



### PETER'S MISSIONARY PLEDGE

**P**ETER GRAY lived on a big farm way out in the beautiful green country, and a nicer chap you never saw or knew than Peter; but like most nice boys, Peter had one very bad habit—the habit of promising things that he couldn't always do. Mother and father Gray had tried to break him of this habit but to no avail. Every once in awhile Peter would surprise them by making another promise that he had no idea of keeping, and when he came home from Bible school one Sunday morning and announced that he had promised to give one dollar earned by his own hands to the missionary cause, the family just looked at him in utter amazement.

Presently mother drew him close to her chair and raising his chin in her hand she looked long and tenderly into his deep blue eyes.

"Do you realize, Peter," she said earnestly, "what you've done?"

"Sure, I do," answered Peter, "I've promised a dollar to the missionary cause this fall."

"Not only that," answered mother, "but you have promised to earn that dollar with your own hands."

"I know," replied Peter, "but you and father are always giving me dimes and pennies—I'll save them."

"But that won't do," reasoned mother. "Earning is different from giving; this particular dollar must be earned. There must be a sacrifice of some kind connected with the earning of that dollar."

Peter's face took on a distressed look, and for a moment he felt as if he were going to cry, then suddenly he smiled.

"Well, mother," he said softly, "I see I've made a mistake, but I'm not a piker—I'll earn that dollar—what have you got for me to do?"

"I'll give you a dime," answered mother, "to mow the front lawn."

Like a good fellow, Peter got out the lawn mower and soon had the yard all dressed up and was much pleased with it himself.

The next day his brother said, "I'll give you a nickel if you will shine my shoes." Peter accepted the offer and in less than ten minutes he had earned another nickel.

Peter worried no longer. Nevertheless, as time went by the dimes earned by Peter's hand could be counted on three fingers, and for the life of him he didn't see any way of ever gaining the other seventy cents—and then one day

while he was holding his father's fishing pole while he went to the house, a great idea entered his head—he would catch perch fish and sell them to Mrs. Jones, who ran the summer boarding house at the cross roads.

As soon as father returned, Peter put on his hat and went to interview Mrs. Jones.

"Sure, I'll take all the fish you can catch, Peter," said the lady, "but they do tell me that you make promises that you don't try to keep, so I'll not worry about having to pay for them until you bring them. I won't believe you until I see the fish."

Peter felt the hot blood mount his cheeks, but he turned away without saying a word and went back home, determined to make good every promise he had made.

"Father," he said when he again reached the spot where his father sat fishing, "may I use your fish pole?"

"All you want to," answered the man.

"That's saying a lot, father," answered Peter. "for I am going to earn that missionary dollar catching fish."

"Going to be mighty hot work," replied the father, taking note of the hot board platform that protruded out into the slow moving stream.

"I know it's going to be hot work," answered the boy, "but a promise is a promise—and I've got to keep this one, even though it is going to be hot work."

A few days later Peter sat on the board platform and fished in the same spot where his father had caught many previously. After he had fished all day he packed his basket and started for home. When Mrs. Jones responded to the knock at the front door she was pleasantly surprised with a basket of squirming fish.

And Peter—talk about anybody being surprised!—He was more than that when kind Mrs. Jones laid a fresh green-back dollar bill in his hand.

"They're not worth that much, Mrs. Jones," said Peter softly.

"Sure, they are," replied the woman, "that and more—but I just can't spare more than one dollar for them right now."

At Bible school the next day Peter raced down the aisle of the little country church and laid his dollar in the missionary plate and went back home.

"I'm glad you paid it, Peter."

"Sure, I paid it, and I've promised another. I know the Lord will show me the way to earn it."

