

the fort. He was one of those who had grown tired of Sitting Bull's medicine, and he told Allen he was glad that the inspector had pulled a few featherd from Bull's bonnet. Allen thanked him, gave him a pound of tobacco, and sent him back to say that the sons of a Great Mother wished to sleep. The vistas of disaster had closed again.

During the last year of his visit, Sitting Bull became increasingly difficult. He appeared suddenly at Fort Qu'Appelle and demanded, with twelve hundred backers, a reservation. He was reminded that one awaited him in the States. He appeared at Wood Mountain with Sub-Inspector A.R. Macdonnell in command, and announced that he wanted ammunition. Ammunition was not proffered. He swore that he would procure it, himself, from the Police stores. Macdonnell said: "All right. Come and get it." The gates were thrown open, and hundreds of warriors crowded ~~into the~~ in to loot the fort. They saw the officer and an N.C.O. standing by the storehouse door. They also saw rifle muzzles sticking in silent threats from holes drilled in the buildings around the square. They ran from the trap with ~~undiminished~~ trepidation.

This was the end. Given the cue by Broad Tail, Inspector Crozier systematically weakened Sitting Bull by treating singly with the minor chiefs, decreasing the medicine-man's prestige by the attrition of small but frequent desertions. Aided by a

Page 96. famine, the Police had the enormous satisfaction of seeing him depart in December, 1880, personally conducted by the rugged Macdonnell.

The four years of ceaseless worry were over, four years of watching by a burning fuse which might at any instant reach and ignite an unprecedented charge of powder. The explosion might easily have wiped out every white in the Northwest, and especially every man to whose care the magazine was entrusted, Scarcely an officer, hardly a man in the ranks who had not been tried in the long course of this persistent peril. Deeds from which tradition grows had been precipitated like rain, They sank into the ground of forgetfulness, yet were not wholly lost, Settlers talked them over around their campfires, The Police thought of them in the solitary watches of riding herd. During these years a sense of fraternity had deepened, had formed out of pipe-smoke in the messes. Example gave off an influence that compelled incoming recruits to emulate their betters.

But this new solidarity was not the only boon that Sitting Bull conferred upon the Force. Every move of Custer's conqueror was front-page news across the continent, and usually there was mention of the Police, By the end of his time the name of the Force was as well known as his. From that day on, hardy men, and reckless men, and men whose adventure could never cure of romance began to drift toward the recruiting stations. The memory of Sitting Bull is dim. But it is not too much to say that the uninvited, unwanted, unpitied grim old savage was godfather at the christening of a new renown.

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Riel evidently did not enjoy the place, for it all gave him asylum, and, anticipating Mr. Mencken, he wrote in his commonplace book:

O my God, preserve us from the misfortune of having anything to do with the United States. Let the United States protect us indirectly spontaneously, and by the arrangement of Thy Holy Providence, but never by a direct engagement or by understanding on our part. I have liked miserably in the United States among serpents, in the very midst of vipers. I was there so surrounded that whenever I wished to place my feet I saw them swarming. The ground was positively alive with them. The United States are, in a sense, a perfect hell for an honest man.