy animal!"

The contrast between Pye's words and the smile on his face was so curious that Clive burst into an involuntary laugh.

"Yes, you can laugh!" said Pye, in the same tone. "I'll make you laugh on the other side of your face presently!"

"Oh, rats!" said Fisher. "You know the law of the Fourth—it's as the poet beautifully expresses it:

"The good old law, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can!"

Pye gave a growl.

"That's all very well, Fisher, but—"

"I remember how you collared my duff at dinner only the last day of last term. I remember—"

Pye grinned at the reminiscence.

"Well, that's no excuse for a new kid having the cheek to eat my beef. I'll beef him! Let the rotter wait, that's all."

"I am waiting," said Clive, "I'm waiting for some more. The supply doesn't seem to be very good. Isn't there any more beef?"

"You've had the last," said Locke. "There's no more for you, and no more for Pye."

"Then pass the bread and cheese, Pye, will you?" said Clive politely.

"No, I won't!" said Pye.

"Oh, don't be a pig!" said Fisher. "Shove them over. Here you are, Lawrence!"

Clive Lawrence smiled amiably at Pye as he started on the bread and cheese.

"I say, they've got a pudding on the Fifth Form table!" said Sugden, looking round. "We haven't one here. It's not fair."

A dozen pairs of eyes turned to the Fifth Form table.

The Fifth Form master was not there, and Kendal had taken the head of the table. There was a huge suet pudding in front of Kendal, which he was about to cut for the benefit of the boys of the Fifth. The Fourth-Formers naturally felt a sense of wrath at the sight of it. An insufficient quantity of cold beef and bread and cheese seemed to be

considered good enough for the juniors, while the Fifth revelled in the luxury of a suet pudding with plums in it.

"There you are, Pye!" said Fisher. "If you want more, go and collar some pudding from the Fifth. You're leader of the Form, you know."

"Rats!" said Pye. "If it wasn't in open hall—"

"Rats to you! I say, kids, we ought to have some of that pudding."

"Certainly!" sneered Pye. "You don't admit my claim to be head of the Form, so suppose you show up your quality, Fishy. Get us some of it."

Fisher looked puzzled.

If there had been a master at the Fifth Form table, he would have asked for some, but he knew how little use it would be to make such a request to Kendal.

Clive Lawrence looked across at the pudding, and his active brain worked rapidly.

He was still hungry, even after the beef and the bread and cheese, and a plum-pudding seemed the very thing to finish the supper with.

He wrinkled his brows in thought. He had made up his mind to take a very prominent hand in the endless warfare that raged between the rival Forms at St. Winifred's, and now there seemed to be an opportunity of acting with advantage.

"Please, sir, may I have some pudding?" asked Clive, looking at the Form master with the most innocent and engaging smile he could work up at a short notice.

The Form master had finished his supper, and was turning aside in his chair to speak to Trelawney, the captain of St. Winifred's. He glanced at Clive.

"Certainly, my boy!" he said indifferently, naturally imagining that there was pudding on the table, from Clive's innocent question.

"Thank you, sir," said Clive demurely.

The Form master continued his talk with Trelawney. Clive rose from his seat. He was close to the Fifth Form table, and a couple of steps took him behind Kendal's chair.

"Thank you, Kendal," he said courteously.

"Hallo! What do you mean? What are you doing? Give me back that pudding, you young scoundrel!"

Kendal sat almost petrified as the new boy seized the dish, and in the twinkling of an eye lifted the pudding across to the Fourth Form table.

Fisher gave a suppressed whoop.

"Buck up!" he whispered.

The juniors did not need to be told to buck up. The bold act of brigandage was not likely to pass unchallenged, and they hadn't many seconds in which to take advantage of it.

A dozen knives were instantly digging into the pudding, and never was a pudding served with such amazing celerity before.

In slices, in lumps, in chunks it was passed among the juniors.

Kendal sprang up in such a hurry that he knocked over his chair backwards with a crash, and he leaped towards Clive with a howl of rage. The Fourth Form master turned towards him in indignant amazement.

