

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 ravens 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 handwriting, 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 without 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, thrusting 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 probation 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 looked 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!" growled 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 cheerfully 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 piece 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?"

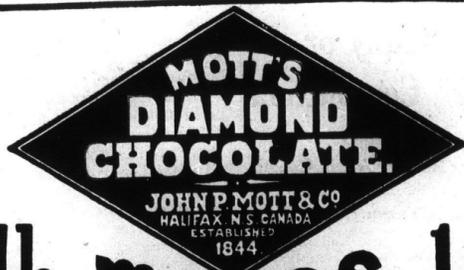
The boarding-house master came, grinning.

"What do you mean by charging this youngster thirty shillings for five shillings' 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 swindler, 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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