As an indication of the size of the hunting enterprise on the western plains, in 1840 Red River alone sent 1,210 carts to the spring hunt.

The great plains on which the buffalo ranged lay between the Saskatchewan River on the north and the Missouri on the south, and between the eastern woodlands and the foothills of the Rockies.

In early years Grantown was the rendezvous from which the Red River hunters started off. Its parish church, log trading post, Grant's house together with Falcon's and a few others farther down the road, formed the focal point of the village, and lines of white-washed houses spread out along the wooded banks of the Assiniboine. These, with a few cattle on nearby pastures, perhaps a cantering horseman or slow-moving ox-cart on the road, and a few Métis around the trading post, formed a picture that suggested French Canada.

In preparation for the hunt, however, the scene changed: all was noise and hubbub. Hunters gathered at White Horse Plain were equipped by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Garry, after which they camped around Grantown to get all in readiness for the long journey ahead and the coming months away from home. For weeks the place was a veritable sea of tents. Then, in the first days of June, they were joined by the hunters from the Forks and the brigades of carts set off on the spring hunt. The priest from Grantown accompanied the hunt to look after their spiritual needs.

Long lines of screeching carts with spare oxen and horses began to stream south and west over the prairies. For the first few days the cavalcade travelled slowly to let the horses graze and conserve their strength for the hunt. No great order was observed until after they stopped to elect the council of the hunt. This important halt was usually made at Pembina Crossing, on the edge of the buffalo plains.

John Norquay, an early native-born Premier of Manitoba, wrote that on this stop "officers, or captains, were chosen, men detailed for duty—guards, scouts, etc., rules and regulations laid down and proclaimed to the whole party."

The hunters' route then lay over the buffalo plains, and though their large numbers provided some protection against the marauding Sioux, they closed their ranks and took greater precautions for safety.

On arriving at some favourite site with rich pastures and spring-fed creeks, they made camp. People from other parts of the country also assembled there, and class distinction dictated that Métis, English half-breeds, Indians, and others should have separate camps in which their daily life functioned. All, however, were governed by the rulings of the president and council.

By this time the hunters were well drilled in the regulations of the hunt.

"Dire penalties were imposed," wrote John Norquay, "if due obedience was not paid to them. For instance, no one was allowed to branch away from the main body of hunters. Infraction of this rule was punished by the destruction of a man's entire outfit. Also, if a man ran a buffalo without telling his fellow hunters, the results of his chase were confiscated and given to the poor of the band. Guards did regular sentry duty. The sentry were visited just as in a military camp, and woe betide the guard found asleep at his post."

The camp was guarded night and day, and at night all horses were brought into the safety of the cart-ringed enclosures, for a sagacious buffalo-runner was a valuable animal and much prized.

The scene at the camp was now one of tense anticipation. Scouts sent out to reconnoitre presently return wild with excitement; the big herd has been sighted. Riders ready themselves for the fray, and then dismount. A sudden hush falls over the camp and solemn Mass is said. Who among them may not return?

The riders remount and start off slowly. "A nobler sight," comments Norquay, "could scarcely be witnessed than these . . . hundreds of skilful riders advancing evenly, their horses champing their bits," and as eager as their masters for the fray. "A little ahead and on each flank rode the captains, restraining the eager and impulsive by word or gesture so that even the poorest mount would have a fair chance of overtaking the quarry."

As they near the buffalo the hunters make their last stand before reaching the brow of a hill. The captains give a sharp command, the riders dash off, the herd panics, and the hunt is on.

Deft fingers handle powder horns; with matchless skill bullets are dropped from mouth to muzzle, and poised bodies lean to shoot. Each man drops an article to mark his kill as he plunges on. Shouting, bellowing and gunfire fill the air, amid choking dust

and the rumble of hoof-beats. The superbly trained horses run free but sure-footed among the crazed and milling beasts. Huge hulks lie strewn; the wounded reel and toss, then stumble on, but to certain death. A rider pitches headlong in a heap and is left behind.

Drunk with the lust of slaughter, the horsemen kill the fleeing animals to the last. By the time the decimated herd disappears in the distance, the plains are strewn with the slain and each hunter proceeds to claim his spoil.

As the bedlam subsides, the camp moves up, and the women begin to skin and dress the animals. Some of these women are hired for the purpose because of their outstanding skill in handling the huge carcasses which weigh up to 2,000 pounds. The preparation of carcass and hide for transportation, including the drying of meat and making of pemmican, goes on for some time before the camp can break up.

