

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *Danny Meadow Mouse Returns a Kindness*

THERE Peter Rabbit lay. He had dragged that piece of stake a long way, a very long way, indeed. But now he could drag it no farther, for it had caught in the bramble bushes. So Peter just dropped on the snow and cried. Yes, sir, he cried! You see he was so tired and worn out and frightened, and his leg was so stiff and sore and hurt him so! And then it was so dreadful to actually get home and be stopped right on your very own doorstep. So Peter just lay there and cried. Just supposing old Granny Fox should come poking around and find Peter caught that way! All she would have to do would be to get hold of that hateful stake caught in the bramble bushes and pull Peter out where she could get him. Do you wonder that Peter cried?

By and by he became aware that someone was wiping away his tears. It was Danny Meadow Mouse. And Danny was singing in a funny little voice. Pretty soon Peter stopped crying and listened,

and this is what he heard:

“Isn’t any use to cry!  
Not a bit! Not a bit!  
Wipe your eyes and wipe ‘em dry!  
Use your wit! Use your wit!  
Just remember that to-morrow  
Never brings a single sorrow.  
Yesterday has gone forever  
And to-morrow gets here never.  
Chase your worries all away;  
Nothing’s worse than just to-day.”

Peter smiled in spite of himself.

“That’s right! That’s right! Smile away, Peter Rabbit. Smile away! Your troubles, sir, are all to-day. And between you and me, I don’t believe they are so bad as you think they are. Now you lie still just where you are, while I go see what can be done.”

With that off whisked Danny Meadow Mouse as spry as you please, in spite of his lame leg, and in a few minutes Peter knew by little twitches of the wire on his leg that Danny was doing something at the other end. He was. Danny Meadow Mouse had set out to gnaw that piece of stake all to splinters. So there he sat and gnawed and gnawed and gnawed. Jolly, round, red Mr. Sun climbed higher and higher

in the sky, and Danny Meadow Mouse grew hungry, but still he kept right on gnawing at that bothersome stake.

By and by, happening to look across the snow-covered Green Meadows, he saw something that made his heart jump. It was Farmer Brown's boy coming straight over towards the dear Old Briar-patch.

Danny didn't say a word to Peter Rabbit, but gnawed faster than ever.

Farmer Brown's boy was almost there when Danny stopped gnawing. There was only a tiny bit of the stake left now, and Danny hurried to tell Peter Rabbit that there was nothing to stop him now from going to his most secret retreat in the very heart of the Old Briar-patch. While Peter slowly dragged his way along, Danny trotted behind to see that the wire did not catch on the bushes.

They had safely reached Peter Rabbit's secretest retreat when Farmer Brown's boy came up to the edge of the dear Old Briar-patch.

"So this is where that rabbit that killed our peach tree lives!" said he. "We'll try a few snares and put you out of mischief."

And for the rest of the afternoon Farmer Brown's boy was very busy around the edge of the Old Briar-patch.