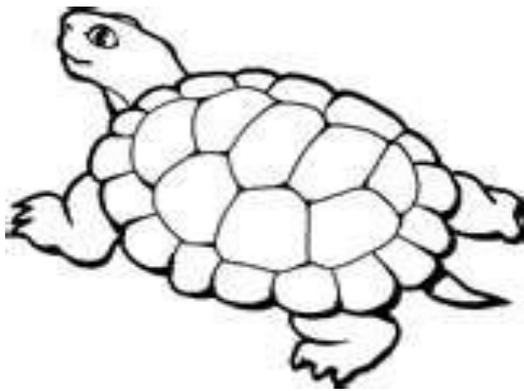


## The Wonderful Turtle



Near to a Chippewa village lay a large lake, and in this lake there lived an enormous turtle. This was no ordinary turtle, as he would often come out of his home in the lake and visit with his Indian neighbors. He paid the most of his visits to the head chief, and on these occasions would stay for hours, smoking and talking with him.

The chief, seeing that the turtle was very smart and showed great wisdom in his talk, took a great fancy to him, and whenever any puzzling subject came up before the chief, he generally sent for Mr. Turtle to help him decide.

One day there came a great misunderstanding between different parties of the tribe, and so stirred up became both sides that it threatened to cause bloodshed. The chief was unable to decide for either faction, so he said, "I will call Mr. Turtle. He will judge for you."

Sending for the turtle, the chief vacated his seat for the time being, until the turtle should hear both sides, and decide which was in the right. The turtle came, and taking the chief's seat, listened very attentively to both sides, and thought long before he gave his decision. After thinking long and studying each side carefully, he came to the conclusion to decide in favor of both. This would not cause any hard feelings. So he gave them a lengthy speech and showed them where they were both in the right, and wound up by saying:

"You are both in the right in some ways and wrong in others. Therefore, I will

say that you both are equally in the right."

When they heard this decision, they saw that the turtle was right, and gave him a long cheer for the wisdom displayed by him. The whole tribe saw that had it not been for this wise decision there would have been a great shedding of blood in the tribe. So they voted him as their judge, and the chief, being so well pleased with him, gave to him his only daughter in marriage.

The daughter of the chief was the most beautiful maiden of the Chippewa nation, and young men from other tribes traveled hundreds of miles for an opportunity to make love to her, and try to win her for a wife. It was all to no purpose. She would accept no one, only him whom her father would select for her. The turtle was very homely, but as he was prudent and wise, the father chose him, and she accepted him.

The young men of the tribe were very jealous, but their jealousy was all to no purpose. She married the turtle. The young men would make sport of the chief's son-in-law. They would say to him "How did you come to have so flat a stomach?" the turtle answered them, saying:

"My friends, had you been in my place, you too would have flat stomachs. I came by my flat stomach in this way" The Chippewas and Sioux had a great battle, and the Sioux, too numerous for the Chippewas, were killing them off so fast that they had to run for their lives. I was on the Chippewa side and some of the Sioux were pressing five of us, and were gaining on us very fast. Coming to some high grass, I threw myself down flat on my face, and press my stomach close to the ground, so the pursuers could not see me. They passed me and killed the four I was with. After they had gone back, I arose and lo! My stomach was as you see it now. So hard had I press to the ground that it would not assume its original shape again."

After he had explained the cause of his deformity to them they said: "The

Turtle is brave. We will bother him no more." Shortly after this the Sioux made an attack upon the Chippewas, and every one deserted the village. The Turtle could not travel as fast as the rest and was left behind. It being an unusually hot day in the fall, the Turtle grew very thirsty and sleepy. Finally scenting water, he crawled towards the point from whence the scent came, and coming to a large lake jumped in and had a bath, after which he swam towards the center and dived down, and finding some fine large rocks at the bottom, he crawled in among them and fell asleep. He had his sleep and then arose to the top.

Swimming to shore he found it was summer. He had slept all winter. The birds were singing, and the green grass and leaves gave forth a sweet scent.

He crawled out and started out looking for the Chippewa camp. He came upon the camp several days after he had left his winter quarters, and going around in search of his wife, found her at the extreme edge of the village. She was nursing her baby, and as he asked to see it, she showed it to him. When he saw that although it was a lovely baby it did not resemble him in any respect, he became very angry and went off to a large lake, where he contented himself with catching flies and insects and living on seaweed the remainder of his life.

