

THIRD DAY OF THE TRIAL!*

The Riel trial was resumed at Regina, on the morning of July 30th, by Mr. GREENSHIELDS' addressing the jury for the defence. The Court-room was again filled to its utmost capacity. After referring to the difficulty counsel had met, in the prisoner's endeavour to obstruct their conduct of the case, Mr. Greenshields dwelt upon the history of the Indians and half-breeds in the North-West Territories, pointing out their rights to the soil. In this Court they had a different procedure from that in other parts of the Dominion, and while not desiring to be understood that the prisoner would not receive as fair a trial as the machinery provided made possible, he questioned whether a jury of six men, nominated by the presiding magistrate, was sufficient to satisfy the demands of Magna Charta,—the great bulwark of the rights and liberties of all British subjects. He believed any of the older Provinces would rebel against such an encroachment on their rights, and he did not see why such a condition of things should obtain here. For years the half-breeds had been making futile efforts to obtain their rights. All these efforts had been met by rebuffs, or had received no attention whatever from the Federal Government, and those very rights for which the half-breeds were supplicating and petitioning were being handed over to railway corporations, colonization companies, and like concerns. He would not say that the action of the Government justified armed rebellion—the shedding of blood—but it left in these poor people those smouldering fires of discontent that were so easily fanned into rebellion by a madman such as Riel. The prisoner had been invited by the half-breeds to come among them from a foreign country to assist them in making a proper representation of their grievances to the Government. They were unlettered and required an active sympathizer, with education sufficient to properly conduct the agitation. Riel was the man they chose, and there was no evidence to show that when Riel came to this country he came with any intention of inciting the people to armed rebellion. His work was begun and carried on up till January in a perfectly constitutional manner. After that time, as the jury had seen in the cross-examination of the witnesses for the prosecution, no effort was made by the defence to deny that overt acts of treason had been committed in the presence of the prisoner; but evidence would be brought to show that at the time these acts were countenanced by the prisoner, he was of unsound mind and not responsible for what he did. The peculiar disease of the prisoner was called by men learned in diseases of the mind, "megalomania." This species of mental disease developed two delusions—one the desire for and belief that the patient could obtain great power in political matters to rule or govern, another his desire to found a great church. That the prisoner was possessed of these delusions, the evidence abundantly proved. The jury might consider, with some grounds for the belief, that the evidence of Charles Nolin, who swore that the prisoner was willing to leave the country if he obtained from the Government a gratuity of \$35,000, was inconsistent with the real existence of such a monomania as the prisoner was afflicted with. But not one isolated portion, but the whole, of Nolin's evidence should be considered. Other portions of his testimony, for instance, prisoner's opinions on religious matters, and his intention to divide up the country between various foreign nationalities, were conclusive proof of the prisoner's insanity. This was a great State trial, the speaker said, and he warned the jury to throw aside the influence of heated public opinion, as it was expressed at present. There were many people executed for having taken part in the rebellion of 1837, and it was questionable if there could be found anyone now who would justify those executions. The heat of private feeling had died away, and the jury should be careful that no hasty conclusion in this case should leave posterity a chance to say that their verdict had been a wrong one. They should, if possible, look at the case with the calmness of the historian, throwing aside all preconceived notions of the case that interfered with the evidence given in the Court, and build up their

* In preparing this abstract of the day's proceedings, the writer acknowledges to have drawn from the reports published in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette and Star*.