

RIEL SURRENDERS HIMSELF FOR HIS PEOPLE.

During the night of the 15th of May 1885, Riel had a dream. It is impossible to hear these last words addressed to his friends the morning he left for Camp Middleton without having a heart full of the greatest emotion.

"My friends," he said, "you're going to smile with pity, because I had a dream last night and was weak enough to believe in it. I saw myself hanging from the gallows. I saw an outraged people moved by my agony and crying out for justice for my people. My death will be the salvation of my brothers. You are my witnesses that I am not guilty of starting the bloodshed. We have won. Goodbye."

With that he left to surrender himself to his executioner.



THIS DREAM WAS TO COME TO PASS AND THE DAY OF ITS REALIZATION WAS THE 16TH OF NOVEMBER 1885, A DAY OF MOURNING AND PROFOUND SADNESS FOR THE MÉTIS PEOPLE.

At 8 o'clock in the morning, Riel climbed the scaffold at Regina, capital of Saskatchewan, accompanied by Father André the priest of Prince Albert parish who was there to help him. Riel climbed up onto the scaffold quickly, loudly telling the one who was taking him there to hurry because the priest was going slowly and seemed near fainting. After having reached the top of the scaffold he advanced by himself bravely, as if representing his unseen people. He placed himself where his executioner indicated with a calm and a resignation impossible to describe. This place was the fatal platform from which at a sign from the executioner the innocent victim would be thrown into eternity at the end of a bloody rope.

I repeat here the words that a great person wrote in January 1886. "His life (Riel) was that of a hero, his death that of a saint and his name will shine among the greatest in history. From the height of the gallows his great soul will soar and thunder out across the horizon of the fatherland, awakening the old French blood asleep in our veins."

Here is a document that corroborates the assertions of this great person. "To our brothers the English and French Métis of the lake and its environs:

Very dear family and friends,
If you have not already learned it, you should know that from time immemorial, our forefathers have defended this country which was theirs and is ours at their peril. The government in Ottawa has taken away our homeland; for fifteen years they have scoffed at our God-given rights, crushing us with thousands and thousands of injustices. The officials are guilty of all sorts of crimes. The Mounted Police scandalize all of us with word and deed. They are so corrupt that our wives and daughters can't be safe in their own neighborhoods (and we're hardly better in our own time). The laws of honesty are nothing more than jokes for them now. Oh, my brothers and friends, we're always taught to have faith in God but today when evil has reached such heights, we need to especially have faith in our Lord Jesus-Christ."

By the French-Métis, Members of the

I ADDRESS IN PARTICULAR THOSE WHO ARE TAKING IT UPON THEMSELVES TO WORK FOR THE INTERESTS OF THE MÉTIS NATION. If the death of our leader is not sufficient to awaken in our hearts the love that we owe our fatherland and the Métis nation; if we have doubts about the importance and the necessity of helping the cause succeed; if we have doubts about the "raison d'être" of the Métis nation let's take a look at the

and that he resorted to arms simply to fight against the vices being practiced in the country to the detriment of the Métis nation. But, one might say, if this man was always disposed toward good and its practice, why then was he executed? The answer is very clear and short: it's that he had enemies and his enemies wanted him dead both physically and spiritually at all costs. Furthermore, his enemies were very dangerous because they were clothed in authority and they succeeded in their infamous plans.

It is true that they succeeded in destroying his body but his spirit lives on and his mission will continue following God's will. The world with all its means cannot stop God's plans. Before being condemned Riel said, "My whole life I have had as my goal practical results. I am leaving writings and after my death I hope that my spirit will bring about practical results. Oh, Lord, I offer you my entire life for this cause and from my weakness create an instrument to help the inhabitants of my fatherland."

