

**The Loss of the "Birkenhead."**

BY FRANCIS H. DOYLE.

The Birkenhead troop-ship was wrecked Feb. 26th, 1852, by striking a pointed rock off Simon's Bay, in South Africa. Only one hundred and eighty-four persons were saved by the boats, out of six hundred and thirty-eight on board.

Right on our flank the crimson sun went down,

The deep sea rolled around in dark repose,

When, like the wild shriek from some captured town,

A cry of women rose.

The stout ship Birkenhead lay hard and fast,

Caught, without hope, upon a hidden rock;

Her timbers thrilled as nerves, when through them passed

The spirit of that shock.

And ever like base cowards, who leave their ranks

In danger's hour, before the rush of steel,

Drifted away, disorderly, the planks,

From underneath her keel.

Confusion spread, for, though the coast seemed near,

Sharks hovered thick along that white sea-brink,

The boats could hold?—not all—and it was clear,

She was about to sink.

"Out with those boats, and let us haste away,"

Cried one, "ere yet yon sea the barque devours."

The man thus clamouring was, I scarce need say,

No officer of ours.

We knew our duty better than to care

For such loose babblers, and made no reply,

Until our good colonel gave the word, and there

Formed us in line to die.

There rose no murmur from the ranks,

no thought,

By shameful strength, unhonoured life to seek;

Our post to quit we were not trained, nor taught,

To trample down the weak.

So we made women with their children go,

The oars ply back again, and yet again;

Whilst, inch by inch, the drowning ship sank low,

Still under steadfast men.

What follows why recall? The brave who died,

Died without flinching in the bloody surf;

They sleep as well, beneath that purple tide,

As others under turf.

**JOHN, THE NURSE.**

Several years ago, when yellow fever was raging in Memphis, a stranger entered the city and went directly to the relief committee.

"I want to nurse," he said.

The physician looked at him critically.

These were appalling times. The city was quarantined. Paties were numbered by hundreds, and nurses were so scarce as to command their own prices.

The man who had applied for this perilous position was the last person one would have picked out for such a service.

He was of rude appearance. His face was coarse, with no trace of heroism in it.

His hair was cropped close, and he huffed as he walked.

The physician concluded he was not fitted for the work, and told him he was not needed.

"I wish to nurse," said the stranger.

Try me for a week. If you don't like me then, dismiss me; if you do, pay me my wages."

The doctor again looked at the man's eyes with professional scrutiny, and found them unflinching.

"Very well," he said, "I'll take you, although, to be candid, I hesitate to do so. Keep honest and sober. What's your name?"

The man hesitated. "Anything," he answered. "It doesn't matter. Call me John."

The doctor, not liking the mystery, but in straits for nurses, gave the man directions and set him to work.

"He wants money," thought the doctor, "and takes this desperate way of making it. I'll keep my eye on him."

But John proved that he needed nobody's eye upon him. With quiet persistence he worked his way into the confidence of those about him, and in a few

weeks had become one of the most valuable nurses on that heroic force. To storm yellow fever is as deadly an undertaking as the ride of the Light Brigade. John was tireless and self-denying. Wherever the pestilence was hottest he worked the hardest.

The suffering and the sinking adored him. To the neglected and the forgotten his rough face was as the face of an angel. In a way of his own he spoke of Christian trust to his dying patients.

"I cannot understand God," he would say, "but I know Christ well." Before the nurse knew it he was greatly honoured in the stricken city.

Yet there was still something suspicious about the hero, and especially about his conduct on pay day. He dodged around back streets, and when he returned he was always without money. What did he do with his large wages?

One day he was followed. The spy felt confident that he should entrap John in some misdemeanour. Relief boxes had been placed in certain streets for the benefit of the yellow fever sufferers. Before one of these, in an obscure spot, the suspected nurse stopped, and put into the box the whole of his week's earnings. That was John's noble secret.

