THE BRAVE RUN AROUND MEMBER

Story of a Young Cavalier and How He Joined the Club.

By FRANK H. SWEET.

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The Do What We Can circle of the King's Daughters was discussing its work for the ensuing month.

"I don't know of any urgent needs in our own neighborhood," said pretty May Whitely, pursing her lips and trying in vain to look wise and serious. "We've fitted out the Joneses and McDorgans and have sent a ton of coal to Widow Cracken."

Kate Markham, who was sitting by the window, now looked up from her sewing.

"I don't think we need bother about our next work," she said quietly. "If I'm not mistaken it's coming down the street now."

Several of the girls left their sewing and hurried to the window.

Coming down the opposite side of the street was a small boy of ten or twelve, his hands deep in his pockets and his feet keeping time to some merry tune which he was energetically whistling.

"He doesn't act as though he was overburdened with care," one of them remarked. "But, see, I do believe he is coming here!"

The boy had stopped and gazed across the street inquiringly. Then with another handspring he came racing toward them.

"Who is he anyhow?" asked May Whitely as she resumed her seat.

"One of Ben Carter's children," Kate answered. "Ben is the lame man who used to peddle clams around the village. He lives somewhere near the salt pond. Our hired man was down that way yesterday after a load of seaweed, and he stopped at Ben's to ask about the tides. He says they need help. Ben was in bed with rheumatism and hadn't done a day's work this winter, and there were two small boys and a sickly woman. I heard our man tell papa they had absolutely nothing to eat except a few small potatoes. He told them about our circle. I suppose that is what brings the boy here today."

But quick footsteps on the stairs put an end to further conversation. A moment, and there was a light knock upon the door.

"Come in," said Miss Leeson.

The door opened, and a bright faced, merry eyed boy stood before them. His clothes were patched, and glimpses of frost bitten feet could be seen through the ragged openings in his boots, but his shoulders were well thrown back, and his eyes did not shrink or waver as they looked into those of Miss Leeson, the president.

"Do you the—the club what helps folks?" he asked.

"Yes. What can we do for you?"

"I've come to jine," he said modestly.

"Join what?" Miss Leeson let her sewing fall into her lap.

"Why, your club, of course," eagerly. "Pete Guning was down our way yes'day an' told us all about it. He said them that lived out our way—us, an' Ben an' Mary Ann an' the folks an' the whole mess—had to jine an' fixed 'em up. Now we want to jine, an' help us look after our folks, an' get things for 'em when they seem to let on nobody don't like 'em. Pete says you're the boss. Put me down for a member. I'll work for 'em, an' get things for 'em, an' do anything you tell me to. I'm strong, an' I don't care a hang for mud an' slush an' rainy weather, an' all of 'em would be mighty hard on your nice dresses an' pretty shoes. I could run errants an' fetch an' carry things, an' I'd be stayin' on trappin' poor folks. Now what d'you say?" And he looked at her so trustingly that she forgot the ragged clothes and poverty and only saw the brave earnest soul looking through the clear eyes. Her gaze wandered to the girls questioningly. May Whitely came to the rescue.

"Fellow members," she cried springing to her feet, "I move we create the office of cavalier and run around messenger extraordinary in our circle!"

There was a quick upraising of hands.

"Contrary minds the same sign. It is a vote. Now, I further move that we appoint Mr"—glancing inquiringly at the boy.

"Lish," looking at her a little doubtfully.

"Mr Lish."

"Carter" added Kate Markham.

—"Mr Lish Carter" said May calmly. "to the office just created. All in favor signify by usual sign. Contrary minds. It is a vote."

The boy gazed at her with a puzzled expression on his face but detecting an undercurrent of merriment in the room, he took courage and bowed his thanks.

"Be I a reg'lar member" he asked beamingly as he rose to his feet, 'an' can I fetch in my poor folks?"

"That point is now in order" said May politely.

But the boy did not need encouragement. He was too full of his subject to think much of himself or his surroundings. There was not the least trace of embarrassment in the face which he raised so confidently to Miss Leeson nor was there any hesitation in the eager voice which poured forth the story of the poor folks.

"Are they actually starving?" asked one of the girls as he paused for a moment's breath.

"No'm promptly. Pap sent 'em a peck of small taters an' Ben an' me give 'em most of our walnuts an' chestnuts. An' then I dig 'em a few clams now an' ag'in when the weather's good an' hunts wood for 'em. But they're desprit off, most desprit. The father an' mother's sick, an' there's six small kids, an' none of 'em ain't much good for anything. You see," patronizingly, "they's Eyetalians an' only come here last fall. They don't know our talk nor how to scuffle round for vittles yet. They jest huddle clost up to their fireplace an' famish," knitting his brows for a suitable word. "An' would you b'lieve it," excitedly "there ain't a blessed shoe in the whole family! Them children paddle round in the snow an' water barefoot, an' when it's awful cold they wrap their feet up in old rags. The biggest boy helps me some, an' it's him I want to git shoes for. That's why I jined the club."

"Do they live near you?" asked Clara.

"'Bout half a mile. But their house ain't got any floor like ourn. They live right on the bare ground."

Clara held up her hands.

"The idea!" she exclaimed. "Eight persons living in a house without any floor, and in such weather! Hasn't anybody helped them besides your folks?"

"No, folks live scatterin' down that way, an' I guess they ain't heard much about 'em. But we've got along pretty well so fur. You see," proudly, "my pap's a stayin' good provider. Last fall he chopped wood enough to last all winter, an' he worked round 'mong the farmers an' took his pay in small taters—hog taters, they's call 'em," in smiling explanation. "We had mos' four barrels full. An' I sold clams myself an' bought some salt an' a barrel o' turnips. I guess we'd 'a' had plenty to stand us clean through the winter if it hadn't been for so many mouths. Eight Eyetalians can eat a pile of stuff when they'm hungry."

"Yes," assented Miss Leeson when he paused, as though waiting for confirmation of his statement.

"I heard pap ask Pete Guning yes'day," the boy resumed, with another smiling glance around the room, "if he know'd anybody in the village who'd be willin' to help a poor family. That's what made Pete tell about your club. Pap know'd the taters was most gone, an', I guess he thought Ben an' me couldn't hustle round lively enough to keep two families going. You see, pap's purty well on in years, an' he's got the misery in his back, an' Ben's lame, an' I'm only a boy, an' it takes a right smart man to get a good living for eight mouths. If you can help us any, I'll be mighty glad, an' I'll work for you