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INDIAN FOLK LORE.

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This is the story of the Creek Prophet.

Just at the edge of the wood, near a spring branch making out into the black-jack ridges along Cap's Creek, there stands in picturesque decay a low log cabin. The wild ivy has trellised the sunken roof and run down and around the tottering walls. The sumac and the sassafras flourish once more in the abandoned sofky patch whose furrows have grown dimmer every year till scarcely a trace of them remains. The deeply worn path that wound from the door to the spring is now vague and uncertain. No Indian or renter going home from a squirrel hunt will come out of the bottom at this place after sun down.

Here is where, many years ago, Chalogee, the Creek Medicine man and prophet lived. I remember him well, for he passed our place almost daily on his way

to the next settlement to blow medicine for the sick or locate by divers strange signs and mutterings a lost hog or cow or horse. He passed and repassed so much that Tom and I knew almost to a minute when to expect him, and hid out, lest we come under his evil influence. But one day we made bold to lay a rattlesnake that one of the farm hands had killed, across his path. Pretty soon Chalogee came along and actually stepped on the snake. And, mind you, he was bare-footed. Eighty or ninety years were not a burden to him then. He jumped backward farther than Tom could jump forward, hop, step and leap, made a wide detour and plodded on in the same old fashion as though nothing had happened, while Tom and I held our hands over our mouths and rolled over each other. To his dying day, I believe Chalogee thought he stepped on a live snake. Tom and I had the idea that a man who could prophecy, and make it rain, would not be afraid of a little thing like a harmless six-foot rattler, but we found we were wrong in that.

In personal appearance Chalogee was tall and bony, a little stooped and dark-skinned like an Arab. He wore a red shirt and a shawl turban of the same

color. He was a close student of Nature and all his life lived alone, mingling very little with other men except in a professional way. The full-bloods, among whom he was most popular, mistook his intimate acquaintance with natural facts and laws for divine knowledge, and he, like other prophets, was shrewd enough not to let them know any better. He was famous as a doctor, but more famous as a rainmaker. He claimed to have thunderbolts, or thunder bullets, as a local wag called them, which he had taken from a tree recently struck by lightning. He kept these thunderbolts or bullets in a deep hole of water near his cabin, and when the people wanted rain he had some on tap for a small remuneration. One summer when the crops were burning up my father offered Chalogee five salt barrels of corn for some rain. Chalogee accepted the offer, promising my father a shower on the following day, to be followed by other showers until the ground would be thoroughly soaked. My father was to deliver the corn when he got the rain. Chalogee insisted on this, because, he said, he did not want something for nothing, No rain, no pay.

When the bargain was concluded Chalogee repaired to a deep hole of water, where he kept his thunderbolts, stripped, and waded in with great ceremony.

He stirred the water until it was muddy and then set his thunderbolts to work. The water seethed and boiled like to a mighty cauldron. Chalogee went ashore and awaited results. Presently he heard a low rumble, as of thunder, and then a great cloud came up out of the west, and before he had time to get his thunderbolts under control the lightning flashed, the wind blew and the rain poured down in sheets and torrents. While he was yet trying to conciliate his thunderbolts a great flood rushed down the creek and swept them away. Old Chalogee himself came near being drowned, and finally walked back to his cabin in dejection.

Night came, and morning came; still it rained as it had never rained before. A horrible thought flashed through his mind. The world would be inundated and mankind destroyed. He rushed out and ran down the creek like a mad man. All day he searched in the drifts for his thunderbolts. The stream rose higher and higher, and the rain ceased not. At last, however, when he had about given up the search, he found them lodged in a cottonwood drift near the mouth of Limbo, whereupon the clouds scattered and the waters subsided. The second deluge was nipped in the bud.

## The Story of the Alabama Prophet.

It is not known whether or not the subject of this sketch, like Mohamet, had a mole between his shoulders, or any other mark indicating that he was all he claimed to be, but it is known, and well known, that when he said so, things came to pass, and in a hurry. He could make it rain -- in sheets or torrents -- without much monkeying with his thunderbolts or bullets. Had he not kept fast in the wilderness until he could see things? Had he not been led of elf and fairy? Had he not paid his respects to Este Chupko, the Wood Spirit?

He could blow his breath in water through a hollow cane, roast or boil an herb and set disease at defiance. Had he not gone under cover of darkness to the shadowy shores of the mystic river Strange, and yanked the horns off the terrible Tying Snake? Did not his medicine bag hold in profound secrecy the dust of ages, the tooth and hoof of things without name or record?

