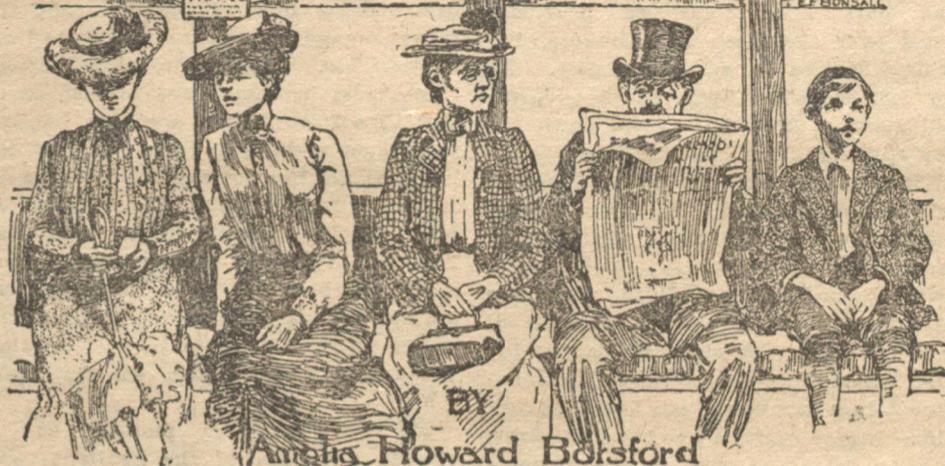


BOYS AND GIRLS

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE



(In the 'Wellspring.')

'With you for a companion I shall really enjoy a day's shopping,' said Mildred Rees to her Cousin Ruth, as the two girls took their seats in the car on their way downtown. 'I have had so much shopping to do lately that its pleasures have begun to pall.'

'And why do you suppose it will be any better when I am with you?' laughed her companion.

'Oh, I am looking forward to the pleasure of showing you about, and of having your company, too,' replied Mildred. 'I was so glad when I got your letter telling that you were really coming to make me a visit. You had been putting it off for so long that I had really become discouraged.'

'I am sure I am quite as glad to be here as you can possibly be to have me,' said Ruth, eagerly. 'To-day I have plenty of errands for myself and for the rest of the family, so you may get tired of helping me shop before I am ready to return. Look over my list, please, dear, and tell me where I can get these things to the best advantage.'

Mildred took the list and the pencil which Ruth held out, and hastily scrawled in the margin the names of the proper stores. By the time she had finished, the car had reached the shopping district, the two girls left their seats and joined the crowd on the sidewalk.

In working their way down the two memorandums which they carried in their respective purses they came to the item of ribbons on Ruth's list.

'Oh, I saw in the morning paper,' remarked Mildred, 'that Osborne Brothers are having a ribbon sale. We might go there for what you want. It is a store to which I do not often go, but they sometimes have bargains. It is not far away. Shall we try it?'

'Oh, let's go, by all means,' said Ruth. 'I'd like to see as many big stores as I can.'

'It is farther down this street,' said Mildred, turning a corner, and the two girls, chatting in a lively manner, entered the store and turned toward the ribbon counter. As they stood in the midst of the gay display, a clerk approached to wait on them. She was a tall, slender girl, with a pleasant face, though, she looked pale and weary, but as she spoke, and Mildred looking up met her glance, a sudden vivid red flushed over her face. Mildred straightened up, haughtily and turned to leave the

counter, saying to the astonished Ruth: 'I am quite sure there is nothing here we shall care to look at, Ruth.'

When they were out of hearing, Mildred continued:—

'I did not care to trade with that girl. Did you notice that she recognized me,

It's luncheon time. Let's have something to eat. We'll go up to the restaurant in this building, and while we eat our lunch I'll explain what I know about the girl we saw at the ribbon counter.'

As they waited for their order to be filled, Mildred began:—

'That girl—her name is Rose Collins—used to be a schoolmate of mine, but she left school early because she had to earn her own living. As she was in the same Sunday-school class I used to see her often, though we were in different sets of young people. I rather liked her, and when I found she was learning dressmaking I persuaded mother to engage her as assistant to our regular dressmaker. I was really very friendly to her in those days. There! I have that identical pin on at this moment, and she must have recognized it at her first glance. No wonder she turned so red. This is the pin,' and Mildred touched the odd, pretty bit of gold she wore. 'I always had a fancy for this pin and I wore it a great deal in those days. I've often seen Rose looking admiringly at it, and once she spoke of what a pretty pin I wore.'



MILDRED STRAIGHTENED UP, HAUGHTILY, AND TURNED TO LEAVE THE COUNTER.

and how red she turned? Forgive me, Ruth, for dragging you away so unceremoniously. I'll tell you the story, and then you will understand why I did not want to have anything to do with her.

'Well,' continued Mildred, as she dangled over her luncheon, 'I was having a dress fitted. I took off my collar and ribbons and laid them with this pin on the low work table by which Rose sat.