

CHAPTER XXI

LOUIS RIEL

DURING the war of 1812 Upper and Lower Canada had been drawn together. French and British forgot their differences and jealousies. But when peace had once more come these differences and jealousies were felt again, and the French especially thought that they had not enough voice in the ruling of the land. Many of them were still very ignorant, being able neither to read nor write. These scarcely knowing what they wanted, but easily led by a handful of clever and discontented men, rose in rebellion.

This Rebellion they called the Patriot War. There was never any real reason for it, and it was soon over. But it made wise people see that something must be done to prevent such discontent in the future. So it came about that Canada, which, in 1791, had been divided into British Canada and French Canada, was, in 1841, united again. It was decided that there should be only one Parliament, to which both French and British should come in equal numbers. It was also decided that the colony should have 'responsible government.' Responsible government means government by those who are responsible, or answerable to, the greater number. They may continue to rule only so long as the greater number of the people wish them to do so. When they can no longer get the greater number to vote for them they