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History of the North-West.
by Alexander Begg.
Vol. III
Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Company 1895.

Chapter VIII

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No manin the North-West had the opportunities Riel possessed at one time of making himself a name in history, to be honored and esteemed by everyone, but he lost all by his inordinate vanity, utter recklessness, and selfish and senseless abuse of power. It is claimed that Riel emerged from the Rebellion of 1869-'70 a poor man, and that, therefore, he was deserving of sympathy, and this is held up as a proof of his patriotism. The fact that he was an outcast without the means of supporting himself comfortably was due entirely to his own acts of folly. No doubt, duting the tears he was in exile in the United States, he pondered well over the oportunityes he had lost, and on reading his letter of acceptance to the invitation of the Half-Breeds of the Saskatchewan, and noting his subsequent anxiety, as testified to at his trial by those who were friendly to him, to feather his nest fromthe Dominion treasury, we can only come to the conclusion that he was resolvednot to allow any such opportunity to slip a second time. Indeed it seems plain that in visiting the North-West, in 1884, he was actuated in a large measure by a desire to better his own condition, and raise himself from poverty to affluence. The affairs of his Half-Breed country-men appeared to be only a secondary consideration with him-the means, in fact, by which he hoped to gain his own individual ends.

At first, Constitutional methods, with him as the leader in them, appeared to be sufficient, but as these did not bear fruit fast enough, the spirit of revolution inherent within him led to his adopting the same tactics as he had ~~to contend with~~ pursued in 1869 an '70. Then as he percieved that the forces he had to contend against were more powerful in 1884 than on the previous occassion, he endeavored to negotiate-for his people-no! but to

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secure the money which wouldenable him to retire and live in comfort for the rest of his days, When remimded of the cause of the peopls, he declraed that, with him, that was a secondary consideration. Was that patriotism? Riel played a desperate game in 1884, for Riel, and lost. Such is the only conclusion that can be arrived at when reading all the facts of the case.

Yet in justice to him it must be said that whatever his motives, the people of the North-West owe something to the stand he took in 1869 and '70, and had he profited by the experience of that time, and pursued a moderate and constitutional course in 1884, he might have done much towards removing the odium attached to his name in connection with the acts of the Red River Rebellion .