

# The Orphans' Friend.

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## THE REAPERS.

The reapers bend their lusty backs,  
Their sounding sickles sway;  
At every stroke the golden sea  
Recedes to give them way;  
The heavy ears fall bowing down,  
And nestled at their feet.  
Such will, such work as theirs, perforce,  
Must win—must homage meet.

So careless of fatigue they go,  
So true, so steadily,  
The admiring traveler on the road  
Leans o'er the gate to see;  
With Marvel of the soon-fallen breadth,  
The lounging gossips tell;  
But the reapers labor for us all,  
'Tis need they should work well.

Ere the great sun that burns above  
Shall crimson in the West,  
And the children's poppy nosegays fade,  
And they lie down to rest,  
Each golden spear that upward points  
Shall fall upon the field,  
And the farmer drain a sparkling glass,  
Rejoicing o'er the yield.

Ply, bonny men, your sickles bright,  
And give the people bread!  
At every conquering stride you take,  
On want and woe you tread,  
Drop heavy ears, and give the strength  
You gathered from this plain,  
That man may rise refreshed and firm,  
And do great things again.

God bless the hands all hard and brown,  
That guide the cleaving plow,  
That cast abroad the shining seed,  
And build the wealthy mow;  
They rear the bread our children eat,  
'Tis by their toil we live,  
Hurrah! give them the loudest cheer  
That grateful hearts can give!

## TWOPENCE A DAY AND WHAT IT ACCOMPLISHED.

Joseph Gurney had worked for the same masters some three or four years, and his wages, though small, not exceeding eighteen shillings a week, were regularly paid summer and winter alike; so, as he often told his wife, when she was inclined to grumble at the smallness of the sum, they were better off than some of their neighbors, who, receiving higher wages in one part of the year, were often thrown out of employment altogether when the slack time came. In fact, Joseph Gurney cultivated a contented mind, and, as the wise man long ago predicted, he found it "a continual feast." The dinner-bell sounded at one o'clock; and Joe had just commenced his simple meal of bread and cheese and a mug of beer, when the senior partner in the firm came along, and stopped to say a few words to him. 'Well, Gurney, so you have a son and heir I hear,' he remarked, in the easy, good-natured manner which had won him a well-deserved popularity throughout the factory.

Joseph rose and touched his cap respectfully: 'Yes, sir, thank you, and a fine hearty boy he is too.'

'I am glad to hear it. I hope he will grow up to be a comfort both to you and his mother; we shall find him a corner here, I daresay, when you'll be bringing him along to work.'

'That's what I thought, sir, but Martha, my wife, she says, 'Apprentice him to a good trade; but then, sir, where is the money to come from for that sort of thing?'

'Save it from that,' said the master good humoredly, yet seriously, pointing with his walking-stick to the mug of beer on the table by Joseph's side.

The man's color rose. 'I am not a drinking man, sir,' he said somewhat angrily. 'It's only a pint of beer I get with my dinner, none with supper, nor yet on

Sunday—it's but twopence a day I spend on drink.'

'Stay, my friend,' interposed Mr. Baker, kindly. 'I know you are not a drinking man; you have now been with us nearly four years without our having found out that a workman more sober and trust-worthy than Joseph Gurney is not employed in our factory; still, could you make up your mind to do without your daily pint, only 'twopence a day' as it may cost you, you would find that by the time your boy is grown old enough to learn a trade, the money to apprentice him would be in your possession. I will leave you this to think about at your leisure; in the meanwhile give this trifle to your wife, with my congratulations and best wishes for the future prosperity of her son,' and slipping five shillings into the man's hand the good master passed on.

Mr. Baker had only spoken the truth when he said Joseph Gurney was a sober man. He had never been seen the worse for liquor in his life; the single pint of beer, which he considered necessary to keep up his strength on working days, was truly all he allowed himself. Martha Gurney could never remember a week, during the whole of her married life, when more than the weekly shilling had been deducted for her good man's dinner-beer from the wages which he regularly brought home to her every Saturday night.