"Kendal! How dare you? Sit down immediately!"

"He's collared my pudding!"

"Eh? What? If you dare to touch Lawrence, Kendal, I shall cane you. You hear me?"

The captain of the Fifth dropped his hands to his sides. He could not directly disobey the Form master, but he was quivering with fury.

"Now, what is the matter?" asked the master of the Fourth. "Explain yourself quietly, Kendal, if you have anything to complain of."

"My pudding! I was just going to carve it, when that—"

when Lawrence lifted it off the table under my very nose," hooted Kendal.

"Calm yourself, Kendal; that is not the way to speak to a master."

"They're scoffing the pudding!"

"Lawrence, did you take that pudding from the Fifth Form table?" asked the Form master, looking severely at Clive.

"Certainly, sir; you told me I might."

"I—I—I told you you might! What do you mean? I certainly told you nothing of the kind."

"I asked you if I might have some pudding."

"I understood from your words that the pudding was on this table," said the Form master sternly. "I did not give you permission to take it from the next table."

"Oh, no, there wasn't any on this table, sir," said Clive innocently.

The Form master looked hard at him.

"This appears to me very much like a wilful misapprehension, Lawrence," he said. "Perhaps, as you are a new boy— Never mind. Kendal, you may take back the

KINDLY FILL IN THE ORDER FORM IN THIS ISSUE!

"And remember, in future, Lawrence, you will be pudding! with what you find on your own table!"

"Yes, sir," said Clive meekly.

The permission to take back the pudding wasn't of much account to Kendal. Clive was quite satisfied, for, while the pudding had been made, the juniors had made short work of the dish, and Kendal, with feelings too deep for words, grabbed that and took it away. The Fourth Form was in convulsions of laughter, from end to end.

Locke dug Clive Lawrence ecstatically in the ribs. "Gorgeous!" he murmured. "Here's a chunk of the pudding, Lawrence; I saved it for you! You deserve it, no mistake!"

Clive grinned as he took the pudding. It was a generous helping, and quite enough for him. Fisher grinned across the table.

"That's ripping!" he whispered. "You did it well, Lawrence; and I never thought of it, either! I say, you'll be worth your salt in the Fourth—if you know how to keep your place!"

Another rather dubious look came over Fisher's face. And Clive knew how to keep his place as a humble and obedient follower of the great Fisher? Certainly the new boy was going ahead with great strides!

A Visit from the Fifth.

"Bedtime!" said Locke, glancing at the clock in the common-room. "Feeling sleepy, Lawrence?"

"No," said Clive, with a smile; "a bit fagged, you know, that's all. I've had rather an exciting day!"

"Well, the first day of the term is generally rather exciting," grinned Locke. "It's been so for us, too. But we're up half an hour later than our usual time to-night, you know—it's our first-night privilege. There comes a giddy preface to tuck us away into our little bunks. Hallo, Fatty!"

Costigan, the fattest prefect at St. Winifred's, nodded good-naturedly to the junior. He had been chaffed so often about his girth that he didn't mind it.

"Time for bed, you kids!" he said.

"Make it another quarter of an hour, Fatty."

"You know I can't! Off with you!"

"Oh, I say," said Fisher; "give us ten minutes! I was just explaining to the new kid here some of the rules of the school; the awful respect we have to show to the prefects, and so on, and—"

Fisher dodged as Costigan reached out towards his ear. The Fourth-Formers crowded upstairs to the Form dormitory—Fisher, Locke, and Lawrence among the first.

Clive looked round the dormitory with a great deal of interest. It was a long, lofty apartment, with blue-washed walls, and windows set very high, probably to prevent juniors from breaking bounds by climbing out of them. There was a long row of white beds, all neatly turned down ready for the youngsters, and the room only needed a fire to make it quite cosy.

"That's your bed, kid," said Fisher; "it's between mine and Locke's. I hope you'll sleep well to-night."

There was a curious tone in Fisher's voice, and Clive looked at him quickly.

