

Killing for Sport.

BY SARAH K. BOLTON.

A pretty picture they made in the boat,
Drifting along by the riverside,
He at the oars, while her fair white hand
Trolls at the stern in the ebbing tide

Hark! for a rustling sound is heard;
A timid deer has come down to drink;
A gentle creature, with great brown eyes,
Standing alert on the river's brink.

A bullet whistles along the air;
It has struck the beautiful arching
neck;
The blood flows over the smooth, round
breast,
And begins the silvery stream to fleck.

The creature struggles in agony,
Asking for help with appealing eyes;
Half rising, she staggers and falls again,
Then mutely suffers, and slowly dies.

What heart could have wrought the cruel
deed?
Who quenched the life of the harmless
thing?
Alas! it was done by the fair white hand,
And simply for sport, this suffering.

The picture is spoiled in the drifting
boat;
In the lovely foreground the deer lies
slain;
The girl was thoughtless? but God forgive
The woman who ever causes pain!

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WILLIAM BRIGGS,

Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto.

C. W. COATES, S. F. HERRIS,
2176 St. Catherine St., Wesleyan Book Room,
Montreal, Halifax, N.S.

Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK
Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MARCH 18, 1899.

A LAND OF QUEER CUSTOMS.

All things are reversed in Holland. The main entrance to the finest public building in the country, the palace, or late town hall, of Amsterdam, is its back door. Bashful maidens hire beaux to escort them to the Kermis, or fair, on festival days. Timid citizens are scared in the dead of night by their own watchmen, who at every quarter of the hour make such a noise with their wooden clappers one would suppose the town to be on fire. You will see sleds used in summer there. They go bumping over the bare cobbles, while the driver holds a dripping oil rag in advance of the runners to lessen the friction.

You will see streets of water, and the country roads paved as nicely as Broadway. You will see vessels hitched, like horses, to their owners' doorposts, and a whole row of square-peaked houses leaning over the street as if they were getting ready to tumble. Instead of solemn-striking clocks you will hear church chimes playing snatches of operatic airs every quarter of an hour by way of marking the time. You will see looking-glasses hanging outside of the dwellings, and pincushions displayed on the street doors. The first are called spionnetjen, and are so arranged outside the windows, that persons sitting inside can, without being seen, enjoy a reflection of all that is going on in the street. They can learn too what visitor may be coming, and watch him rubbing his shoes to a polish before entering. The pincushion means that a new baby has appeared in the household. If white

or blue, the new-comer is a girl; if red, it is a little Dutchman. Some of these signals are very showy affairs; some are not cushions at all, but merely shingles trimmed with lace; and among the poorer class it is not unusual to see merely a white string tied to the door latch—at token of the meagre life the poor little stranger is destined to lead.

Sometimes instead of either pincushion or shingle, you will see a large placard hung outside of the front door. Then you may know that somebody in the house is ill, and his or her present condition is described on the placard for the benefit of inquiring friends, and sometimes when such a placard has been taken down, you may meet a grim-looking man on the street, dressed in black tights, a short cloak, and a high hat, from which a long black streamer is flying. This is the Aanspreker, going from house to house, to tell certain persons that their friend is dead. He attends to funerals, and bears invitations to all friends whose presence may be desired. A strange, weird-looking figure he is, and he wears a peculiar, professional cast of countenance that is anything but comforting. All these customs are in striking contrast with those of America.

THE WANDERERS FOUND.

BY MAGGIE PENNELL.

It was a blustering cold day in November. The wind came tearing along the streets, sending the people nearly off their feet, and making the newsboys shiver as they stood on the corners of the streets and shouted out: "Telegram, News, Mail, Star, Saturday Night, Buffalo Express."

One little fellow was indeed an object of pity. His hands, blue with cold, clutched hold of the papers under his arm as he eagerly asked of the passers-by, "Telegram, sir?" "Mail and Empire, madam?" The last left, only a cent please.

Some smiled kindly on him, while others only passed him by with a rough "Get out of the way, boy." He had rather a pretty face, and his short yellow curls clustered round his ragged hat. After selling all his papers, he began to walk quickly up the street with no object in view save to keep himself warm. He had not gone far when he saw a man, looking very tired, pushing a heavy wheelbarrow along the street. His clothes, which were threadbare and ragged now, looked as if they had been very good once; and as the little boy watched him, he felt a great pity for him.

