

## **Chapter II Twinkle Discovers the Turtle Can Talk**

AT this sudden commotion in their water, the fishes darted away and disappeared in a flash. But Twinkle didn't mind that, for all her interest was now centered in the struggling turtle.

She knelt upon the grass and bent over to watch it, and just then she thought she heard a small voice say:

"It's no use; I can't do it!" and then the turtle drew its head and legs between the shells and remained still.

"Good gracious!" said Twinkle, much astonished. Then, addressing the turtle, she asked:

"Did you say anything, a minute ago?"

There was no reply. The turtle lay as quiet as if it were dead. Twinkle thought she must have been mistaken; so she picked up the turtle and held it in the palm of her hand while she got into the water again and waded slowly back to where she had left her shoes and stockings.

When she got home she put the mud-turtle in a tub which her papa had made by sawing a barrel in two. Then she put a little water into the tub and blocked it up by putting a brick under one side, so that the turtle could either stay in the water or crawl up the inclined bottom of the tub to where it was dry, whichever he pleased. She did this because mamma said that turtles sometimes liked to stay in the water and sometimes on land, and Twinkle's turtle could now take his choice. He couldn't climb up the steep sides of the tub and so get away, and the little girl thoughtfully placed crumbs of bread and fine bits of meat, where the turtle could get them whenever he felt hungry.

After that, Twinkle often sat for hours watching the turtle, which would crawl around the bottom of the tub, and swim in the little pool of water and eat the food placed before him in an eager and amusing way.

At times she took him in her hand and examined him closely, and then the mud-turtle would put out its little head and look at her with its bright eyes as curiously as the girl looked at him.

She had owned her turtle just a week, when she came to the tub one afternoon and held him in her hand, intending to feed her pet some scraps of

meat she had brought with her. But as soon as the turtle put out its head it said to her, in a small but distinct voice:

"Good morning, Twinkle."

She was so surprised that the meat dropped from her hand, and she nearly dropped the turtle, too. But she managed to control her astonishment, and asked, in a voice that trembled a little:

"Can you talk?"

"To be sure," replied the turtle; "but only on every seventh day--which of course is every Saturday. On other days I cannot talk at all."

"Then I really must have heard you speak when I caught you; didn't I?"

"I believe you did. I was so startled at being captured that I spoke before I thought, which is a bad habit to get into. But afterward I resolved not to answer when you questioned me, for I didn't know you then, and feared it would be unwise to trust you with my secret. Even now I must ask you not to tell any one that you have a turtle that knows how to talk."