"Why shouldn't I sleep well?" he asked.

Fisher and Locke looked at one another and grinned.

"Well, you may be disturbed, that's all," said Fisher. Clive thought he understood.

"Oh, I see—some sort of joke on a new-comer, is that it?"

"That's it. I don't suppose any of the Fourth Form will qualify for that, and you know—you have shown too much sense the Fifth—but—"

"You don't mean to say that fellows have the cheek to come in from other dormitories to play tricks on us?"

"Yes, I do, my buck!"

"The Fifth, I suppose?" asked Clive.

"That's it. The Sixth used to take a hand in playing games with new kids, but since Trelawney has been captain that's been stopped."

"And a jolly good thing, too!"

"Well, Trelawney says it is undignified, and I dare say it is. Any way, we're glad not to have the seniors bothering the Fifth within bounds, you see. Now those rotters have it all their own way."

A plaint came into Clive Lawrence's eyes.

"Oh, they do!" he said. "You don't mean that you knuckle under, and let them do what they like?"

"Not at all. They come to jape the new kids, and that's an old custom. They come in force, too! If they interfered with the rest of us, it would mean a Form row; but so long as it's only the new boys—"

"I see," said Clive drily; "the new boys don't count?"

"Exactly," agreed Fisher and Locke.

"Well, I happen to be a new boy, and I'm conceited enough to think that I count a little bit," said Clive.

"What sort of japes are the Fifth likely to work off on us?"

"Oh, teasing you in a blanket, and perhaps making you checked the gums to much!"

"Will they? I've heard of a fellow having his arm broken through being tossed in a blanket!"

"I dare say; but that sort of thing doesn't often happen, you know."

Clive laughed.

"I don't think I'm inclined to risk it, however, for the amusement of the Fifth," he remarked. "I'm afraid they will have to chuck it this time."

"You can't get out of it."

"Can't I? If they try to toss me in a blanket there will be ructions, that's all! I'm not taking any, thank you!"

"There'll be twenty of them, probably."

"I don't care if there are fifty." Clive glanced round the dormitory. "Look here, there are over forty of us, why shouldn't we put a stop to this sort of thing? If new boys are to be japed, let it be done by their own Form. The Fifth have no right to come into our quarters; why should we put up with it?"

Fisher and Locke looked dubious.

"Well, it's an old custom," said Locke.

"The sooner you get a new one the better, then!"

"Hut! You see, the fellows may think you are putting on altogether too many airs for a new-comer in the Form," said Fisher, with rather a sniff.

Clive Lawrence looked him straight in the eyes.

"Say that you think so, and have done with it!" he exclaimed.

Fisher turned red in the face.

"Well, yes, I do think so, if you want it out plain," he said. "I rather like you, Lawrence, and I've said so, but you've got to remember your place. I'm captain of the Form—"

"Nothing of the sort!" called out Pye, who heard the talk as he was undressing himself. "I'm head of this Form, Fishy!"

"Oh, shut up, Pye!" said Fisher irritably. "I tell you, Lawrence, I'm the head of this Form, and it's anybody's place to make a set against the Fifth coming into the dormitory. It's my place."

"Well, do it then," said Clive. "I've no objection. I only want it done, that's all."

"I don't see why it should be done in your case more than another's."

"The dignity of the Form—" said Pye.

"Shut up, Pye! Look here, we're not going to make a Form row of it, and that's flat!" said Fisher angrily. "The old custom goes."

A very determined look came over the face of Clive Lawrence.

"Well, old custom or not, nobody's going to toss me in a blanket while I can hit out with right or left!" he exclaimed.

"Good for you, new kid; I'll stand by you!" sang out Pye. "As head of the Form—"

"Shut up, Pye!"

"Sha'n't, Fishy! Who may you happen to be?"

"I'll jolly soon show you!" roared Fisher; and he made a rush at Pye.

"Stop that, there!" called out the prefect's voice from the door, as Costigan put his head into the dormitory. "Stop that, Fisher, or, sure, I'll come to you! Get into bed!"