So, quickening his pace, he overtook him and said, "You look tired, let me help you, sir."

The man turned and looked at the boy, and something in the clear, open face, and his honest blue eyes, struck him; so he said, "Well, I wouldn't mind if you do, I am kind of tired." Soon Willie was pushing it along, at the same time keeping up a brisk conversation with Mr. Willis.

"Where do you live, my boy?" the man began.

"I do not live anywhere," was the answer. "I hardly ever earn enough money for to get a decent bed, so I just sleep under carts or any place."

"Well, I am not much better myself," Mr. Willis replied, "but I have got a bit of a shed to live in, and a morsel to eat so I'm very thankful for that."

"Oh, yes, we must be very thankful for what we have. I know some boys that have no work or home. At the Mission I learnt about God and Jesus and heaven so since then I try to be good and contented. You see, sir," he went on eagerly, "I have no father or mother or anybody to look after besides myself, and I try to help those other poor fellows who have sisters and brothers to look after."

"You are a good boy," Mr. Willis said, "and your words so remind me of a little boy I had once, he was like you too, but he is lost, lost," and a sad, dreamy look came into the man's eyes as he spoke. By this time they had come to a small, broken-down cottage, which they entered, Mr. Willis began at once to light the fire and get some supper, while Willie sat and looked about the place, which seemed like a lovely Haven of Rest to him.

After supper, arrangements were made for Willie to stay there always, much to his delight, for Mr. Willis had taken quite a fancy to him, so many happy evenings were spent there, tightening the ties of friendship between them, which was to last forever.

But Willie could not fail to notice a certain sadness about Mr. Willis' life, and felt curious to know what it was about, but he kept a deep silence on the subject till one night, about three months

after Willie had taken up his abode with him, Mr. Willis said:

"Well, Willie, I suppose you would like to know who the man is you have been living with all this time. A little of my history, eh?"

Willie smiled assent, and so he began: "I was not always so poor as I am now, Willie, for once we—I had a sweet wife then—lived in a lovely mansion, and had many servants. Well, after we were married a short time, our first child came, a boy, who was fair and pretty like his mother. Then there came into our employ a coloured woman, nurse to our precious baby. Everything went on happily till the child was about three years old, then one night we missed both child and nurse. We searched, advertised, did everything, but in vain; and shortly after my wife died from the shock. Both wife and baby gone, what could I do? I went abroad, to try and forget my sorrow, not caring what became of house or stock. Then I heard that they had passed into other hands. I could not get work, became poorer and poorer, till I have come to this. That is my short story, abruptly told, I know, but I cannot even now bear to speak of it. But I thought I would tell you, especially as you once said you remembered something about a negro woman."

"Oh, Mr. Willis," exclaimed Willie, when he had finished, "what a sad story; but never fear, I have no doubt but that you will find your boy, only wait and trust in God, and let me fill your little son's place."

About a week after this conversation, as Mr. Willis was reading an old newspaper, he suddenly exclaimed, "Listen, Willie," and read as follows: "Flamborough: Any person bearing name of Frank Willis, gone from this place about five years, will please return as soon as possible, as some important money matters have to be settled. Signed, H. Ashton."

"Willie," Mr. Willis excitedly said, when he had finished reading, "that surely means me. I know Harry Ashton. You and I will go straight away and see what it is." So before many hours had passed, they were speeding along; away from the city's smoky houses to the fresher cottages of the country, and they soon reached Flamborough, where they were heartily welcomed, and got the money matters settled at once, which proved to be \$10,000 to Mr. Willis, left by some rich relative.

At different places Willie was proved the lost child, and once more father and son lived together in the same big house in which Willie was born. He had been stolen by the nurse for his beauty and clothes, and when about five years of age was forsaken and turned out into the world.

So by the good deed done by Mr. Willis, to, as he thought, a waif of the world, he had rescued his own child, and thus both "wanderers were found."

Toronto.

A VEGETABLE WATCH.

BY LIZZIE DE ARMOND.

It is very remarkable that so many plants perform the same offices and serve the same ends as various articles made by the hands of man.

There is a certain plant with a very long name, that we might call a "vegetable watch." Each leaf consists of three parts—one large leaflet in the middle and one on each side much smaller and growing up from the base of the central leaf.

