

There are lots of squirrels in there and we might be able to catch one. Will you come?' 'I'll see,' said Jamie. That was his first mistake. He should have answered that he must go directly home when school was dismissed, but he said, 'I'll see.'

That made it hard for him to study during the afternoon and his teacher wondered why she had to prompt him more than usual. He was mentally debating the question whether he should go to the woods or refuse.

Now, Mrs. Clark had a habit which she had learned from her own mother, of requiring her child to study Bible verses on Sunday afternoons. On the previous Sunday Jamie had learned these words: 'My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.' What a pity it was that he did not think of them when he was tempted to do wrong. His father had instructed him that it was his duty to go directly home every day after school. His mother had made a law that he must do it. Might not these words have helped him to obey? But unfortunately Jamie was thinking more of what he wanted to do than of what he ought to do, and the thing that he wanted was to go with Will Scott.

School was dismissed at three o'clock instead of four, as Will had told him was to be the case, and the two boys met near the door.

'Have you the money for your car fare?' asked Will. 'Yes. Why do you want to know?'

'Cause, if you haven't got to pay carfare you may as well get some buns, so that we can both have a lunch. I know where to get some good ones with sugar on top.'

Now, if Jamie had a particular fondness for anything it was for sugared buns. So, having put himself under Will's guidance, it was easy to obey the suggestion to visit the baker's. This took at least a half hour, and it was almost four o'clock when the boys were fairly started on their homeward way.

They soon entered a wood path, and in the heart of the woods they found numberless things to attract their attention. They saw several squirrels, and climbed two or three trees for birds' nests, and examined a large number of chestnut burrs containing very small nuts. So they strolled along with no thought

of time until Jamie suddenly said:

'Why, Will, it's growing dark! What time must it be?'

Will looked about him and decided that it must be after sunset. We'd better hurry along, old fellow. We've got off the path somehow, but I'll soon find it. Don't be alarmed.' But Jamie was greatly alarmed, for in the first place he did not know how they were going to reach home, and in the next place he did not know what might be in store for him when he did get there. So in real distress he helped Will to look for the path. After some wandering they found it, and then they went as swiftly as possible toward home. They emerged from the woods near the house where Will lived, and there, coming along the road in a buggy were Mr. and Mrs. Clark. Jamie saw, though it was nearly dark that his father and mother looked very anxious. 'Where have you been, my son?' exclaimed his mother. 'You don't know how worried we have been. We were on the way to the school building to inquire for you.'

Will skulked off toward home, leaving his companion to explain matters as best he could. Now Jamie was an honest boy, and he told the truth at once, without trying to excuse himself in any way. 'Do you think you deserve punishment?' asked his father. 'I'm sure I do,' replied Jamie, 'Well, I'm not going to punish you this time, but if I hear of your taking any more walks with Will Scott I shall certainly put you in the village school again.'

But Jamie never did.

Two Wood Piles

'Ho, hum,' sighed Roy Miller, as he sauntered out to the back yard and stood looking at the wood which had just been drawn into the yard. 'That all has to be sawed and split and piled. For once I wish I had an older brother.' And he shrugged his shoulders as he started toward the shed for the saw.

Roy was not the only boy in the neighborhood who had to face a pile of wood that afternoon. As he came out from the shed he noticed that Luke Stafford and James Bent were both at the same kind of work. These two boys lived just across the street from each other,

and before Roy went to work he stood and watched them for a few minutes.

James was busy piling wood that he had already sawed and split, and it made an even, regular pile that any boy might have been proud of.

'That's the way Jim always works,' thought Roy, with an admiring glance at the result of his friend's labors.

Just then the minister passed by the Bents' front gate. 'All done but sandpapering, James?' he enquired, with a smile.

James blushed at the implied compliment and answered: 'Pretty near, sir.'

Just then Roy's attention was attracted by the voice of Luke Stafford across the way. Luke's load of wood had been in the yard for about a week, but none of it was piled and only a few sticks, lying in a heap beside him, had been sawed. Now he called out in drawling tones: 'Maw, how many sticks do you need to-day?'

The sharp contrast between the two boys that he was watching struck Roy as decidedly comical and he sat down upon his own load of wood and laughed. Then he picked up the saw and went to work with a will.

'I may not be able to rival Jim,' he said to himself as he sawed; 'but I am bound I won't be like Luke, not if I have to stay up and saw nights.'

When Mrs. Miller came out to call Roy to supper she looked in surprise at the wood which he had put in order.

'Why, Roy, how much you have done!' she said. 'I am glad to see you take hold of your task so well.'

'Oh,' replied Roy. 'I didn't relish the undertaking when I began; but I had an object-lesson which did me good.'

'What was that?' asked his mother, looking interested.

'It was the contrast between Jim's and Luke's wood,' replied Roy, pointing as he spoke.

And Mrs. Miller, who knew both boys well, looked and laughed; and then she said:

'I like the choice you made of patterns.'

And the pattern proved to be one which lasted Roy all his life. If he was tempted to shirk any task after that he was sure to hear Luke's lazy tones, as he asked, 'How many sticks do you need to-day?'—Julia Darrow Cowes, in 'Young People's Weekly.'