

THE FENIAN RAID ON CANADA.

(From the United Service Gazette.)

It was said of the Balaclava Charge that however defective as a strategic manoeuvre, the opportunity it gave for the exhibition of a heroic courage on the part of our soldiers was a full equivalent, speaking from the national point of view, for even the terrible loss of human life. Something similar, but with less justice, was observed respecting the Abyssinia Expedition. Its management had been disfigured by the grossest administrative blunders. The money of the British taxpayer had been wasted with unexampled extravagance and a force of immense magnitude was employed to do a work which, as events afterwards proved, could have been accomplished by half a regiment. Nobody now disputes the fact that it was the attack of the 4th King's Own upon Theodore's body-guard that virtually decided the fate of the war. All this is admitted, but then, *per contra* it is urged look at the moral effects of the expedition. Here was the able sovereign of a barbarous and almost inaccessible kingdom detaining a number of British subjects in close and cruel custody. The imprisoned Britons appeal to the National Lion, the lion gives one roar, the prisoners are set free, and the pomp, power and empire of the captor become at once things of the past. Here was a great moral result, purchased at an immense cost, but still alleged to be worth all the money. The prestige of the nation was preserved, and "*Civis Romanus sum*" would never more be shouted in vain by captive Britons to barbarous jailors.

Although we have not altered our opinion as to the management of that war, we admit that there is a good deal in this plea of its defenders. We must look at the moral aspects of a military achievement, and looked at from that point of view, there is nothing which has given us greater pleasure than to read the narrative of the recent expulsions of the Fenians from Canada. We can look now with contempt at the breechless scamps and cowards who, while ready to advance to the murder of the weak and the robbery of the unprotected, have shown an equal alacrity in running away the moment they were confronted by a mere handful of brave and loyal men. But it is easy to be wise after the event. Things looked very different both in the States and Canada, a few weeks since. The American newspapers were filled with inflated accounts of the preparations for the Fenian invasion. The "Generals" were set forth with the accuracy of an *Army List*. The muster roll of the troops was called over with a mockery of detail and the great guns, and the other munitions of war were described with all that power of exaggeration which is the great speciality of the transatlantic journals. Everything was done, in fact, to inflate the bubble; but the bubble was burst, nevertheless, the moment it was struck with a true and firm hand. All honor, then, be given to the brave regular troops, as well as to the equally brave Canadian Militia and Volunteers who, disregarding the frowns of the gigantic Fenian phantom, rushed at it with the courage of true men and in a moment proved its utter unsubstantiality.

It is almost impossible to apportion the meed of praise fairly amongst the victors of Trout River. Our Canadian friends will not, however, be angry if the United Service Gazette gives the *pas* to the Queen's troops. The march of Lieutenant Colonel Bagot at the head of his gallant 69th was a wonderful achievement, when we consider