IF WE WANT HIS SPIRIT TO BRING ABOUT PRACTICAL RESULTS, IT'S UP TO US TO WAKE UP AND BEGIN BY PUTTING INTO PRACTICE THE TEACHINGS THAT HE GAVE US. Yes, he gave his whole life for the national cause and it's up to the Métis people today to recognize the true value of the sacrifice made by our leader in giving his life for his people. Are we going to set it aside and forget it as has been done for so many years already, forget all the instructions he gave us while still among us? Isn't his cause ours as well? Aren't his principles ours, too? Yes, certainly. But, what are we waiting for to get to work? Are we waiting for or searching for help from the Bryces, the Taylors, the Davidsons and the Sommervilles? Certainly, not, because all these individuals are not and cannot be counted on as far as the Métis cause is concerned, no more than were the Schulzes, the Boultons, the Scotts and others in 1869 and 1870. Riel never had any confidence in them while alive and if he were alive today would feel the same because the former and the latter are and were our enemies. Today if we saw apparently friendly strangers come to offer their help for the cause it would seem perfectly reasonable for those who seem to appear to govern the ship of state to accept their services, but at the same time to watch over them so as not to give them any opportunity to encroach upon or damage the cause.

3

26th of March to the 6th of April, the government had changed its ideas and its politics, and given them what they had refused to give them for ten years. What was the cause of this change of heart? The bullets of Duck Lake, the rebellion of the Northwest! The government had rebuffed them for years, but finally these men defended their right to life and liberty, and the government relented and gave them what belonged to them. Now I call to all those friends of liberty in this chamber! I call not only to the liberals seated around me, but to all those men who have in their body the heart of an Englishman, and I ask a question of them: When the subjects of Her Majesty petitioned for their rights, for years, and these rights were not only lost from view but crushed underfoot, and when these men risked their lives, arms at the ready, and recollated, is there one member of this chamber who will say that these men should not be pardoned and reintegrated into the legitimate possession of their rights? Is there a member of this chamber who will not say that the criminals of this rebellion - if there were criminals - are not those who fought, who spilled their blood, who died, but the men who occupy here, in front of me, the ministerial posts?"

AND FINALLY, WE ALSO HAVE MARTIN JEROME, WHO USED ALL MEANS POSSIBLE FOR SEVERAL YEARS TO HELP HIS COMPATRIOTS, TO HAVE THEM RESPECT OUR RIGHTS SO AS TO CARRY ON AS A PEOPLE. He never missed an occasion to warn when some danger seemed to be threatening his nation. He had always been disposed to give good and wise advice to his compatriots, whenever the occasion presented itself to him. I cite below some of the counsels that he gave to his compatriots in a speech given on the occasion of the celebration of the Métis National Day at St Anne.

"Dear children, I desire and wish with all my heart that what I've just placed before your eyes remains engraved in your hearts and your memory. And I beg you to never be ashamed of your nationality, never hesitate to say that you are Métis, and be certain that you will be much more respected by other nations. Always take the counsel of your elders and your ancestors. Love each other and be assured that divine providence will protect you, and that in future generations, your descendants will still love to say, 'We are members of the great Métis family, which has done so much for our religion and the civilisation of our country.'"

IN CONCLUSION, ALLOW ME TO TELL YOU THAT RIEL WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN, BY HIS LOFTY IDEALS, HIS FAITH IN GOD, HIS COURAGE AT EVERY

TEST, HIS PATRIOTISM, AND HIS ATTACHMENT TO THE RELIGION OF CHRIST. His memory will remain profoundly engraved in the heart of all those who are prepared and who desire fervently to see the success of the national cause. God gave the man a progressive revelation. His plan unveiled divine secrets for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. He had the grace, the knowledge and the power to execute his plan in spite of the condition and the opposition of men and the organized system of Satan. Time has proven that the immeasurable blessing of God was with Riel while he was on earth, because the cause that he defended conformed to God's design. If we hope to follow in his footsteps, and if we want to continue his work with the same commitment that he had, we also will have upon us the blessings of God, which will be for us the assurance of our success. So, I have total confidence that the small number of people who read and re-read this document carefully and thoughtfully will decide to march ahead, encouraged by the ideas so well expressed by all the authorities that I have mentioned earlier. These expressions, so just and so fitting, should certainly encourage us and prove to us that our cause is good and that divine providence is with us.

Very respectfully,
Charles Sauvé

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5

6

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