

"We know not what it is about," said the chief. "Ever since the days of Black Cloud, our people have been told of a secret writing, but none knew where it was but we knew that some day it would be found. Our braves sing even to-day of the writing, and our medicine men tell, that when the great Sioux nation has its paper they will be chief of all the red people, and—and——" he hesitated, looking steadily at Mackintosh as though taking his measure—"when that happens, say our medicine men," he went on at last quietly and tensely but boldly, "we shall sweep the palefaces out of our country! I have spoken, O Red Fox!"

Hal heard the sharp intake of breath as Mackintosh heard and understood the meaning of the chief's words. This was no ordinary affair into which they had dropped. There were big and tragic possibilities in it, and Hal shuddered as he thought of them. Mackintosh's words broke in upon the youngster's thoughts.

"Then we are not friends, Red Feather," the factor was saying, after the surprise had passed from him. "That paper is mine—given me by my brother there. I promised him I would keep it. Some day Pierre le Grand shall give it back to me—even if it costs him his life to do so."

"Then shall we take it from you, Red Fox," was the calm reply. "Till then, it shall be a truce between us, because you, knowing nothing of all this matter, did only that which any man would do for his brother—and the Sioux love the brave man