

THE FALL OF SHAKO.

(A True Tale of the Shiawassee.)

[Written for THE ARGUS by Jas. O. Curwood.]

CHAPTER I.

The 17th day of October, 1813, dawned bright and beautiful; not the shadow of a cloud marred the sky above, and it appeared as though one had reached the heart of an uninhabited wilderness.

Yet a close observer stationed on the high bluff on the west side of the Shiawassee, would have noticed a large number of plumed and painted Indians trailing slowly across the flats below.

Some were carrying heavy bundles, others with gory scalps dangling at their belts, while a small body, guarding some unfortunate prisoners, brought up the rear.

And what was this strange band; a tribe of the Chippewa Indians who were returning from their disastrous campaign with Tecumseh, and were headed by the powerful chief, Shako.

They pass on, and are almost immediately followed by another party. These latter do not cross the open but dodge along the bank of the river, keeping themselves concealed as much as possible. It is evident the two war parties are enemies.

The pursuers are led by Osceola, a chief of the Chippewa, son of Ponto. A short explanation is required at this point. Many people suppose that at some past day a battle was fought two and one-half miles south of Chesaning between the old chiefs Shako and Ponto. That is not the case. There was a fight at the place designated above, but old traditions say between Shako and Ponto's son Osceola; and, again, Shako was not killed; he died of the smallpox, in the year of 1837. Shako, it is said, became chief soon after Ponto's death, but much against the will of the latter's son.

Of course there are many legends concerning the two chiefs, but they are so widely different in opinion that it is almost impossible to gain true facts in that direction. The truth of this story is based entirely upon the information given me by some of the oldest and most reliable settlers of Saginaw county.

The battle described below was fought, as nearly as can be recollected, about the middle of October, 1817, and lasted for three successive days. Osceola at length gained control of the separated tribe, but in the spring of 1840, General Brady removed the whole nation to the Indian territory.

Shako played an important part in the war of 1812, fighting of course, on the British side. Osceola, however, helped the Americans in many a hard fought battle. Hence the great rivalry.

A fierce wind was blowing from the north, the sky was overcast and a deep gloom hung over the valley. The usually still and tranquil Shiawassee was a rolling torrent; waves knee high rushed upon the pebbly shore, tossing in wild confusion a number of picturesque canoes that were fastened there.

Upon a high, steep bluff that commanded the river in all directions stood a figure—the figure of an Indian. His long, loose, many-colored blanket fluttered wildly in the gale.

plans by which the renegades who were situated on the other side of the river were to be defeated.

During the night the gale ceased and the stars came out bright and clear; nothing marred the death-like stillness except the dripping of water from the boughs overhead or the occasional cry of a panther, anon joined by the yell of a wildcat, in the deep forest far beyond.

Although so calm and peaceful, human beings were abroad that night on the flats of the Shiawassee, two and one-half miles south of where Chesaning now stands.

A little to one side of the Indian village was a small grove of powerful pines; in the shadow of these trees stood a large body of Indians. Osceola could be discerned in the dim light looking intently and steadily toward the north—he neither moved or spoke, but seemed to be a part of the mighty tree against which he was leaning. In one hand he held a long rifle, once the property of a British soldier; in the other a tomahawk stained red.

The splashing of a deer in the water below caused several rifles to spring to the shoulders of as many savages, but a low word of warning from the chief instantly lowered them; the greater part, however, paid no attention to the sound, but continued to gaze across the country to the northward.

Suddenly, far away in the distance, a bright flame shot upward to the east, to the west—once! twice, then fell. The Indians were signaling from the Chesaning (Big Rock.) Immediately Osceola and his braves began moving from their cover. Stealing quietly to the water's edge they embarked in their canoes, and soon the 75 warriors were flying down the stream to join a much larger party waiting for them two miles below Shako's flats.

The paddles were dipped noiselessly in and out of the water with a skill no white man could have imitated. Soon the foremost canoe turned toward the shore, closely followed by the rest—a few minutes later they were joined by Osceola's cousin Glencoe, who was accompanied by 125 braves. Together they made a wide detour through the forest to take Shako in the rear.

The larger part of the Indians were armed with rifles; some carried English muskets, while others possessed relics of the old French and Indian war. The remaining ones carried strong hickory bows with flint headed arrows. Together they made a formidable array.

Osceola followed the margin of the river for nearly a mile when he abruptly turned and plunged into the pine forest, following cautiously a well-beaten trail. It seemed an age before they, at last, reached the outskirts of the woods. From here they struck to the southward and within half an hour were in Shako's rear.

As you see, the plan of attack was admirable, the war party having completed a half circle and in such a manner as not to arouse the suspicion of their enemies. At this point they divided themselves into two divisions, then began to slowly creep toward the doomed village; the ground was well adapted for a night surprise. At this particular place the Shiawassee (shining waters) makes a wide curve; on the attacking party's side, high bluffs rise about thirty rods back from the river; between there and the stream are the Shako flats upon which stood

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It was a picturesque scene; the black
clouds massing in the heavens seemed
fairly to mingle with the dark smoke
that drifted upward from acres of wig-
wams farther back on the flats.

