

DEAN'S

Illustrated Farthing Books.

TRUE HEROES.



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ALFRED THE GREAT.

TRUE HEROES.

“Is it not grand to hear about all these brave men? I am so glad that I live in these war times!” said George.

“So am I,” said his brother William.
“We do not think that men who live

now-a-days could be such heroes. It seems like reading the histories of old times. Think of that little boy, who stood on the deck of his vessel, calmly filling the powder-flasks, while men were falling dead around him; and of that John Davis who threw himself over a barrel of powder, to cover it, when a shell from the enemy's battery burst near him!"

"And kept on passing out the powder for the guns," added George.

"And think of that gunner on the Cumberland, who moved three steps on his thighs after both legs were shot off, fired his gun, and fell back dead!"

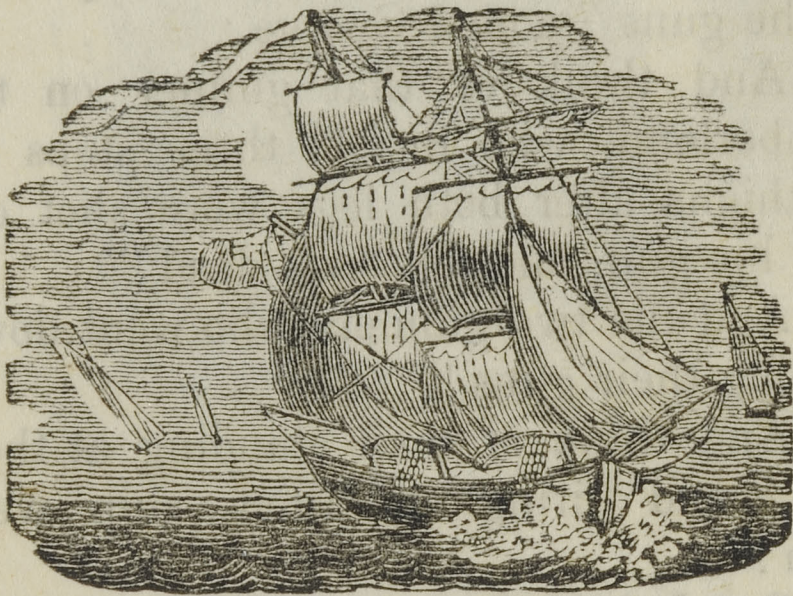
"And the two gunners who went down clasping their guns!"

"And think of men standing at their guns, and firing as their ship went down!"

"But I think," added Willy, "that the sea captain, that Aunt Mary was telling us about, was as brave as any of them."

"What was that? I did not hear her," said George.

“He was coming from the West Indies, and knew he was in great danger from privateers. He saw a ship at a distance, which showed signals of distress. All the crew and the passengers begged him to keep away, feeling confident that it was a privateer trying to decoy them. His mate, who had sailed with him many years, entreated him not to go to her, and told him that the crew were all ready to



mutiny. The passengers besought him not to run into such danger; and one of them said that if they were taken prisoners, he should testify that it was all the

captain's fault. The captain said nothing in reply, but ordered them to steer for the vessel, and kept his glass in one hand and a pistol in the other. As they came near the vessel, the whole crew became clamorous, saying they could see men and arms on board. The captain thought he saw a few men and bedding, and signs of distress. One of the passengers looked through the glass, and said he could see a hundred men, and so the mate thought. Still the captain kept on till they reached the ship."

"And was it a privateer?" asked George.

"No, it was a ship, just sinking. She sank a few minutes after they got the captain and crew on board their own vessel. There were twenty-one persons in all, almost starved and exhausted. The captain brought them to this port, and said not a word about it. He merely reported that he had brought home the crew of a sunken vessel. The mate told of it, and how he and almost all the crew fell on their knees, and thanked the cap-

tain for doing what they had tried so hard to keep him from doing."

"Don't you wish, Will," said George, after a long pause. "that we were men, and could do such things?"

"It is not every man who has the



chance to do them," said William. "Father says that it is in a great many people

to do great things, who never have an opportunity to do them. He says it takes something besides a man to make a hero."

"What?"

"An occasion. He says that heroism is doing right when it is hard to do right. It is doing, in the face of danger and difficulty, precisely as one should do without them."

"In other words, heroism is virtue going through a tight place," said George. "But don't you suppose, Will, that when it comes to the tight place, it gets new strength, and becomes nerved to go through?"

"I suppose so. Father says that danger gives a sort of excitement, which makes one able to do what he could not do at other times. His whole soul must be roused, and in the act. And then I suppose that the thought of what people will say, is often a strong motive."

Their mother, who had been quietly sewing, looked up from her work, and said: "One of the noblest instances of

true heroism is that of a miner, of whom I have lately read. He was with a companion in the mine preparing for a blast. By accident, the match was lighted too soon, and there was not time for both to escape, as they had to be drawn up separately. Knowing that instant death was before him, he quietly said, 'Go aloft, Jack; in a minute I shall be in heaven.' There he was alone, underground, with no witnesses, no encouragement, nothing but his self-forgetting self. This was true heroism."

"Yes, indeed," said the boys.

"I should like to know how to go to work to become a hero," said George.

"There is only one way," said his mother—"to love right more than you fear evil, and to do right in spite of everything. Then if an opportunity comes for showing it, you are a hero; if not, you are quite as worthy, if not as famous.

