

PREFACE

NEAR the Lake of the Woods at sunrise one morning in 1882 I saw a priest standing on a flat rock, his crucifix in his right hand and his broad hat in the other, silhouetted against the rising sun, which made a golden halo about him, talking to a group of Indians—men, women and papooses—who were listening with reverent attention. It was a scene never to be forgotten, and the noble and saintly countenance of the priest brought it to me that this must be Father Lacombe of whom I had heard so much; and it was.

My acquaintance with him, begun that morning, has been full of charm to me, and my only regret is that in these later years the pleasure of meeting him has come at lengthening intervals. His life, devoted and self-sacrificing, has been like peaceful moonlight—commonplace to some, but to others full of quiet splendour, serenity, mystery and of much more for which there are no words.

We who know him love him because of his goodness and we feel that he is great; but we may not say he is great because of this or of that. His life has been hidden from the world in far-away Indian encampments and it is there we must look for accounts of his good works and great deeds.

The noble and elevating example of devotion and