

his sister Maud to go with him to look at his trap. They approached it very carefully, keeping behind the rock, and then Johnny, taking off his cap, peeped cautiously through a crevice. An exclamation of joy almost escaped him, 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 open 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 farther. 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, perhaps, that might be spoken, are such as he would feel unwilling his parents should hear; when I learn that a girl says or does 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 forever.

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 his 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 misgiving about keeping the poor little fellow there. "I almost wish 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 down the trap 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-door. 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 one to go nearer and nearer to 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."—*Uncle Paul's Stories.*

#### Good use of a Sermon.

Mr. Nott, a missionary to one of the islands in the Pacific ocean, preached a sermon one day on the words, "Let him that stole steal no more." In the sermon he said it was a duty to return things that had formerly been stolen.

The next morning, when he opened his door, he saw a number of natives sitting on the ground around his house. He was surprised to see them there so early, and asked why they had come. "We have not been able to sleep all night," they said. "We were at chapel yesterday, and heard you say from the word of God that Jehovah commanded us not to steal; whereas we worshipped a God who we thought would protect thieves. We have stolen. All those things that we have brought with us are stolen goods." Then one of the men held up a saw, saying, "I stole this from the carpenter of such a ship." Others held up knives and various tools.

"Why have you brought them to me?" asked Mr. Nott. "Take them home and wait till the ships from which you stole them come again, and return them, with a present besides. The people begged Mr. Nott to keep the things until they could find the owners. One man who had stolen from a missionary then being on another island, took a voyage of seventy miles to restore the goods.