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Indian Legend

The Bear and Lizard

BY

GERTRUDE KETTLEWOOD

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Many, many years ago when the world was young the Indians believed that all the wild animals were people and had the power of conversing with each other.

About this time there lived a bear and lizard family, as next door neighbors.

The lizards were very gentle and kind hearted and did all they could to establish friendship between the two families, but the bears are just the reverse; they had a very cross disposition, and were always trying to stir up quarrels.

The Coyote who lived with the bears sided them greatly in these neighborly conflicts by carrying tales back and forth between the two families.

He wanted to be friendly with both families, as he made his home with the bears and often graced or disgraced (just as you wish to call it) the lizards' well-filled table with his presence.

Instead of trying to bring the two

families together he would tell many untruths and make them greater enemies.

One summer when the lizards were out gathering manzanite berries they were attacked by the bears and killed with the exceptions of the grandmother and little baby lizard, as they had stayed at home.

The bears thought they couldn't do anything anyhow as the grandmother was too old, and the baby too young.

The bears would often visit these two that were left and tell them how they had slew their people and make them feel very badly. As the little lizard grew older he began to feel a great desire for revenge, but being very wise said nothing of it.

Now in this family of bears there were five members, not including the Coyote.

The oldest and most powerful of these bears was the master of the house and he did no work, but made his brothers toil for him. One day when he was at home alone, lying down in front of the fire-place, he saw a shadow fall across the floor and looking up the chimney he saw the little lizard peeping down at him.

He immediately began telling him how he had slaughtered his father and