But his story, like that of many another heroic life, had a tragical end. John sickened and died of the plague. When his body was made ready for its unnamed grave, a livid mark was found upon it—the terrible brand of a criminal—and the hospitals rang with the news that John, the noble nurse, had been a convict.—Youth's Companion.

"So you owned up, did you?" "I just told the simple truth; says I, 'Clem, you know yourself you are not doing Tom any good; you are taking him into mischief that he hasn't the sense to get out of, or keep out of, and I told him so; that's the whole of it.'"

"How did the captain take it?" "I thought he'd want to fight, right off, and I didn't feel like anybody's brave boy at the minute; Clem could mash me into jelly, and the boys would think he'd served me right; they're tremendously under back to the captain."

Another shout from the playground. Clem was outdoing himself, and the boys were going wild; Lewis and Paul left the shade of the tree to join the crowd of spectators, and the question was not answered. Lewis did not hear how Clem took the simple truth.

But the question got itself answered a few weeks later. The Alleghan boys were having a mass meeting, at which Clem was choosing nine boys from the various clubs, to form a "picked nine." The school had been challenged by St. Anthony's College, quite an unusual honour, and all local jealousy was laid aside in the loyal desire to win honour for old Alleghan.

It would be the jolliest chance of the session, for they were to play on St. Anthony's grounds, which meant a trip down the bay, being entertained in the historic old town, and having what was called in the inveterate boy slang, "a swell time."

As the young captain called out name after name, a generous shout of con-



"I NEVER WAS IN SUCH A BOX."

**THE SIMPLE TRUTH.**

BY ELIZABETH PRESTON ALLAN.

"Well, sir—I never was in such a box! I didn't know what to say. And very likely I've made a mess of it."

"What did you say?" asked Paul Sterrit's listener.

"Well, you see, Lewis, it was this way: I have been after that little rowdy, Tom Kregloe, to keep away from Clem Fauntleroy. Clem wasn't doing him any good at all."

"Clem is not such a bad lot," objected Lewis.

"No, Clem has no end of grit, and if he could once see things right, he'd go for the right, then and there; I hope he will some day. But Tom, you know, is a soft chap, and he thinks Clem the biggest Injun going. Well, as I said, I kept after Tom, and told him plainly that Clem was no fit chum for him."

"And Clem heard of it?"

"Oh! of course; a fellow always hears such things; and he came right up to me in a crowd of boys, and says he, 'I hear you think I am not fit company for your pet lamb.'"

"Pretty hard on you, old man; what did you say?"

Paul did not answer immediately; the shouts of the Alleghan boys at a little distance, announced a home run on the baseball ground; it was Clem Fauntleroy, always first in sport, as he was too often first in mischief.

"What would you have said?" asked Paul, turning back to the conversator.

"It's too late for you to be asking advice now," laughed his companion, "but I'm fond of Clem myself; I certainly should not like to set up as his enemy."

"I couldn't deny it, you know."

"No, you couldn't deny it, but there are ways of getting round a thing; couldn't you say it was a misunderstanding?"

"I think he understood it only a little too well," answered Paul, in his down-right way.

gratulation went up after each one; all were chosen now except the umpire, and many hopes were centred on this place.

"For umpire," said the captain, and there was a breathless pause—"Paul Sterrit."

But there was no applause; the surprise was so great that perhaps the boys doubted their own ears; doubtless the disappointment was great too.

Paul flushed; he felt the disapprobation of the boys more keenly for the minute than even Clem's generosity, and swallowing the lump in his throat, he had actually opened his lips to decline the place, when the silence was again broken by the captain: "All you fellows know," he said, in his rough way, "that I don't pick Sterrit for his beauty, nor because he loves me; but idiots as you seem to be, you can't pretend not to know that Paul Sterrit has more pluck about telling the truth and standing up to it than any boy in Alleghan."

