

CHAPTER VIII

Brother North Wind Proves a Friend

DANNY Meadow Mouse had seen nothing of old Granny Fox or Reddy Fox for several days. Every morning the first thing he did, even before he had breakfast, was to climb up to one of his little round doorways and peep out over the beautiful white meadows, to see if there was any danger near. But every time he did this, Danny used a different doorway. “For,” said Danny to himself, “if any one should happen, just happen, to see me this morning, they might be waiting just outside my doorway to catch me to-morrow morning.” You see there is a great deal of wisdom in the little head that Danny Meadow Mouse carries on his shoulders.

But the first day and the second day and the third day he saw nothing of old Granny Fox or of Reddy Fox, and he began to enjoy running through his tunnels under the snow and scurrying across from one doorway to another on top of the snow, just as he had before the Foxes had tried so hard to

catch him. But he hadn’t forgotten, as Granny Fox had hoped he would. No, indeed, Danny Meadow Mouse hadn’t forgotten. He was too wise for that.

One morning, when he started to climb up to one of his little doorways, he found that it was closed. Yes, sir, it was closed. In fact, there wasn’t any doorway. More snow had fallen from the clouds in the night and had covered up every one of the little round doorways of Danny Meadow Mouse.

“Ha!” said Danny, “I shall have a busy day, a very busy day, opening all my doorways. I’ll eat my breakfast, and then I’ll go to work.”

So Danny Meadow Mouse ate a good breakfast of seeds which he had stored in the hollow in the old fence-post buried under the snow, and then he began work on the nearest doorway. It really wasn’t work at all, for you see the snow was soft and light, and Danny dearly loved to dig in it. In a few minutes he had made a wee hole through which he could peep up at jolly, round Mr. Sun. In a few minutes more he had made it big enough to put his head out. He looked this way and he looked that way. Far, far off on the top of a tree he could see old Roughleg the Hawk, but he was so far away that Danny didn’t fear him at all.

“I don’t see anything or anybody to be afraid of,” said Danny and poked his head out a little farther.

Then he sat and studied everything around him a long, long time. It was a beautiful white world, a very beautiful white world. Everything was so white and pure and beautiful that it didn't seem possible that harm or danger for anyone could even be thought of. But Danny Meadow Mouse learned long ago that things are not always what they seem, and so he sat with just his little head sticking out of his doorway and studied and studied. Just a little way off was a little heap of snow.

"I don't remember that," said Danny. "And I don't remember anything that would make that. There isn't any little bush or old log or anything underneath it. Perhaps rough Brother North Wind heaped it up, just for fun."

But all the time Danny Meadow Mouse kept studying and studying that little heap of snow. Pretty soon he saw rough Brother North Wind coming his way and tossing the snow about as he came. He caught a handful from the top of the little heap of snow that Danny was studying, and when he had passed, Danny's sharp eyes saw something red there. It was just the color of the cloak old Granny Fox wears.

"Granny Fox, you can't fool me!
I see you plain as plain can be!"

shouted Danny Meadow Mouse and dropped down out of sight, while old Granny Fox shook the snow from her red cloak and, with a snarl of disappointment and anger, slowly started for the Green Forest, where Reddy Fox was waiting for her.