But Mr. Baker's idea, that twopence a day would in time grow into a handsome sum, had never before occurred to the simple mind of Joe Gurney; and all that afternoon he pondered on his master's words, till at last, throwing down his tools, he seized a piece of chalk, and began making mysterious-looking figures on the wall of the factory. Joseph had, as he himself expressed it, 'received no eddication,' but he had a rough method of his own of making calculations, and the result of his present one appeared considerably to astonish him. He scratched his head, pondered a little longer, tried again and again, but always with the same result; and when he laid down the lump of chalk and resumed his work, his resolution was taken.

The next Saturday night, the shilling, though deducted as usual from his wages, did not go to pay a weekly score at Red Lion's Inn; it was carried in Joseph's pocket to another and quite different destination.

Weeks, months, and years passed on, and the little Samuel grew in mind, an active, healthy, persevering lad; carefully trained and educated to the best of their ability by the fond parents, whose only child he had continued to be. Joseph had kept the promise made on the day of the boy's birth, that he should have a good education; and at eleven, young Samuel was a fair scholar, sharp, shrewd, intelligent, and fond of learning; his progress in the acquirement of knowledge was a source of continual wonderment to his simple-minded father, who, sitting by the fire-side of an evening, never tired of

hearing the boy con over his next day's lessons, or read aloud from some interesting book, borrowed from the school library. But at eleven years of age, his father decided that Samuel, hearty and strong as many a much older lad, must begin to do something for himself towards his own support, and accordingly a place as errand-boy in a respectable grocer's shop was soon secured. Joseph accepted of his son a somewhat smaller weekly sum than usual, in consideration that he should be allowed four evenings in the week to leave work in time to attend an evening school in the neighborhood. This arrangement, indeed, seemed quite unnecessary in the eyes of the fond mother, who considered her son a finished scholar; but Joseph, having his own opinion on the matter, overruled her objections, and gained the day.

The boy's uniform good conduct and steadiness soon gained the confidence of his master, and for nearly two years he continued in Mr. Morton's shop.

It wanted only two or three days to Samuel's thirteenth birthday, when one evening he came in from his day's work with a cloud on his unusually bright, good-tempered face.

'Father, said he, as he hung up his cap on its nail, 'Mr. Morton thinks I had better leave him.'

'What's that for?' replied his father, in a startled tone. 'Have you been up to any mischief, lad?'

'No, indeed, father; master says he'll give me a good character to any one,' and the boy drew himself up proudly as he spoke, 'but he says I'm too old and big for errand-boy now—I ought to be doing something better for myself now. He says he'll be sorry for me to go, but he won't stand in my way. He wants an apprentice, though: I know he'd take me, but that can't be—I know that; and a tear or two stood in the boy's eye, which he was too manly to let drop.

'Why can't it be?' inquired his mother, looking up from the ironing in which she was engaged.

'Why, mother, he says he can't take less than ten pounds with an apprentice; mostly he gets more than that—but where could we get that from?'

The good woman sighed. Often had her boy's future troubled her, and she had tried, by taking in washing and ironing, to lay by a little sum towards the fulfilment of her darling wish, 'to apprentice him to a good trade; but ill health had prevented much extra exertion, and frequent illness had swallowed up her little earnings.

'Would you like to be apprenticed to Mr. Morton, Sam?' inquired his father.

'Indeed I should, father; better than anything else.'

'Better than the factory?'

'I hate the factory,' said the boy, excitedly. 'I'd rather—'

'Gently, my lad; you've always been a good, obedient boy, and if I bid you come along to the factory to work, you'll come. But,' he added, seeing the boy was about to answer, 'don't say any more on the matter now; Thursday'll be your birthday; you'll be thirteen then; quite

time you were something better than an errand-boy, I think. When you come home to supper directly after work, we'll talk it over; you needn't go to work that night I suppose.'

'But, father,' urged the boy, 'if I can find another place with better wages than Mr. Morton's, I needn't go to the factory, need I?'

'Well, you can look out if you've a mind. And now your mother and I are waiting to know the end of that story you were reading last night; make haste, and let us hear if the poor colliers ever got out of the pit alive.'

Thursday night came and Joseph, much to his wife's surprise, was nearly an hour after his usual time. Samuel was home, the tea ready set, and the kettle singing on the fire, when he made his appearance. How cosy and comfortable the little kitchen looked, so clean and bright, and the good wife in her usual neat trim, waiting to receive him. A currant cake was on the table, made by the fond mother as a special tribute to Sam's birthday.