Meanwhile, there is much feasting and merrymaking. In the Indian section, scantily clad children, with much shouting and laughter, slide down huge piles of freshly-cut meat as big as Red River haystacks. Above the fires hang steaming, bubbling pots, and beside the coals, on hastily-made spits, big ribs of meat roast with appetizing odours. The whole camp is gorged to repletion.

It is recalled by people at White Horse Plain that Pierre Falcon made a song about the buffalo hunt, but the original French verses have not survived.

The words of this song are taken from a book of fiction, *Lords of the North,* by Agnes Laut, published in 1900 by The Ryerson Press. In it she used historical characters and some historical incidents. One of her characters, a young man "Pierre the Rhymester," is easily identified as Pierre Falcon, by the characteristics which she attributes to him. In her story she has him singing a song of his own composition about the buffalo hunt.

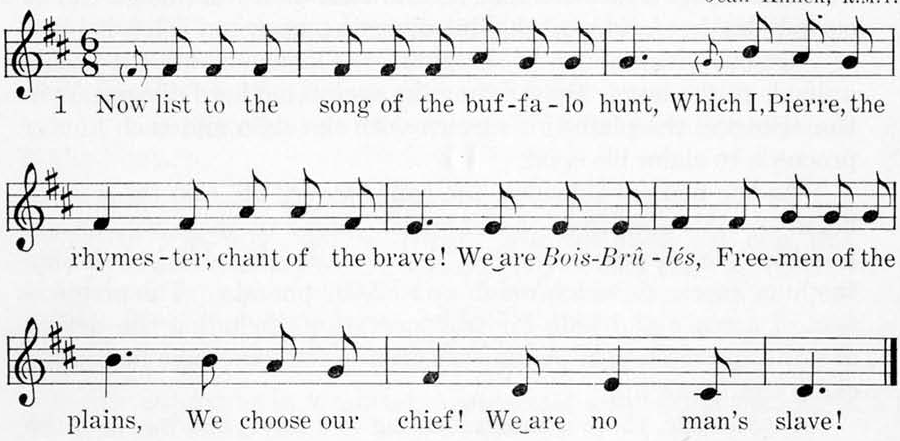
There is strong reason to believe that when Miss Laut did her research in western Canada, she obtained from some old Métis Falcon's original French song on the subject. Later, when she wrote *Lords of the North* three other of Falcon's songs, which she might well have used for him to sing, were already written down. But, though they were ready at hand, and though she was not given to versifying, it would seem she preferred to translate into her ornate English Pierre's simple French song of the buffalo hunt.

Martial Allard, an authority on Pierre Falcon's life and work, considers that the greater part of this song is sufficiently like Falcon's work to be his composition.

The Buffalo Hunt

Words by Agnes Laut

Adapted from "Cécilia" by Jean Klinck, R.M.T.



Now list to the song of the buffalo hunt,
Which I, Pierre, the rhymester, chant of the brave!
We are Bois-Brûlés, Freemen of the plains,
We choose our chief! We are no man's slave!

Up, riders up, ere the early mist
Ascends to salute the rising sun!
Up, rangers up, ere the buffalo herds
Sniff morning air for the hunter's gun!

They lie in their lairs of dank spear-grass,
Down in the gorge, where the prairie dips,
We've followed their tracks through the sucking ooze,
Where our bronchos sank to their steaming hips.

We've followed their tracks from the rolling plain
Through slime-green sloughs to a sedgy ravine,
Where the cat-tail spikes of the marsh-grown flags
Stand half as high as the billowy green.

The spear-grass touched our saddle-bows,
The blade-points pricked to the broncho's neck;
But we followed the tracks like hounds on scent
Till our horses reared with a sudden check.

The scouts dart back with a shout, "They are found!"
Great fur-maned heads are thrust through the reeds,
A forest of horns, a crunching of stems,
Reined sheer on their haunches are terrified steeds!

Get you gone to the squaws at the tents, old men,
The cart-lines safely encircle the camp!
Now, braves of the plain, brace your saddle-girths!
Quick! Load guns, for our horses champ!

A tossing of horns, a pawing of hoofs,
But the hunters utter never a word,
As the stealthy panther creeps on his prey,
So move we in silence against the herd.

With arrows ready and triggers cocked,
We round them nearer the valley bank;
They pause in defiance, then start with alarm
At the ominous sound of a gun-barrel's clank.

