

CHAPTER XXI
*An Exciting Day for
Danny Meadow Mouse*

DANNY Meadow Mouse started along one of his private little paths very early one morning. He was on his way to get a supply of a certain kind of grass seed of which he is very fond. He had been thinking about that seed for some time and waiting for it to get ripe. Now it was just right, as he had found out the day before by a visit to the place where this particular grass grew. The only trouble was it grew a long way from Danny's home, and to reach it he had to cross an open place where the grass was so short that he couldn't make a path under it.

"I feel it in my bones that this is going to be an exciting day," said Danny to himself as he trotted along. "I suppose that if I were really wise, I would stay nearer home and do without that nice seed. But nothing is really worth having unless it is worth working for, and that seed will taste all the better if I have hard work getting it."

So he trotted along his private little path, his ears wide open, and his eyes wide open, and his little nose carefully testing every Merry Little Breeze who happened along for any scent of danger which it might carry. Most of all he depended upon his ears, for the grass was so tall that he couldn't see over it, even when he sat up. He had gone only a little way when he thought he heard a queer rustling behind him. He stopped to listen. There it was again, and it certainly was right in the path behind him! He didn't need to be told who was making it. There was only one who could make such a sound as that--Mr. Blacksnake.

Now Danny can run very fast along his private little paths, but he knew that Mr. Blacksnake could run faster. "If my legs can't save me, my wits must," thought Danny as he started to run as fast as ever he could. "I must reach that fallen old hollow fence-post."

He was almost out of breath when he reached the post and scurried into the open end. He knew by the sound of the rustling that Mr. Blacksnake was right at his heels. Now the old post was hollow its whole length, but halfway there was an old knot-hole just big enough for Danny to squeeze through. Mr. Blacksnake didn't know anything about that hole; and because it was dark inside the old post,

he didn't see Danny pop through it. Danny ran back along the top of the log and was just in time to see the tip of Mr. Blacksnake's tail disappear inside. Then what do you think Danny did? Why, he followed Mr. Blacksnake right into the old post, but in doing it he didn't make the least little bit of noise.

Mr. Blacksnake kept right on through the old post and out the other end, for he was sure that that was the way Danny had gone. He kept right on along the little path. Now Danny knew that he wouldn't go very far before he found out that he had been fooled, and of course he would come back. So Danny waited only long enough to get his breath and then ran back along the path to where another little path branched off. For just a minute he paused.

"If Mr. Blacksnake follows me, he will be sure to think that of course I have taken this other little path," thought Danny, "so I won't do it."

Then he ran harder than ever, until he came to a place where two little paths branched off, one to the right and one to the left. He took the latter and scampered on, sure that by this time Mr. Blacksnake would be so badly fooled that he would give up the chase. And Danny was right.

"Brains are better far than speed
As wise men long ago agreed,"

said Danny, as he trotted on his way for the grass seed he liked so well. "I felt it in my bones that this would be an exciting day. I wonder what next."