

## A PAGE FOR SABBATH SCHOLARS.

## Catching the Squirrel,

JOHNNY RAY had set a trap in the woodlands for squirrels.

The "woodland" was a large plot, of many acres of land, covered with beautiful trees, most of which were walnut. The squirrels loved that place. It was home for a great many families of them. Johnny thought he would like one of the sprightly little things for his own; and as it was in the spring, when there were no nuts on the trees, and when it might be supposed that the squirrels had eaten up all, or nearly all their winter's store of provisions, he thought one of them might be tempted by a nice yellow ear of corn, to go into his box-trap. He set it in the woodland one fine afternoon, and having dropped a few grains of corn about it for "decoys," as he called them, left it there. A large rock stood not far from the place, and behind it he could creep up quietly, now and then, to see if his trap was sprung.

Two days passed, but no squirrel was caught. On the third day, Johnny asked his sister Maud to go with him to look at his trap. They approached it very carefully, keeping behind the rock, and the boy, taking off his cap, peeped cautiously through a crevice. An exclamation of joy almost escaped them, but he checked it, and with a motion of his hand hushed his sister, and beckoned her to come and look. A bushy-tailed little fellow was nibbling the scattered grains near the mouth of the trap. They watched him almost breathlessly. He finished eating the decoys, and, lifting up his head, looked around. They could see his bright eyes. He gave a hop or two toward the trap, and again looked about him. Then he looked in, then around again, seemingly in doubt whether it was safe to venture further. But at last he walked into the trap, nibbled at the ear of corn, the cover fell, and he was a prisoner!

Now, before I tell you what became of him afterwards, I wish to say that I have seen more than one boy and girl who seemed to me very much like that squirrel. When I see a child beginning to be a little disobedient to parents, because he thinks it pleasanter to have his own way than to obey them; when I hear a boy using words which, though not the worst that might be spoken, but such as he would feel unwilling his parents should hear; when I learn that a girl does or says things when out of sight of her mother, which would grieve that mother's heart, then I think—that girl, that boy, is picking up the decoys which have been dropped by a being very different from little Johnny Ray, for he did not wish to harm the squirrel; they are picking up the shining grains, which the great trap-setter, who is the evil one, has made to look very inviting to the young and thoughtless, and strewn about the entrance to a place

where he hopes to make those dear children his prisoners for ever.

The little squirrel could hardly be blamed, for he could not think, as you can, and the corn was sweet to his taste. So the beginnings of sin may be sweet to you, but you know to what they lead.

Johnny took up the trap to carry it home. He could hear the imprisoned squirrel scratching and struggling in his fright at being shut up in that strange dark place, and before he reached home he began to feel some misgivings about keeping the poor little fellow there. "I almost wish that he was back in the woodland," said Johnny to his sister Maud.

"Well, so do I; I'm sorry that he should be there in that box, when he has been so happy all day long."

"I mean to let him go!" said Johnny.

"Oh, that will be nice!" cried Maud. "But do you think he could find the way from here?"

"I'm afraid not; but we can go back to the woodland gate." And back again they went. Johnny set the trap down on the grass; then he lifted the cover a little way and looked in. The squirrel put his nose to the opening, and thrust out one of his pretty slender paws, as if begging to be let out. Johnny opened the trap wide. The squirrel sprang out, and was off in a twinkling, never stopping to look back till he was safely up in a walnut tree, and then he perched on one of the branches, giving his tail a whisk, as if he would say, "I will never be caught so again."

But the great trap-setter, of whom I have told you, is not so willing to let precious souls go out of his snare, when he has once caught them. Look out, carefully, and prayerfully, for his decoys. He tries to make little sins appear quite harmless. He makes them very attractive, and thus he tempts on to go nearer and nearer destruction. Our Lord has taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." And the voice of Wisdom to every child is, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

## A Kiss for God.

A beautiful instance of a child's apprehension of spiritual truth occurred amongst the children in St. Luke's Hospital recently. A boy, between seven and eight years of age, for several months past an inmate of the hospital, suddenly bent forward, as he sat up in his little bed, and impressed a kiss upon the air.

"Who is that for?" asked a child lying next him.

"For God," was the reply.

"But God won't stoop down to get it."

"No," he answered, "but Jesus will give it to him for me."

These are the exact words of the children.