A wave from our captain, out bursts a wild shout,
A crash of shots from our breaking ranks,
And the herd stampedes with a thunderous boom
While we drive our spurs into quivering flanks.

The arrows hiss like a shower of snakes,
The bullets puff in a smoky gust,
Out fly loose reins from the broncho's bits
And hunters ride on in a whirl of dust.

The bellowing bulls rush blind with fear
Through river and marsh, while the trampled dead
Soon bridge a safe ford for the plunging herd;
Earth rocks like a sea 'neath their mighty tread.

A rip of the sharp-curved sickle-horns,
A hunter falls to the blood-soaked ground!
He is gored and tossed and trampled down;
On dashes the furious beast with a bound.

When over sky-line hulks the last great form
And the rumbling thunder of their hoofs' beat, beat,
Dies like an echo in distant hills,
Back ride the hunters chanting their feat.

Now, old men and wives, come you out with the carts!
There's meat against hunger and fur against cold!
Gather full store for the pemmican bags,
Garner the booty of warriors bold.

So list ye the song of the Bois-Brûlés,
Of their glorious deeds in the days of old,
And this is the tale of the buffalo hunt
Which I, Pierre, the rhymester, have proudly told.

Attributed to AGNES LAUT.

(From *Lords of the North*, The Ryerson Press.)

4. *The Dickson Song*

Introduction / By 1837, when Falcon wrote the song about "General" Dickson, he was established as a farmer to the extent of thirty cultivated acres. This was the second largest farm at Grantown on the White Horse Plain, the first extension of the Red River Settlement. For a Métis, it was a notable achievement, since their chief interest still lay in the buffalo hunt, and in the life of the warrior protecting Red River against the incursions of the Sioux.

To understand the following song about "General" Dickson, it is necessary to know the crisis that threatened the Red River Settlement at this time and how it was met. It is a story which might have come straight out of Gilbert and Sullivan. In his "Dickson Song" Pierre Falcon, with his keen love of the dramatic, highlights the final theatrical scene of the incident.

In the winter of 1836-1837 a gentleman, who styled himself General Dickson, led a filibustering expedition from Washington and New York to Red River. He had the amazing idea of recruiting as soldiers for his army Cuthbert Grant's Métis there, whose fame had reached far places. After enlisting them, he planned to proceed to Santa Fé, liberate the Indians at that place, and found a kingdom in California, of which he was to be the head.

His first step in this plan was to introduce himself in Washington and New York as General James Dickson, who had lived for several years in Mexico. He also called himself Montezuma II, Liberator of the Indian Nations. As he proceeded to recruit officers for his army there, he had all the stage trappings—fine English tailoring executed with imagination, plenty of gold lace and gold braid, a handsome sabre-scarred face with beard and double barrelled moustache. He wore small arms and a British general's gold-inlaid sword. Dickson also had in his extensive military luggage a coat of mail for which he never found a use. He was well-bred, a convincing talker, and had command of money. His officers and aides whom he recruited were lavishly equipped, and some carried with them extra beards and moustaches. The

S. O. M.—3

major of artillery wore silver epaulets, gold lace on his chest, and silver lace down the sides of what he termed his pantaloons.

Dickson was in deadly earnest. He had stacks of printed matter, *Articles of War and Government of the Liberating Army*, manifestos ready to post up in conquered territory, and his officers' commissions were impressive documents signed by both himself and the general of his army. His preparatory organization complete, he proceeded to Montreal where he recruited as additional officers some half-breed sons of Hudson's Bay Company officials, who he felt would be useful in Red River when mobilizing his Métis soldiers.

In August, 1836, Dickson with his officers and attendants, numbering in all about sixty, embarked at Buffalo in a chartered vessel to traverse the Great Lakes on their way to recruit the soldiers of the liberating army at Red River, and proceed to Santa Fé—a trek of a mere 5,000 miles.

Before they reached Sault Ste. Marie the party was shipwrecked. On arriving there, they were arrested on a trivial charge (the sailors had stolen a cow) so that American authorities could investigate the party. The Liberator had been talking too freely of his plans. Finally released, a much diminished army proceeded to a certain point on the Mississippi. They arrived there in boats and canoes, having lived on barrels of sour apples procured on the way. Dr. Grace L. Nute notes the expedition as the only filibuster that ever entered Minnesota.

