

ravenous appetite, he amused himself with all the eager curiosity of one unaccustomed to see similar sights.

The appearance of the youth soon attracted my curiosity, and gently opening the door, I stood behind him without his being in the least conscious of my presence. He now began rumaging his pockets, and, after a great deal of trouble, brought out a roll of paper, which he opened. After satisfying himself that a large copper coin was safe, he carefully put it back again, saying to himself, in a low tone, "Mother, I will remember your last words: 'a penny saved is two-pence earned.' It shall go hard with me before I part with you, old friend."

Pleased with this remark, I gently touched the lad on the shoulder. He started, and was about to move away, when I said:

"My good lad, you seem tired, and likewise a stranger in the city."

"Yes, sir," he answered, putting his hand to his hat. He was again about to move forward.

"You need not hurry away, my boy," I observed. "Indeed, if you are a stranger, and willing to work, I can perhaps help you to get what you require."

The boy stood mute with astonishment, and coloring to such an extent as to show all the freckles of a sunburnt face, stammered out,

"Yes, sir."

"I wish to know," I added, with all the kindness of manner I could assume, "whether you are anxious to find work, for I want a youth to assist my coachman."

The poor lad twisted and twirled his bundle about and after only placing his hand to his head, managed to utter an awkward answer, and said he would be very thankful.

I mentioned not a word about what I had overheard with regard to the penny, but inviting him into the house, I sent for the coachman, to whose care, I entrusted the new comer.

Nearly a month had passed after this meeting and conversation had occurred, when I resolved to make some inquiries of the coachman, regarding the conduct of the lad.

"A better boy never came into the house, sir; and as for wasting anything, bless me, sir, I know not where he has been brought up, but I really believe he would consider it a sin, if he did not give the crumbs of bread to the birds every morning."

"I am glad to hear so good an account," I replied.

"And as for his good nature, sir, there is not a servant among us that doesn't speak well of Joseph. He reads to us while we sup, and he writes all our letters for us. Oh, sir, he has got more learning than all of us put together; and what's more, he doesn't

mind work, and never talks about our secrets after he writes our letters."

Determined to see Joseph myself, I requested the coachman to send him to the parlor.

"I understand Joseph, that you can read and write."

"Yes, sir, thanks to my poor dead mother."

"You have lately lost your mother, then?"

"A month that very day when you were kind enough to take me into your house, an unprotected orphan," answered Joseph.

"Where did you go to school?"

"Sir, my mother has been a widow ever since I can remember. She was the daughter of the village schoolmaster, and having to maintain me and herself with her needle, she took the opportunity of her leisure moments to teach me not only how to read and write, but to cast up accounts."

"And did she give you that penny which I saw you unroll so carefully at the door?"

Joseph stood amazed, but at length replied with great emotion, and a tear stood in his eye.

"Yes, sir, it was the very last penny she gave me."

"Well, Joseph, so satisfied am I with your conduct, that not only do I pay to you a month's wages willingly for the time you have been here, but I must beg of you to fulfil the duties of collecting clerk to our firm, which has become vacant by the death of a very old and faithful assistant."

Joseph thanked me in the most unassuming manner, and I was asked to take care of his money, since I had promised to provide him with suitable clothing for his new occupation.

It will be unnecessary to relate how, step by step, this poor country lad proceeded to win the confidence of myself and partner. The accounts were always correct to a penny; and whenever his salary became due, he drew out of my hands no more than he absolutely needed, even to a penny. At length he had saved a sufficient sum of money to be deposited in the bank.

It so happened that one of our customers, who carried on a successful business, wanted an active partner. This person was of eccentric habits, and considerably advanced in years. Scrupulously just, he looked on every penny, and invariably discharged his workmen, if they were not equally scrupulous in their dealing with him.

Aware of this peculiarity of temper, there was no person I could recommend but Joseph; and after overcoming the repugnance of my partner, who was unwilling to be deprived of so valuable an assistant, Joseph was duly received into the firm of Richard Fairbrother & Co. Prosperity attended Joseph in his new undertaking, and never suffering a penny difference to appear in his transactions, he so completely won the confidence of his senior partner, that he left him the whole of his business, as he expressed in his will "even to the very last penny."