

way he kept on repeating it to himself.

Anyone else might have picked it up, and pocketed the money as well. He hadn't stolen the purse, he was no thief, he thought, and yet it almost felt like stealing too, keeping something back when he knew whom to restore it to.

For more than an hour he wandered about, fighting a battle with himself, and his conscience would not rest. He was not dishonest, he had *found* the purse; still he knew who the owner was. Wouldn't it be dishonest to keep the thing? In his heart Jack knew it was.

Then something stole into his troubled mind—words he had heard only last Sunday morning—"Thou shalt not steal."

And, "Lord have mercy upon us," cried Jack, "Incline our hearts to keep this law." He knew now what he had to do, he wouldn't hesitate any longer; and without waiting to think another thought, Jack hurried off to the grocer's.

"Who's lost a purse, Mr. Gray?" he asked. "I've found one like that," with a nod at the paper in the window. "I picked this up at the end of Lennox Street a couple of hours ago," and he felt so relieved that somebody else shared his secret and that he could not be tempted any more.

"Mrs. Tom Jenkins lost it yesterday," said the grocer, looking so pleased. "Poor soul! Such a way as she has been in! It was the money to pay her rent. That's her property, you may be sure," he added, examining the purse which Jack had drawn from his trousers pocket; "buff-colour, horse-shoe clasp, and five pounds in gold; it's all there!" and he looked approvingly into Jack's fresh young face, little knowing what

temptation he had just gone through. Then giving him her address he bade him run off and make the poor soul easy as fast as ever he could.

Poor Mrs. Jenkins? Her harassed face showed the distress she had been in. She thanked Jack with tears in her eyes, and gladly pressed on him the promised reward.

"I knew I should get it back if an honest person found it, for I'd put plenty notices about; but every person isn't honest, you know. Thank God, you're an honest boy!"

And Jack blushed crimson to the very roots of his hair.

With the honest shillings in his hand and a heart as light as air, Jack ran into the town and bought himself the pair of skates he had gazed so longingly at that afternoon in Stone and Pearce's window.

"The eighteen-pence that's over, Annie shall have," said he.

"Why, Jack!" exclaimed Mrs. Martin, as he rushed into the house and dangled the skates, with a laughing face, under his mother's eyes,

"What have you been up to now?"

"Shu' the door, mother," said he, "come and sit down, and I will tell you all."

And Jack did tell her everything.  
—*Selected.*

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