Meanwhile, George Simpson, the Hudson's Bay Company's Governor of Rupert's Land, was travelling east from Red River. He was in Detroit when he learned of this newest threat to the Settlement which he had nursed through so many vicissitudes. There, he was startled by a newspaper account headed, "Pirates on the Lakes," which gave a highly coloured version of the incident at the Sault, and of invaders bound for Red River. The thing had ugly possibilities. Without the Métis of Grantown, the Settlement could not survive. It might even be wiped out, or added to the Liberator's empire. An ominous note was that the General of Dickson's army was a son of the Hudson's Bay Company's dire enemy, Kenneth McKenzie, called the Emperor of the American

Fur Trade. Simpson acted quickly to avert disaster. He sent off despatches to the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters in London, and to the War Office, and instructions to Governor Alexander Christie of Red River.

When winter descended Dickson, with his party still further reduced, started off by dog-sled and on foot for Red River, and the frozen prairies took their toll. Guides deserted, men wandered and perished, and the remnants became separated. Finally, in December, 1836, four months after starting off from Buffalo, the survivors (Dickson and eleven officers) straggled into the Red River Settlement in a pitiable state.

Simpson's plans to defeat the invaders, though supremely simple, were an example of his superb strategy. The Hudson's Bay Company on his orders refused to honour Dickson's drafts, and no army could be raised. Red River was saved. Also under Simpson's orders, the Hudson's Bay Company absorbed Dickson's half-breed officers by offering them good positions. The others dispersed and Dickson, a defeated, deserted and deflated man, was stranded in Red River for the rest of the winter. Thus rendered harmless, he cut a gay figure in the Settlement, for evidently, in spite of the difficulties of the journey, Dickson managed to bring considerable equipment with him. Rev. G. H. Gunn's mother used to tell of the various and resplendent uniforms in which he appeared. He spent much time with Cuthbert Grant at White Horse Plain, and when spring came Grant outfitted him and gave him guides to start south to Santa Fé.

In character to the end, Dickson staged his last scene at Red River with care. On that spring day in 1837, guides, horses, drivers and carts were waiting beside the church at Grantown for him to begin his journey, and a crowd gathered to say good-bye. He made a final laudatory speech of thanks to Cuthbert Grant. Then he removed his ornate military hat, bowed ceremoniously to him and—according to tradition—said: "You are the great soldier and leader; I am a failure. These belong to you, not to me." In a grandiose manner he removed his epaulets, fastened

them on Grant's shoulders, handed him his sword,[1] mounted, and rode away. Thus ended the great invasion.

The song which follows, "The Dickson Song" ("Ballade du Général Dickson"), as it came to be known, might more rightly be called "Eulogy of Cuthbert Grant," the name Falcon gave it. It deals with the last scene in the Dickson episode, and it has the immediacy and spontaneity which mark Falcon's work. His songs seem to take form under the enthusiasm of the moment—an enthusiasm which it is difficult to capture later.

A French grandson said in his best English, "Always—he make his song right away."

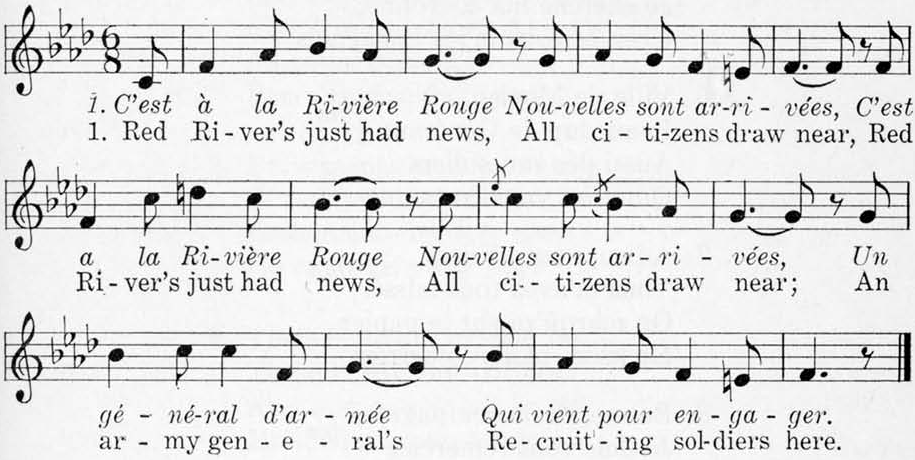
So it may be that after Dickson's dramatic farewell at the Grantown church, Falcon, too, left the little group there, mounted his horse, and as he galloped home composed his song to the rhythm of his horse's hoofbeats.

