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For the Sunday-School Advocate.

JOSEPH AND HIS LAST PENNY.

BY FRANCIS FORRESTER, ESQ.

In the *Band of Hope Review* I found a story the other day which pleased me so well that I will relate it to you, my children.

Some years ago, as a gentleman was leaving a public building he saw a poor country boy sitting on the door-steps and eating some bread and cheese. Something in the boy's manner pleased him, so he stood still and watched him. Very soon the boy pulled a roll of paper from his pocket, and opening it took out a large copper coin, which, after a few moments, he carefully put back into the roll of paper, saying to himself:

"Mother, I will remember your last words, 'A penny saved is twopence earned.' It shall go hard with me before I part with you, my old friend."

So pleased was the gentleman with this act of the boy that, without letting him know that he had overheard his remark, he stepped up and offered to give him work in his family. This offer was joyfully accepted. The boy was placed under the care of the coachman and set to work.

"After nearly a month had passed," says the gentleman, "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 does not speak well of Joseph. He reads to us while we sup, and he writes all our letters for us. O, sir, he has got more learning than all of us put together; and what's more, he does not shirk his work, and never talks about our secrets after he writes our letters."

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

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

"Yes, sir, I have to thank my poor dead mother for that."

"You have lately lost your mother, then?"

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

"Where did you go to school?"

"Sir, my mother had been a widow ever since I



can remember. She was a 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, my boy, that penny which I saw you unroll so carefully on the door-step?"

"Joseph stood amazed, but at length replied with great emotion, while 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 accept the office 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 after 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 like 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 business transactions, he so completely won the confidence of his senior partner that he left him the whole of his extensive and profitable business, as he expressed it in his will, 'even to the very last penny!'"

Bravo, Joseph! His poor beginning had a good ending so far as this world is concerned. Economy, industry, honesty, and fidelity did wonders for his earthly fortune. But what was his good fortune worth if he was not pious? What did he gain if after all his prosperity he lost his soul? I cannot tell you whether he took care of his soul or no, because the gentleman who published the lad's history says nothing about it. I will believe, however, that he was pious. But be that as it may, I wish you to settle this question each of you for himself—Which is better, to be rich and lose my soul, or to be poor and save it?

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

A DYING FATHER TO HIS LIVING DAUGHTER.

As a certain father was about to die, his thoughts turned to his only but absent daughter. All his love for her was burning in his heart, and he wished to send her a few last words from the brink of eternity. What do you think his message was?

"Tell her," said he, "tell her to love the Saviour now—tell her to love him while she is young; if she puts it off till she is old, it will be so much harder to love and trust him."

Did his daughter obey his dying wish? I really don't know; but I do know that the advice is just