

learn the truth or falsity of the reports, in order that the Kiowa might be guided by the result on his return. A sufficient sum of money was raised for his expenses, and he left for the north in September, 1890. Almost the whole tribe had assembled at the agency to witness his departure, and each in turn of the principal men performed over him a ceremony of blessing, such as has already been described. His going and return are both recorded on the calendar previously mentioned.

In October, 1890, shortly after Ä'piatañ's departure, Sitting Bull, the Arapaho prophet of the Ghost dance, came down from his tribe and gave new impetus to the excitement among the Kiowa. This event also is recorded on the same Kiowa calendar in a well-drawn picture representing a buffalo standing beside the figure of a man (figure 86). It is also indicated less definitely on another calendar obtained from the tribe. Sitting Bull confirmed, as by personal knowledge, all that had been told

of the messiah, and predicted that the new earth would arrive in the following spring, 1891.

The Kiowa assembled on the Washita, at the mouth of Rainy Mountain creek, and here, at the largest Ghost dance ever held by the tribe, Sitting Bull consecrated seven men

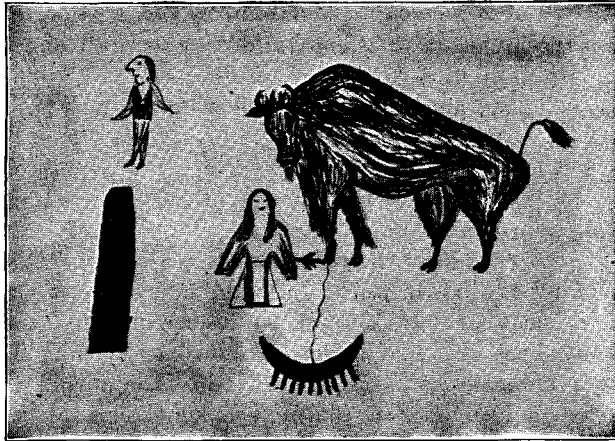


FIG. 86.—Sitting Bull comes down (from a Kiowa calendar).

and women as leaders of the dance and teachers of the doctrine by giving to each one a sacred feather to be worn in the dance as the badge of priesthood. ~~Until the Ghost dance came to the prairie tribes their women had never before been raised to such dignity as to be allowed to wear feathers in their hair.~~ After "giving the feather" to the leaders thus chosen, they were taught the songs and ritual of the dance. At first the songs were all in the Arapaho language, but after the trances, which now began to be frequent, the Kiowa composed songs of their own.

Among the dreamers and prophets who now came to the front was one who merits more than a passing notice. His original name was Bi'āñk'i, "Eater," but on account of his frequent visits to the spirit world he is now known as Äsa'tito'la, which may be freely rendered "The Messenger." For a long time he had been in the habit of going alone upon the mountain, there to fast and pray until visions came to him, when he would

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Rise of
women

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