

and couriers sent out by Riel and Big Bear had the effect of unsettling and exciting both half-breeds and Indians throughout the length and breadth of the land, and that most of the Indians, at least, did prepare for war, but few of them actually took part in hostile demonstrations: and some remained unmistakably loyal throughout. Let me quote instances of this loyalty. One of Big Bear's emissaries, who was a renegade from Pakan's reserve, at Whitefish Lake, came back to his old home for the purpose of putting the band in a fair way to get their share of the plunder; but the Indians turned a cold shoulder on him, and after he had fruitlessly endeavored to get them to listen to him, he announced his intention of getting his own share whether they chose to have theirs or not. He said the Indians at Battleford, Fort Pitt and Saddle Lake were breaking into the stores of the traders and taking all the goods they wanted, and now that they had an opportunity of doing the same thing, it would be a mistake never enough to be regretted to let such a golden opportunity slip. The little trading store, belonging to the Hudson Bay Company, on the reserve, was temporarily closed; the man who had been in charge of it, a half-breed named Peter Erasmus, was absent assisting in the defence of the larger and more seriously threatened post at Lac la Biche. The Indian declared his intention of breaking into this store and helping himself. The others objected, on the ground that such an outrage would be blamed on the whole band, and they had no wish to acquire a reputation for housebreaking. The wrangling went on for some time in front of the store about which they were disputing, and when finally the rebel approached the door to break it in, another Indian raised his gun, and from the distance of a few yards killed him instantly,—a most indefensible act, of course, but one that put a remarkably sudden stop to all rebellious and plundering talk in that neighborhood. The murderer was afraid, as of course he had reason to be, that he would be either arrested by the police and tried for murder, or that he would be waylaid by the avenger of blood. The police, however, had other matters to attend to, and a couple of ponies being handed over by his family to that of the murdered man, nothing further was heard of the matter.

The other instance of Indian loyalty is pleasanter to contemplate. On the morning when the Hudson Bay Company's store at