

of anxiety: "Has anyone seen Willy?"

"I saw him getting a patty tin of sugar--but that was a long time ago," volunteered one child.

"I saw him eating bread and butter over there," said another pointing vaguely.

No Willy was to be found. They searched the sugar house, all the dark little corners; they looked all around the wood pile and behind the nearest stumps.

"I told you he'd make trouble," complained one unpleasant little girl, always glad for an excuse to feel superior. "I wouldn't have brought him!"

Lucy began to cry: "What will my mother say!"

"Don't worry, Lucy," said Mr. Atwood, who in spite of his blustering ways could be gentle with children. "We'll organize a search and find him in a jiffy. He's too little to go far. He must have just strayed a little ways."

By this time it was quite dark and the friendly woods of the afternoon had turned into frightening jungles. The children huddled around the door of the sugar shack from which still glowed a comforting blaze, while the men--the two farmers, the sap gatherers, the sugar "cooks"--spread out over the trails to look for the presumably wandering and lost Willie.

They went to the ends of the open trails and back again.

No Willie!

They held a consultation, lighted a few more lanterns and started out again.

One of the waiting children repeated with relish a story