

Canadian Indian Holds a Thousand at Bay Mounted Police Defied by Chief Almighty Voice

Indian's Side of Almost Incredible Battle of Canadian Northwest Told For the First Time — Field Guns Required to Annihilate Famous Western Outlaw.

Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance, who as a qualified journalist has undertaken to write a history of his race, recently visited the scene of this tragic exploit. Through conversations with Bowdoin, Esq., the exact father of Almighty Voice, himself a warrior of note (having fought with distinction under his own father, Chief One Arrow, in the Northwest Rebellion of 1885), and with Spotted Gull, the outlaw's mother, who escorted her son through the long days and nights of the battle, he gained a full recital of the circumstances in the language of the Indians, and here presents them in English though still infused with the Indian spirit.

By CHIEF BUFFALO CHILD LONG LANCE
A Chief of the Blood Band of the Blackfoot Tribe

"HERE died three braves." This tragic phrase, having withstood the elements through the twenty-six years of peace that have existed between the Indians and the white people in the great Northwest, remains to-day carved in a tree-trunk near Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. It was carved there in Cree syllables by the notorious Indian outlaw, Almighty Voice, Canada's last Indian to die fighting the white man. And it marks the spot on which he slew his final three victims from the Canadian Mounted Police.

Almighty Voice's bloody career began on October 18, 1898, when he escaped from the police, after having been arrested for killing a man. This animal, belonging to the government, but Almighty Voice is said by his kinsmen to have mistaken it for one of his father's herd. At all events, having unlocked his chains with a mighty yell, Almighty Voice, a man of speed, sped home. He declared to his mother:

"The Mounted Police told me to-day that they were going to hang me for killing a man. But they will never put a rope around my neck—I will die fighting them!"

One of the police afterwards admitted that he had said this to the prisoner as a joke. The actual penalty was a month's imprisonment. This Almighty Voice never knew. In carrying out his vow, Almighty Voice set a record unparalleled in the annals of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. He brought down seven Mounties and spoils during the following two years, and culminated his career by making the greatest single-handed stand in the history of the North American West.

Early next morning after his escape the Mounted Police called at his father's camp and searched every inch of the place—but one—for the vanished prisoner. In a corner of the main living quarters was a pile of provisions covered over with blankets. It is a strange fact that they never once approached this spot nearer than three or four feet, although they very diligently searched every other part of the enclosure. It is generally believed at Duck Lake that the police knew what was under those blankets, besides provisions; but they also knew what it would mean to approach it.

First Pursuer Shot

AFTER the Mounties had gone that morning, Almighty Voice left the camp with one of his wives for the Kenistone Reserve in the north, taking along with him his muzzle-loader and a couple of horses. The Mounted Police, world-famous for their unerring accuracy as man-hunters, immediately despatched Sergeant C. C. Colebrook and a half-breed scout to re-take their prisoner, cost what it might.

One morning they came upon Almighty Voice, in the act of picking up a prairie chicken which he had just shot. When he saw the policemen approaching he re-loaded his gun and stood waiting. At twenty yards he ordered a halt. Sergeant Colebrook continued his advance. His gun was pointed at Almighty Voice. "Stop, or I'll shoot!"—came the Cree command. This was interpreted to the sergeant by the half-breed scout. "Not!" said Sergeant Colebrook. "I am going to do my duty." He roared on. "Crack!"—a bullet came tearing into his neck; he fell forward in his saddle, a dead man.

The killing of Colebrook marked the real commencement of the great man-hunt. Almighty Voice was now outlawed with a substantial price on his head, dead or alive. From this time on, until May 25, 1897—nearly two years later—he is dropped into mysterious oblivion by all books dealing with his career. The Mounted Police force secured the country for him in vain. Not once were they able to pick up as much as a sign of his trail.

