

"Yes, he must get into the woods as soon as possible. He piled so fast as to forget the cross pieces which his father had shown him how to lay to keep the pile even. It leaned forward and at length fell with a crash. "If I wasn't a boy I'd cry." Tears were, indeed, very near Pete's eyes as he gazed at the fallen wood. For a moment he felt like giving the whole thing up and letting the ten cents go. But as he sat for a little rest on the sawbuck a thought often came to him. Poor little Ben, his school-mate, who had suffered so long! He could almost see, this moment, the patient face, white and thin, which he always turned upon his friends when they went to see him. He had been in a dreadful accident, and for long weeks no one thought he would live, but was now better, and the doctor had said that if he could get out of doors there would be a chance of his getting stronger. He needed a wheel chair, but his parents were poor, and his school-mates were trying to make up enough money to buy one.

No, Pete would not be sorry he had given up fishing. But it was a very discouraged face which he turned to his mother as she came to the back door. She held out a piece of ginger bread to him. "If I had the seeing to things," he said, fretfully, "I wouldn't let boys' piles fall down." "Such things would seem hard," she said, with a pat on his head, "if we didn't know so well that in some way they are for the best." "How can such things be best? There are lots of hard things. It's hard for Ben. How can it be best for him?" "It takes hard things to make good things. A brave boy is a good thing. If hard things don't come, how could any boy learn to be brave?" Pete gave a little nod. In his very heart he wished to be a brave boy. "And about Ben," went on his mother, "it must be that there is some wonderful good waiting for him. Perhaps the Lord is going to make a brave, great, good man of him through all this." Pete went back to his work with a great glow in his heart. Perhaps he was helping the Lord a little in helping Ben. "I wonder," he said to himself, "how boys that haven't got mothers learn to be brave."

And then in a vague and misty way it came into his small head that the same dear Lord who was so good as to give such mothers to some boys must manage to help the other boys in some way, according to their need. At twelve o'clock Pete stood and gazed in triumph at his neatly piled wood. At one he set out with his

fishing tackle to join Jim, his heart bounding with the delight given by pleasant words from father and mother. Reaching the cross-roads just before turning into the woods Pete saw an old woman seated at the roadside on a large basket, while another one stood near her. "Oh, it's little Pete, isn't it?" she said. "Pete, my boy, have you seen farmer Mills go by from market yet?" "Yes'm," said Pete, "I saw him go past our house while we were at dinner." "Dear, dear," exclaimed the old woman. "The stage put me off here, and I made sure I'd catch farmer Mills to give me a lift home with my baskets. What'll I do now?" Pete didn't know. All he thought of was to get to Beech Creek as soon as he could. In his great satisfaction at receiving his well-earned shining bit of silver had mingled an ambitious hope. Why mightn't he catch some fish and sell them, like Jim? Think of having two dimes instead of one!

But as he rushed on a tug at his heart seemed to take the lightness from his feet. Slower and slower they moved, came to a halt, and then "reversed." He was very anxious to help little Ben. But here was an old woman who needed help this very minute, and no one but Pete to give it. "Can't you get home if I help you?" he asked. "The Lord's blessing on you for a brave boy. I guess I could if you'd take hold of the heaviest basket on one side." It was a long walk, and hard. Many a time they had to stop and rest. The sun sank low before they reached Mrs. Brown's cottage, and then Pete was so tired as to be glad to rest, and eat some ginger snaps from the big basket. It was far too late to go fishing when Mrs. Brown showed him a short cut home over the fields. As he ran down a slope he stopped with a sudden exclamation.

Oh, what wild flowers! All the carressing of the afternoon suns must have gone into those lovely colorings. It was out of the track of the village children, and had not been picked over. Pete gave a shout of delight. "I'll take the biggest bunch to mother. It'll be 'most as good as the money." Half an hour later he struck into the turnpike road near home. A carriage came along behind him, but stopped as it drew near. Two or three children in it were shouting their admiration of the flowers, a bunch which a peck measure would scarcely cover. "Would you be willing to let them have it?" asked the gentleman who drove. "Course I would!" said Pete, inwardly resolving

that he would very soon get another bunch for mother. He placed them in the hand reached for them; then touched his hat as he drew back. "Thank you. Here—" the gentleman held out his hand just as the horses started. "There—it fell. Pick it up, my boy."

Could Pete believe it? A flash in the sunshine, then a gleam in the dust. "A quarter!" he cried, beside himself with joy. "What for?" asked Jim, who at this moment came along the road. "Just for wild flowers," said Pete. "Hurrah! I've got a quarter and ten cents for Ben. Sold your fish, Jim?" noticing that he had none with him. "How much did you get?" "Not a red cent." Jim, wet and muddy, walked on with a gloomy scowl as he talked. "Fish didn't bite worth anything. But I did catch one big fellow—guess I would 'a' got fifteen cents for him. But Bob Hill was there, and when I caught it he said 'twas his fish 'cause I put my hook into his hole. And he grabbed for it, and we both got into the water, and the fish got away. I 'most wish I'd stayed in your back yard."—*Selected.*

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