the suddenness of the route, the distance that had to be traversed, and the style of road which had to be gone over. The 69th had in the first instance to be moved from Quebec to Montreal, from thence it advanced to Port Louis, and it was in marching from Port Louis to the town of Huntingdon that Colonel Bagot and his men showed the stuff they were made of, the marching power which Marshal Saxe has told us is the first quality of the soldier, and the eagerness to be "at 'em" which has distinguished the English soldier in all times and places. The troops had marshes to wade through and corduroy roads to tumble over, but neither prevented them keeping up a pace that would have been creditable on the Epsom road. Their only apprehension was that the Fenians would not wait for them, and the result proved that this apprehension was not entirely without foundation. We look upon this advance of Colonel Bagot and his command as an exceedingly brilliant military achievement as it is only necessary to look at the map of Canada to see how energy, skill, daring, and military *esprit* must have combined to land the troops on the scene of action only sixteen hours after they had started from Montreal. Equal alacrity was exhibited by the remainder of the regiment, under the command of Major Smythe, the Major proving himself a fitting colleague in arms for his energetic Lieutenant Colonel. We now come to the Militia and Volunteers, and it would be impossible to say too much of the true military *elan* with which they advanced upon their dastardly and half-concealed foes. The Fenians ran, it is true, so much the better; but, strongly entrenched as they were, if they had had the pluck of game chickens, the brave Canadians must have had to contend with a sanguinary hand to hand resistance. They went on fully prepared for this, and, therefore, deserve as much credit as if the banks of the Trout River had been a Thermopylae, and the cowardly Fenian rabble the great Persian army. The support of the regulars had, of course, its usual magic effect in giving courage to the local levies; but there is another notable fact in connection with those local levies, and that is, that they appear to have been mainly commanded by retired officers of the regular army. This hint ought not to be neglected by our authorities at home. If they mean to maintain the English Volunteers as a portion of the national defences let them give the various corps properly trained military officers, their recruits will come with alacrity, and the force will become efficient and valuable. This Canadian raid has proved what Volunteers can do when properly supported by regulars, and it has added another proof to the already established value of the Militia. It is quite evident that we may henceforth leave the Canadians to deal with the Fenian invaders single handed, but we hope that the next time they may permit them to get a little further into the country, so as that they may be all captured, tried by drum-head court martial and shot, as all such piratical scoundrels so richly deserve to be. The British troops are now about to leave Canada, and there could not have been a more graceful farewell festivity than this joint operation against the Fenian raid. Our children in Canada have now grown up to man's estate, and have shown in this affair that they possess all the energy, pluck and the patriotism of their sires.

Before we conclude, we have just one little word to say to the American Government. That Government has taken great credit to itself for its tardy action in the Trout River affair. It is true that when the loyal Cana-

dians and the Queen's troops had driven the Fenian scamps back to the American frontier, a public officer of the United States made prisoner of "General" O'Neil, and — politely handed him into a coach! In our humble judgment, such an act was a mere ludicrous mockery of honest neutrality; but we must defer further criticism until we learn whether the "General" has been brought to book in the American courts of justice for the piratical invasion of a friendly state. The United States Government, if its members have the minds of statesmen, must remember that O'Neil's offence was one as much against themselves as against the invaded British dependency. If this raid had been so successful as to call for Imperial support, *casus belli* would have been established as between us and America; and all history proves that, once English blood is up, no considerations of danger, of policy, or of expense ever prevent the whole energies of the nation being thrown into the cause of justice and national prestige. There is no Englishman who would not deeply deplore a collision with the United States, but there are conditions of the national mind which careful observers of our people have not failed to notice. When those conditions arise, we are as reckless as the Berserker from whom we are descended, but with this difference, that we never fail in the long run to sweep the enemy out of our path. Let our fellow-Canadian subjects be of good cheer; they can fight their own battle bravely and well, but if ever they should be in danger of being overpowered by traitorous Fenians, abetted by American sympathizers, there will help come to them from over the sea, even although that help should call out all the means, all the energies, ay, and all the men of their fatherland.

GENERAL LINDSAY.

The following has been addressed to the Editor of the *London Times*:

SIR,—May I request you to insert the words, as reported by the *Montreal Gazette* of the 11th June, which my brother General Lindsay, used to the Volunteers at Eccles Hill, on the site where the Fenians were repulsed in Missisquoi. These words were in sufficiently reported by the Atlantic Cable telegraph, and have been misrepresented by several newspapers, as if they expressed discourtesy to the United States:—

"You are successful, and your success is due to your own efforts. No one else has helped you. The Regulars were, however, ready to start to your assistance at an hour's notice, and held a position most important for defence. They were at St. John's, which commanded both banks of the Richelieu, and could have repelled any attack on either flank. But you resisted and repelled the attack yourselves. Another thing should be noticed. The President of the United States issued a proclamation, very proper and friendly in itself, but of no actual use to you as you had to repel the attack yourselves."

The English of this is that the Volunteers to whom the words were addressed, repulsed the attack without aid either from Great Britain, as represented by her Regulars on one side, or from the United States, as represented by the States' troops on the other.—This is truth—truth most honourable to the Canadians; and there is nothing surely, in this to wound the susceptibilities either of Great Britain or of the United States.

I have the honor to remain,
Your obedient servant,
CRAWFORD AND BALCARRES.