"The Riders of the Plains," the official history of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, says: "During this period Almighty Voice never showed



"The rush continued, Indians and raiders firing as fast as their guns would operate."

himself among his people, nor did he apparently hold any communication with them." As a matter of truth, Almighty Voice had constantly visited his people. He had spent much of his time with his parents. His presence was discovered on that date in 1897, however, and resulted in the shooting of Napoleon Venne, a half-breed scout who was guiding a party of mounted police on his trail. Venne still carries the bullet in his chest. The reason why this had missed the scout's heart by an inch was that Almighty Voice had granted the request of his young cousin, Going-Up-To-Sky, to try his prowess.

Almighty Voice, himself, never pulled a trigger that he did not bring down his victim. **Saskatchewan Aroused** THE shooting of Venne aroused a genuine alarm in the surrounding countryside; for everyone knew that Almighty Voice was in the neighborhood again and they knew that he was now on the warpath in deadly earnest. In addition to Going-Up-To-Sky, he now was also accompanied by his brother-in-law, Topenan. He had assumed the offensive and become a killer. With an Indian this means that he intends to get, as many as he can before he is gotten. Twenty-six years of healthy growth had given him a great wiry frame of body which stood well over six feet in moccasins.

Resared to the primitive, adventurous environment of the Indians of those days, he had become famed as a runner, a hunter and a man of indomitable courage and independence. He was of regal descent, having been the eldest grandchild of the noted Chief One Arrow who led the Duck Lake Indians in the Northwest Rebellion. Altogether, he was dauntless, resourceful, physically powerful and enduring; a man who could well justify the alarm which he had now aroused throughout the northern limits of Saskatchewan.

The news of Almighty Voice's sudden re-appearance after two years of baffling evasion was received with grave concern at Prince Albert, forty miles away. At midnight twelve mounted policemen under Capt. Allan Stewart set out on horseback for the Minnechunas Hills. At the same time another force under Inspector Wilson was despatched from Duck Lake.

Captain Allan's party riding past Bellevue Hill the next morning noticed in the distance three objects moving toward a small bluff. "I see three antelopes over there," one man reported. But when they approached closer they were surprised to discern the forms of three Indians stripped for battle.

The captain knew instantly that he had located his quarry and he ordered his men to charge.

Almighty Voice waited until the party had advanced to firing range. Then he opened up. The first burst of Indian fire brought down the two officers commanding the detachment, Capt. Allan and Sergeant Raven. Capt. Allan's right arm was smashed with a bullet and Sergeant Raven sagged in his saddle with his thigh dangling uselessly over the side of his horse. Corporal Hockin now assumed command of the detachment.

Almighty Voice had counted his latest "coo"—one killed and four

wounded—and had taken cover in a small clump of bush now known as the Almighty Voice Bluff. His people knew that he would not come out alive for he had selected this site on which to make a final stand against the Mounties.

A Disastrous Movement CORPORAL HOCKIN'S detachment which stood guard awaiting the reinforcements which had been summoned, was joined by the party from Duck Lake. That afternoon this combined force was reinforced again by a command consisting of every spare man from the Prince Albert barracks.

At six o'clock in the evening Corporal Hockin called for volunteers to charge the bluff. Nine policemen and civilians answered the call. This was the most disastrous movement of the day. The Indians, perceiving their intention, were on the edge of the bluff awaiting the onslaught. Scarcely had the fringe of the bush been reached when Corporal Hockin received his death wound, a bullet in the chest.

bullet. Something falls every time he shoots." Almighty Voice's old mother had stood on top of the rise just back of the bluff all day shouting encouragement to her son. She recounted the bold exploits of his father and of his grandfather, Chief One Arrow; and she urged him to die brave, he had shown himself to be. He answered her affectionately, from time to time, informing her how he was faring.

After two attacks on Friday, he said, he and his boy cousin had dug a hole, got into it and covered it over with brush. Two mounted police lay dead ten feet from this pit, he said. He had taken their guns and ammunition and thrown away his old muzzle-loader. (This latter crude weapon up to this time had accounted for all his victims, however.)

"I am eating the bark of the trees, I am almost starving. I have dug as far as my arm will reach, but can get no water. But do not fear; I shall hold out." Excitement had become intense in the surrounding countryside as all day Saturday fresh troops were arriving on the field from Regina, Prince Albert and Duck Lake. The whole citizenry of northern Saskatchewan seemed to have flocked there over night.

