

to Philadelphia was one of those not-to-be's.'

'It is one of God's providences,' said father slowly and reverently. 'He knows what is best for us all.'

'And you, too, know what is best for Clem and me,' continued Maddy, gravely. 'The work is hard sometimes, but—'

'Yes, it is hard, and I'm afraid you will have to keep it up. Your uncle Madoc is here, and thought of helping me to send you away to school, but he doesn't think now that it would be best.'

So Maddy and I took up our old routine of work, admitting to each other that our punishment was just. A year later father called us and said: 'A letter and cheque have come from Uncle Madoc. You are both to have an education, and a start in life. You will begin by going away to school, and—'

'Don't,' Maddy and I cried together. 'We aren't a bit deserving. We've been wicked and ungrateful!'

But father reached out his great sunburnt hands, and after a lingering clasp, he placed them on both our heads. I still hear his rough but kindly voice in benediction: 'God bless and keep you always, my lads.'

And then we both went to mother, kissing her face and her rough, brown hands. And she clasped us both in return, saying softly and tenderly: 'These, my sons, were lost, and are found!—Mrs. Findlay Baden, in the 'Morning Star.'

Sissy

(Elsie L. Gilmore, in 'Presbyterian Banner,')

The new boy walked away from the clumsy school house, District No. 10, with his head held high but with a quivering of the firm little chin, and a downward droop of the sensitive mouth that he would not for worlds have the other boys see. There was the faintest suspicion of tears in the grey eyes and a little tightening of the throat, which he controlled only by his strong will, and the will of a twelve-year-old boy is not to be treated lightly.

It had come at last. The boys had called him 'Sissy.' Phil Gray had started it, and being a born leader the other boys had followed suit. Not that Phil meant to be unkind. Oh, dear, no. He was simply thoughtless and given to teasing, a fault common to most boys the world over. And so one day, passing the new boy's home, he saw him shaking the table cloth, and another time sweeping the steps. That was enough for Phil. He told the others of the class and immediately dubbed this new scholar 'Sissy.' Now, when a boy's real name is John Howard Wagner (called by his mother Jack), you can easily see how he would resent the nickname of 'Sissy.' Any right-minded boy would do so. From the first Jack had been something of a mystery. His home was about a mile from the school, a little brown house nestling at the end of a pretty lane leading from the main road. He had moved into the neighborhood in time for the opening of the fall term. At first he was quite popular, joining in all the sports at recess and during the noon hour, but as soon as the afternoon session closed he would start immediately for home. Again and again he was invited to a game of 'roll and tumble' on the soft autumn grass, or to join an ex-

pedition to the marsh, where grew the largest and fattest cat tails. But he always would give the same cheery answer, 'Not to-night, boys.' But when Phil Gray invited him once to stop long enough to plunk at his big glass marble and Jack refused, that was the last straw.

It was considered an honor by the boys to be allowed to try and win Phil's glassy. It was big and of a pale green tint, while glistening in the centre was a silvery looking bird. Jack's refusal was an insult to Phil and to Phil's glassy. 'Stuck up,' said Phil, and as being 'stuck up' was the biggest crime known in District No. 10, and as Phil's word was law, you can see how Jack became unpopular.

It was shortly after the episode of the marble that Phil had witnessed Jack at his household duties and had dubbed him 'Sissy.' The boy's heart was almost broken, and though a little explanation might have adjusted matters, there was just enough stubbornness in his make-up to keep him silent. And so the time passed drearily for the new boy until the latter part of October. Then for several days he was absent and Miss Mason, District No. 10's teacher, went to his house to find out the cause.

The next morning after her visit to Jack's home she called school as usual, and after opening exercises, said, 'We will not have the classes right away, as I want to tell you a little story.'

Every head was lifted in expectation, and numerous bright eyes were fastened on the teacher's face as she commenced speaking. Miss Mason was not a pretty woman, but she was a very wise one and knew by experience that there were better ways than scolding by which children could be shown their faults. So she spoke to them in her soft pretty voice, and they listened attentively.

'I visited Jack's home last night,' she commenced, 'and I saw some very, very sad things and some very lovely things. I found out that Jack had not been to school because his mother has been sick. How many of you knew that Mrs. Wagner was a cripple?'

Not a hand was raised, but little looks of sympathy were exchanged by the eager listeners.

'She cannot walk a step,' continued Miss Mason, 'but is obliged to sit all day long in a wheeled chair. She is a widow, too, Jack's father having died a year ago. She has some money, but is obliged to be very economical in order to educate her son. A woman goes to the house once a week to clean up and bake, but otherwise Jack is obliged to do most of the work. His mother directs things, but can do very little herself, except plain sewing. So that is the reason Jack was sweeping the other day when Phil passed.' She turned her eyes on Phil, who hung his head.

'I didn't know,' he said, in a low voice.

'I am sure you didn't,' answered his teacher. 'But now that we know how matters stand we can help Jack out in many ways. We can take turns in going to his home and helping when there is extra work to do. Mrs. Wagner is a lovely little woman and not a bit sad or dull, even though she is so afflicted, and I think it will do you all good to get acquainted with her. I am very proud of Jack, for a boy that will willingly give so much time to a sick mother is very apt to grow into a

manly man. He loves play as well as the rest of you, but as soon as school is out it is necessary for him to go right home. In a few months an aunt is coming to live with them, so he will have more time to play. But in the meantime we must do all we can for him. For my part, I admire a boy who is not ashamed to show his love for his mother.'

When recess came Phil Gray gave a little pointed talk to his mates and wound up with: 'I know I started it, but if I hear any of you ever call him "Sissy" again I'll—' Here Phil doubled up his fists in a belligerent manner. 'Say, boys,' and then followed a little low-toned conversation among the boys of Phil's age. It was evident that something fine was going to happen.

As it was Friday, Miss Mason was to spend the night and stay over Sunday with Mrs. Wagner, and after an early supper she and Jack did the dishes and then went to the pretty little sitting room for an evening's visit. Mrs. Wagner was sewing and Jack was trying his hand at carving, while Miss Mason read aloud to them. Suddenly Jack gave a startled exclamation. There at the window, peering in between the muslin curtains was something big and shiny and hideous. And then the boy clapped his hand. It was a 'Jack Lantern,' and what living boy does not like 'Jack Lanterns.' Both Mrs. Wagner and Miss Mason smiled, for they knew what was coming, and Jack ran to open the door. There were the boys who had bothered him at school. The very self-same boys. There was Phil Gray, Fred Reed, Will Johnson, Sam Pickens, and Bert Bell. They walked in half abashed at first, but seeing Miss Mason, who was in the secret, and who made them acquainted with Mrs. Wagner, they soon felt at home.

'It's a surprise, Jack,' whispered Bert Bell. Jack nodded, his eyes filling and his heart running over with gratitude. All differences were forgotten, and he was never to be 'Sissy' again. One of the boys had a basket of rosy apples and another a big bag of corn already popped. And after they had played all sorts of funny tricks, Miss Mason, under Mrs. Wagner's direction, made them the most delicious taffy imaginable. And what a feast they had. Mrs. Wagner enjoyed every minute and each boy fell in love with Jack's pretty helpless mother. They started home about nine o'clock, leaving the big Jack Lantern lighting up the kitchen window. But after they had started down the lane with its wealth of purple daisies and sumac Phil ran back. 'Jack,' he called, softly. The boy went up to him, and Phil said in a voice he tried to make rather rough, 'Here, Jack, this is for you,' at the same time pressing something into Jack's warm plump hand. The 'something' was a green glassy.

Phil's atonement was complete.

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