

truly he thought it was a ghost that stood before them—the ghost of the murdered Keelatee. And as the young brave strode forward, step by step, his savage gaze fixed upon the Chief, White Owl shrank back with terror in his snakish eyes.

Keelatee stretched out two mighty hands and caught the chief by the hair. He dragged him from the council stool, and flung him face downwards on the wolf robes with shattering force, then, unarmed, he stood over him, as a hound stands over a quivering hare.

The tribesmen groaned, and some of them hid their faces. This was no human man who dared to handle thus the Mighty Chief! Never before in the history of the northland had such a thing happened, and to-night the warriors believed they looked upon a ghost!

"No Chief, but a grass snake!" hissed Keelatee, as White Owl lay at his feet, afraid to look up, afraid to move. "Your tribe may be mightier than mine, White Owl, because there are many of you, but where are your warriors, where are your mighty men, that they stand thus with fear in their eyes, while I, a stranger, trample upon their Chief?"

Keelatee snatched the hunting knife from White Owl's belt, then he looked round the council tent defiantly, but no warrior stepped forward. He laughed. "O mighty Chief," he cried, mockingly, "I am about to kill thee. Is there not a brave—a squaw—a small papoose, who will come forth to defend thee? Is there not one in all your mighty tribe who will raise a hand to defend their mighty leader?"

Silence fell, and White Owl groaned and covered his face. When next the young brave spoke there was no mockery, no derision in his voice, only a terrible earnestness. "See here, White Grass Snake," he said, "I have shown myself a better man than you and all your warriors. The people of Long Valley may be few, but they are brave. They drink no firewater, they observe the law, above all things they live clean.

"For many snows, White Owl, thou hast tortured and oppressed my people. Thou hast brought hunger to our teepees, so that our little children perished during the lean months. Thou hast taxed us and beaten us so that we might never rise in strength against thee. Yet behold, one man has conquered thy whole tribe, without arms, without bloodshed. Have I spoken truly?"

White Owl glanced fearfully up, saw the hunting knife, and nodded, and again Keelatee's mocking laugh stabbed the chilly stillness of the tent. "It is not at my soul to murder one who is more helpless than an old squaw," he jeered. "I am not one to strike the weak, or to lead those who have faith in me out on to the rotten ice. The young people of Long Valley follow higher creeds than those, and because I have humbled you and your tribesmen to the very dust, I go satisfied."

And Keelatee went, while not a hand was raised to stay him.

II.

A few days later a messenger arrived at Long Valley with a warning from White Owl that, unless Keelatee was delivered to him, a prisoner, White Owl would destroy every man, woman and child in the teepees. Keelatee replied that he was leaving his tribe that night, and that they would see his face no more. He said that if a single member of the Long Valley tribe suffered harm, White Owl would have to deal with him Keelatee, and sooner or later, as sure as the moon follows the sun, White Owl would fall his victim. And that night Keelatee bade farewell to his tribe, and clad in his hunting gear he vanished into the shadows—an outcast.

Weakened with firewater, a nervous wreck of a man, White Owl had no desire to bring upon his own precious self the vengeance of Keelatee, who, he knew, would follow like a panther till his chance came. Why should he, moreover, kill the geese that laid the golden eggs? If he wiped out the Long Valley tribe his braves would be compelled to toil, he himself would be deprived of the luxuries he loved so well. Idle, degenerate, devoid of pride, he was content to swallow the terrible insult on the strength of his own having left his

tribe, which, he said, was all that really mattered.

But though Keelatee was gone, his fame as a mighty warrior and as a great hunter lived on, and that summer, when an awful terror fell upon the people of Moon Hill, his name was upon the lips of the old squaws. It was a terrible period, for it seemed that Satan himself haunted the surrounding forest. It began one night when the squaws were squatted round their fire—behind them the dim loneliness of the forest. Suddenly, from out the stillness, came the crying of a child. Sob after sob, wail after wail, the ghostly sound rose from the shadows, till one old squaw, heedless of the warnings of her friends, went out into the bush to search for the helpless infant.

The old squaw did not return, and next morning they found her mangled remains at the foot of a great cottonwood. On a stout branch above were certain marks which showed that a huge brute had crouched there, dropping upon the helpless woman as she passed below.

Thus began the reign of terror. The panther, for such it was, now haunted

as no resistance was offered, till finally it was unsafe to venture into the bush even at daytime.

