

The Beaver Circle

Our Senior Beavers.

[For Beavers from Senior Third to Junior High School Form, inclusive.]

Mrs. Cochran's Tom.

BY WINIFRED COLWELL, BROOKVILLE, N. B.

Junior shoved his hands in his pockets, dejected fashion, as he leaned against the lamp post. Jimmy had released him from the grocer's scarcely an hour before, and he was dreadfully tired.

Nobody wanted to buy papers. He had yelled until his throat was sore, and what good had come of it? A bold young man had snatched a paper from beneath Junior's arm, satisfied himself with the headlines, and walked away smoking a cigarette.

Nobody had treated Junior that way before and he was quick to resent it. In spite of the fact that he was on "bizness" he planted his sturdy little legs on the middle of the pavement and wrinkled his stubby freckled nose almost up to his eyes.

"Hey!" he shouted, angrily, "wanter borrey a cent to buy a paper?"

The offender made good his escape, and Junior returned to his reclining position against the post in no gentle mood.

For the past week Junior had been in what Jimmy termed a "tall huff." There had been no snow for some time, and consequently Junior's shovel was forced to be idle. It was bitterly cold, and nobody ventured out to buy papers. Rent was due, and mother was greatly worried as to how she could pay it. Her mistress had recently decreased her servants "because of the war," and mother was one of the sufferers. No one else could give her work, and her savings were almost gone. But what seemed very dreadful to her was the threat of the burly landlord. He was not wanting in tenants "who paid," and announced to her that morning he would give her three days of grace. Then if she could not pay she must "git out" and leave him the "furniture."

So Junior was in a "tall huff" with a reason behind it. He didn't know how they would be able to scrape even a quarter of the sum required by the landlord.

But Junior wasn't a lad to give up quickly, so he leaned against the lamp post to discover a way out of what seemed to be an unavoidable disaster.

Surely something must be done. His small sisters couldn't stand the bitter outdoor cold all the time. Junior wouldn't permit himself to think of his mother under such trying conditions. It was altogether too terrible!

The charities! The thought of them brought tears to Junior's eyes. They would not let them starve to be sure; but then their home would be gone and "Be it ever so humble."

Yet Junior was determined to be resigned to his fate. He saw no other way out of the difficulty. He knew that he and Jimmy wouldn't have to work so hard, but after all what did that matter? Junior's affections would die with his home, and he would be nothing more than an automaton. With a sigh he shifted his papers to the other arm and waited for customers.

Just then a man rushed by all out of breath. He was dressed as a butler, but the crowd of newsboys thought him some fine lord.

Junior did not move from his position to join the mass of newsboys about the newcomer. The words came distinctly to him where he was:

"Mrs. Cochran's Tom is lost!" Junior sighed and drew his tattered coat about his shivering form.

"Wish the lan'lord was!" he muttered.

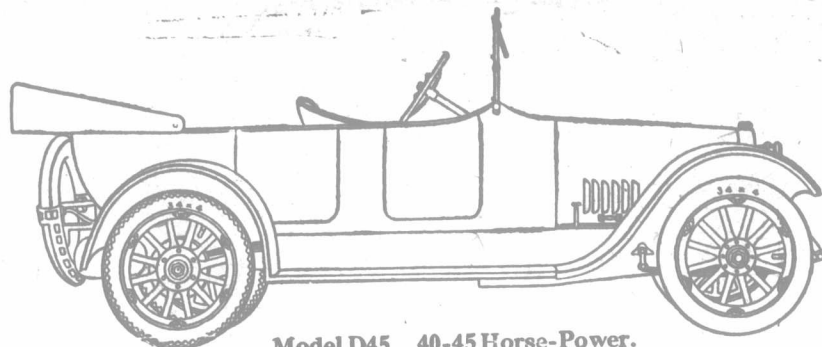
"Large reward for his safe return!" Junior picked up his ears then, and waited. But the herald had had his say, and when Junior looked up to find him he was nowhere to be seen.

With swift feet Junior pursued him round the corner.

"Say, mister," he gasped, "what's Mrs. Cochran's Tom like?"

The man frowned.

"Like?" he repeated. Junior nodded. I mean, how old's he, an' what's his hair an' eyes like?" he explained in one breath.



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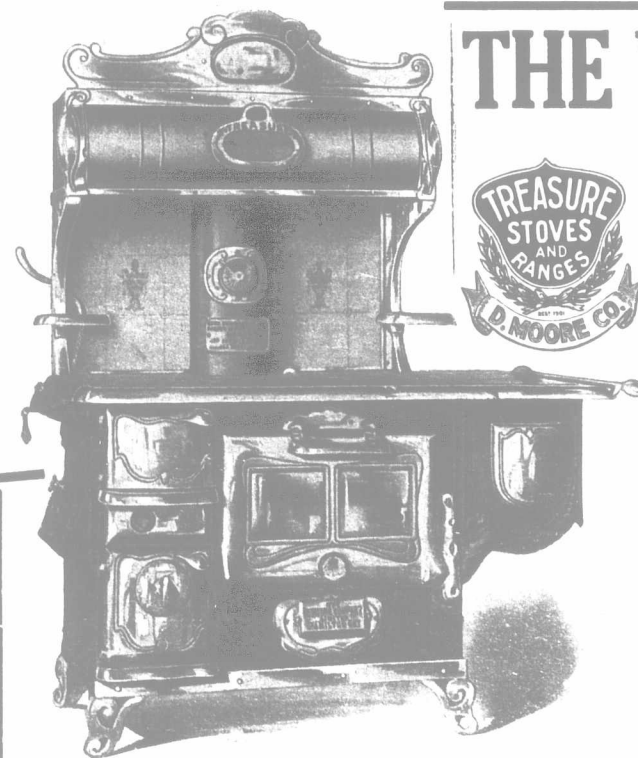
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