

The story of Sask. and its People

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Vol. I.

Chicago-Regime

The S.J. Clarke Pub. Co.

1924.

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Chapter XLIV

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Father Hugonard and Sb.

In the Indian War of 1876, on the American side, S.B. and his Sioux wiped out General Custer and his command, and then took refuge on the Canadian side at Fort Walsh. In the spring of 1878 there being no buffalo in that vicinity S.B. struck north, and, with about 1,500 of his followers camped two miles west of the mission. Father Hugonard was alone, for Father Decorby had gone to Fort Carry for supplies. There was a great shortage of flour which was worth twenty dollars for a sack of a hundred pounds. They had none to spare at the Hudson's Bay post at Qu'Appelle, and the mission had only three sacks left, but when S.B. sent some men down he thought it best to "lend" them a sack. Meanwhile he had heard that there was plenty of flour at Fort Ellice, which involved a journey of 120 miles, and he sent a half-breed to that post with four Red River carts. He returned with six sacks on each cart. The Sioux knew this; and they were having very hard times to get sufficient food for so many. There was no place nearer than Wood Mountain, and only two white men at the Fort, Mr McLean who was in charge and the Father thought, a Mr. Calder.

The reader will kindly imagine for himself the young French Priest not very long out from the sunny vineyards of Southern France, where he
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had been brought up in the mellow civilization of a thousand years, sitting one quiet spring morning in the solitary mission in that deep Qu'Appelle Valley, teaching some native children. Two miles away, on the bench he had his neighbors the Sioux, noted "tigers" of the American plains, who not long before had butchered in fair fight General Custer, great Indian Warrior, and all his mounted men. When Father Hugonard told the experience to me I made some notes, which I have been fortunate enough to find. I can therefore give the reader the story pretty much in the Reverend Father's own quiet matter of fact way and without any coloring of my own. He said. "The next morning after the flour arrived from Fort Ellice, at about ten o'clock, I heard some unusual singing, or rather yelling, and I went outside and here were about eighty of Sitting Bull's men all on horse back riding along the trail in paint and feathers, and all with shot guns. I thought they would go on, but they turned down to the mission, and when they got to the gate they sent out three big yell. They they all dismounted and tied their horses, except one, and that was Sitting Bull who continued to sit silent and unmoved on his horse. After they had tied their horses, they led S.B.'s horse very solemnly to the door of the house, where SB dismounted, and gave his horse to some one who led it back. Then Sb came into the house and about twenty men followed him. There was not room for any more. They all shook hands with me and said How! How! the way they talked!! but I could not say a word; I did not know a phrase of Sioux, There was pretty nearly always some half-breed or Indian around, and I sent a half-breed to fetch another one whom I knew could talk Sioux. Sitting B. and his men were not threatening, but ~~they were not threatening~~ they seemed to be kind of 'on the fence'. I tried to be ~~polite~~ as polite with them as I could because to tell the truth I was 'a little bit scared'. Knowing what they had done to Custer I was not without some fear, and I thought the best thing was to treat them well. I had some dry (buffalo) meat, and a little pork and some bannock, and we cut this and served it in ~~dishes~~ slices but there was not enough meat for half of them. I had a good bit of vegetables left-turnips, parsnips and carrots, and about half of them had to have vegetables. I had also tea and sugar, and they seemed pleased for they were living very poorly up at their camp. After the meal I gave them tobacco. When the half-breed came