

It had been ploughed and sown, and now corn-fields waved where lately the bison had roamed. Houses, schools, and churches stood where pine and hemlock tree had towered their dark heads for ages. The wild Métis had forgotten their hate, and side by side thrifty Scottish settlers and adventurous French half-breeds lived in peace, the one careful and saving, the other careless, passionate and spendthrift.

But most of these half-breeds knew, and cared, nothing for Canada. To them the Company was everything, and they were content to live beneath its rule. But when they heard that Canada, not the Company, was to rule in future, they thought that they were being given over to some foreign power.

The Métis were very ignorant, and it was a pity that no one was sent to explain to these simple people what was really happening; it might have saved the shedding of much blood and many tears. No one was sent, and so they rose in rebellion, led by a man called Louis Riel.

Louis Riel, himself a Métis, was a clever, but half-educated man. He thought himself a patriot, and soon had an army of six or seven hundred men behind him. They took possession of Fort Garry, one of the strongest of the Hudson Bay Company's forts. They made many of the settlers prisoners, and proclaimed a new government, of which Riel was president.

Backed by his army the new president did as he liked, taking prisoner and banishing whom he chose. One of the worst things he did was to condemn a young man named Scott to death, because he had spoken scornfully of his government. After a mere mockery of a trial, Scott was led out and shot mercilessly by some half-drunk Métis.