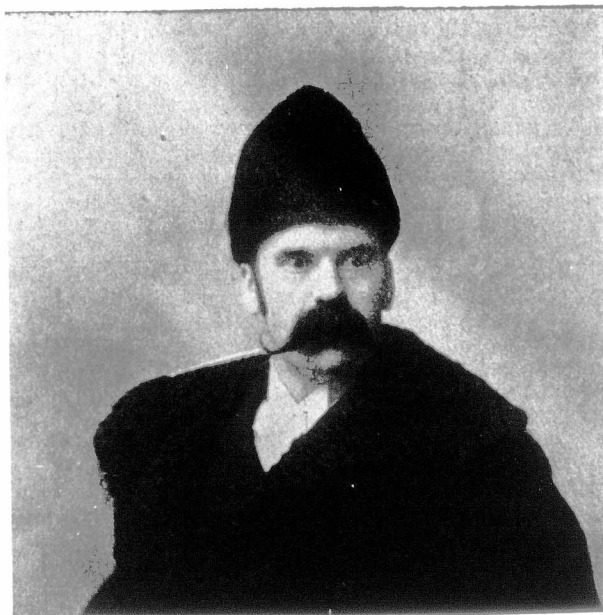


Rebellion Reminiscences.

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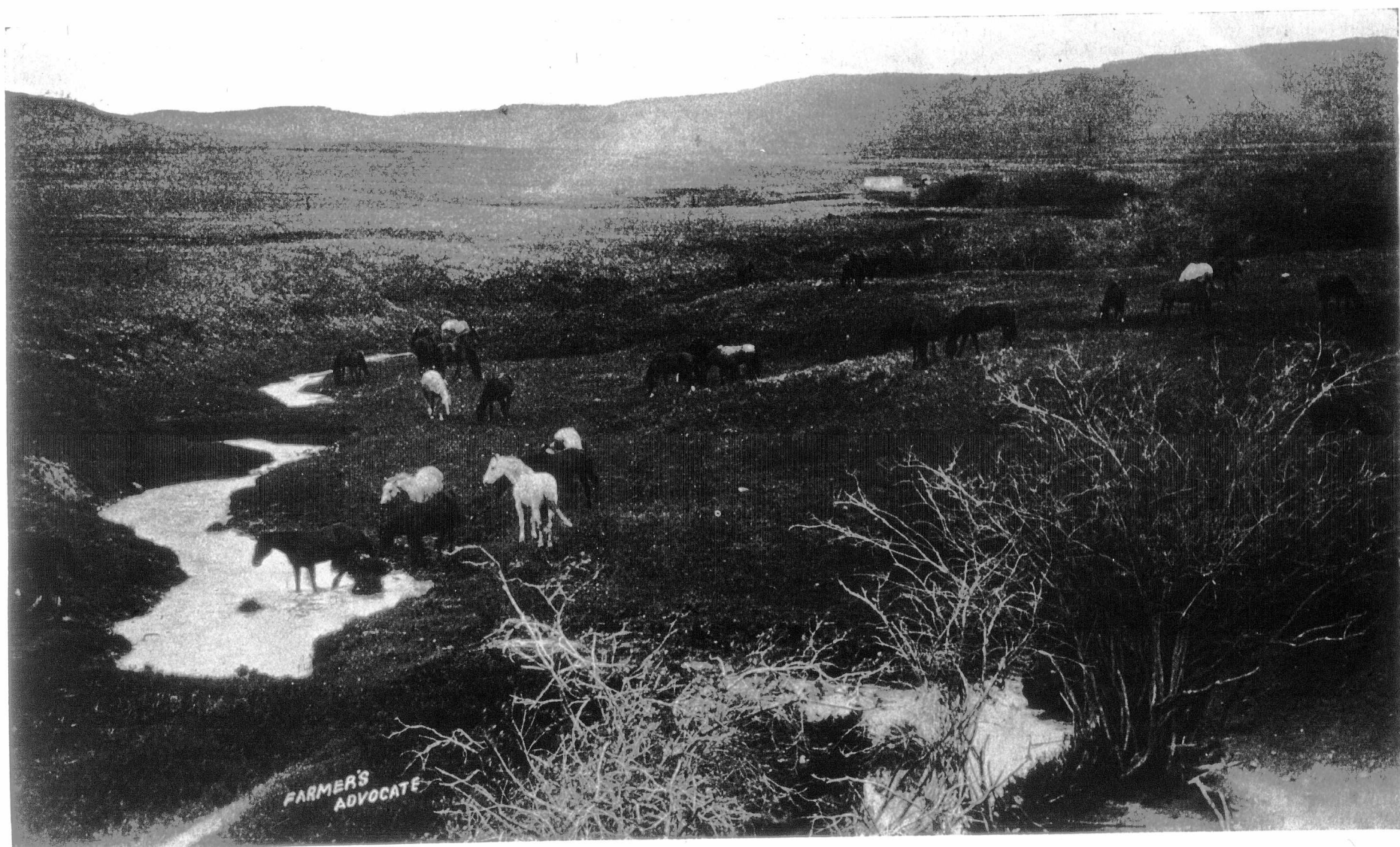
The Canadian West has the somewhat unique and doubtful distinction of having two rebellions on its records. Each of them sent a red stream across the pages of its history, and left the memory of sorrow in many an anguished heart. It is not my business in this short article to discuss the character of the rebel leaders or to fix their place in the verdict of time. I knew something of all of them: Louis Riel, the brilliant, impulsive and erratic head of both insurrections; Ambrose Lepine, the "Adjutant-General" of the forces in 1870, powerful in physique and dashing in his manner; and Gabriel Dumont, the redoubtable leader of the rebel hosts in 1885, a man of immense physical strength and of undoubted prowess on the field, as he had been in the buffalo-hunting expeditions of the earlier days. Many of the scenes in the first rebellion were photographed on the tablets of my boyish mind, and I can turn to them at any time to this day. I recall going with my father through the old front-gate of Fort Garry and grasping his hand the more tightly as we passed the rebel sentry. That day my father went into the council-room of the rebel chief and returned a magistrate's commission he



