

BOYS AND GIRLS

What the Puppy Said.

(By Burges Johnson, in 'Harper's Magazine'.)

She's taught me that I musn't bark
At little noises after dark,
But just refrain from any fuss
Until I'm sure they're dangerous.
This would be easier, I've felt
If noises could be seen or smelt.

She's very wise, I have no doubt,
And plans ahead what she's about.
Yet after eating, every day
She throws her nicest bones away.
If she were really less obtuse
She'd bury them for future use.

But that which makes me doubt the most
Those higher powers that humans boast,
Is not so much a fault like that,
Nor yet her fondness for the cat,
But on our pleasant country strolls
Her dull indifference to holes!

O if I once had time to spend
To reach a hole's extremest end,
I'd grab it fast, without a doubt,
And promptly pull it inside out;
Then drag it home with all my power
To chew on it in a leisure hour.

Of all the Mistresses there are,
Mine is the loveliest by far—
Fain would I wag myself apart
If I could thus reveal my heart.
But on some things, I must conclude,
Mine is the saner attitude.

Losing His Trail.

'Just follow these blazed trees and you can't miss the camp,' said the guide. 'It won't take you very long if you don't get to wandering around foolishly in the woods.'

'Are there any other trees cut with an axe like these?' asked Howard French, shouldering his knapsack.

'Of course there are other trees with marks, but none like these on the camp road,' said the guide. 'There are little bypaths and places where trees have been marked to point out certain things, but you stick to this mark,' and he pointed to a big clean cut on a good-sized tree. 'You can't miss it.'

'Where do the other trails lead to?' inquired James Nelson. 'What would happen if we should take them?'

'They don't lead nowhere,' said the old guide positively. 'Some of them run into swamps and some just quit. You do as I tell you, and don't get to wandering around in the big woods.'

The four boys started, but in less than a mile Howard was sure they should take one path while James was confident his friend was wrong. They argued about it a short time, but at last all went the way Howard wanted to take, and the marks did seem perfect as they went along. A little farther on, George Peters wandered away to pick up some cones, and soon declared he was on the right path and the others all wrong.

'You fellows can get lost if you want to,' he called, 'but I'm going to try this path.'

The other three young fellows tried to show him his mistake, but he went on his way, calling back fainter and fainter until his voice was lost in the distance.

'We'll just have to go on to camp and send out a party to rescue him,' said Howard, fastening his handkerchief to a tree to mark the spot where he left them. 'It seems a pity George thinks he knows it all, but he'll have to learn by experience.'

'You're going the wrong way yourself, Howard,' said James a few minutes later. 'This is the right trail, isn't it, Sheldon?'

'Of course,' said Sheldon, comparing the marks on the trees. 'Hurry along here, Howard, or we will have two strays to hunt up.'

'Don't be foolish, boys,' said Howard. 'This is the road and you know it. Maybe the marks are not exactly like the ones we've been seeing, but who could get them just right?'

'I wonder if any of us will get to camp?' said Sheldon, as he trudged along with James. 'The marks are just as clear as can be, and those fellows are too contrary to admit it. What's that noise? I wonder if there are any wild animals in the woods?'

'Hello! Hello!' The voice sounded far away but they recognized it as that of George. They shouted back, and presently a forlorn figure, with hands, face and clothes scratched by brambles, and a general air of discouragement, joined them. 'I tell you I'm thankful to get back,' said George, mopping his heated face. 'I've been through brush and thistles and ponds and everything else since I left you. Where's Howard?'

'Off looking up another trail,' said James. 'When you found you were wrong, why didn't you turn and come right back?'

'I didn't like to own I was wrong,' said George. 'For a while I heard your voices and thought I could keep near enough not to get lost, but I wandered farther and farther away. I was a chump to mistake the marks, and I'll gladly own it for the sake of getting to camp and getting something to eat. I'm dead tired.'

The three boys heard nothing of Howard, and when they got to camp a guide was sent out to find him. Just at dusk the two came in footsore and weary, and Howard was ready to confess his mistake. 'I roamed around till I was utterly discouraged, and I thought I'd have to stay there all night,' said the young man. 'I wish I had stuck to the right road, but the other really looked like the right one at first. I never would have found my way back, for I was hopelessly bewildered.'

'It seems folks are possessed to lose the trail,' remarked the guide, as they talked over the adventures of the day around the camp fire. 'I've been bringing folks to camp before now, and some of them would straggle right off and think they were on the right road in spite of all I could do. It just seems they want to be lost in the woods.'

'Well, if it is a common complaint, I feel better about my experience,' said George. 'After this I'll be sure of the trail before I venture away from camp.'

'That's a good idea,' said the guide thoughtfully. 'It's a good idea to carry that with you all through life as well as in camp. I've seen young folks brought up in good homes and started on the right trail by their parents, but first thing you know they'd be starting away on some other path. The marks look all right at first, but they lead into all the swamps and briers of sin fast enough. Once in a while a boy or girl will work back to the trail, but oftener somebody has to hunt them up and lead them back.'

