

John Marshall was the first head of the Supreme Court. But he did not hide away and read his law books. He was a very jolly fellow.

He was more than six feet tall. He never bothered to stand up straight. His clothing was never very neat. In fact, he looked not at all like a great judge. And this led to some funny scenes.

One day he was walking in Richmond market. Many farmers were there with their crops. Some had just come from the fields. They were roughly dressed. But Marshall was dressed no better.

All at once a stranger stopped him. The man had just bought a turkey. He offered Marshall some coins to carry it for him. Marshall was amused that the man did not know him. And he accepted the job with delight. Just think! The head of the country's highest court working as an errand boy! What would the stranger have said if he had learned the truth?

Marshall had no false pride. Once, on a trip to North Carolina, he lost all of his money. There were holes in the pockets of his suit.

He sent the suit out to be fixed. But he acted too soon. For he had forgotten to pack another suit.

What could he do? He had to appear in court. And he did—in shabby old clothes he borrowed. The well-dressed people there didn't know what to make of him. Another man might have been embarrassed. But Marshall thought the stares were funny. He wrote his wife a cheery, joking letter about the whole affair.

Marshall drove an old carriage that was in as bad shape as his clothes. Or maybe *drove* is not the right word. For he found it hard to keep his mind on the road. His thoughts were all of the cases he was going to hear.

Most of the time the horse found its own way. Once, however, it failed. Somehow the carriage got caught on a small tree. And there it stayed. Marshall had no idea what to do.

At last a farmer came to his aid. With a yank he pulled the gig free.

Only later did the man learn who Marshall was. He shook his head. He said, "He may be the biggest lawyer in the United States. But he ain't got sense enough to back a gig off a sapling!"

Marshall would have agreed with him—and laughed. That was the kind of man he was. And yet he earned the title *Great Chief Justice*.

CHECK YOUR READING

1. The story says that John Marshall was
 - A bookish
 - B jolly
 - C short

2. Most of the time he did not
 - A wear shoes
 - B stand straight
 - C cut his hair

3. The adventure with the turkey happened
 - A in a barnyard
 - B at a state fair
 - C in a marketplace

4. The stranger thought Marshall was a poor man because of the way he
 - A dressed
 - B talked
 - C walked

5. He offered Marshall some money to
 - A buy the turkey
 - B clean the turkey
 - C carry the turkey

6. Marshall thought that working as an errand boy was
 - A embarrassing
 - B funny
 - C frightening

7. Marshall once lost all his money because he had holes in his
 - A pockets
 - B purse
 - C suitcase

8. He thought that wearing old clothes in court was a
 - A shame
 - B joke
 - C habit

9. Marshall's driving can best be described as
 - A skillful
 - B cowardly
 - C careless

10. The farmer who freed the carriage said that Marshall didn't have much
 - A sense
 - B fame
 - C courage