

[Page 40 - An Indian turned into a Chenoo](#)ISSUE : [Issue 26](#)

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An Indian Turned into a Chenoo Some distance up the river Sagunay, a branch turns off to the north, and runs far into the region of ice and snow. Up this branch, one fall, ten or a dozen families ascended in their canoes, to hunt and trap; they were obliged to pass the winter there, so that in the spring they might bring down their fur and meat by water after the ice was gone. Among those hunters was a youth who fell desperately in love with one of the young women. She was about twenty years of age; she did not favor the young man's advances, but flatly refused him. This roused his savage ire, and he vowed revenge. He hinted darkly that some calamity would soon befall her; nor was he long in finding the means of fulfilling his own prediction. Being somewhat skilled in medicine, he soon found some herb, from which he manufactured a powerful soporific drug. Stealing into the lodge one night, after all the inmates were asleep, he carefully held it to her nose, so that she might inhale the narcotic perfume; he had a good opportunity for this, as she lay with her face up, and her mouth wide open. She was thus put into a sound sleep, from which she could not be awakened. He then went out and rolled up a snow-ball, making it hard and as large as his two fists; this he brought in, and placed in the hollow of her neck, just below her throat; he then retired without being discovered. The sleep-producing drug prevented the girl from awaking, while the snow melted and extended its chilling influence over the region of her vitals. When, after many hours of sound sleep, she awoke, she was chilly, shivering, and sick; she said nothing, however, but refused to eat. This continued for some time, until her parents became alarmed, and inquired what the matter was with her. She insisted that nothing was the matter, but still refused to eat; she was ill and cross, and would not work. One day she was induced to go to the spring for water; she stayed so long that her mother became uneasy, and went to look after her. She approached cautiously, so as not to be discovered, and found the girl greedily eating snow. She asked her what she meant by that. The girl replied that she had a burning sensation at her stomach, which the snow relieved; and more than that, she craved the snow, and the taste of it was pleasant. After a few days she began to grow fierce, as though ready to kill somebody. Finally, she requested her parents to kill her. She was very fond of them, as they were of her; and she told them that unless they killed her she would kill them, • not that she desired to do so, but she felt herself uncontrollably impelled towards it; her whole nature was being changed. "How can we kill you?" her mother inquired. "You must shoot me," she replied; "you must fire seven guns at me, all together. And if you can kill me with seven shots, all will be well; but if you fail to do it by firing seven guns at me seven times, you will not kill me at all, but I shall kill you." This was done. Seven guns were loaded; and seven men, standing at the door, aimed at her heart, as she sat in the wigwam just opposite. She was not bound. The guns went off, and every ball struck her in the breast; but she sat there firm and unmoved. As she had previously directed them, they immediately proceeded to reload their pieces. Again they fired, and every ball hit and went through her; but she neither fell nor faltered. Six times



their guns were discharged,--when she looked up with an encouraging smile, as much as to say, "You will succeed." The seventh discharge was made, and she fell forward dead, with her body, and especially her heart, completely riddled with bullets. They now proceeded to burn her body, according to the directions she had previously given them. They left her lying in the wigwam where she fell, and proceeded to fill it with dry pine fuel that would kindle up and flame and burn furiously. She, with all her surroundings, was soon reduced to ashes, except her heart. This had become congealed and hard as if frozen solid; and it required patience and perseverance to reduce it. All was at last accomplished, and the Indians immediately left the place. The girl had evidently been brought under the power of an evil spirit, and had been transformed, or was rapidly becoming transformed, into a Chenoo, • one of those wild, fierce, unconquerable beings. But the transformation was going on contrary to her wishes, and she was being impelled to do deeds from which her better nature shrank; it was in order to avoid killing and devouring her parents that she caused herself to be killed. The Indians all immediately moved down to the shore, where they were obliged to await the breaking of the ice. Thither, after emptying their tesoktaguns (cribs raised from the ground, in which the dried meat was packed to keep it from the weather and the moisture of the ground), they conveyed on sleds their provisions and furs,--the result of the winter's hunting. They dreaded and avoided the place where the poor girl was killed; they feared lest some particle of her flesh might remain unconsumed. Should that have been the case, all their labor would have been in vain; from that particle of unconsumed flesh would sprout and spring a full-fledged Chenoo, from whom no mercy could be expected, and from whose fury and power there could be no escape. When the snows melted, and the ice on the river thawed, they launched their canoes and returned to their village. This story is taken from LEGENDS OF THE MICMACS (1894), collected by Silas T. Rand. It is available via the Johnson Reprint Co., N.Y. Rand added: "I learned from Ben Brooks today that the Chenos were not supposed to be a distinct race, like the Kookweses, but were simply common Indians transformed."