He could prophesy -- see months and years into the future. Had he not come from a race of prophets? Had he not taken counsel of the Great

Spirit in the seclusion of Tulledega? He was not an amateur like his less famous contemporary, Chalogee, who lost his thunderbolts, but a prophet of the first magnitude, who wore whiskers and was not without honor -- except once -- in his own country.

The Alabama Prophet was born in Alabama ninety or more years ago, and was one of the first Creek emigrants to set foot west of the Mississippi. He did not stop with the other Creeks, who settled along the river near the present eastern border of the Creek country, but pushed on to an ideal spot at the westernmost limits of Tulledega. Here he pitched his tent, built his hut, cleared his sofky patch and entered upon his long career as prophet.

His success, from the start, was remarkable. The volume of business at his command, together with the faith of his adherents, continued to broaden and deepen as a river, unto his last prophecy. He lived in utter seclusion, in close and solemn communion with Nature, and had nothing to do with men, except at long range. But he had several huts of wives.

He was of average height, of fine physique, of great personal magnetism and dignity, with large, full eyes, and head as perfect in outline as the roof of the

world. Just a little more and he would have been bald. His whiskers were not thick, but they made up in length what they lacked in number. His methods of treating sick differed widely from the methods employed by Chalogee. He had only to look at and examine a garment worn by the patient to determine the nature of the disease and what medicines were necessary. This Chalogee could not do. He had to treat the patient in person. And herein, it was claimed, lay the prophet's superiority over Chalogee. He had delved much deeper into the mysteries. But Chalogee, knowing that he had caused more rain to fall than any other prophet since the flood, was quite sure that the claim would not hold water.

The Alabama Prophet, to his credit be it said, was not penurious and exorbitant like some doctors who charge without distinction between a call and a cure. He was considerate and liberal, and charged no more than he knew the patient was able to pay. It did not matter whether he was paid in cash or not. But he always insisted on some sort of a settlement. He would take a shoat, a colt, a yearling, a due-bill -- anything except a stand-off. In matters, however, outside of his profession as a doctor, he set a price

and charged according to the deed. Thus, for a local rain he charged about ten dollars, in cash or chattel. For a general rain, a ground-soaker and a gully washer, he charged the value of a cow and a calf -- in advance.

But when he predicted the Isparhecher War -- the crowning glory of his life -- for which had he asked he might have received a high command from the Creek government in General Porter's army -- he frankly donated his prophecy to the Muskogee nation.

The Alabama Prophet gave splendid and frequent proofs of his genuineness, but it was not until he suffered persecution that he gave the best he had in his shop.

A certain very self-important young man of the name of Lucky Billy was made prosecuting attorney of the district in which the Alabama Prophet resided. Lucky Billy was just out of one of the mission schools, where he had developed a most sincere dislike of heathens and false prophets. He could read a little and write his name like a hen scratching. This was the same Lucky Billy of whom the following story is so often related: He was reading a newspaper one day when a fellow asked him, "What is the latest today, Billy?" "Oh, nothin', notin'," Billy replied, "Cept



the white men's tryin' to cut up the worl'."

Now that the way was open, Lucky Billy desired to do something great and lasting. He loved his benighted people and was anxious to do something for them. He looked about for opportunities. The Alabama Prophet seemed to offer a fine field for operation. He could begin work there. Why had he not thought of this sooner? He trumped up some charges against the Prophet and caused a warrant to be issued for his arrest. The news of the arrest of the Prophet by the lighthorse spread all over the country, and on the day appointed for the trial the people flocked to the court house from far and near in great numbers. The jury impanelled, the indictment read, the witnesses heard, Lucky Billy began his prosecution. The Prophet sat as calm as Socrates. He had employed no attorney, intended to do his own pleading and placing his hope of acquittal in the injustice of the charges. But when Lucky Bill shouted at the top of voice, "Gentlemen, the prisoner before you is an imposter, and I know he is guilty!" The Alabama Prophet sprang to his feet, surveyed the court room, the, lifting his face upward, exclaimed:

"This wrong shall not go unavenged, I'll call down the lightning to my aid."

Just then, as if to emphasize his awful threat, there came a blinding flash from the cloudy heaven above the court house, followed by a clap of thunder that seemed to reverberate to the ends of the earth. There was consternation, turmoil and confusion. The doors and windows were darkened by frightened human beings, all swarming out and escaping at once. Scores of men jumped on their horses, still hitched and staked; scores of others never stopped to jump on their horses at all. The throne of justice lay on the floor irreparably damaged and wholly overcome. Before anything had time to happen the sole occupant of the court room was the Alabama Prophet, a free man.

When Lucky Billy found himself he threw the case out of court, writing diagonally across the indictment that he was not willing to press it.