

side of the American frontier, and then was sent to what is now Edmonton, in that magical region of long summers and great agricultural capacity known as the Peace river district, hundreds of miles north of Dakota and Idaho. There the Rockies are broken and lowered and the warm Pacific winds have rendered the region warmer than the land far to the south of it. But Father Lacombe went farther—400 miles north, to Lake Labiche. There he found what he calls a fine colony of half-breeds. These were dependents of the Hudson Bay Company, white men from England, France and the Orkney Islands, and Indians and half-breeds and their children. The visits of priests were so infrequent that in the intervals between them the white men and Indian women married one another, not without formality and the sanction of the colony, but without waiting for the ceremony of the church. Father Lacombe was called upon to bless and solemnize many such matches, to baptise many children, and to teach and preach what scores knew but vaguely or not at all.

In time he was sent to Calgary, which was a mere post in the wilderness for years after the priest went there. The buffaloes roamed the prairies in fabulous numbers, the Indians used the bow and arrow in the chase, and the maps we studied at the time showed the whole region enclosed in a loop, and marked "Blackfoot Indians." But the other Indians were loth to accept this disposition of the territory as final, and the country thereabouts was an almost constant battleground between the Blackfoot tribe, the Bloods and the Crees.

The good priest—for if ever there was a good man Father Lacombe is one—saw fighting enough, as he roamed with one tribe and the other or journeyed from tribe to tribe. His mission led him to ignore tribal differences, and to preach to all the Indians of the plains. He knew the chiefs and headmen among them all, and so justly did he deal with them that he was not only able to minis-