White Owl, consuming still more firewater, believed that Keelatee was dead, that his spirit had entered the panther, and that his whole tribe was doomed. He ordered a runner to visit Long Valley to bring back a party of braves to hunt the panther. The runner refused to go, whereat he was threatened with torture—we have not far to look for the counter-personal of White Owl today. The runner went. He was told by the people of Long Valley that White Owl and his tribe might stew in their own grease—or words to that effect. He remained at Long Valley, and the people of Moon Hill set him down as yet another victim.

Then at the council fires of the squaws at Moon Hill, an old squaw got up one night. "Our men are not men at all," she said, "they are idlers, weaker than women. There is but one man who can rid us of this plague that has fallen upon us. His name is upon the lips of all. It is Keelatee."

"Keelatee is dead," answered another,

fire, he beheld a huge yellow form sneak forth from the shadows and tread out upon the tree that lay across the gulch.

Nimble as a deer Keelatee stepped from his hiding and barred the way. The panther crouched, its green eyes flashing fire, while an awful snarl, which reached the very teepees, stabbed the evening stillness.

The bow of the young warrior was taut, his hand was steady. Terrible and forbidding the panther crouched before him, and for fully ten seconds man and beast glared at one another. Then, even as the panther leapt, the arrow sped on its way. It entered the gleaming mouth, it passed downward and through, it buried its point in the very wood from which the great brute rose.

Keelatee stepped aside, while another dreadful snarl, striking terror through all the village, echoed across the front. But all was over, and the young brave called to the children of Moon Hill to bear away the carcass.

When the tribe beheld the panther, lying dead, a mighty shout went up from the throats of the braves, the squaws, and the children. "This is our chief," they cried. "Henceforth we will have for our leader a brave man and a mighty warrior. Keelatee shall be our leader."

And so it was. Thenceforth the people of Long Valley and the people of Moon Hill were one people—a mighty hunting race, led by one who was proud and gentle.

But even as Keelatee came forth from the shadows, White Owl departed into them—an outcast. That very night he stole away, and his tribesmen saw his face no more, for the law of the Indians says that a chief who has fallen from his place of eminence must leave his tribe for evermore.

After Fourscore Years

One Sunday morning in the year 1833, a family newly settled on the unfenced prairies of Illinois, awoke to find that the cattle had strayed in the night. The boys were sent to find them, and as they started, their mother called to them, "Boys, as you go, remember that it is the Sabbath day!"

Her husband heard her words, and they led him to think that the boys had not much to remind them that the Sabbath was different from other days. Accordingly, after they had returned with the cows, and had eaten their breakfast, he called his wife and children together, and had a simple household service of Bible-reading and prayer.

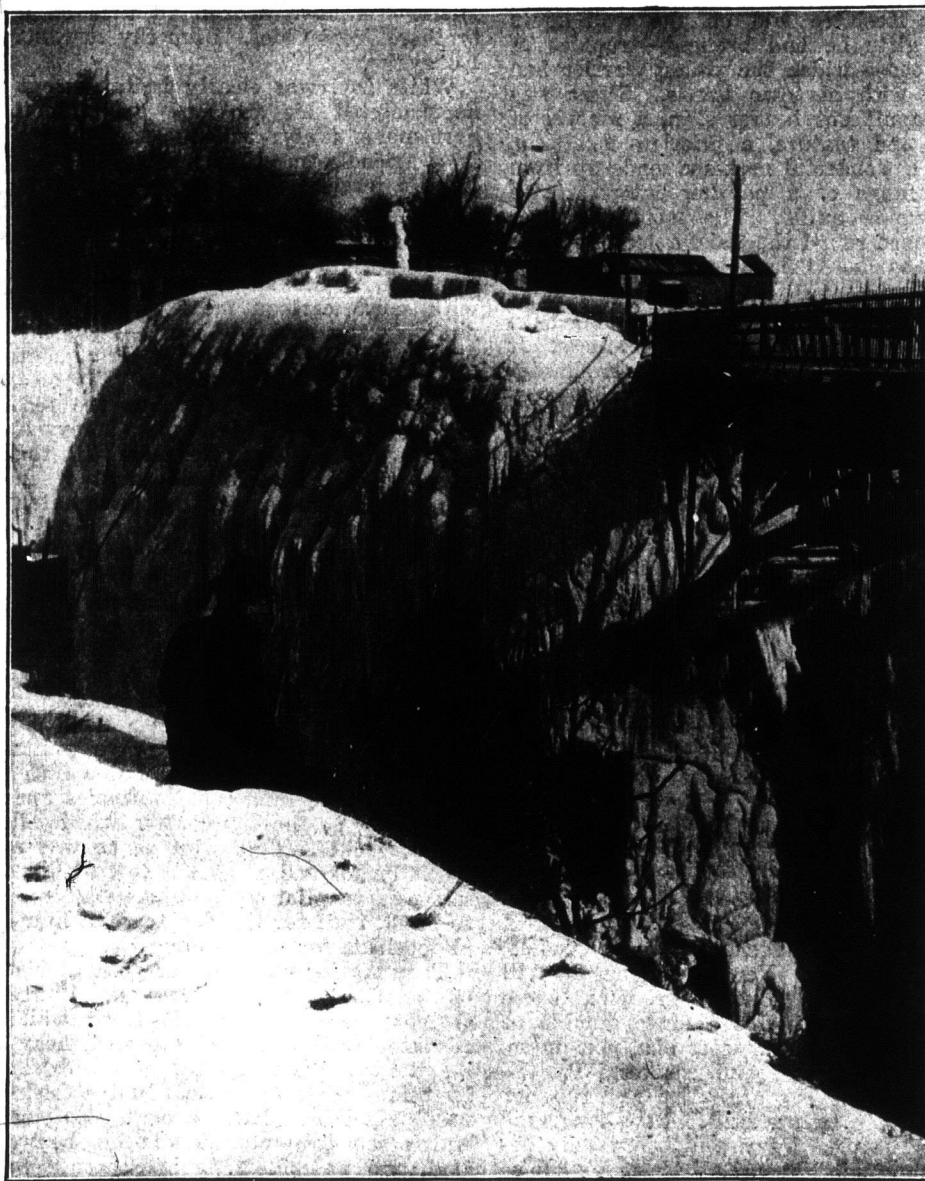
Before another Sabbath he had found a way to have a regular religious service in that neighborhood. Some one owned a book of Payson's sermons, and one of the neighbors was a good reader. Another could sing, and another was accustomed to offer public prayer.

