

FATHER LACOMBE AND CHIEF CROWFOOT.

RECENT news despatches from Calgary announced the death of Chief Crowfoot of the Blackfoot Indians; and in the subsequent report of the installation of a new chief over this great tribe was a mention of Father Lacombe. These two, the chief and the priest, were the most interesting and by far the most influential public characters in the newer part of Canada. Together they controlled the peace of a territory the size of a great empire.

The chief was more than eighty years old; the priest a dozen years younger; and yet they represented in their experiences the two great epochs of life on this continent—the barbaric and the progressive. In the chief's boyhood the red man held undisputed sway from the lakes to the Rockies. In the priest's youth he led, like a scout, beyond the advancing hosts from Europe. But Father Lacombe came bearing the olive branch of religion, and he and the barbarian became fast friends, intimates in companionship as picturesque and out of the common as any the world could produce.

It must be remembered that in a vast region of country the French priest and voyageur and *courier des bois* were the first white men the Indians saw; and while the explorers and traders seldom quarreled with the red men or offered violence to them, the priests never did. They went about like women or children, or rather, like nothing else than priests. They quickly learned the tongues of the savages, treated them fairly, showed the sublimest courage, and acted as counsellors, physicians and friends.

Father Lacombe was one of the priests who threaded the trails of the north-western timber land and the far western prairie when white men were very few indeed in that country, and the only settlements were those that had grown around the frontier forts and still earlier mission chapels. For two years he worked at his calling on either