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The Weekly Messenger.

LOUIS RIEL'S DEATH.

Up till Monday morning it was only a few privileged persons who knew what was to be done with Riel. The special messenger bringing the warrant signed by the Governor-General of Canada, directing that the execution of Louis Riel should take place, arrived at Regina on a special train at eight o'clock last Sunday evening. An hour later the rebel leader received the intelligence that he was to be hanged. It was High Sheriff Chapleau himself who

TOLD HIM HIS FATE.

The scene was remarkable in many ways. Riel's cell was next to the guard room, where the troops were doing night patrol duty, fully fifty being in the room. Through the iron gate, in front of the cell, was seen an armed sentinel on duty, and outside the building a cordon of armed men were pacing their beats. The iron gate was thrown open on the approach of High Sheriff Chapleau and Col. Irvine, commandant of the Mounted Police. Riel, who had been conversing with the surgeon of the post, arose and welcomed the Sheriff in a hearty and thoroughly unconstrained way. His voice was modulated, and he displayed no sign of excitement. His initial greeting was: "Well, and so you have come with the great announcement; I am glad." Sheriff Chapleau replied that the death warrant had come. Riel, continuing in the same cheery way, said: "I am glad that at last I am to be released from my sufferings." He then broke off into French and thanked the sheriff for his personal consideration. He proceeded again in English: "I desire that my body shall be given to my friends to be laid in St. Boniface" (the French Cemetery across the Red River from the city of Winnipeg.) The sheriff then asked him if he had any wishes to convey as to the disposition of his personal estate or effects. "Mon cher" replied he, "I have only this," touching his breast above the region of the heart, "this I gave to my country fifteen ago and it is all I have to give now." He was asked as to his peace of mind and replied: "I long ago made my peace with my God. I am as prepared now as I can be at any time. You will find that I had a mission to perform. I want you to thank my friends in Quebec for all they have done for me." He continued, in reply to another question, "I am willing to go. I shall be permitted to say something on the scaffold?" he said in a tone of enquiry. When told that he would be allowed, he said smilingly, "You think I may speak too long, that it will unnerve me: Oh, no; I shall not be weak. I shall feel that when the moment comes I shall have wings which will carry me upward." After talking for some time on different subjects, remaining perfectly calm all the while, his spiritual adviser, Father Andre arrived, and Riel, turning to Sheriff Chapleau, shook hands with him and said, "Good-bye, my friend." Pere Andre said masses for the doomed man during the earlier part of the night. Riel then lay

down and appeared to sleep soundly, awakening at an early hour and again resuming his devotions, and continuing without intermission until the time for his execution.

HIS LAST MORNING.

Although he had supped early the previous night, Riel took nothing to eat in the morning. He said he had another vision in the night, the guardian angel revealing to him that he would live three years in the North-West. He would rise three days after his execution and share the premiership with Sir John Macdonald.

The hour fixed for the execution was eight o'clock, but it was fifteen minutes past that hour before those who had passes from the Sheriff were admitted to the guard-room. Here was found the prisoner kneeling on the floor of the upper room from which he was to step to the gallows. It was a sad scene, and around him were gathered numbers of Mounted Police, Sheriff Chapleau, Deputy Sheriff Gibson, press representatives and a few others. The room, naturally dark, was illuminated only with a set all window through which the sun, now risen but a few hours, shot a few bright rays. Riel had passed the night in prayer with Father Andre. He now knelt beside the open window, through which could be seen the dread instrument of death, and prayed incessantly for fully half an hour, Fathers McWilliams and Andre, conducting the service for the dying in French. Riel repeated the responses in a clear voice, which could be heard distinctly above the murmur of the Fathers' whispering tones. At 8:05 Pere Andre administered the last sacrament to Riel. Although pale he was firm. He was dressed in a black coat, brown tweed pants and moccasins. The figure of the hangman now appeared out of the gloom of the loft holding the straps to bind Riel. He wore a mask over his face. At twenty five minutes past eight the pinning of the condemned man began, during which he repeated Ave Marias, Father Andre with a lighted candle standing in front.

THE LAST MOMENTS.

At the door on the way to the ghastly place of execution knelt Riel, his profile showing clear against the light. Father Andre addressing Riel in French, said:

"Do you pardon all your enemies from the bottom of your heart?"

Riel—"I do, *mon pere*; I pardon all my enemies for the love of the good God."

Father Andre—"Have you any sentiment of malice, any feeling of bitterness against any one?"

Riel—"No, my father, I forgive all."

Father Andre—"Do you offer your life as a sacrifice to God?"

Riel—"I do, *mon pere*."

Father Andre—"My child, the flesh is weak and the spirit strong. Do you repent of all your sins, thought, word and deed?"

