

# LITTLE GROWLING BIRD IN WINDEGO LAND



Keeche Muk-kee-kensuk, the Great Turtle (which Growling Bird had so cleverly captured) did not go into the Soup-Pot after all, although Little Bear, angered at being bitten, had vowed that such would be its fate! Instead of killing and cooking the turtle Nokomis thought it would be better to mark its shell with the children's names and the date and let it go free again. As the Turtle People (unless killed) often live to a great age, she thought that this one might carry their "sign" when they had grown up and forgotten all about turtles and their childish adventures in Windego Land. So she drove sharp-pointed sticks in the ground, to fence in and keep Turtle from moving, and gave Yellow Hair a piece of red chalk to mark the letters or initials on the reptile's back. Thus she began to cut them deep into the tough shell with her sharp knife.



Suddenly Big Bear, who was watching the operation, began to sniff the air suspiciously! "Woof!" he said, "I SMELL STRANGERS!" Looking down the river he spied, afar off, a canoe with two people in it. They seemed to be heading straight for the Camp, but Nokomis and the others were too busy putting the children's "brand" on the turtle to pay any attention. When the carving was finished and the sticks removed, Turtle scrambled and slid into the water, thinking himself very lucky to escape so easily! By this time the canoe was close at hand, and, as it turned to approach the bank, they saw to their astonishment that a Paleface, a WHITE MAN, was sitting in the bow! It was (you have surely guessed it!) the little girl's FATHER, who, after searching for almost a year, had found his Fanny at last, safe and well, in the Refuge Ground of far-off Windego Land!



When Yellow Hair caught sight of the White Man's face she rushed forward, hardly believing her eyes! But when she made sure that it was really her father, she shrieked, "OH! PAPA!!!" and in another moment she was clasped in his arms and strained to his breast as if he would never let her go! Oh, what a joyful meeting it was—for those two, at least! But first you must be told how it all came about: If you have read the story of Little Growling Bird since the time Nokomis took him on a visit to the Indian Village, you may remember that Chief Red Feather carried the little paleface girl into camp in his arms. He had rescued her from some bad Indians who had stolen her from her home across Keeche Gummees, the Great Lake! Then it was that Nokomis begged Red Feather to let her take Fanny home with her to live in the Wigwam and be a companion to Little Growling Bird until her own people could be found.



In the spring, Chief Red Feather had sent a messenger to the nearest Paleface settlement, but many moons passed before the good news reached her father's ears. Then, you may be sure, he traveled day and night until he came to the Indian Village, whence Red Feather brought him to the Refuge Ground in his bark canoe. The White Chief brought a whole packful of presents for the Indians, and another and more valuable one for the good Nokomis who had been so kind to his little girl! Of course, he did not take Fanny away at once; it would not have been polite to have done so without having first a big "Medicine Smoke and Powwow." Nokomis now prepared food, and, after all had eaten, she brought forth pipes and Indian tobacco. Putting on her fine red blanket (because there was "company") she then lighted a small council fire and asked that every one be seated.



Although Yellow Hair loved her father dearly, she could hardly bear the thought of leaving her good, kind friends. She loved Nokomis as a mother (her own being dead), and Growling Bird, too, was very dear to her. Big Bear, Aundak—yes, and even Little Bear—she loved them all! When her father saw how grieved every one was at the thought of separation, he proposed that Nokomis should let Growling Bird go along. He promised to take good care of him and to send him to school with Fanny, saying that he would learn many things that would be useful to him when he grew up. Nokomis knew how lonesome Growling Bird would be without his little playmate, and, although it hurt her to do it, she at last consented to the plan. She hoped, too, that when he returned he might be able to teach his own people the secret of the White Man's "Medicine"—which every one knows to be very powerful indeed!



Then began a great hurrying and packing of clothes and playthings in the Birch-Bark Box which Big Bear carried down to the canoe. Little Bear, suddenly growing generous, brought two cans of maple-syrup (which did not belong to him), and Aundak brought forth his secret hoard of "Megs," or Indian shell-money, as a farewell gift; while Yellow Hair (to show her love) gave Nokomis the only treasure she possessed—her faithful Dolly! Then, when everything was aboard and Nokomis had taken a tearful leave of her "babies," the canoe glided out into the stream, the children waving farewells and crying, "Boozhoo! Boozhoo! Good-bye to Everybody!" And so they passed away from the Happy Refuge Ground in the Wonderful Windego Land! And to all the paleface children who have been following his adventures, Little Growling Bird also wishes to say: "Good-bye, Friends; Good-bye, Everybody!" A. T. C.