

And then the big boy went away after patting Speckles on the head. And all that day Speckles was happy, for he found the food and water in the usual place, and paid no attention to the absence of the big boy and the old lady. And so the night settled down and Speckles slept as usual in the barn in the manger full of soft, warm straw. But when the morning dawned he jumped from bed and ran to the house and barked at the door. Always before when he had barked a good-morning the old lady had opened the door at once and had patted him on the head. And then she had placed his plate of food down to him and he had breakfasted. But this morning he barked and barked, and no one opened the door to him. Then, seeing a window low over the porch open, Speckles jumped through it into the room. He found the place empty and cold, and his lonesome bark, bark, bark made an echo which frightened him. Why, the house was empty! Even the last piece of furniture was gone.

And then, heavy-hearted, Speckles jumped out through the window and stood on the porch, looking around. How differently things appeared since the People of the House were gone! Even the big yard in which he had loved to romp was lonesome, and the wind moaned round the corner of the empty house, making a wail as it entered the open window. If Speckles had only known that a new family was that very minute getting ready to move into the empty house, he would have bided the time and remained where he was. But this he did not know, so he decided to go away from the place where he had been very content. To be sure, he had missed the companionship of children, for the big boy and the old lady could not play with him as children did, although they had always been so kind to him. But he did not mind doing without children's society so long as he had a good home.

But on this morning of which I write Speckles realized that he was now homeless. Poor puppy! Could he only have waited a few hours, he would have seen a very nice family move into the old house. But—perhaps after you have finished this story you will be glad that he did not wait. Well, to hurry through the story, Speckles took paws in hand, so to speak, and trotted away from the place where he had been left alone. He entered a country road which seemed very pleasant, for the snow had been worn away by the many wheels that ran over it, and the sun was unusually bright and warm for a January morning.

So down and up the road he went, over hills and through valleys. And about him stretched meadows of woods and fields. And once he crossed a stream—walking over on the ice. Ah, how cold it was to his little paws! About 8.30 o'clock he saw some children coming to meet him. They were running and jumping and laughing, and seemed so happy that Speckles became happy, too, and wanted to share in their sport. So, forgetting that he was a stranger, and that he might not be welcome, he ran down the road as fast as ever he could, barking a "Howdy-do" to the group of girls and boys. There were five of them—two boys and three girls—and when they saw Speckles they ran towards him with all their might.

"Oh, a doggie!" cried one little girl. "Oh, what a pretty puppy!" cried one of the boys. "The one who gets him first may own him," said the oldest boy. And then the race began, and what do you think? One of the little girls got him. She threw herself on her knees and caught Speckles in her arms just as the other four children reached the spot, all out of breath. "He's mine!" cried the happy little girl. And what do you suppose Speckles did? He reached up his face and kissed her square on the cheek with his pink tongue. And he wagged his tail till it was in danger of coming out of place. But he was so happy, for he knew the little girl would love him and give him the happiest home he had ever known.

"But what will you do with him at school?" asked one of the other girls. "The teacher won't allow you to keep him in the house." "I'll ask her to excuse me till I can carry him home," said the happy little girl who now owned Speckles. "And I know she won't refuse when I tell her how we found him—a poor little waif on the road."

And the teacher excused the little girl from school that morning, allowing her to lead Speckles to his future home, which turned out to be the happiest home in the world to him. And ever after that he was a contented puppy.

#### Letter Enigma

My first is in simple, but not in mind;  
My second is in ambush, but not in find;  
My third is in neck, but not in arm;  
My fourth is in city, but not in farm;  
My fifth is the same as my second, you see;  
My sixth is in acorn, but not in tree;  
My seventh is in love but not in true;  
My eighth is the same as my fifth and my two;  
My ninth is in bound, but not in setter;  
My tenth is the same as my very first letter;  
My whole is a name  
That to children is dear,  
And its jolly, fat owner  
Comes once every year.

#### Riddles in Verse

Without my first you'd look very strange,  
My second you much want to be;  
My whole is what many a lady has worn  
At a ball, a reception, or tea.  
(NOSE-GAY)



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Jimmy sees in a shop window just what he wants for Christmas. If you will look carefully at the picture, you will find what this is in the hidden letters.

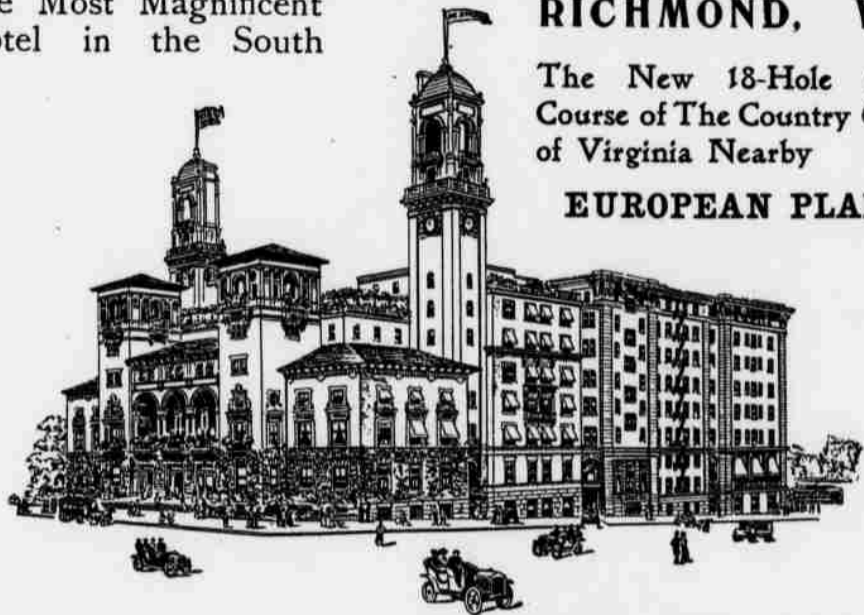
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