

From Mother's Boys and Girls

by Isabella Alden (Pansy)

NOT FOR SALE

“HERE, my lad, if you want to earn five cents, now's your chance!” This was what Mr. Harvey Phelps said to Ned Turner, as he swung himself from his horse. “You hold my horse for five minutes, and I'll give you five cents; that's fair isn't it?”

Now if there was anybody in the world who really needed five cents, it was Ned Turner, so he said:

“Yes sir,” very briskly, and rushed across the street and took hold of the bridle.

Mr. Phelps was gone considerably more than five minutes, you may have noticed that men always are gone longer than they say they will be; but when he came down the steps and saw Ned standing quietly beside his horse, he said:

“All right, my boy,” and tossed him a ten cent piece.

“See here, sir,” Ned said, just as he was mounting his horse, “you've given me five cents too much.”



“How is that?”

“Why, you said you'd give me five cents, and here is ten.”

Mr. Phelps laughed.

“Upon my word,” he said “you're an honest fellow; why didn't you keep it, and say nothing? That is the way fellows of your stamp generally do.”

You should have seen the red blood rush up into Ned's honest cheeks.

“Thank you, sir,” he said quietly, “I ain't for sale; when I do decide to sell myself, I won't do it for five cents, anyhow.”

How Mr. Phelps laughed! He seemed to think it was a good joke.

“You're a plucky youngster,” he said, “I like your spunk; you may keep the other five for a present, since you won't take more than five for your pay; I didn't know I gave it to you, I suppose it would have been all the same if I had thrown out a ten dollar gold piece, or would you have concluded that you could sell yourself for so much money as that?”

“I'll have something better than money, when I sell myself,” Ned said; “but I thank you for the five cents, all the same.”

Mr. Phelps rode away still laughing; but as he cantered along, his face began to grow sober. The truth was, he went to thinking over some things that he had done that very morning, and he began to think that *he* was for sale, and that he had sold himself for such a mean thing as *money*, and pretty cheap at that. I can't tell you about it, but I know that he wished, for a few minutes, that he was a boy again, and as honest as that ragged one who held his horse for him and who wouldn't cheat, even about five cents.