

And the Indian Agent wrote to the Great Father that he was giving them the food and they were eating it. And when a boy who had been among white men and learned to read, wrote to the Great Father that the people were starving, the Indian Agent got two old Indians to sign a paper by their thumb marks saying that what the boy wrote was not true. He fooled the old Indians. He made them think the Great Father said that the people must have food or they would starve, but nobody had starved to death yet.

In the night time, the sleeping children dreamed of eating meat broth, and they said, "Mamma, give me more! Where did you find the meat?" The mothers cried, but they did not awaken the dreaming children, for they thought the spirit people were feeding them while they slept.

THE COMMITTEE OF OLD MEN

A committee of old men went to the Indian Agent asking for food, and the oldest man said, "My friend, we know that you have lost your mother. We know it is your sad heart that makes your mind mean. Your mother is in the spirit village, happy with the Indians. There is her picture hanging over your desk. She has a good face and she pities God's poor ones. The people come in here to look at your mother's good face, when you think they come to bother you.

A man's heart is his mother's heart and her heart is his heart. And when a man loses his mother it makes his mind mean for a year. And the more a man loves his mother the meaner it makes his mind to lose her. So we honor you because your mind is so mean this winter.

But remember, that we did not cause your mother to die. If the little white doctor, Foolish Grasshopper, had let us come we would have cured her with the pow-wow."

The Indian Agent was wild. To call him mean was enough. But the thought of an Indian pow-wow by his dying mother was too much. He hated the Indians and all their customs. He leaped to his feet and shouted, "Out of here, rascals! You came here to tell me that you are starving and that's a lie! As long as a man can stand and walk he is not starving, and if he tells me he is, I'll imprison him in the guard house and give him no food or fire. Get out of here, go!"

Before the committee had time to go, the Indian Agent went into the next room and bolted the door behind him. And the Indians heard him roll down the curtain to make the room dark.

The old man said, "Perhaps he was offended at what I said. I thought I was praising him," And another old man said, "A white man's mind is strange. An Indian does not know how to talk to him politely." And another old man said, "Why don't he go from house to house and see with his own eyes that we have no food? And this man's boy (who had been among white