

what did this amount to when in nine cases out of ten, that department knew nought of the matters at issue? The Provincial Legislature was altogether a nonentity.

How to remedy this sad state of affairs was the question that occupied the attention of a few clear heads filled with brains. The cure was found in that greatest of political boons—Responsible government. Throughout the provinces of British North America was this question agitated. In every hamlet and town its merits and demerits were debated. The influential families, who saw far into the future, who beheld their castles and bulwarks tottering and falling before the advancing tide, who looked upon the storm gathering in the clouds, now no “larger than a man’s hand,” which in a short time would, during its march through the political horizon, sweep down upon them in its unabated fury, carrying all they held most dear with it. “The old form of government must and shall be preserved” was the cry these men raised and the motto was emblazoned on their banners.

The little army, eager for the fray, mustered all its strength and awaited with impatience the coming election which was to teach those in power, so dire a lesson. But they were doomed to disappointment. The “other side,” seeing all hopes for success rapidly crumbling beneath them, proclaimed and scattered broadcast among the loyal people the intelligence that were responsible government established, in a little time the step would lead to the ultimate independence of the provinces and a severance of the tie which bound them to Great Britain. The troops would then be withdrawn, and the defenceless Colonies, left to themselves, would be at the mercy of any power strong enough to seize them. This report gained ground with the descendants of the noble and patriotic loyalists: and at the polls the result of the campaign showed a large opposition to Responsible Government.

But nothing daunted by this overwhelming defeat, the little party ceased not from exertions on behalf of the great question. The few members they had returned, made their voices heard on the floors of the House, on every opportunity that presented itself. In Great Britain, too, the “Reform” was but imperfectly understood. Lord John Russell was among its most strenuous opposers. But in 1854, Responsible Government was carried in principle; a short time after that it was in full working operation.

The volume before us gives a full account of this great conflict. The whole history, from its first inception to its completion, is laid bare to the public eye. The different questions that occupied the attention of the House, the attitude taken upon them by the legislators and assemblymen, from 1842 to 1854 (when the Conservative form of government ceased) all appear in panoramic order on the political canvass. The next volume will commence with the Liberal Government, Hon. Manners-Sutton, Governor, and continue to the end of the administration of Hon. A. H. Gordon.

Occasionally, throughout the book, when we come upon a subject on which party feeling ran high, the author contents himself with merely giving an outline of the matter, shutting from our gaze, the remarks made by Hon. members. We regret this, because we consider it not only necessary, but of very great interest to know just what was said. The author seems to have made it a standing rule, for whenever any excitement occurs, he tells us he keeps back the conversation that took place at that time. We hope this omission will not happen in the second volume of this work, which ought to be in the library of every one interested in his country’s history.

At the outset Mr. Fenety says he gives these “Notes and Observations”