[1]These epaulets were valued ornaments on the altar of the Grantown church for many years, but unfortunately they were later destroyed by fire.

Dickson's sword, which Falcon does not mention in his song, had an honoured place in Cuthbert Grant's home and it is now a treasured possession in my home.

Le Général Dickson

Words and music by Pierre Falcon



1. C'est à la Rivière-Rouge,
   Nouvelles sont arrivées, } *bis*
   Un général d'armée
   Qui vient pour engager.

2. Il vient pour engager
   Beaucoup de Bois-Brûlés } *bis*
   Il vient pour engager
   Et n'a point d'quoi payer.

3. Dit qu'il veut emmener
   Beaucoup de Bois-Brûlés. } *bis*
   Ils sont en renommée
   Pour de braves guerriers.

4. Vous, Monsieur Cuthbert Grant,
   Maître de régiment, } *bis*
   Mes épaulettes d'argent
   Je vous en fais présent.

5. Moi, Général Dickson
Je cherche ma couronne } *bis*
Je cherche ma couronne,
Chez Messieurs les Espagnols.

6. Ville de Mexico,
Beaucoup de Généraux, } *bis*
Aussi des canonniers
Qui vont vous couronner.

7. Adieu, mes officiers,
Vous m'avez tous laissé. } *bis*
On marqu'ra sur le papier
Dickson, pauvre guerrier.

8. Bourgeois de compagnie, } *bis*
Je dois vous remercier
De me faire ramener
Au fort de Mackenzie.

9. Je dois vous remercier } *bis*
Puisque avec vos deniers
J'ai pu me faire guider
Par deux des Bois-Brûlés.

10. Qui en a fait la chanson? } *bis*
Un poète du canton:
Au bout de la chanson,
Nous vous le nommerons.

11. Un jour étant à table } *bis*
A boire et à chanter,
A chanter tout au long
La nouvelle chanson.

12. Amis, buvons, trinquons, } *bis*
Saluons la chanson
De Pierre Falcon,
Le faiseur de chansons.

PIERRE FALCON.

The Dickson Song

1. Red River's just had news,
   All citizens draw near; } *repeat*
   An army general's
   Recruiting soldiers here.

2. Enlistments he does seek
   Of many Bois-Brûlés, } *repeat*
   Enlistments he does seek;
   He can't give any pay.

3. Their fame has carried far,
   These hardy Bois-Brûlés, } *repeat*
   And now as soldiers brave
   He's led a group away.

4. These silver epaulettes,
   To you I would present, } *repeat*
   Dear Mr. Cuthbert Grant,
   Chief of the regiment.

5. For I'm a general
   And Dickson is my name; } *repeat*
   In the land of Mexico,
   A crown I go to claim.

6. When you reach Mexico,
   Right in the chiefest town, } *repeat*
   Generals and cannoneers
   Will greet you with a crown.

7. My officers, farewell,
   You've all deserted me; } *repeat*
   Unhappy Dickson's tale
   Will soon be history.

8. I thank you one and all,
Men of the company,
For you have brought me back,
To Fort Mackenzie. *repeat*

9. I know I owe you thanks,
Your money goes to pay
The service of two guides,
Two hardy Bois-Brûlés. *repeat*

10. Who is the district bard,
That this song has composed?
If you wait for the end,
His name will be disclosed. *repeat*

11. At table we will sit,
One day, to sing and drink;
To sing the whole song through,
And let the glasses clink! *repeat*

12. Now, friends, let's have a toast,
Let us salute the song!
Sung by our prairie bard,
The poet, Pierre Falcon. *repeat*

PIERRE FALCON.

Translated by Robert L. Walters

NOTE: Both words and music of the song presented here were composed by Pierre Falcon. This version was sung by Falcon's grandchildren as Pierre himself taught it to them, and the words and music were taken down by Mr. Henry Caron as they sang.

II. THE METIS RESISTANCE

5. *Misfortunes of an Unlucky "King"*

Introduction / By 1869, when Falcon composed the "Misfortunes of an Unlucky King," he was an old man. Though he had continued eager for the buffalo hunt twice a year, he nevertheless progressed as a farmer. At Grantown he was usually second only to Cuthbert Grant in the acreage which he had under crop.

There, his family of three sons and four daughters grew up. He became a prominent and respected citizen, a man of integrity whose merit was officially recognized by his appointment, in 1855, as magistrate for his home district of White Horse Plain.

