

Chapter II - Prairie-Dog Town

LYING in every direction, and quite filling the little hollow, were round mounds of earth, each one having a hole in the center. The mounds were about two feet high and as big around as a wash-tub, and the edges of the holes were pounded hard and smooth by the pattering feet of the little creatures that lived within.

"Isn't it funny!" said Chubbins, staring at the mounds.

"Awful," replied Twinkle, staring too. "Do you know, Chub, there are an'mals living in every single one of those holes?"

"What kind?" asked Chubbins.

"Well, they're something like squirrels, only they aren't squirrels," she explained. "They're prairie-dogs."

"Don't like dogs," said the boy, looking a bit uneasy.

"Oh, they're not dogs at all," said Twinkle; "they're soft and fluffy, and gentle."

"Do they bark?" he asked.

"Yes; but they don't bite."

"How d' you know, Twink?"

"Papa has told me about them, lots of times. He says they're so shy that they run into their holes when anybody's around; but if you keep quiet and watch, they'll stick their heads out in a few minutes."

"Let's watch," said Chubbins.

"All right," she agreed.

Very near to some of the mounds was a raised bank, covered with soft grass; so the children stole softly up to this bank and lay down upon it in such a way that their heads just stuck over the top of it, while their bodies were hidden from the eyes of any of the folks of Prairie-Dog Town.

"Are you comferble, Chub?" asked the little girl.

"Yes."

"Then lie still and don't talk, and keep your eyes open, and perhaps the an'mals will stick their heads up."

"All right," says Chubbins.

So they kept quiet and waited, and it seemed a long time to both the boy and the girl before a soft, furry head popped out of a near-by hole, and two big, gentle brown eyes looked at them curiously.