Then the crowd cheered enough to satisfy anybody, though Paul always believed it was Clem they were cheering, and perhaps he was right. Don't you feel like giving him a little send-off yourself? For next to the boy who could not be made to flinch from the truth, comes the one who does him honour for it.

Our Alleghan boys do not yet know, perhaps, why the simple truth is the bravest, safest, highest, sweetest thing in the world, though sometimes the hardest for the moment. But they will learn some day, if by cherishing the truth they grow worthy to learn, that it is because it is divine; because it is a showing forth of him who said of himself, "I am the Truth."

A six-year-old boy came home from Sunday-school boasting that he could beat his class singing.

"How do you make that out?" said his father.

"Why, pa, I got done 'way before any of the rest."

**A Queer Boy.**

He doesn't like study, it "weakens his eyes;" But the "right sort" of book will insure a surprise. Let it be about Indians, pirates, or bears. And he's lost for the day to all mundane affairs; By sunlight or gas-light his vision is clear; Now, isn't that queer?

At thought of an errand he's "tired as a hound," Very weary of life, and of "tramping around;" But if there's a band or a circus in sight. He will follow it gladly from morning till night, The showman will capture him some day, I fear, For he is so queer.

If there's work in the garden his head "aches to split," And his back is so lame that he "can't dig a bit;" But mention baseball, and he's cured very soon, And he'll dig for a woodchuck the whole afternoon. Do you think he "plays 'possum?" he seems quite sincere; But—Isn't he queer?

—St. Nicholas.

**WHAT HAPPENED TO A GOOSE.**

"Why is the goose silly?" repeated Grandpa Longbow, putting down his paper. "Do you know that the goose was once the wisest of all creatures? You don't? Then it might be well for little boys and girls to hear the true story of what happened to the goose."

"Long ago, when the rabbit had the longest tail of any creature living, and when the eagle, then the most timid of birds, used to live on pumpkin seed, the goose was very wise. It walked about with a dignified bearing that you can yet see traces of, in spite of its waddling; and by asking questions of every one, it learned all that was really to be known about the dry land. But the learned goose was still unsatisfied."

"Why?" it exclaimed, "the world is more than three-fourths water; and, although I know all that is to be known on and about dry land, I am ignorant of everything in the water."

"So the goose set about learning how to swim and dive; and after many years of study or questioning it learned all about the water and the creatures that have lived in it. But still it was not satisfied."

"I know very little about the air," said the learned goose. "I must now learn to fly like the eagle, so that I will be able to take longer journeys than are possible to one who only swims and walks."

"After much practice the goose learned to fly; and that enabled it to travel so much and learn so much that it finally fell ill with brain fever. When it recovered its mind was affected, and it couldn't tell whether it belonged to the sea like the gull, the dry land like the hen, or the air like the eagle. And ever since it has been wandering about—a homeless, witless, foolish bird, and all because it asked too many questions and learned too much."

"No; I will not tell you how the rabbit lost its tail, and the eagle became brave and fierce. Remember the fate of the goose, and don't try to learn too much at once."—Independent.

**JEROME AND HIS BIBLE.**

The books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew, those of the New Testament in Greek. Translations of these had been made for the use of the Roman Christians, who spoke the Latin language. But about 400 A.D. Jerome, a great scholar and a most holy man, was asked by the Emperor, says The Classmate, to translate all the sixty-six books into Latin, and thus give the Roman Christians a Latin Bible which they might be sure was correct. He had lived a long time in the Holy Land, and it is said that no man who appeared for a thousand years after Jerome's time could have done this work so well. The great Latin Bible of Jerome is known as the Latin Vulgate, and it is chiefly from this that we got our first English Bible, about 1400 A.D.

It must not be supposed that copies of the entire Bible in Latin were plentiful. It was not until 1450 A.D. that John Gutenberg first printed the Latin Bible. Prior to that time all copies were made by hand, and this was tedious and expensive. Accordingly, men had to be content with a copy of the Psalms, or of Matthew's Gospel, or some other single book of the Scriptures.