Although there is a long gap in time between Falcon's "The Dickson Song" (1837) and his "Misfortunes of an Unlucky King" (1869), which now follows, it is recalled by old people of the district that in this interval he continued to put the life around him into song. It seems, however, that none of these songs has survived.

The incidents which led to Falcon writing his "Misfortunes of an Unlucky King" stirred him deeply. Cuthbert Grant had died in 1854, and a new leader for the Métis did not emerge until

1869. At this time Canada's tactless preparations to take over the North-West brought forward Louis Riel.

The Hudson's Bay Company's rights in Rupert's Land had expired and the sale of the North-West to Canada was being arranged, so the British government asked the Company to carry on until the transfer could be made. Meanwhile the Canadian government started some limited surveying in the country. People generally at Red River had not been informed that Canada had been given these rights, and when the surveyors were sent out in August, 1869, to begin their work, the Métis were greatly incensed to find the land at their very doors being surveyed. They felt that their rights in the country were being threatened and a serious insurrection followed.

The resentment against the surveying reached a climax on October 11th when lines were laid on André Nault's land, a few miles south of the Forks. Alarmed, Nault ran down to his boat on the Red River, and crossed to the home of his young cousin, Louis Riel, for advice. Riel had recently returned, after spending some years at the College of Montreal. He was educated—he would know what to do. Jumping into the boat with Nault, Riel returned with him to the spot where the surveyors were at work. He promptly put his foot on the surveyors' chain and demanded that work should stop, saying that they had no right on the land. This proved effective and the surveyors departed.

This happening is worth noting, as it marked the moment when Louis Riel became the virtual leader of the Métis, and it led on to the incident behind the song.

The Métis were further inflamed by a second grievance. They learned that without consulting Red River, the Canadian government was sending up William McDougall, former Minister of Public Works at Ottawa, in readiness to assume the governorship of the new territory. A careless remark made by McDougall upon his appointment, referring to himself as practically "King of the country," filtered through to the Settlement. It was a fighting word to the Métis—further fuel for the fire that raged against the surveying of their lands and against McDougall's appointment. They decided that this "King" and his court (prospective members for his Council who were in the party) should not set foot on their soil.

In the middle of October word came that McDougall was already approaching the international border. Riel immediately went into action. On October 22nd he ordered a barrier to be placed across the road at St. Norbert, some miles south of the Settlement, and instructed his men to stop all incoming travellers and to search their carts. He sent a letter to await McDougall at the border, forbidding him to enter the country. McDougall arrived there on October 30th and remained on the American side waiting for December 1st, the date that had been set for him to assume the governorship. There he was supposed to wait for final instructions.

In the meantime, Métis plans went forward. On November 2nd, Riel and his men seized Upper Fort Garry and set about forming a provisional government.

McDougall himself made no attempt to enter the settlement, but two members of his party with their attendants proceeded as far as the barrier at St. Norbert. There, they were stopped. One of the party, Captain Cameron, a brash young English officer, was reported to have ordered the Métis guards to "take down that blasted fence," and he tried to ride through. But, faced by the formidable and well-armed Métis, the party provoked no incident and turned back.

McDougall fumed at the border until December 1st, waiting for instructions from Ottawa, which did not come. He therefore made an attempt to assume the governorship by crossing the border and reading out a proclamation of his own—a strange proceeding which finished his career in both Canada and the North-West.

Accordingly, there was no need to fight at the barrier, but the blockading of the road against McDougall was the beginning of the insurrection.

Among the English-speaking settlers there was real terror. They were the smaller group, without recognized government and without protection. Outnumbered by the Métis, who were natural soldiers, and alarmed by Riel's arbitrary rule, they considered their situation a serious one, and every able-bodied man readied himself to fight if the need arose.

On the other hand, the Métis, not having a true understanding of the situation, were determined to fight for the land they had inherited.

Falcon was greatly stirred when his comrades took to arms. Though he was now a frail old man, his fiery spirit was unquenched and he was eager to join his comrades at the barrier. Joseph Tassé, the Quebec historian, quotes Falcon as saying: "While the enemy is occupied in despatching me, my friends can strike hard and get in some good blows." But he was not allowed to go. All he could do in the crisis was to write a song about it.

This song, "Misfortunes of an Unlucky King," was his last song. He died at his home at White Horse Plain on October 26, 1876. But to the end he remained active and full of verve and fire. He continued to serve at the altar of the church at Grantown. Each morning, in the early hours, his frail figure could be seen trudging along the road on the way to Mass.

