

government were entirely ignored. Riel's regime was, for a time, characterized by moderation as well as energy, but the brutal slaying of Thomas Scott alienated the sympathies of the better people, and when the expedition under Colonel Wolseley for the establishment of the Canadian authority reached Fort Garry, Riel had fled as a lonely fugitive. His position as a former protégé of a high ecclesiastic may have had something to do with the prominence accorded him by his fellows, and the advantages which he demanded for the church were calculated to assure his followers of its approval of him. Even after his flight he retained such influence that the Government sought and obtained Archbishop Taché's aid to induce him, upon the payment secretly of a considerable sum of money, to leave the country. Though an outlaw, he was returned to parliament by the constituency of Provencher, and actually appeared in the Chamber and signed the roll. He immediately disappeared, however, and was nowhere to be found. It was afterwards learned that he had been for a time at the residence, at Terrebonne, of Madame Masson, the patroness of his college years, and that later he had been at the provincial asylum for the insane at Beauport, whether as a parlor lodger or as a raving lunatic is still a vexed question among those who knew him there. Still later, it was known that he had found a refuge among the Metis in Montana, where he was a "professor" at a Jesuit "college." In the summer of 1884, when the half-breeds of the territories of Saskatchewan and Assiniboine wanted a leader who could attract the attention of the Government to their claims and grievances, they sent for Louis Riel, at the little mission of St. Peter's, at the base of the Rocky Mountains. He returned, but not with the fierce-looking, determined face, the imperious glance and the confident bearing of the young adventurer of 1869. The Louis Riel who, during the fall and winter of 1884, addressed meetings at the half-breed settlements throughout the North-West, was a rather shabby man, with a neglected beard and a restless eye, whose apprehensive glances gave him a hunted aspect. He appeared twenty years older than a man of forty-one years. He was now a sort of professional rebel, anxious to make capital out of his talent for stirring up disaffection. At first he spoke only of obtaining a recognition of the claims of the half-breeds, and redress of their grievances by constitutional methods. In the month of September, at a public meeting at St. Laurent, he submitted a Bill of Rights, which was unanimously agreed to, and which, it was understood, was to be forwarded to the Government at Ottawa. The list of claims is a remarkable one. It reveals clearly that the men who drew them up had rebellion in view, and that they were possessed of a good deal of political skill and sagacity. The claims in effect were: (1) The subdivision into provinces of the North-West Territories; (2) the half-breeds to receive the same grants and other advantages as the Manitoba half-breeds; (3) patents to be issued at once to the colonists in

possession; (4) the sale of half a million acres of Dominion lands, the proceeds to be applied to the establishment in the half-breed settlements of schools, hospitals, and such-like institutions, and to the equipment of the poorer half-breeds with seed-grain and implements; (5) the reservation of a hundred townships of swamp land for distribution among the children of half-breeds during the next one hundred and twenty

reason for doubting the sincerity of his belief that the bill "had done its work," and of his desire that it should do its work, as his own purpose was to create trouble in the hope that he would be bribed, as he was in 1870, to leave the country. Sir John Macdonald, the Premier, declared in Parliament that the Government had never received the Bill of Rights, and he also stated that Riel had made an offer to the Government to leave the country for \$5,000, the same amount which he had received in 1870.

The men whom he had stirred up to rebellion were, however, in thorough earnest. The Metis (pronounce this name Meteece) are the descendants of those energetic and adventurous voyageurs, trappers and Hudson's Bay employees, who made their way amid great difficulties and dangers to a country then out of the world; with the blood of these there mingled in their veins that of probably the finest dark race in the world. Unlike other mixed races the Metis are strong in physique and strong in mind, and are quite able to hold their own with the pure white in the race of life. A Metis, inheriting the energies of many races, is to-day the Premier of the constitutional government of Manitoba. These bold, energetic men, long accustomed to provide for and protect themselves and their families amid exciting scenes, were restive under the monotony of



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years; (6) a grant of at least one thousand dollars for the maintenance of an institution, to be conducted by the nuns in each half-breed settlement; and (7) better provision for the support of the Indians.

This document was a bold bid for the support of all peoples and powers in the North-West. The English settlers wanted political rights; these were appealed for in the first clauses. Many of these regarded the agitation at the beginning with favor; as likely to secure the redress of real grievances. Riel expected their support and complained bitterly that they deserted as soon as decisive action was called for. They saw, however, that the half-breeds had determined to rebel, and took no part in the movement. The demand for subsidies for schools and numerics was a bid for the support of the church. "The priests were for me and they were against me," said Riel. "They are against me now, not because I rebelled, but because I did not succeed in helping them." The half-breeds to the third and fourth generation were to be provided for if these demands were enforced. The last demand is significant, as it reveals the fact that from the first an Indian rising in support of the half-breed rebellion was counted upon.

That Riel intended to take part in actual rebellion himself is more than doubtful. The story was that the people, when he tried to depart, retained his services with a pistol. When asked why he fought, Riel declared "The people compelled me to fight. I told them last winter that our Bill of Rights had done its work; they would get all that was just in due time. They said I could not go away; the matter was stirred up and I must fight it out." There is

farm life to which they had been driven by the disappearance of the buffalo and of fur animals, and by the construction of railways which rendered "freighting" unnecessary. When their rights to the land were not recognized, when the surveyors threatened to square their lane-like farms into quarter sections, they grew pugnacious. Bred among territorial feuds, they were not reluctant to resort to what was their former condition, and, insane as it looks to people with a knowledge of the resources of a Government like that of the Dominion, were ready to attempt by force to overthrow the authority of the Canadian Government in the North-West. Riel had inspired them with a belief in his power to bring the Metis of the United States and the Indians of the whole West to his aid. He probably also made prodigal promises of Fenian assistance. He adopted the rôle of a religious mystic, which probably came naturally enough to a man of his temperament and training, and by mysterious and incoherent utterances appealed to the superstitious element which is naturally strong in the wanderer in the wilds. From among men such as these, and of this temper, the Provisional Government was formed on that St. Patrick's Day.

The Adjutant-General, Gabriel Dumont, was an old buffalo hunter and Indian fighter who had fought on both sides of the line, and had taken more human lives, if not scalps, than any other man on the prairie. The story goes that at a sun-dance or a moon-dance, or some other festival of the Blackfeet, the braves were, according to custom, boasting of their individual prowess, when Dumont, uninvited, jumped into their midst and, flourishing his rifle, exclaimed