'You're late to-night, my man,' she said, as her husband took his seat by the fire, and warmed his hands by the cheerful blaze, for the cold east wind howling outside made the weather almost as severe as the middle of winter.

'Yes, I'm late, sure enough,' he said cheerfully, as he took the tempting cup of hot tea from her hands. 'Well, Sam, my boy, how about finding another place? You know we were to talk about it to-night.'

'I haven't heard of one,' said the boy moodily; 'I've inquired everywhere.'

'Well,' returned Joseph, with a curious twinkle in his eye, which certainly did not express much sympathy with his son's evident disappointment, 'then, I suppose you'll be walking along with me to the factory on Monday; there's a berth for you there with five shillings a week.'

'Must I, father?'

'Must you, lad! What's good enough for your father is good enough for you.'

The boy did not answer; his disappointment was too deep to be expressed in words; while his mother, stooping over him, gave him a sympathizing kiss, and whispered to him to 'be a good boy, and not vex father.'

'I looked in at Mr. Morton's as I came along,' pursued Joseph. 'He's got an apprentice lad, I find. Do you know who it is, Sam?'

'No, father?'

'It's a friend of yours, I hear. Can you guess who it is?'

Sam looked up quickly; 'Is it John Jackson, father? He was in to see Mr. Morton to-day.'

'No, Sam. Guess again.'

'I can't tell you,' said the boy disconsolately; 'it makes no difference to me.'

'Makes no difference to you! Well, then, I'll tell you, my boy, it is you!'

'Father!'

'Yes, it is you! And here's the money, almost roared Joseph in his exultation and delight. 'Count it, my lad: it's all yours; and there's more than enough to

apprentice you, I reckon; and he tossed on the table a little canvas bag.

Sam seized it eagerly, and turned out the contents—bright sovereigns and a few shillings. It was a pleasant picture: the proud happy father—the eager, excited boy—the loving wife and fond mother, standing with clasped hands, looking from one to the other with a face expressing the utmost astonishment. It was the moment to which Joseph Gurney had been looking forward for years.

'Thirty-three pounds, sixteen shillings!' exclaimed Samuel, as he rapidly counted over the glittering coins. 'Father, what does it all mean? Did you say it was mine?'

'Every penny of it, my lad,' replied the happy father; draw his wife closer to him, and laying his hand fondly on the boy's shoulder, he proceeded to narrate to them in his own simple way the interview he had had with his master on the day following Samuel's birth, and the impression his words had made upon him. Then followed the history of the chalk calculation on the factory wall, and the surprise which the result of it occasioned. 'I saw then,' added Joseph in conclusion, 'that a little sacrifice on my part would leave money to give you a good trade when you should be grown big enough. I resolved to give up my beer, and say nothing about it, and I've never had a drop from that day to this. I've always kept a shilling from my week's wages as usual, but it didn't go to the Red Lion, as before; it went to Mr. Baker's, and he put it in this bag, and he's kept the money for me ever since. You've always been a good, obedient boy to me and your mother, so the money's yours, my lad. Ten pounds I shall pay to Mr. Morton to-morrow when your articles are made out; you shall have a new suit of clothes too, and the rest of the money shall go in the bank in your name, and pleased God if I live so long, you shall still have the twopence a day till you're out of your time, and then, Samule, there'll be a nice little sum to start for yourself with. So God bless you, my lad, and may you be a good, useful man; that's all I want of you in return.'

The boy fairly, sobbed as he threw himself into his father's arms. 'Father,' he said as soon as he could speak, 'I can't thank you now as I ought, but I promise you you shall never be sorry you gave up your beer for me. God help me, I will be all you want me to be; and if I turn out as good a man as my father, mother and I will be quite content.'

And the boy kept his promise. And now that over a handsome shop-front appears the name of 'Samuel Gurney, grocer,' he, a thriving, prosperous man often gathers his children around his knee, and tells them the story of his early life, how his self-denying father built up for him present prosperity on the foundation stone of 'Twopence a Day.'—*Chamber's Reading Book.*