Dr. Stewart, who still practices at Duck Lake and who owns the last gun used by Almighty Voice, was one of the men who rescued the dying body of the gallant Corporal Hockin from the edge of the bluff. Constable O'Kelly, "The Fighting Irishman," with his field glasses discovered the body of the corporal and he believed that he had seen it move. He called for a volunteer to make a dash with him down the hill and across the lowland to the bluff, to attempt a rescue. Jumping into a buckboard the doctor and the constable went down the hill as fast as their horses would run.

O'Kelly piled the limp form in the back of the rig while Dr. Stewart sprang out and held the horse. They whirled around and beat a galloping retreat through a shower of bullets, one of which removed a spur from

one of the constable's boots. Dr. Stewart attributes Kelly's escape to the fact that he kept dancing from position to position both on the ground and in the buckboard. And he ascribes his own escape to the fact that Almighty Voice knew him very well and desisted from taking a shot at him as he stood holding the horse.

"He could have made quick work of me if he had wanted to," said the doctor, "but he knew that I was there as a medical attendant." By Saturday evening the field guns, a 3-pounder and a 7-pounder, were well in place, and at six o'clock the first shells were sent thundering into the bluff.

Chant of Death

THE second shot got the range and the rest went plump into the spot where the fugitives were known to be concealed.

When the barrage had ceased, Almighty Voice shouted, "You have done well, but you will have to do better." Darkness settled quickly over the landscape and a silence as sickening as the whining, thundering shells of a few minutes before, bore itself into the very souls of the volunteers. "Men heard each other breathing," one of them related to me, "creeping in behind the thoughts of their own dead comrades came the half-said realization that to-morrow would spell the eternal end of the two creatures below, who had participated in neither food, water nor sleep during the past three days, night or wrong, they had displayed a quality which all men admire."

One of them also confided to me that he secretly hoped that the Indians would escape during the night, never to be heard or again. No one will ever know what was in the heart and mind of Almighty Voice during that gruesome stillness.

The night wore on, interrupted by only one mysterious shot which took the hat off of the head of one of the pickets; then, attracted by the smell of the bodies on the bluff, a group of coyotes gathered on the lowland below and set up their dolorous chorus of yip, yip, yip, hoo-o" which lasted far into the night.

Then, another sound floated from

the opposite hill, just behind the bluff—"Hi-hee, hi-hee, hey-hey-hey-hey"—It was Almighty Voice's writhed old mother chanting her son's death song.

"I wanted to go in that bluff and take my son in my arms and protect him," she told me, "sweeping her arms through the motions of an affectionate embrace. Again and again she had tried to enter the bluff all during the four days' vigil, but each time she was interrupted by the police."

"They told me," she said, "you must not go in there; it would not be nice for us to have to kill a woman." She continued: "I was very weak that night; I had not had anything to eat while my son was starving. Presently, a deep-toned echo to the old woman's chant came rumbling out of the bluff. It was Almighty Voice answering his mother. That was the last time his voice was ever heard."

At six o'clock the next morning, the big guns began belching forth their devastating stream of lead and iron. It was obvious that no living thing could long endure their steady beat.

By noon the pelting ceased. At one o'clock volunteers, led by James McKay, G. C. (now chief Justice of Saskatchewan) and William Deane, decided to make another raid on the bluff. The mounties themselves had been refused permission to re-raid again. On the first rush the volunteers were not able to locate the hiding place of the Indians. Remarkably well, indeed, had they concealed themselves beneath their brush covering. A second charge, however, brought them upon the sun-pit.

The Mysterious Shot

HERE lay the body of Almighty Voice. His young cousin, also lying in the hole, was still alive.

According to old Henry Smith, a half-breed, who removed the dead outlaw's body to his mother's grave, as he had promised her, one of the mounted policemen walked up to the hole and put a finishing bullet through the wounded lad's head. Almighty Voice was shot in seven places, but his death missile was a piece of shrapnel which split open his forehead. In the bottom of the sun-pit were two holes, the depth of a man's arm, which had been dug by the outlaw in a vain attempt to reach water. The bark from the surrounding trees had been stripped off and eaten.