'Yes, and the worst of it is, some of them never want to be brought back,' said the cook, poking up the fire till a shower of sparks rose into the darkness. 'They'll argue that their way is right till the last. It seems strange that with the plain way laid down to get to heaven in the Bible, so many folks have their own little trails that they think will come right out at the Eternal Hope. I've had lots of people say it's all foolishness trying to follow Christ. They have their trails marked out along the line of paying debts and living good lives; and that's all right, but the trail stops short. It may not lead into swamps, but it don't bring them into camp.'

The young men sitting around the fire thought of the many temptations to leave the right trail, as they listened to these two old men who had had many years of experience with human nature, and their hearts were touched. They no longer saw the departure from the faith of their parents as an evidence of progression and enlightened thought, but as a defection from the road worn smooth by the feet of Christians of all generations. 'Old-fashioned' was the word they had applied to certain essential truths, but now they realized that the old-fashioned trail to camp was worth all the progressive short cuts that ended in disaster and utter loss.

'So you think it is easy to keep on the right trail, do you?' asked Howard, when both men were silent.

'I didn't say that,' said the guide quickly. 'I said you can't miss it if you follow the plain marks, but it seems easy to look the other way or deny that the marks are plain. I'm glad our Saviour made the way plain enough for all, and still more pleased that he goes out into the wilderness of sin to hunt up the foolish ones who have followed the

wrong trails. Some of the lost ones won't come, but I'm glad there are others who are willing to say they are on the wrong track, and thankfully let him lead them home to heaven, just as Howard wanted to get into camp to-day. Boys, don't lose the trail through life, whatever you do. Keep your eyes on the plain marks and you'll come out all right in the end.'—The Interior.'

A Question of Neighbors.

(By Alice M. Guernsey, in the 'Guardian'.)

It was a curious group that waited the coming of Lois Masten that hot Sunday in August. Ralph Wenkle, in spotless white suit, sat between Tom and Jerry Saunders—as clean as he, but in gingham blouses and shabby linen knickerbockers. Mike Phinney's face showed his nationality no plainer than did his name, and the Fatherland was written in every gleam of Fritz Schroeder's blue eyes. A motley, ill-assorted group held together by the loving faithfulness of their teacher.

'She's the best teacher in this school!' cried Mike, at the close of a heated argument with the boys of the next class, and Tom added loyally, 'She's the best teacher there is anywhere!'

'Who is your neighbor, boys?' asked Lois, as the lesson study began.

The boys looked puzzled. At last Fritz said a bit slowly, 'Carl Hengel's my neighbor—t any rate, he lives 'cross the hall. But I don't like him,' he added, as the memory of sundry encounters came to mind.

'And I don't like Tom O'Rary,' cried Mike. 'I just hate him, and I'll never let on he's my neighbor at all.'

'We have some nice neighbors, I guess, said Ralph; 'but we don't know them any. Out in the country, where we used to live, we knew everybody, and it was lots nicer.'

'Oh, we've got an uncle,' said Tom, eagerly, 'an uncle who lives out west—way out west—and he hasn't got any neighbors nearer'n ten miles.'

'Whew!' whistled Mike, under his breath. Small wonder that the story seemed incredible to the tenement house lad, in whose mind the country was a mixture of play-ground, sand heaps, recreation-pier breezes, and Mulberry Park trees.

Lois smiled, as she said, 'Listen, boys, and I'll tell you a story. Once on a time a great crowd of people were standing around Jesus and talking with him. At last somebody asked a question, and Jesus told the story in answer. He said that there was a man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. The people he was talking to knew all about the road. Robbers lived along the way, hiding in the rocks, and pouncing on travellers and stealing all they had—their money and clothes and everything.'

'Why didn't the police stop 'em?' questioned Mike.

'I am afraid the police on that road were not good ones,' answered Lois.

'Praps they made the thieves divide up with 'em,' concluded Mike, sagely.

Unheeding the interruption, Lois went on. 'One day a traveller went along this road, as I said, and the thieves fell upon him, and took his things away, and half killed him, and then ran off. There the poor man lay, almost naked, and bleeding, and sore, with nobody to help him. A priest came along and looked at him and then crossed over to the other side of the road and went along down toward Jericho.'

'I call that mean,' said Tom. 'I should think he might have helped a fellow.'

'Mebbe he was scared of the robbers himself, and wanted to hurry away,' said Jerry.

'Then another man came along,' continued Lois, 'a man who went to the same church and belonged to the same country as the traveller. But he just looked at him and turned away.'

'That's meaner yet,' said Ralph. 'You'd think that a man who went to the same church would help him, anyhow.'

'What if he didn't have any money?' suggested Tom.

'Well, he might ha' told him that he was sorry for him, and tried to help him up. Did he do that, Miss Lois?'

'No,' said Lois. 'He just went by on the other side. Then there came along another