

of his own influence. While he is permitted to pose in the character of a Mahdi or a Cromwell, he is likely to maintain a quasi heroic position in the eyes of the misguided portion of the population capable of sympathizing with a criminal whose acts have been characterized by a selfish and reckless disregard for human life and private property, so long as a way seemed to open for the gratification of his personal ambition. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Crown counsel may see their way to putting this hypocritical fanatic and professional agitator off the pedestal of questionable fame upon which he is desirous to stand.

Whatever evidence may exist as to the prisoner's political objects, it would seem infinitely wiser to put him in the felon's dock to take his trial upon the less romantic crimes of robbery and murder. There should be little difficulty in bringing home his guilt in respect of either, if not as a direct participant, as an accessory, both before and after the fact. The rebellion did not begin, as do those in Spain, with a *pronunciamiento* against the constituted authorities, for even the alleged Bill of Rights that has sometimes been spoken of was never, it seems, forwarded to the Government.

The first overt act, as proved by numerous testimonies, was the robbery of a private firm—not an assault upon the Mounted Police or other representatives of the Queen's dignity. A correspondent of the *Globe*, who seems to be a most intelligent authority, writing from Prince Albert, April 4, gives the following facts relating to the outbreak of Wednesday, the 28th of March, at the village of Batoche. He says:—

"On the afternoon of that day Riel, followed by two or three score of men, entered the shop of Walters and Baker and said, 'Well, gentlemen, it has commenced.' 'What has commenced?' said Mr. Walters. 'Oh, this movement for the rights of the country.' He then asked for arms and ammunition, and urged that they should be given up quietly, saying, 'If we succeed our Government will pay you in full, and, even if we are defeated, you will be indemnified by your own.' Mr. Walters refused to give up the powder in his store and reached for a rifle hanging unloaded on the wall. He was immediately seized by a number of men, and, along with his clerk, was made prisoner. The store was then plundered, the half-breeds clothing themselves with coats, boots, etc., from the store. All the freight as it passed from day to day through Batoche, from Troy, was seized. Private parties obtained a receipt for the goods taken from them, but all Government and Hudson Bay Company freight was at once confiscated."

Now, what is there about this affair that need be exaggerated into high treason? Why not try the parties who plundered the store of Walters and Baker for an act of outrageous robbery committed in broad daylight? As to the charge of murder, to which crime Riel was undoubtedly an accessory, if not a principal, what more is necessary than to prove his participation in the fight at Duck Lake, which, so far as the evidence yet published goes, was an unprovoked attack upon Major Crozier's police and special constables, while on their way, in the performance of their duty as "peace officers," to enquire into and arrest the thieves who had plundered Walters and Baker's store. These crimes, which all who are not the natural enemies of the police, would join in discountenancing, can be proved; and so the trial of the offenders might take place without introducing the uncertainties and dissatisfaction sure to attend the prosecution of an alleged political offence. Even the warmest sympathizers with those who claim they had grievances against the Government would not have their sensibilities wounded if Riel were sent to the penitentiary for the robbery of that store at Batoche, or if he should be hanged for the murderous assault on Crozier's police, or for inciting the Indians to the Frog Lake massacre. It is, how-

ever, a great question whether a conviction will be secured against him for treason, and highly improbable that, even if found guilty, a capital sentence would be executed, even if imposed. By all means let Louis Riel have a fair trial; but a "long rope and a short shrift" must be the outcome of it, if robbery and murder are not henceforward to be regarded in Canada as coming within the category of political offences.

If Louis Riel be permitted in this case to escape scot free—no pun is here intended in regard to the amnesty he obtained for the cruel murder at Fort Garry—what is to prevent any one hereafter from starting a "rebellion" whenever he wants to plunder the community? Riel's argument at the very outset, as shown by our quotation above, was that somebody else than the disturbers would have to pay the cost of the rising. If the thieves who robbed Walters and Baker's store were successful in the strife they provoked, their "government" would pay the plundered proprietors; if the movement failed, then the Canadian Government would foot the bill. A nice little "heads I win, tails you lose" sort of an arrangement, which the public are now beginning to appreciate in face of the imposition of increased taxes! No, Riel and his fellow criminals must be taught that they have to pay in their own persons, as felons, for the results of the crimes they have perpetrated; and, the less of mock heroics with which their trial is invested, the less chance there will be hereafter of Canada being put to expense, in blood and money, to suppress a rebellion which was primarily a game of "grab" on a bold scale.

**WILLIAMS AT BATOCHÉ.**

CAPTAIN KIRWAN, of the N.W. Transport Service, who was at the battle of Batoche, thus speaks of the late Colonel Williams' heroic action on that memorable day—"I was detailed to accompany the Colonel in the charge, having had some experience in the Franco-Prussian war. At 2 o'clock we fell in, and Colonel Williams, after speaking a few encouraging words to the men, led the way with a revolver in one hand and his cap in the other. After scrambling through the underbrush the first rifle pits were carried and the men shouted as only brave-hearted men can shout "God save the Queen," and "Canada our home." Under a dropping fire from rebel pits Colonel Williams kept pressing on, carrying pit after pit, and exposed to an open, enfilading fire from the opposite side of the river. At one time he perhaps imprudently exposed himself, and several rebel bullets came whistling about his ears. Turning to those around him he said, without the least evidence of excitement, "Boys, they're devilish bad shots." He was a lion in the charge, but after the fight I will never forget how kind and gentle he was to the unfortunate women of the village.

**THE OLDEST MILITARY ORGANIZATION.**

To the Editor of the CANADIAN PICTORIAL.  
SIR,—Will you kindly permit me to correct the statement in your last issue that the Prince of Wales' Rifles of Montreal is the oldest military organization in the Canadian Militia. The old Belleville Rifles, now No. 1 Company of the 49th Battalion, and at present in the North-West with the Midland Battalion, under command of Major Edward Harrison, was organized in 1836, and has been continuously effective since that date.

Yours faithfully,  
J. W. JOHNSON.

Belleville, June 30, 1885.

THE Governor General's Body Guards, the 12th and 35th, who have been stationed at Humboldt, have received orders to march homewards. They would probably start on Thursday night.

THE military hospital at Moose Jaw has been broken up, the sick and wounded having become well enough to be sent home. They arrived in Winnipeg on the 28th ult. under the charge of Dr. Casgrain, who was surgeon in charge of Moose Jaw and Swift Current hospitals. The nurses are also returning to Toronto, having completed the good work which they came to perform. The patients above mentioned are Privates T. Kemp, Wainwright and Lovell, of the 90th, Private Bain, Queen's Own, and Privates Fowler and Marshall, of the Royal Grenadiers.

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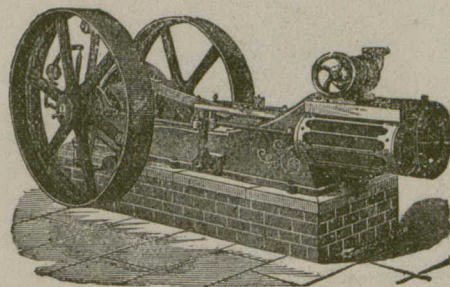
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