

ed animal, or what?" And the Indian Agent said "A rich, wicked, thieving Indian Agent died. He went to the spirit village. The spirit people turned him into the terrible rat. They threw him into the Missouri River. He came here swimming down the river. He has wild looking eyes and a long, hairless tail. He is so wicked that he will eat his own son and nephew if he is hungry. I was afraid when I saw him in the people's food house. I ran out of the food house and locked the door. And I have not unlocked it since. I hope the terrible rat will not charm our minds, for if he does, he may eat up all the people in the country.

### WHY NOT KILL THE TERRIBLE RAT?

One of the committee, an old warrior with many coups, said, "Why not kill the terrible rat? If he has a family and his children have children, the people on the earth will all be eaten up. Let us be brave and fight with the terrible rat. I have a sacred bow made of ashwood made by my grandfather more than a hundred years ago. I have sacred arrows. They are honest arrows and they fly straight. We can save the people if we are not afraid to fight. Let us be brave!

The Indian Agent said, "All the soldiers in the world cannot kill the terrible rat. The people must make broth from something, and live as long as they can. And if anybody does kill the terrible rat he will come to life again, for the terrible rat is a mysterious rat.

Then the Indian Agent gave the old man lying on the sacred white Buffalo blanket, a large piece of meat and a pan full of biscuits and they carried him home.

### THE OLD MAN DIES

In a large and comfortable old fashioned Indian house made of split cottonwood logs and clay with the "holy earth" for the floor, the old man lay peacefully on the sacred white buffalo blanket. He did not eat the food given him by the Indian Agent. He said, "Give the food to the starving children and let me die. My mind is already in the spirit village.

The people gathered around the old man, singing the old sacred songs and beating softly on the old sacred drum. And they lighted the old sacred pipe, holding it toward the heavens, and toward the "holy earth," and toward the spirit village for the spirit people to smoke, after they had smoked it. And they touched the stem of the sacred pipe against the old man's lips so that he would remember his people and speak with them when he was gone to the spirit village. And while the night-wind was blowing through the dark streets of the starving village, the old man died.