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spot where the university building now stands. It was then a riding park. It was also near the jail, which fact was not altogether unimportant for a camp such as ours, and which may even have a salutary effect on certain kinds of university students. We left Winnipeg on the 15th of April, for Calgary, whence we were to go to Edmonton, Fort Pitt, etc., where Big Bear and his braves were terrorizing the scattered communities. Calgary was an interesting spot. Some years ago, Sir William Van Horne prophesied that Calgary would be one of the most important cities in Canada. About the same time he prophesied that wheat in Manitoba would be two dollars a bushel. Van Horne is a great railroader, but as a prophet he has not been a striking success. The people of Calgary and the farmers of Manitoba are still waiting, with commendable patience, for the fulfillment of these prophesies, and if they were building up on them (which we doubt), we should not be surprised if hope deferred was making their hearts sick. The most entertaining and exciting thing we saw at Calgary was the breaking of bronchos for the mounted men in our brigade. It is really a breaking, not a training, and the marvellous staying-power of both the cowboy and the broncho made a good study. After an hour or so the man was still "on top," and the horse was broken—that is, broken enough for a cowboy to use; but woe betide the tenderfoot



"TENNESSEE COULEE—LOOKING NORTH-EAST—SOUTHERN ALBERTA. GENERAL HORSE ROUND-UP, 1901."

had just received, saying, to the amazement of Riel, that he would not accept an appointment from a rebel government. I recall the gray, wintry morning when Dr. (afterwards Sir John) Schultz, who had escaped from Fort Garry, hard-hunted, to my father's house in Kildonan, and was there concealed till he started out on his famous journey overland to Ontario, under guidance of the old fur-trader, Joseph Monkman. I recall that dark 4th day of March when Thomas Scott was cruelly shot, at the command of Riel, by a half-drunken firing party. Then I remember the day when it was all over, and the soldiers came up the Red River and found Fort Garry deserted by the rebels, who had not stood on the order of their going, but had gone all at once. Amongst the officers of the incoming army were such afterwards-famous men as Garnet Wolseley, W. F. Butler, and Redvers Buller, two of whom have, unfortunately, found that there is some truth in the saying that "South Africa is the grave of good reputations."

And then, fifteen years later, another rebellion broke out further to the westward, along the banks of the Saskatchewan. Writing for the "Farmer's Advocate," it may be worth while saying that both rebellions had their origin in questions as to the ownership of land. The only people who seem to undervalue land are the foolish lads who want to leave the farm for the teen-

ing city and the overcrowded professions. Or if they do not seek places in the professions, they want to get into business, and so ten men struggle against one another to sell wheat and apples in the city, when nine of them would be happier and more independent growing these out in the countryside. But the early settlers, the French half-breeds, valued the land. The first rebellion was due to their ignorant dread of being dispossessed of their land by the incoming of new races. The second rebellion was due to the delays of local red-tapeism in granting land patents, and to the desire of the settlers to hold their land in narrow strips rather than in the rectangular form of the new surveys. In neither case was there sufficient cause to justify armed revolt, but in both cases the local powers dealing with the people were strangely oblivious of existing discontent, and never seemed to seriously anticipate rebellion till the storm broke.

The regiment in which I served as an officer during the second rebellion, the 91st Winnipeg Light Infantry, was recruited hurriedly, after the outbreak had taken shape. The recruiting was done in Winnipeg and vicinity, and the regiment was extremely cosmopolitan in race, religion and color. One company was recruited from the farming districts north of Winnipeg, on the Red River, and another came from the picturesque district of Minnedosa. We rendezvoused in Winnipeg, on the

who gets on "the hurricane-deck" of what they consider a "busted broncho."

The commander of our brigade was General Strange, a magnificent veteran of the Indian Mutiny—eccentric, it is true, but utterly devoid of fear, and ready for anything that came along. He was a retired officer, and when the rebellion broke out was trying to make his fortune at ranching, but found it rather difficult to learn a new business after fifty years at soldiering. Like Mark Antony, he was "no orator as Brutus is, but a plain, blunt man." He made several short addresses to the regiment during the campaign, and his words came like bullets from a Winchester. There was no difficulty in knowing what he meant. Another of our officers was Steele, who commanded a detachment of the Mounted Police and scouts. Steele, of course, is now known to everybody as the Colonel of the famous Strathcona Horse; still more recently with Baden-Powell's Constabulary. When I heard that he was to go out with the Strathconas, I said to myself: "That's a good appointment. I am a man of peace, but sometimes we have to fight to get it, and if fighting has to be done in South Africa, it's a good thing to have men who understand the business go and do it." One day, when we were having a skirmish with the Indians near Fort Pitt, I was sitting in a clearing while the men were under cover. Suddenly I heard someone