With regard to Falcon's education, J. J. Hargrave's statement that Falcon could neither read nor write (*Red River*, 1869), would seem to be an error. It was repeated by later historians—Tassé, Bryce, Dugas, Morice and Bell. This statement was also made in a paper by Margaret Complin presented to The Royal Society of Canada by W. S. Wallace.

The basis for Hargrave's assertion was evidently a document which survived at Fort Garry until it was demolished. It was a form of enlistment in the mounted constabulary dated at Fort Garry, February 14, 1835, and signed before Governor Alexander Christie, "Pierre Falcon—his mark." This, however, seems a case of mistaken identity.

In 1835, Pierre Falcon of the songs was a man of forty-two years. He had long been retired from service with the Hudson's Bay Company, and had been a settled farmer for eleven years. In view of these facts, he was an unlikely applicant for a position in a mounted police force and still more unlikely to be accepted. Moreover, a man who had spent eleven years of his youth in Quebec for an education, living with a well-educated grandfather, and who became a clerk in the fur trade, and in later life was appointed a magistrate, undoubtedly knew how to read and write. Members of the Falcon family support the view that the man

who signed this document, "Pierre Falcon—his mark," was the second son of Pierre the singer, who bore the same name. This son, who in 1835 was about twenty-one years of age, had been born and brought up in the West where he had no opportunity for a formal education.

The grandchildren of Falcon, the singer, recall his kindliness and saintly character, and the long hours he spent reading his prayer book—a book that today bears evidence of his love for it. They tell of his clerical work as a magistrate. They also recall him in velvet smoking jacket and skull cap, seated at his writing table, issuing government bounty for wolf heads.

"Misfortunes of an Unlucky King," ends Falcon's songs. Those presented in this series run through the period of initial settlement in Western Canada to the end of fur trade rule and the birth throes of Manitoba: from the song, "The Battle of Seven Oaks," to "Misfortunes of an Unlucky King." We are happy to present them as a belated tribute to this noted bard of the plains.

Falcon's airs and verses may be primitive but they are the product of a primitive life. It is doubtful whether anyone, in any other part of Canada in this period, so largely put the life around him into song. Such as they are, the airs Falcon composed for "The Battle of Seven Oaks" and "The Dickson Song" may be unique, since James Gowler and other authorities say they have found no early Red River music that originated here.

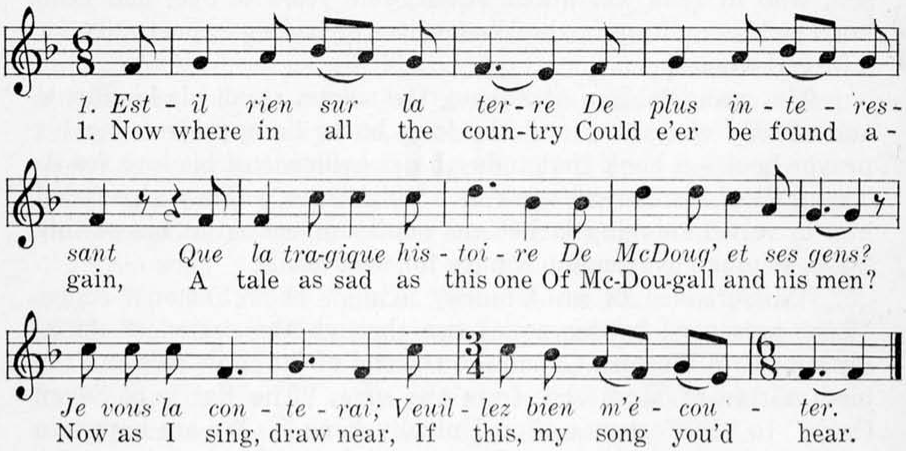
Joseph Tassé pays his tribute to Falcon as the "troubadour of the North-West":

"He always loved to make up songs. He composed many besides those that have survived. He exercised his inexhaustible creative talent on almost every political event (in the North-West) and on a host of local matters. All his compositions are not of the same interest but they are sung by our voyageurs to the rhythmic stroke of the oar on the most distant waters of the north. The echoes of the Assiniboine, the Mackenzie and Hudson Bay will long repeat them."

That the man and his songs are practically unknown today, even in his own part of the country, is to be regretted. Moreover, the significance of the name of Falcon Lake, bestowed upon it by his contemporaries who knew his work, has also been forgotten.

