

Resisted Temptation

Mrs Thomas was a widow, and ever since her husband's death had taken in sewing to earn a living for herself and her two sons, James and Joe, who were quite young at the time of their father's death.

For some time Mrs Thomas had been in declining health, and at one time her life was despaired of.

James, aged 16, and Joe, 14 years, had been employed in a foundry for several months. Their wages were small, and during their mother's illness it was quickly disposed of. By the kindness of their neighbors, Mrs Thomas was nursed through her illness, and was now on the fair road of recovery, and all seem bright and happy again.

It was Saturday and pay-day in the foundry, and the fact that they were to receive their hard-earned wages for the week seemed to make the men and boys happy. James and Joe joined in their jokes and laughter for the first time since their mother had taken ill. But there was unhappiness in store for the boys, for that evening, when they received their wages, they were informed that their service were no longer required, owing to the lack of work in the shop. The fact that they had been discharged was a severe blow to them; the rent was due on the morrow, and out of the wages received the rent must be paid. While their mother was improving, she must have extra delicacies to strengthen her. Where was the money coming from? The problem puzzled the lads.

Scarcely a word had been spoken since they left the foundry. Three more blocks and home would be reached. Who would be the first to break the news to their mother?

«Joe!» exclaimed James, as he stopped to pick up a large pocket-book lying on the sidewalk just in front of him.

«Perhaps it is empty,» said Joe as James showed his find.

«No, it is quite heavy. Let us sit on this stone and see the contents.»

The boys seated themselves side by side, and for the moment their great troubles were forgotten. As James opened the pocket-book the contents so surprised the boys that for the moment neither could speak. Each pocket contained a roll of greenbacks.

«What luck!» gasped James.

«Luck, indeed, is not against us, after all,» said Joe. «Our find is a rich one.»

«But,» replied James, a little disappointed, «the money is not ours, and we must see who the owner is.»

From one of the pockets of the book James took a business card, on which was the name of a banker residing some distance uptown.

«He is a rich man,» said Joe, «and will not miss the sum, though to us it is a fortune.»

«Three hundred dollars is not a small sum, even to a banker, and