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A Case of Foiled Display.

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Horace De Geer.

It was in the early eighties, that period of such weighty import to the settlers of the prairie country. Excitement and unrest pervaded the whole Northwest. The hand of war was hovering threateningly over it: another rebellion was impending. The French half-breeds of the Saskatchewan were restive. They were determined to assert their rights, and to get redress for their many wrongs. Already they had sent for Louis Riel to come and lead them, and it was plain that they were wickedly intent upon mischief. Their forces were being swelled daily by the arrival of fresh bands of breeds and Indians from various parts of the Territories, from Manitoba, and from over the boundary. The whites were uneasy and suspicious, and had in many places organized volunteer corps, in some cases merely as a matter of precaution, in others to protect themselves from prowling bands of marauders. Farmers stabled all their stock before going to bed, let the dogs loose, and slept with their rifles standing against the wall beside them.

The sun was setting at the close of a bright spring day, and surely it never looked upon a scene of greater beauty, of more awe-inspiring grandeur. Upon every side, "to the last point of vision and beyond," stretched the vast, undulating prairie, just taking on its new garment of varied green. The farm-houses standing far apart in two lines, one on each side of the road, were a scene of bustling activity. Inside, supper was being prepared; outside, the stock, panting from their steady run up the long pasture-path, were being shut up, and the farmers were unhitching from plow or seeder. The lately-sown grain was beginning to sprout amid the blackness of the mellow fields. Farther north lay the lake, surrounded by rushes and willows, red in the setting sun.

The water had receded from the old bank and between the two now was a level stretch of smooth sand, with here and there bunches of meadow grass. Behind this bank, on this evening, effectually screened from the gaze of anyone at the farm houses by the thick growth of willows, a man was pacing restlessly back and forth. A horse, tethered a short distance away, raised its head now and then and neighed impatiently. At such times its master paused in his walk, stroked its neck with his hand, and spoke to it in a low voice. The animal immediately resumed its feeding and the man his walk. Whenever he came to the end of his course, he flushed the bank and looked through an opening in the bushes at the hills to the southward, over which he could see the road winding downward toward the farm-houses. To his left, that is, to the eastward of the place where he was now standing, a branch road led through a winding coulee to the edge of the lake. Seeing nothing, he

would give vent to an impatient exclamation and re-commence his uneasy pacing to and fro.

He was a tall, strongly-built man, with very broad shoulders and long limbs. His clear, brown complexion, spoke of a life spent in the open air, as his military cloak and authorita-

tive eye told that he had been accustomed to command. He was well dressed, and had a bright-red silk kerchief knotted about his neck. This taste for color and the intense blackness of his eyes, might lead one to suppose that he had French blood in his veins. He had a gun under his



"WILL HE EVER COME?"