

THE FENIAN RAID

OF

1870.

INTRODUCTION.

With one consent men have called the Fenian Raid a farce, and our neighbors have amused themselves mightily at the excitement which it necessarily caused among us; but, however ridiculous its more prominent features, it has not passed without producing the most serious effects on what we are taught by England to term our nationality. Without a baptism of blood, it has been said there can be no national life, and though we have not yet been called to pass through such a painful ordeal, no one can have failed to note the very remarkable progress which we as a people have made, all unwillingly perhaps, during the last week towards independence in thought and action.

It was our own volunteers who, in a great measure, formed the army which acted under command of our own Militia Department. A few weeks later and they might have been alone in the field. The relations between Canada and the mother country were brought up by the general impression, right or wrong, that England had failed to look upon us as a people who had equal claims to protection from her to those of the people at home, and a determination became very generally expressed to have the Imperial policy with regard to us more explicitly defined. The expression of this view drew forth feelings which might fairly be characterized as national. The full effects of this movement on the public mind are not yet known. The relative position and influence of the various races of our population may also have been to some extent ascertained and defined. This last we cannot view as a desirable feature of the case, as whatever discriminates between our races must be a hindrance to their fusion. Viewed as a whole, however, it cannot be denied that the Canadian people have gained from this excitement reliance in themselves, and the respect of their neighbors, to an extent fully to compensate for all the harm done.

The following notes might have been sooner published were it not that they had to be put together during spare moments of