

THE SEEING EYE

By
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TO EVERYONE, I think, there is always something particularly pathetic about a blind man. Shorn of his strength and his independence, he is a prey to all the sensitiveness of his position and he is at the mercy of all with whom he comes in contact. The sensitiveness, above all, is an almost insuperable obstacle to cope with in his fight for a new life, for life goes on willy-nilly and the new conditions must be reckoned with. In darkness and uncertainty he must start again, wholly dependent on outside help for every move. His other senses may rally to his aid, but they cannot replace his eyesight. To man's never failing friend has been accorded this special privilege. Gentlemen, I give you the German shepherd dog.

Because of their extraordinary intelligence and fidelity, Germany has chosen her own breed of shepherd dog to

nice looking lot, especially when you take into consideration that not more than ten or twelve dollars has been paid for one of them. Moreover, they have a certain expression in their eyes, a sturdiness and interest which is too often lacking in their fashionable cousins. As the qualities of courage and intelligence are characteristics of the German shepherd dog wherever he is found unspoiled by intensive show breeding, it is not so hard to collect groups of these leaders for the blind as it would seem, and after a few simple tests to prove he is fit for the service, the new recruit can go to work, and all his work is founded on obedience.

*Now these are the Laws of the Jungle,
And many and mighty are they;
But the Head and the Hoof of the Law,
And the Haunch and the Hump, is—Obey!*

It is little short of marvelous how a raw dog can be taken into the school and in four months be turned out a blind leader, and the miracle is that the dog so perfectly

apt pupil he learns it easily and graduates into the next class. Here he begins his work in the leading harness, which is more easily seen in the pictures than explained in words. He now learns that although in hours of play and exercise he can romp with other dogs in the park, the moment the harness is put on him dogs must be anathema to him. Called from his play, a dog advanced in his work is ridiculously like a business man called to his office; you can almost see him lay aside his newspaper, settle his coat, straighten his necktie and take on an air of business affairs.

Life in a Big City

IN THE beginning, all schooling went on in the park; but it was soon found that a dog might work perfectly there and be of no use in the bustle and distraction of a city, so the park was given over to obedience exercises and the advanced classes were moved into the city itself. From the moment a dog wears the leading harness his schooling is done under actual working conditions. He must go at a fast walk so that the slackening in his gait for an obstacle is instantly felt through the rigid handle of his harness. For curbs he pulls back and stands still so that his master can find the edge with his cane; for steps, approaching traffic and all obstacles barring progress, he sits down; and for trees, letter boxes, scaffolds, pedestrians, he

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help her in the rehabilitation of her war blind, and in the lovely city of Potsdam she has established a very simple and businesslike school for training her dogs as blind leaders. Inclosed in a high board fence, the school consists of dormitories for the blind, kennels for the dogs and quarters for the teachers, the different buildings framing a large park laid out in sidewalks and roads with curbs, steps, bridges and obstacles of all kinds, such as scaffoldings, barriers, telegraph poles and ditches—everything in fact that the blind man has to cope with in everyday life.

Many Dogs and No Fights

THREE forces work together to make this school the model that it has become: The German Government, the Shepherd Dog Club of Germany and the association of war-blinded soldiers. The latter is a splendid organization of some 3000 men which strives continually and successfully to keep its members in work and above pity or charity and out of the class of beggars and peddlers. The government furnishes the land for the school and further grants each blind man a subsidy for his dog's keep after he has left the school.

The dogs are supplied by the Shepherd Dog Club of Germany and are either donated or bought at the lowest price compatible with the qualities they must have, for these blind leaders are the distant cousins and the cinderellas of famous show dogs; they not only have the goods but they deliver them in the shape of courage, intelligence and service. The total cost of a dog, trained and ready to leave the school, is about sixty dollars, which includes the initial cost of the dog.

They must be young and healthy, with quiet, steady nerves and a good character. As a whole, they are a very

assimilates his instruction. From the very small beginnings of becoming absolutely house-broken, he is taken step by step upward to his life work of leading a blind man, of being that man's eyes and his sword and buckler. He is first let loose to run with all the other dogs and to learn to mind his P's and Q's and not to fight.

For any dog full of life and energy, this first step is an education in itself and of itself starts him thinking. After he has mastered his lesson, the park becomes a schoolroom; and here, with dogs running loose, people passing in all directions, laughing and talking, he has his first studies in concentration and learns to sit and lie down on command, to speak, to fetch, to carry; and he must learn good will and to do it all cheerfully, gladly and with dispatch. This is the A B C, or kindergarten, of obedience, and if he is an



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