Suddenly the sharp crack of a rifle
rang out above the storm; the figure
on the bluff was seen to leap quickly
backward. It was well he did so, for
next instant a bullet rushed through
the empty space, a moment before
occupied by Osceola, a chief of the Chip-
pewas; a cloud as dark as those con-
gregating in the sky above passed over
the chieftain's face. "So your treach-
erous renegade has declared war? So
be it, and before another sun shall pass
o'er our heads Shako will die. For
years have the English and American
nations been at peace, but the feud
still exists."

All this was said in an undertone, so
low that the speaker himself was hard-
ly conscious of uttering a word. As the
last sentence fell from his lips he
wheeled about and stalked toward the
large group of wigwams in the rear.
Reaching there he immediately detach-
ed several of his messengers to sum-
mon his warriors to the council tent,
and here, during one of the most terri-
ble storms of the year, were drawn the

country to the northward.

Suddenly, far away in the distance,
a bright flame shot upward to the east,
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The Indians were signaling from the
Chesaning (Big Rock.) Immediately
Osceola and his braves began moving
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the attacking party's side, high bluffs
rise about thirty rods back from the
river; between there and the stream
are the Shako flats upon which stood
the designated village.

The town consisted of fully a hun-
dred wigwams which during the last
few days had been surrounded by a pal-
isade of sharpened stakes. With the
aid of tough wood ivy and grape vines
they managed to reach the river bot-
tom without even arousing the ene-
my's dogs. They now fell upon all
flurs, and quickly gained entrance
through the barrier of pointed stakes.
At this critical moment a dog barked,
soon joined by a dozen others.

With loud war whoops, Osceola and
his savages rushed forward. No an-
swering cry of defiance greeted them;
no arrows came whizzing through the
air or rifle ball to cause destruction.
Shako had fled.

Hark! What is that? From far down
the river comes faint shouts; rifle shots
are heard and blood curdling yells ring
out on the midnight air. The tables
are turned! Osceola is beaten.

Continued next Saturday.

*Chesaning is an Indian word meaning "Big
Rock." This boulder is situated some eighty
rods east of the village; it is a peculiar as-
well as a beautiful mass of stone, rising ab-
ruptly on two sides to an altitude of seven
feet; it is about 20 feet long, while the width
varies from 9 to 15. This in former days was
a favorite signal station of the Indians.

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CHAPTER II.

For a moment the chief's hopes were crushed; even now he could hear the agonizing cries of the women and the few brave defenders who fought till the last one fell.

He could not aid his unfortunate comrades for no canoe was at hand. Of course they could swim across but what good could they do on the other side, with wet powder. With a deep sigh Osceola turned to his companions: "A cowardly blow to murder women, but the revenge will be sweeter."

Hurriedly burning the town they started on their homeward march to meet Shako in open battle. Never did an Indian war party start upon a campaign with a more fixed determination in their hearts than did this band of Chippewas.

They had hardly traversed a third of the distance when a great light shone up in the sky. "The village is burning!" said Osceola starting upon a keen race.

As they reached the vicinity of their canoes they crept forward with more caution. As the foremost gained the sandy shore, a splash was heard in the river. All was as still as death; every rifle was ready, and many a full-stretched bow was pointed toward the ominous sound.

"Back! they are waiting in ambush; nothing can save if you cross."

"Who are you?" queried the chief-tan.

"Pinery, the white hunter."

"Enough! retreat!" and like spectral shadows the powerful body of savage disappeared in the gloom.

The sun was beaming all over this land of the wild; the birds were singing, and the sweet scent of burning birch was wafted upon the breezy air; the fish darted from their hiding places and splashed gleefully upon the calm bosom of the river; a timid deer came to the clear water for its early drink; and all seemed glad on this glorious morning.

Let us look a quarter of a mile above, and we do not see these signs of peace.

Two fortified camps face each other; the renegades on the right—Osceola on the left. Presently a white man emerged from the edge of the forest; tall, dressed in buckskin and carrying an unusually long rifle. It was Pinery, the hunter. Osceola greeted him warmly.

"My white brother is just in time; we are about to make a move against wondercamp, and when a bright light and a loud report comes from the Big Rock, we will begin."

"So ye air goin' ter lather it to 'em, Ossy? Wall, I hope you'll 'ave good luck, an' it won't be my fault if old Kill-deer don't drap sum on 'em." Here he paused and patted affectionately the muzzle of his rifle. As we take a close observation we notice that there are but few braves around; the

Shako's only way of escape now lay in the direction of the river; if he could once reach his canoe and cross, they could find safety in the great forest that stretched mile after mile to the northward. It is all probability if this could be done Shako would return to Canada and bring back enough of the warlike Hurons to completely vanquish Osceola. The latter realized this and gave orders to capture the renegade dead or alive. If he escaped all would be lost.

Pinery tried to cut his way through and reach the canoe first, but was driven back. Up the hill rushed Shako dodging from tree to tree, and halting at regular intervals to fire a volley at the advancing foe. At last he reached the utmost verge of the sheltered ravine, and with a loud war-whoop rushed over the hill followed by about a dozen companions. Osceola and Pinery dashed upward at their utmost speed, but reached the top just in time to see the remains of the once powerful renegade tribe disappear around the bluff at the foot of which lay their canoes.

