



CHAPTER 2

WHITEFOOT SEES QUEER THINGS



Whitefoot had spent the winter undisturbed in Farmer Brown's sugar-house. He had almost forgotten the meaning of fear. He had come to look on that sugar-house as belonging to him. It wasn't until Farmer Brown's boy came over to prepare things for sugaring that Whitefoot got a single real fright. The instant Farmer Brown's boy opened the door, Whitefoot scampered down under the pile of wood to his snug little nest, and there he lay, listening to the strange sounds. At last he could stand it no longer and crept to a place where he could peep out and see what was going on. It didn't take him long to discover that this great two-legged creature was not looking for him, and right away he felt better. After a while Farmer Brown's boy went away, and Whitefoot had the little sugar-house to himself again.

But Farmer Brown's boy had carelessly left the door wide open. Whitefoot didn't like that open door. It made him nervous. There was nothing to prevent those who hunt him from walking right in. So the rest of that night Whitefoot felt uncomfortable and anxious.

He felt still more anxious when next day Farmer Brown's boy returned and became very busy putting things to right. Then Farmer Brown himself came and strange things began to happen. It became as warm as in summer. You see Farmer Brown had built a fire under the evaporator. Whitefoot's curiosity kept him at a place where he could peep out and watch all that was done. He saw Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy pour pails of sap into a great pan. By and by a delicious odor filled the sugar-house. It didn't take him a great while to discover that these two-legged creatures were so busy that he had nothing to fear from them, and so he crept out to

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watch. He saw them draw the golden syrup from one end of the evaporator and fill shining tin cans with it. Day after day they did the same thing. At night when they had left and all was quiet inside the sugar-house, Whitefoot stole out and found delicious crumbs where they had eaten their lunch. He tasted that thick golden stuff and found it sweet and good. Later he watched them make sugar and nearly made himself sick that night when they had gone home, for they had left some of that sugar where he could get at it. He didn't understand these queer doings at all. But he was no longer afraid.