Les tribulations d'un Roi Malheureux

Words by Pierre Falcon — Air: The Wandering Jew



1. Est-il rien sur la terre
   De plus intéressant
   Que la tragique histoire
   De McDoug' et ses gens?
   Je vous la conterai;
   Veuillez bien m'écouter.

2. Sur notre territoire,
   Devenu ses Etats,
   Il venait ce bon père,
   Régner en potentat,
   Ainsi l'avait réglé
   Le Ministre Cartier.

3. Le cœur gros d'espérance,
   Partant du Canada
   Il dit: "J'ai confiance
   Qu'on vivra bien là-bas.
   Ah! quel bonheur! ma foi!
   Je suis donc enfin Roi!"

4. Comptant sur les richesses
Qu'il trouverait chez nous,
Il eut la maladresse
De ne pas prendre un sou,
Par même pour traverser
Un pays etranger.

5. Il paraît que l'orage,
Dans son gouvernement,
Durant tout le voyage,
Eclata fort souvent,
L'union qui rend plus fort
Etait loin de ce corps.

6. Mais, malgré la tempête
Cameron à son bord
Voulait décrire la fête
Qui l'attendait à port;
Et la voir imprimée
Avant qu'elle fût passée.

7. Ce ministre fidèle
Etant loin de prévoir
Qu'elle ne serait pas telle
Qu'il avait cru la voir—
Funeste illusion!
Quelle déception!

8. Déjà de son royaume
Le sol il va toucher,
Quand tout à coup un homme
Lui défend d'avancer,
Lui disant "Mon ami
C'est assez loin d'ici."

9. Etonné de l'audace
De ces hardis mortels,
Il emploie les menaces
Pour vaincre ces rebelles;
Mais cela fut en vain,
Il ne put gagner rien.

10. Obligé de reprendre
La voie du Canada
Il lui faudra attendre
De l'argent pour cela;
Car, pour manger ici
Il prend tout à crédit.

11. Aujourd'hui sa couronne
Est un songe passé;
Le trône qu'on lui donne
C'est un trône percé,
Mais il dit qu'à présent
Il est bien suffisant.

12. Aujourd'hui que va dire
Monsieur le Gouvernement?
Sera-t-il noir de rire
Quand il verra ses plans
Déjà tous culbutés
Par les Bois-Brûlés?

PIERRE FALCON.

As taken down from Pierre Falcon's grandchildren by Henry Caron.

Misfortunes of an Unlucky "King"

1. Now where in all the country
Could e'er be found again,
A tale as sad as this one
Of McDougall and his men?
Now as I sing, draw near,
If this, my song, you'd hear.

2. He journeyed to our region—
He thought it his estate;
The good man there would govern
Like an Eastern potentate;
This land for him was free,
By Cartier's decree.

3. From Canada he started;
His heart with hope did swell;
With confidence he stated,
"Out there we'll all live well,
With joy and rapture sing,
At last I am a king."

4. Out here he would discover
Wealth equal to his greed;
And so he brought not with him
One cent for buying feed,
Though through a foreign land,
He'd have to lead his band.

5. While on the trip all order
By angry words was rent;
This storm and strife prevented
Harmonious government.
The strong need to agree
For solidarity.

6. Discounting then the tempest,
A man named Cameron
Described the happy welcome
He thought that they had won—
He saw as history,
What still was yet to be.

7. This minister so faithful
Was far from finding out,
That facts as he foretold them
Would never come about;
Delusions he would know—
Illusions turned to woe!

S. O. M.—4

8. His kingdom lies before him,
He starts to enter it;
A man cries out to stop there—
"This thing we'll not permit;
My friend, you need not fear
Provided you stop here."

9. Astonished by the firmness
Of rebels brave and bold,
With threats he tries to conquer,
"You'll do as you are told."
His actions are in vain—
He won't have his domain.

10. To Canada he'll hasten,
It's all that he can do,
But first he'll send for money
And wait till it comes through;
Meanwhile they have to eat;
On credit they buy meat.

11. In dreams he wears a crown still
And never knows defeat;
The only throne he has now
Has a hole cut in the seat;
And this today he owns;
He needs no other thrones.

12. As soon as the officials
Find out their plan fell through,
Will they turn black with laughter?
Will they know what to do?
They did not have their way,
Thanks to the Bois-Brûlés!

PIERRE FALCON.

Translated by Robert L. Walters