By night or day, when the earth is parched with heat, or when the rain falls in torrents, during its whole life this curious plant is always giving odd little jerks like the second-hand of a watch.

The movements of the large leaf are very gentle, but the lively side leaflets are astonishingly vigorous. One of these rises a short distance and the other sinks an equal degree, then the first sinks and the second rises, never failing to take their turns at just the right moment. When it is extremely hot or very moist the movements are more rapid.

In India, on the banks of the Ganges, where the plant is found in its greatest perfection, it has been observed that the leaflets make sixty of these jerks in a minute. The natives often mark the time by these queer leaves, so that they have a "vegetable watch," warranted to run a number of years without even the trouble of winding it up. The greatest drawback is that you cannot carry it in your pocket.

The plant was first discovered in Bengal. The Indians regard it with much reverence on account of the strange, perpetual motion of the leaves, and attribute to it supernatural powers.

There are many plants in our own

country which are also useful in calculating time. We can be sure of almost any hour as accurately as by the sun, if we learn the flowers that close or open at that time. Indeed, there are such things as "flower-clocks," or "flower time-tables," known to skillful gardeners. These consist of a collection of various time-keeping flowers. When a certain cluster opens, the gardener knows it is five o'clock in the morning; when another set of petals close, he can be sure that it is five o'clock in the afternoon, and so on throughout the day.

The Little Ones He Blessed.

BY MARGARET K. SANOSTER.

I wonder if ever the children
Who were blessed by the Master of old,
Forgot he had made them his treasures,
The dear little lambs of his fold.
I wonder if, angry and wilful,
They wandered far astray,
The children whose feet had been guided
So safe and so soon in the way.

One would think that the mothers at
evening,
Soft smoothing the silk-tangled hair,
And low leaning down to the murmur
Of sweet, childish voices in prayer,
Oft bade the small pleaders to listen,
If haply again they might hear
The words of the gentle Redeemer
Borne swift to the reverent ear.

And my heart cannot cherish the fancy
That ever those children went wrong,
And were lost from the peace and the
shelter,

Shut out from the feast and the song,
To the day of gray hairs they remem-
bered,

I think, how the hands that were given
Were laid on their heads when Christ
uttered:
"Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

He has said it to you, little darling,
Who spell it in God's word to-day;
You, too, may be sorry for sinning,
You also believe and obey;
And 'twill grieve the dear Saviour in
heaven

If one little child shall go wrong—
Be lost from the fold and the shelter,
Shut out from the feast and the song

TWILIGHT TALKS WITH BOYS.

BY WILLIAM S. ELIUS.

Work makes manlier boys. Some boys who seem to be favoured, though they really are to be pitied, play away the best part of their lives. The boys who dry by day trudge off to shop or store or office, soon learn to depend upon themselves; to be self-reliant and thoughtful. They quickly acquire the manlier virtues by doing battle with the hard world of business. The lesson of their own responsibility is soon borne home to them, and it does not take the working boy long to see that he must depend upon himself if he is to have other people depend upon him. It is no easy school in which this lesson of manly independence is to be learned I know. Few besides those who have been through the experience can understand the hard knocks and bitter heart-burnings that the working boy must endure. But here is the good of it all—thus men are made. The harder our lot the harder shall we be. From the school of work heroes graduate.

My second word is merely a reminder that the way of work is the way of success. Call the roll of the world's greatest men and you will find that most of them became toilers in early boyhood. In the field of labour you come to understand yourself and your own powers; you learn the seriousness of life and are taught at every turn the circumstances and needs of the common people who make up the bulk of the world. Because you understand them you will be better able to help them. So in the school of work you may fit yourself for a larger sphere of service among men.

The one lesson, supreme above all others, that the working boy must learn is that of sheer faithfulness. Work will ever be a weariness and a trial unless a boy learns to do his duty regardless of everything else. Without this determination to be faithful no boy can become a successful worker. Its absence makes him a sure failure. He may hope and dream of a great future all the day long, but unless he is thoroughly true to his present duty his career can end only in shame. No matter how trivial or commonplace or menial his task may be, he must do it with all the faithfulness of his soul, if he would be a noble worker. Do you remember the old saying, "Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle"? My last word to-day, therefore, is that the school of duty alone turns out men ready to be faithful in great things.