"But we haven't had time to undress, Costy," said Locke.

"No, you've been chattering. I'll give you two more minutes, and then I shall come back with a cane!"

And the prefect disappeared. The juniors lost no time in tumbling into bed; but, in anticipation of the row with the Fifth, most of them only partly undressed.

Opinion was divided as to the proper course to take when the Fifth came on their little visit. Some were for making a Form row of it, and setting on the rival Form; others were for allowing the old custom to have its way. As were for allowing the old custom to have its way. As were for allowing the old custom to have its way. As were for allowing the old custom to have its way.

Carker said, there was a great deal of fun in watching the new boys squirming in the blanket, and sometimes missing it coming down, and coming a crepper on the hard floor.

Most of the juniors waited for the event, and were likely to be guided by circumstances, which was the easiest decision to come to.

All the boys were in bed when Costigan put his head in again. The prefect turned out the gas, said good-night, and the door closed.

Clive Lawrence sat up in bed.

"I say, Fisher!"

NEXT SATURDAY: "LYNCROFT'S VENTRILOQUIST." A Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of F.P.P., the Times & Co., by H. Clarke Locke.

AND "CAPTAIN MACKAY'S FORTUNE." IN "PLUCK." P. A Thrilling Story, dealing with the famous eccentric John Smith.

"Well, what is it?" growled Fisher, who was not in the least of tempers.

"When are the Fifth likely to get here?"

"Oh, about the time they arrive!" said Fisher.

It was clear that the new boy had no sympathy to expect from Fisher. But that did not trouble him very much.

"I say, Pye, can you tell me?" he called out.

"Certainly," said Pye. "The Fifth are likely to get here when the prefects have made their rounds and found everything quiet; then they won't be interrupted. When the prefects get back to their own quarters, and make themselves comfy, nothing short of a fire or an earthquake would shake them out again!"

"I see." Clive slipped out of bed, and drew on his waistcoat and donned his slippers. "We may as well be ready. I think it's disgraceful to allow the Fifth to ride the high horse in our dormitory! I'm not going to stand it!"

"Good for you! I'll think about backing you up. I will, if it isn't too much trouble," said Pye; "I'm a good-natured chap."

"Oh, shut up!" said Fisher.

A wordy warfare started between Fisher and Pye, which was interrupted by the sound of an opening door. Dim figures loomed up from the shadows of the corridor.

"Hallo!" called out Clive Lawrence. "Who's there?"

"We are," said the voice of Kendal from the darkness. "Glad you're awake. We've come to see you."

"You're not wanted."

"Possibly not; but we're going to stay, all the same. Don't make a row, you fellows. Ow! You trod on my toes, you clumsy ass!"

"Couldn't help it," said Keene's voice. "What do you want to put your toes under my feet for? It's not sensible!"

"Are you looking for a swelled nose, Keene?"

"Rats! Have we come here to quarrel, or to jape that new kid—I mean those new kids? Of course, we shall put them all through it!"

"Right-ho! Starting with Clive Lawrence, of course, as he's the cheekiest of them. Are you all in, kids?"

"Yes," came a number of voices in reply. The Fifth Form were evidently there in force, probably prepared for a row with the whole of the Form if necessary.

"Then close the door, Benyon!"

"Right you are, Kendy."

The door of the Fourth Form dormitory closed; there was the scratch of a match, and a flare, and Kendal lighted the gas.

Nearly a score of Fifth-Formers, in various states of deshabille, were revealed by the light.

(Another long instalment of this splendid School Tale next week.)

Your Editors Corner

All letters should be addressed, "The Editor, **PLUCK**, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London."

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Again you'll be pleased — at the honest layout, as you know, I have recommended a story unless it is good.

JUST OUT—Two new instalments of "The Bear Friend" M. M.

NEXT SATURDAY'S COVER

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An amusing incident in next Saturday's Grand School Tale, and a small reproduction of our next cover. Look out for it!