

**THE BROTHER-
MIDDIES AND
SLAYERS, AHOY!**

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The brother-middies and slavers, ahoy! by Arthur Lee Knight

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ARTHUR LEE KNIGHT

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For a moment Ernest stood irresolute.

Frontispiece.

THE BROTHER MIDDIES, page 15.

THE BROTHER-MIDDIES

AND

SLAVERS, AHOY!

BY

ARTHUR LEE KNIGHT

AUTHOR OF "ADVENTURES OF A MIDSHIPMITE," "THE RAJAH OF
MONKEY ISLAND," "THE CRUISE OF THE CORMORANT,"
"JACK TREVOR, R.N.," ETC. ETC.

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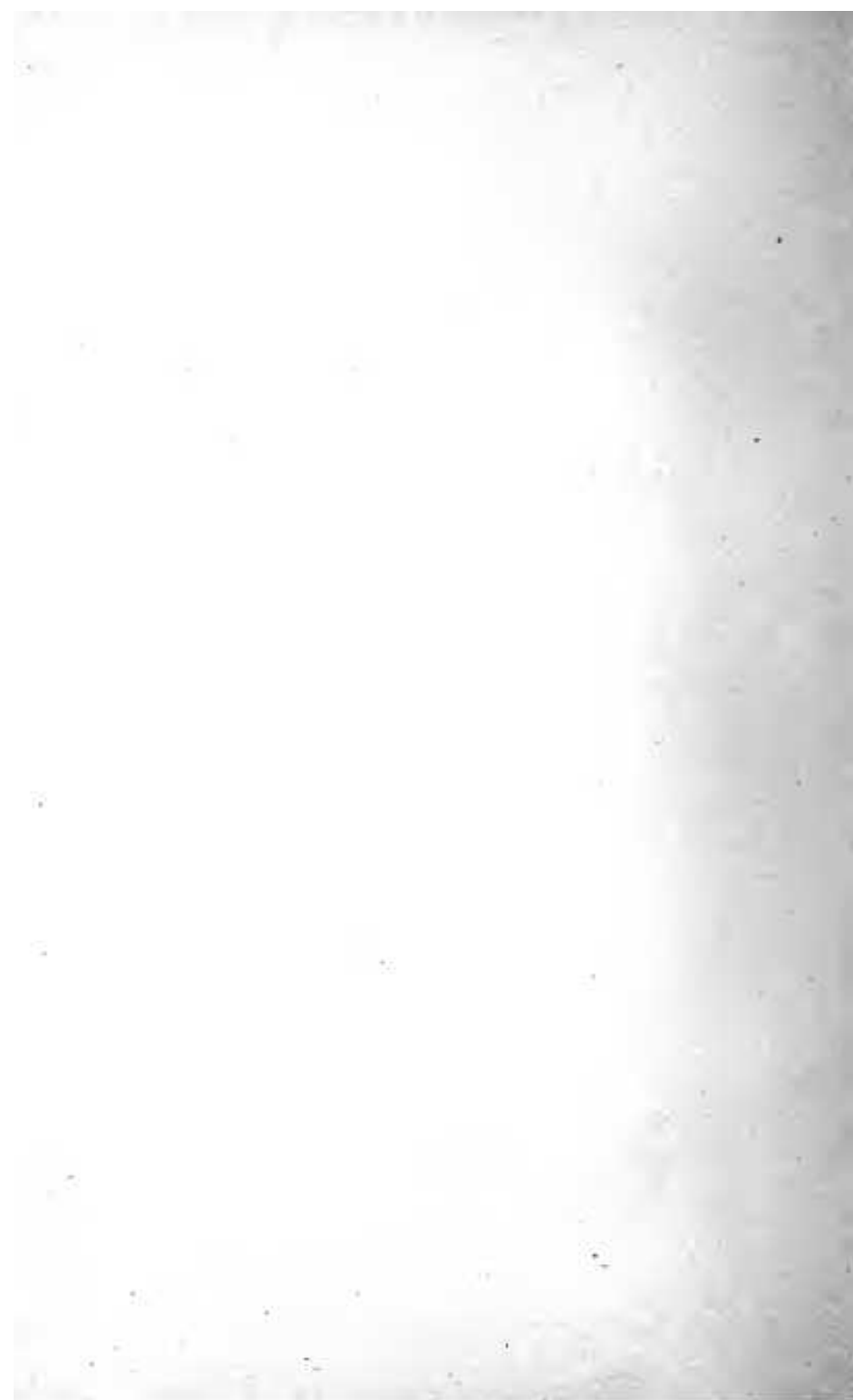
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THE BROTHER-MIDDIES

CHAPTER I.

A FATEFUL LETTER.

UR story opens early on a lovely autumnal morning in the year of grace 1812. The gentle mists which had lain brooding over the surface of the earth were being gradually dissipated by the warm rays of the revivifying sun, and like evanescent smoke curled up amongst the umbrageous oaks and mighty beeches, which in antique and picturesque groupings studded the old park of Hazeldene in all directions—causing them to look grotesque and huge through the medium of their vanishing, semi-transparent

vapours. The golden and ruddy tints of the fast decaying foliage were here and there intensified where the rays of the newly-risen orb of day, struggling through the filmy mist, shot athwart them; and sunlight and shadow lay in chequered patterns upon the mossy sward which carpeted the gentle undulations beneath the wide-spreading branches of the giant trees. Here and there the nimble rabbits issued from great tufts of brown and dying bracken, and gambolled about, or nibbled their breakfasts from the sweet dewy grass as fancy or inclination led them; the wood-pigeons softly cooed their morning orisons of praise amid the sheltering foliage overhead; and the pheasants shook their gaudy plumage in the lustre of the sunlight as they strutted about in search of a morning meal.

On the higher ground, near the old manor house of Hazeldene, the diaphanous veil, in which earth had enwrapped herself during the hours of darkness, very quickly melted away