

The Young People.

King Arthur and the Half-Man.

The summer day was long and hot;
King Arthur rode from Camelot,
And worn with court-craft, sought repose
Among the groves where Ivel flows.

There, while he lay in shadows dim,
A wondrous sight appeared to him.

A shadow drifted toward the king—
A clouded, human-seeming thing,

A futile, fitting, feeble shape
With listless arms and mouth agape

Devoid of purpose, force or will—
The foolish half-man, Keudawd Pwyll,

That quavered out in plaintive key:
"Great King, arise, and strive with me!"

Loud laughed the champion, "Ho! ho! ho!
Shall Arthur strive with such a foe?"

The form that seemed of vapor spun
Waxed huge and black against the sun,

Of goodly girth and ample height,
A burly carl of brawn and might

That voiced a challenge bold and free:
Arise, O man, and strive with me!"

Still paltered Arthur. "Nay!" he said.
"What need of strife? My hardihead

"Is proved and known; and peace is best
In summer's glow. So let me rest!"

Gigantic swelled that gruesome form,
His head a cliff, his brows a storm;

All ruth, all guile he cast away;
He spurned the monarch where he lay

And bellowed forth in evil glee:
"Thou fool! Arise, and strive with me!"

Then Arthur rose for very shame.
He grappled, strove and overcame;

But deep it made his heart to groan
Before that wight was overthrown;

And sore he taxed his vaunted strength
Before the giant lay his length!

So panted Arthur: "Aye! forsooth,
He called me 'Fool'—and spake the truth.

"Yea, 'fool!' to scorn a feeble foe
While false indulgence made him grow!"

Boast not thy strength. Make no delay.
That foeman waxes day by day.

Strike swift! let cravens flinch or flee
If Half-Man Habit challenge thee!

Archie's Last Chance.

By John Goodwin.

"Oh, holy wars!" groaned Dick Morris,
staring at the scrawled pencil note on
the cabin table; "he's done it again!"

The note had been brought aboard by
a very small and very dirty boy, who
charged twopence for delivery. Dick
would not have paid the twopence but
for recognizing his young brother's hand-
writing, and, though he knew he was
buying trouble, he took the note. It
ran thus:

"Dear Dick,—I am in a deuce of a
fix, and if you don't come along and
help me jolly quick, I shall be done for.
I met some pals last night, and we went
to a theatre, and afterwards I asked
them to a blow-out at Johnnie Cope's
cookshop. I took a bed here for the
night after the feed, and I haven't got
enough to pay old Cope, and he's collared
my clothes, so I can't get away. Be a
good chap, and hurry along here with
some clothes, for if the ship sails with-
out me, old Charley's aunt will sack
me as sure as a gun.—Your affectionate
brother,

"Archie."

"Johnnie Cope's Boarding House,
Dean Street."

"Silly young fool!" said Dick, thrust-
ing the note into his pocket, and starting
for the deck in a hurry. "This job is
going to cook his goose for a certainty.
The Old Man swore to sack him the
next scrape he got into, and this makes

the sixth since we left London. The ship
sails in half an hour, too!"

He hastened to his cabin, flung open
a locker, and tucking a pair of trousers,
shoes and coat under his arm, jumped
on to the quay, and set out for Dean
Street at his best pace.

Dick's lot was not a wonderfully light
one, for, in addition to being third mate
of the s.s. Barralong, which was not an
easy berth, he had the additional joy
of looking after his brother Archie, aged
seventeen, who was engaged on proba-
tion as a sort of super-cargo. If he did
well, he was to get the berth of purser's
clerk on one of the company's passenger
liners, and at present this position look-
ed a long way off. Archie was smart
enough at his duty, but never failed to
get into at least one severe scrape per
week, with an extra serious one every
time he went ashore. And Captain
Foyle, who believed in discipline, had
promised to "sack" him, as Archie put
it, at the next offence.

"There's no particular harm in the
young idiot," grumbled Dick, as he
climbed on to a tramcar that took him
part of the way; "but this'll put the
finishing touch on him, and the Old
Man'll be glad to get rid of him. It'll
cut the old people up badly if Archie
is sacked, for he won't get another berth
at sea if he loses this."

Dick reached the address given, and a
curious place it was. The ground floor
was a cookshop, where substantial fare
and hot dinners were served, and the
two upper storeys were of the usual
sailor's boarding house sort.

"Of course, he must get into the hands
of the worst crimp in Greenock!" growl-
ed Dick, as he opened the door.

A bloated red-nosed man in shirt-
sleeves was reading a sporting paper
behind the counter.

"Well, mister, what d'yer want?" he
said, scanning Dick with his bleary eyes.

"I want by brother, who seems to
have got into your clutches, by this note
I've got from him," said Dick; "and
I'll trouble you to hand him out quick."

The man grinned maliciously.
"E's upstairs in No. 3. You can go
up if yer like. 'E don't go till I'm
paid wot 'e owes me."

Dick made no reply, but marched up
to the room. As he opened the door, in
spite of himself, he broke into a grin.

Archie Morris, a pink-and-white,
smooth-cheeked boy, with an angel's face
that sadly belied his character, sat on a
broken chair, with his bare legs sticking
out below an old horse-blanket that was
wrapped around him. He winked cheer-
fully at Dick.

"Here you are, old boy! Jolly glad
you've come! It was getting beastly
chilly. Make that old brute give me
my clothes and let me go, will you?"

"You young scamp!" said Dick sternly.
"How on earth, were you fool enough
to get into the man's clutches?"

"I didn't know anything about him,"
said Archie. "I had a jolly time at
the theatre with two other chaps, and
asked 'em to grub with me. I thought
I'd have a bed ashore for a change, and I
reckoned seven bob would cover the lot
easily—it's all I've got. But the old
thief Cope says the bill's thirty bob,
and he's hidden my clothes."

"Thirty bob!"

"Yes; ain't it a swindle? We only
had a tough beefsteak apiece and some
plum duff. The old ruffian swears that
we had champagne; but it was only
bottled cider, and muck it was, too."

Dick stepped to the door, and called
down the staircase:

"Cope, step up here, will you?"

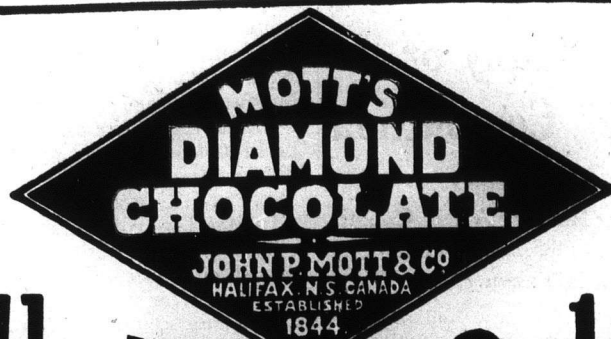
The boarding-house master came, grin-
ning.

"What do you mean by charging this
youngster thirty shillings for five shil-
lings' worth of grub and a bed?" said
Dick quietly.

"Never mind wot I mean, that's the
value o' wot 'e's 'ad. 'E's goin' to pay
 afore 'e goes out o' 'ere."

Dick glanced at his watch, and started
on seeing how late it was. There was no
time for argument—the ship was nearly
due to leave.

"Look here," he said, "you're a swin-
dler, and don't deserve a cent! But I'll
give you fifteen shillings to square the
account, and that's all I've got."



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