Riel—"I do, my father: I have committed many sins, and I asked my God pardon for them all in the name of Jesus, Marie and Joseph."

Father Andre—"You do not wish to speak in public? You make that a sacrifice to God."

Riel—"No, *mon pere*. I make to my God as a sacrifice the speaking to the public—in this my last hour."

Father Andre—"God has been good to you, my son, to give you an opportunity of repenting, and are you thankful for this?"

Riel—"I thank the good God that in His Providence he has enabled me to make my peace with him and all mankind before I go away."

The two clergymen then placed their hands on his head and pronounced the absolution.

"Oh, my God," cried Riel, still speaking in French, as he went down the stairs. "You are my support." He now stood on the drop and said: "Courage, Father Andre, courage, courage." The priests shook hands with him, as he did with Dr. Jukes, and Riel, preserving to the last that politeness which was so characteristic of him, said: "Thank you, doctor." Riel and Father McWilliams then said The Lord's Prayer. As the words "Deliver us" were uttered the hangman pressed the crank and Riel fell a drop of nine feet. Exactly at 8:23 the drop fell, giving a shock to all present. At the first moment of the fall Riel's body remained still, his knees drawn up violently three or four times, the body swayed to and fro, quivering, and Riel was dead. From the first moment of the drop to the time when the body became quiet was under two minutes.

RESULTS.

As a result of the hanging of Riel there were demonstrations in his favor both in Montreal and Quebec. In the former city a crowd of between three and five thousand people paraded the streets with banners. There was no violence of any kind however, and all passed off quietly enough. The flag of the City Hall was flying at half-mast for a short time, but as soon as the circumstance was brought to the notice of the city authorities the flag was taken down. The feeling in Quebec is much more intense than at Montreal. It is thought that the hanging will take the support of the French from Sir John who is chiefly blamed by those who were in favor of having Riel reprieved.

CHANGING OCEAN CURRENTS.

A wellknown New York engineer has thought of a plan for lessening the severity of winter and spring in the North Atlantic States, and also for warming the inhabitants of Nova Scotia. On looking at a map of ocean currents it will be seen that the warm gulf stream is represented as issuing from the Gulf of Mexico and continuing its way across the Atlantic to warm the shores of the British Isles and South-Western Europe, and to extend its influence to the climates of the countries by which it passes. Looking again at the map it will be seen that a strong current of ice water from the Arctic ocean meets the gulf stream before it can reach the New England States, and pushes that warm current of water away from the shores of America. Now the engineer we refer to proposes to dam the polar river in the Strait of Belle Isle and turn its waters eastward

into the wide Atlantic. This strait, which separates Newfoundland from Labrador, is at one point only ten miles wide and one hundred and fifty feet deep. There he would invest \$40,000,000 in a dam. He thinks that if this were done the temperature of the coast would be raised from Newfoundland to Cape Hatteras. Cape Cod, now so cold, would become a resort for invalids even in the winter time, the St. Lawrence gulf and river would become navigable throughout the year, and the seaside bathing resorts would be on the shores of Nova Scotia. This plan seems reasonable enough, but the Arctic current has not been sufficiently explored to be able to say that all its waters pass through the Straits of Belle Isle. In fact it is supposed that for the most part it passes outward around the eastern coast of Newfoundland. If this is the case, the dam, though it might greatly benefit the inhabitants of the shores of the St. Lawrence Gulf, yet it is extremely doubtful that it would make any change in the climate in the New England States or New York.

It was not a hundred years ago that Byron wrote the lines:

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore.

Many persons will still laugh at the idea of man's being able to change the course of an ocean river, just as there were those who ridiculed the idea of steam being used as a power of locomotion, but the lapse of centuries only tends to show that man has been given a more complete control over the earth than has ever been dreamed of.

Supposing the idea of turning the Arctic current away from the American shores was fully realized, there would likely arise an extremely difficult question to settle. The heat of the Gulf Stream being utilized on this side of the Atlantic and the Arctic current being directed over the ocean toward the British Isles would leave the latter to become as cold as Labrador is at present. The British would naturally object to this, but though there are laws laid down concerning land rivers, prohibiting a change of direction to be made, who is to decide that it is unlawful to change the direction of ocean rivers, inasmuch as the ocean belongs to none. Although for some time to come there is no likelihood of such changes being made it is quite possible that in some future century there may be a discussion as to what rights a country has to build dams, even on its own shores, which will alter the direction of ocean currents.

A more remarkable plan than that for deflecting the Gulf Stream was proposed some years ago in the American Congress. The proposal was to have the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico driven northward into Hudson's Bay by way of the channel of the Mississippi River, and also to have the Gulf Stream extended northward through the Bay of Fundy, the St. Lawrence Gulf and Labrador into Hudson's Bay. This plan was scarcely as practicable as the one at present proposed.