The bodies of Constable Kerr and Ernest Grundy, who had been carried to the bluff on Friday evening never to be seen alive again, were lying about ten feet from the hole, although they were killed before the pit had been constructed. The dead body of Going-Up-To-Sky, who had received a fatal wound in the second attack on Friday, was lying on the fringe of the bluff about twenty-five yards from the pit.

The startling revelation that Almighty Voice had gotten out of the bluff on Saturday night and succeeded in working clear through the pickets to a point some thirty yards beyond, was brought to light by the finding of one of his blood-soaked moccasins at this salient point and a crudely made moccasin which he had abandoned just inside the bluff on his return.

This discovery explained the mysterious shot which clipped the hat off of the head of one of the volunteers during the uncanny lull on Saturday night. One of the pickets struck a match to light his pipe and in the same instant clapped out of the darkness and his hat whizzed off his head.

A Mute Sentinel

ON a small poplar tree standing over the bodies of the dead Mounted Policemen was found that eloquent inscription carved in the Cree: "Here died three braves." Almighty Voice, shortly before he was killed, had scrawled out of his hole and asserted the noblest of Indian traits—admiration and recognition of bravery even in his deadliest enemies. The inscription is a commemorative tribute to the "Red Coat" stands to-day, the mute sentinel of America's last frontier.

I visited the Almighty Voice Bluff with the outlaw's mother, his son, his two brothers, Prosper and Gatten, and the old half-breed, Henry Smith. It was a beautiful northern summer day. Under its peaceful quietude, broken only by the occasional short, gruff bark of a wolf-dog, it was hard to believe that this lovely stretch of bush and prairie-land once echoed the thunder of the Northwest Rebellion and the cannon which wiped out Gitchi-Manitou-Ware—Almighty Voice.

I stood at the pit and gazed long and thoughtfully across the broad stretch of lowland at the rising hill beyond, where the field guns were put in position. Then I turned around and looked up the bluff and saw the rise on which the bluff is situated, and I could see the spot, about a hundred yards above, where the old mother stood shouting and singing to her son during the four long days and nights of the siege.

This reminded me to look towards the old mother to see how she was reacting to her first visit to this spot since she was carried home exhausted on the tragic morning of May 25, 1897. I shall never forget the figure which met my gaze. With a sleeping grandchild strapped over her back, she was standing a little way back from the hole, looking her fears in the corner of a crimson and yellow blanket. I watched her; she never once looked at the hole nor did she approach it nearer than ten feet. One hand was mopping her eyes and the other was picking blindly at the little tufts of red willow which crept up to her waist. Her head was bent as though she were ashamed of the emotions which she could not control.

Big Business All Right DILLAWAY: "Talk about your big business, why, my cousin has 18,000 men directly under him." Caraway: "Ah, a general?" Dillaway: "Not exactly." Caraway: "A wholesale contractor?" Dillaway: "No, 63 visitors."—Parrson's Weekly.

The Author in Ceremonial Garb

CHIEF BUFFALO CHILD LONG LANCE, who has been a frequent contributor to The Star Weekly, is called "Big Boss" of the Plains Indians, all tribes of whom, in addition to the Blackfoot of Alberta, are said to look up to him as a leader. Born in a log-cabin of Holding Fire, he became an honor graduate at the Carlisle Indian School, and famous as an athlete there, playing on the football team for three years; also a post-graduate of St. John's Military Academy, N.Y. He was appointed to West Point in 1915, but relinquished this appointment to enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He came out of the war a Captain, wounded twice and decorated for heroism. He has since entered journalism, serving on the staffs of different Canadian newspapers; he is also compiling a general history of the Indians of the Northern Plains and the North.



Almighty Voice, Jr., son of the dead outlaw, who was born to his father and mother during their two years' refuge in the northern wilds of Saskatchewan. He is holding his little twin daughters who were born to his young wife while the author was staying his camp.