With a smothered oath the white hunter raised his rifle and fired. The next instant a loud cry arose from the surrounding warriors. Shako tottered and fell backward. Kill-deer had done its work. The old chief did not die, but was held a prisoner for several years, when he was released on promise that he would never again molest the tribe. His death occurred in 1857, and his grave is yet to be seen in one of the most wild and beautiful spots of the Shiawasee.

The Indians east of the Mississippi at that day might be divided into four great families. The Iroquois, the Algonquins, the Hurons and the Mobilians, each speaking a language of its own, varied by numerous dialectic forms. To these families must be added a few stragglers from the great western race of the Dakotas, besides several distinct tribes of the south.

THE END.

Ladies and gentlemen of Owosso and county: It doesn't matter what my competitors tell you I will do better by you in prices. I buy my stock of shoes at my own price. This simply means that the other fellows can't meet me on prices.

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fact is, they have nearly all disappeared. It is evident that even now, Ocoola is closing around his enemies.

About noon there was a sound that caused every warrior to leap to his feet; a loud report came rolling over the country from Cheesawing. The chieftian gave a few orders and together they rushed for their canoes at the foot of the cliff. Almost at the same instant, loud war-whoops were heard on the opposite side; rifles cracked and bow-strings sprung; the hillside seemed to be fairly alive with the decorated and painted savages.

Down they came dodging from tree to tree, from rock to rock, sending a bullet here, and a bullet there, with deadly effect. Shako's men greatly outnumbered them, and could yet hold their own.

The wily chieftian withdrew to the wooded hillside on his right, where he was partially protected from the hail of lead. Still Ocoola and Glencoe pressed forward, continually forcing the enemy deeper into the forest.

Pinery was always at the front, leading and firing "Kill-deer" with terrible precision; at close intervals the bodies of the fallen would be passed; some with arrows in their breast, others with ghastly bullet wounds.

The shadows of the forest grew deeper as the day waned; the firing had nearly ceased, and no terrible war-cry startled the inmates of the woods. Both of the main parties had withdrawn, and were camped on the verge of the forest, to await the coming day, when they would again continue the fight.

Ocoola's men held complete possession of the flats, and a part of the forest; the young chief was confident of final victory.

The night passed without any hostility on either side, but at dawn the contending forces again took their stand.

About noon, Shako abandoned the woods entirely, and chose a strong position in a deep ravine, flanked by thickets. Their rifles held the pursuing party in check for a time, but by a well directed charge they at length drove the enemy, who fled across the Shiawasse in utter rout.

The renegade leader had lost over two-thirds of his force, but collecting his men together, to the number of a hundred, he made his last stand in a small but very thick grove of beech.

During the preceding battle, Ocoola had been slightly wounded in the foot, enough to make walking extremely difficult, so Glencoe and Pinery now took command. They crossed the river with 150 braves, and by nightfall had gained an important footing in the grove.

Shako lost all hope, many of his followers deserted him, while some few, repenting of past actions, returned to their rightful chief. Notwithstanding, the renegade determined to fight as long as he had strength to lift a rifle. He yet had a number of trusty braves, about 50, and with these he attempted to regain a part of what he had lost.

As he could not hold the grove, he again retreated to the ravine, from which he had been dislodged but a few hours before. By posting a part of his men in the thickets, and the remainder on the steep, wooded side of the hill, he could yet make a stout resistance.

During the night the Indians strengthened their position as much as possible. Early next morning Glencoe

- Ladies' all wool hose, 3 pairs for
- Ladies' fast black cotton hose, 5 pairs
- Ladies' heavy wool skirts for
- Heavy linen towels, 2 for
- Heavy all wool beaver shawls for
- 1 lot men's red underwear (was \$1.25)
- 1 lot men's grey underwear for
- Black Coney muffs for
- 200 yards Angora Fur at
- Angora wool, per ball
- Knitting silk, 1/4 ounce balls for
- Fine embroidered silk handkerchiefs, 1

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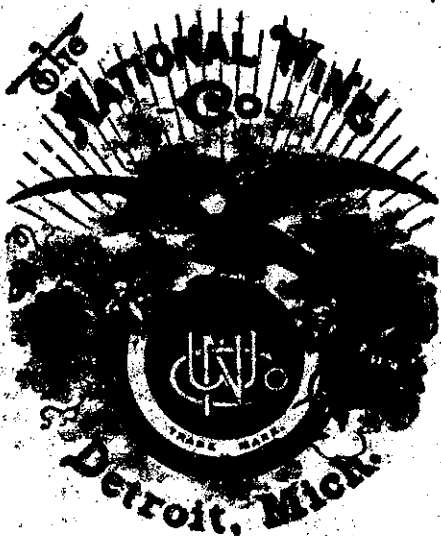
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During the night the Indians strengthened their position as much as possible. Early next morning Glencoe began the battle on the hillside, while Pinery forced his way up the ravine.

The enemy kept up a murderous fire in the woods, and Glencoe was at

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Angora wool, per ball.....
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