

ADDRESS

DELIVERED

BY THE REV. E. AHENAKEW

*At the Annual Meeting of THE WOMAN'S AUXILIARY**Held in the City of Prince Albert, Sask., on**Wednesday, June 16th, 1920.*

NOW THAT peace has been declared, the Indians of Canada may look with just pride upon the part played by them in the Great War, both at home and on the field of battle. They have well and nobly upheld the loyal tradition of their gallant ancestors who rendered invaluable service to the British cause in 1775 and 1812 and have added thereto a heritage of deathless honor which is an example and an inspiration for their descendants.

Before the settlement of the Indians in the reservations, the idea of death, sudden and violent, was always in their minds. The times were such that no one could ever lie down to sleep with any feeling of security. Any night the enemy may surprise and attack, so that lasting vigilance was necessary. By night and by day somebody had to be ever on the watch. The blow fell usually quickly, suddenly and effectively. A deadly feud had arisen between the Blackfoot Confederacy and the Crees, some time in the darkness of the past, that Indian past from which no light penetrates to the present and about which we know nothing concerning the Great North-Western land. The human abhorrence for the snake was no worse than the hate that resulted from the feud. No quarter, no mercy was ever asked for nor given between them; each tribe was bent on exterminating the other. Each year ambitious young men stole away from their camps and secretly travelled across the hundreds of miles of prairie for the purpose of stealing the swiftest horses of the enemy and killing them if possible. It was a repetition of the old-time raids between the English and the Scotch. It is easy to see how living such a life would in time breed into the Indians warlike sentiments and enable them to obtain a certain amount of knowledge regarding military strategy. Much has been written about their warlike character, bravery and skill; some few have given a different opinion of them, but we may well judge from the conduct of our young men during their participation in the Great War as to what their ancestors must have been.

The news of the outbreak of war fell with a numbing thud upon our hearts, as it did upon yours. Owing to the ignorance of many of our people, it seemed far more terrible to many of us than it did to you perhaps. Your knowledge of geography at least shewed you the distance you were from danger, but for many of us there was no such comfort. As an example, one of our headmen from a northern reserve sent to ask me if it was true that the fighting was taking place just east of Battleford. Fight-