

## THE MASTER SCOUT OF THE NORTHWEST

A Gallant and Picturesque Figure Who Helped Make History In The Early Days—Indian Fighting Was a Daily Incident

(E. B. Osborn, in the London Morning Post.)  
Memory leads us by the nose; that is to say, a remembered perfume is more potent than any once-familiar sight or sound. This is yet another proof, I suppose, that our civilization is only skin-deep. I myself am not at all ashamed of this and other survivals of our long fighting past—it has taken us millions of years of hard fending to emerge from the mud-fish stage—having long ago come to the conclusion that the sub-man in one's ego is a wiser and gladder creature on the whole than the patronizing superman. We are all animals, after all, and ought not to be ashamed of it.

Verbsena scent, for example, always wakes in me a stirring of passion in retrospect. And yesterday the harsh spiced aroma of pine-logs burning in my study grate brought before me in long succession scenes of western life in winter and summer—once more I sat on my heels before a prairie blaze piled high with huge logs and watched the "billy" boiling and listened to old-timers spinning their interminable yarns. And across a drift of grey-white smoke, drifting away between the sea of grasses at my feet and the many-flickering ironical smile of a moonless sky, suddenly I saw the straight nose and hawk, blue-black hair of the Master Scout. The shadow of a shade indeed, for I never saw Jerry Potts in the flesh, though his name always came up in any conversation about tracking down "wicked" Indians or circumventing whiskey-smugglers.

Jerry Potts—it is not a very heroic name! Yet the bearer of it was more of a hero than any of the wonder-working scouts who appear in manly-adventurous books for boys by Kingston and Ballantyne and brave And Cooper of the wood and wave.

He was one of two very unusual men who became attached as interpreters and scouts to the Northwest Mounted Police in the days when law and order were being established in the vast little-known territory between Fort Garry (now Winnipeg) and the Rockies. Levellier, who was the Cree interpreter, had all the vivacity and politeness of his French ancestors. He never failed to touch his hat gracefully to any who addressed him, no matter who they might be. Though nearing his seventieth year, he was still lissom and upright, without a touch of grey in his black hair, and he kept all the amazing hardihood he inherited from the Crees, his mother-in-law. Levellier cared nothing for cold when the mercury was frozen in its bulb and the red gleam, a sign of truly Arctic weather, appeared in the Aurora, he would wrap himself round in a single, thin, worn, old blanket, and go to sleep in a snowdrift. He had been in innumerable border wars between the Sioux and the Metis, and was covered with the scars of bullet wounds—he had been shot through the chest more than once and the S. W. M. P. surgeon could never understand how he had survived such injuries. He was a great favorite with the men and everybody was gripped when he vanished and was never again seen by mortal eye. Perhaps, like some wild creature, he preferred to die in secret by himself, or perhaps he fell into one of those subtle ambushes which Nature is constantly setting for men—especially for men who feel sure they know all her cunning ways—in the unwin wilderness.

Jerry Potts, who had good Scots blood in his veins, was a man of sterner and more ample mould. Silent, indomitable, wan, he had the grave, aloof courtesy of a Blackfoot war chief. He had been a leader of braves from his youth onwards. He never talked about his past life, so that there exists no chronicle of it. But one of his great victories, when he drove Piapot's host of Crees and Assiniboines out of the Blackfoot country (where they had massacred a party of Piegans, old men and women and children), was actually witnessed by a fur-trader of good repute named Howell Harris. Potts caught the enemy in a narrow descent leading to a ford on the Belly River, and smashed them up, four hundred dead being counted on the battlefield. At the end of the fight a Cree squaw with a stone in her hand knocked him senseless and he kept the scar to his dying day.

He had the mind of a statesman, and saw in the coming of the Northwest Mounted Police a guarantee of peace with justice and an end of all the cruel fighting for fighting's sake between the Indian tribes of the high prairies and the foothills beyond. Above all, he rejoiced to think that the Yankee whiskey-traders, who had wrought such evil among his people were to be cleared out. So he took service with the police as interpreter and guide, and became a prop and stay of the Pax Britannica for the rest of his indefatigable life. (He died of consumption in 1894, and passed in silence, abstaining from deathbed speeches in the manner approved by the old-timer whose last act was to throw a log at the sorrowful friends assembled to see his taking-off.) His first day with the police won him the confidence of all ranks. In the morning he rode off in front of the advance guard, having told them the way to Milk River, and when they came up with him at high noon he was sitting by a fat buffalo cow, which he had killed and dressed for the use of the force. Everybody's good opinion of him was confirmed next day, when he turned sharp, to the left, led the little army to a fine camping ground, and then showed them some fine springs hard by, which contained the best water they had tasted for many a long day.

As interpreter his services were invaluable. Without him the series of Indian treaties, which were the basis of friendly relations between red men and white men throughout the Canadian west, could never have been arranged and carried out with so little friction. He could translate the bald, hesitating English of his superior officers into the poetic language full of open-air imagery, which the Blackfeet use on ceremonial occasions, without losing a single point of its stern significance. He was a living link between the two races, who trusted him implicitly and never once regretted their confidence. It was as scout and tracker and trainer of scouts, however, that he most touched the imagination of his white friends. His darkly-glittering eyes keen as a nocturnal mosquito-lawyer's, missed nothing—not even the mark of a drop of sweat on a grass-blade. In reading a spoon on hard ground he could not have been far behind the Australian Blackfellow, who is the finest tracker extant. He could enter into the very instinct of every bird or beast inhabiting the high prairies. And he had the most wonderful eye for country—whether he had been there before or not mattered not at all, he could always take you through by the easiest trail and find sound water (not so easily found in a land of vivid blue alkali lakes and tainted, drain-like creeks and also pleasant camping-places, in winter or summer, in storm or sunshine, by night or by day, he was the one unerring guide, and what is more wonderful still, he could teach others the mysteries of his keen prairie-craft. As master scout and scout-master he never had a rival in any of the western wildernesses. It is strange to think he was no immortal such as has been set up in stone or bronze to David Boone and other American pioneers who were not his equals as makers of the early and later west. He should at any rate be immortalized by some R. R. S. of the Canadian prairies in a book for boys.

"You can't complain of the price of wheat now."

"No," replied Farmer Cornstossle. "But they might go a little further and guarantee us the money without puttin' us to so much trouble raisin' the wheat."



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## Lantic Old Fashioned Brown Sugar

There are many other good things in this book suitable for simple entertaining: little plain cakes for the afternoon tea party; a delicious caramel ice cream which takes no cream at all; even a few candies for the children (since children must have candy for their health's sake), and Grandmother's candies are both wholesome and economical.

Lantic Old-Fashioned Brown Sugars come in three kinds known by your grocer as Lantic Light, Brilliant and Dark Yellow, but the Brilliant is more generally recommended for the dishes in the cook book.

If you do not regularly use brown sugar in home cooking, buy some to-day and try it. It costs a little less than granulated, it sweetens as well as flavors, and it gives to many simple dishes a delightful flavor that makes them more acceptable than richer foods. Lantic Old-fashioned Brown Sugar is made by the makers of Lantic "FINE" granulated, the sugar with the red ball trademark. We send the cook book "Grandmother's Recipes" for a 2c. stamp to pay for return postage, or for a brown sugar recipe which you have tested and found to be good.

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