They began to hold morning service and an evening prayer-meeting in a private house. People came a long way to attend; there were more than twenty the first night.

Next, they organized a little church, and in time they built a house of worship, a plain, dignified New England meeting-house, with a tall white spire. It stands at the cross-roads to this day.

For eighty years the church has given its tone to the community. Not far away there is another neighborhood of a very different sort, and the contrast between the two is striking. In one, liquor is sold freely, and there have always been disorder, and rioting, and tragedy. In the other, the little church has kept the life of the people sweet, and clean, and wholesome.

Not long ago the church celebrated its birthday, and there was a surprising attendance from far and near. One of the charter members still lives; he was one of the boys who started out to find the cows that morning eighty years before. Others told of the great things that the church had done, but he remembered his mother's call on that Sabbath morning—the seed from which so much had sprung. There was a deep hush over the congregation as he told the story of that morning; the assembled people seemed to hear in their midst that mother's gentle voice of admonition. Through the little church she has been speaking for eighty years, and through it she yet speaketh.



A Winter Scene.

the village day and night. One by one it took their dogs from among the teepees; it broke into the caches, stealing their caribou meat; it stole their fish from the very nets along the margin. Then, O horror! the children began to disappear. One of them was clawed under the teepee curtain from its mother's side by a ghostly paw, another was dragged by the legs through a thicket while gathering huckleberries, its playmates, on either side, seeing nothing of the brute that did the ghastly thing. Then a certain brave, more energetic than the rest, set out to hunt the panther, returning minus one eye and with his whole features unrecognizable. He died next day, but ere he died he told how he had met the brute (accidentally of course), how he had impaled it with an arrow, and how the panther—as large as any moose—had bitten off the shaft with terrible fury, then charged him.

The idle men of Moon Hill had no stomach for panther hunting after that, and each night the brute came to their teepees, striking terror to the souls of the women and children, becoming bolder

"it is his spirit that possesses the panther."

The old squaw who had spoken first, rose again. "It is not so, my sister," she said. "Keelatee would not slay the children. His hand was always gentle toward them. Keelatee is at the hunting grounds he loves—alone, without a squaw. See, I am old. My work in the teepees is done. I will go alone and bring Keelatee hither. If I fall by the way it will not matter."

And to-morrow the brave old woman went. She found Keelatee in a lonely place, and told him of the panther. He laughed, but when he heard that the little children were suffering his face became grave.

"I will come," he said. "For the sake of the little children I will come and slay the panther."

Fearlessly Keelatee searched the camp for signs. He found that each evening the great brute passed from its lair to the village by a fallen tree which lay across a narrow and shallow gulch. That evening, as the shadows fell, he waited in a thicket at the edge of the gulch, and as the sun sank, a golden ball of