

"It's no better than a wild goose chase you're sending him on, Baxter," remarked a smaller member of the group, whose head protruded unexpectedly above Baxter's enormous shoulder; "I was talking to Jasper Trend this morning and he told me he was turning away nice every day. Whew! but this wind is getting too bitter for me, boys."

"Oh, there's no harm can come of trying," insisted the cheerful giant, pushing back his chair as the others retreated out of the wind, "if hope does n't fill the stomach it keeps the heart up, and that's something."

His great laugh rolled out, following Ordway along the street as he went in pursuit of the fugitive opportunity which disported itself now in the cotton factory at the foot of the hill. When he reached the doors the work of the day was already over, and a crowd of operatives surged through the entrance and overflowed into the two roads which led by opposite ways into the town. Drawing to one side of the swinging doors, he stood watching the throng a moment before he could summon courage to enter the building and inquire for the office of the manager. When he did so at last it was with an almost boyish feeling of hesitation.

The manager—a small, wiry man with a wart on the end of his long nose—was hurriedly piling papers into his desk before closing the factory and going home to supper. His hands moved impatiently, almost angrily, for he remembered that he had already worked overtime and that the muffins