

" There, Sir," replied Macdonell, pointing to 600 exhausted soldiers sleeping on the ground, *not one man absent*. \* This willing young battalion of French militia, officers and men, had accomplished the distance from Kingston to the battle-field. of Chateauguay—170 miles by water and 20 miles by land in 60 hours of actual travel—a fact which deserves to be ranked by the side of the marvellous march of the Light Division of the British army before the battle of Talavera, recorded with so much of just pride by the historian Napier.

Thus it was, that three companies occupied the rearmost lines of defence prepared by de Salaberry, and being thus in the rear, Daly's company had the proud satisfaction of repelling the American flank attack on the ford. Of the men, therefore, engaged, all were French. Of the officers, four names indicate their British lineage. Their gallantry proved it, and proved further, how thoroughly in such a cause, and on such a field—should occasion ever occur—the people of French Canada may rely on the staunch co-operation of their fellow citizens of British extraction.

The French population of Lower Canada are very proud of the victory of Chateauguay, and with just reason. The British population Of the Upper Province had achieved a like success over the common enemy at Queenston Heights. It was gratifying to the natural pride of a great national origin, that the fortune of war should have thus equitably distributed her honourable distinctions. They had, moreover, a stronger motive, both for resentment and exultation. The American Government and democratic press, with unexampled effrontery, had cast upon a race "*sans peur et sans reproche*," the dishonouring imputation of an easy political virtue. They had been charged with a readiness to violate plighted honour, and with disaffection to the British Crown. Truthful and

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i; *Vide United Service Journal*, June, 1848. Corresp.

generous in all relations, whether of peace or war, they resented this indignity, as a stain felt more keenly than a wound, and they gave the "*Bostonais*" their answer on the field of Chateauguay.

This noble and opportune service had the effect of twenty victories. Twenty days had hardly elapsed since the defeat of Proctor on the Thames. Muttered rumours of disaster had scarcely reached remote districts, ere the cloud of anxiety and doubt was dispelled by the exploit of Chateauguay, and the Red Cross Banner of England gleamed forth unsullied, in the light of that valour which it had so often encountered, proved, and respected, under the Lilies of France.

Great Britain honoured this worthy feat of arms in a becoming manner. Standards were conferred upon the regiments engaged. A Battle Medal was given to every soldier. De Salaberry was made a Commander of the Bath. Sir George Prevost, who had ridden up from his quarters in the rear at the close of the action, extolled in a Despatch dated from Montreal on the 30th October, the conduct of the men engaged, and dwelt with superfluous complacency " on the determination of all classes of His Majesty's subjects to persevere in an honourable and loyal line of conduct," which upon that occasion, at least, might have been allowed to speak for itself.

Queenston Heights and Chateauguay are to the people of Canada what Chevy Chase and the " Combat des Trentes " were, in the olden time, to their martial ancestry—the fountain and the nursery of traditions, which create character and foreshadow a national career not unworthy of the sources from whence they spring. As " the child is father to the man," so to nations, honourable traditions are the best guarantee of future greatness, and the descendants of those who fought on the battle fields of Canada, accepting the obligations noble memories impose, are as proud of their antecedents, as those who glory in the iron legend

of Beaumanoir and Bembro—of Knollys, Calverty, and Croquart—of those who,

With stout Erie Percy there were slain,  
Sir John of Adgerton,  
Sir Robert Ratcliff and Sir John,  
Sir James the bold Heron.

The " Combat des Trentes " is, probably, not so familiar to English ears, as the fierce Border foray immortalized in the Ballad of Chevy Chace. The story has been well told, is full of national interest, and is not an inappropriate pendant to scenes upon which the Canadian loves to linger. Both the " Combat des Trentes " and the " woeful hunting " of Chevy Chace, befell in the same century, but the encounter of the " Thirties " preceded that " on Cheviot side " by many years. Chevy Chace dates probably from the year 1388. The " Combat des Trentes " took place 27th March, 1361.\*

About twenty miles from the town of St. Malo, " *St. Malo, beau port de Ilfer,*" on the river Rance, stands the romantic town of Dinan, and, in a dell hard by, where ripen the best figs in Brittany, *experto crede*, may still be seen the ruins of the Chateau and Monastery of Beaumanoir. Thirty-five years ago, the mailed effigies of the warriors of a half-forgotten race lay recumbent on their tombs in the chancel of the roofless abbey, spared by the ravages of revolution, but crumbling rapidly beneath those of time. The name of Beaumanoir was one of high renown in the days of du Guesclin and of Olivier de Clisson, when the English contested, on the soil of France itself, the *suzerainete* of the French crown. The Lord of Beaumanoir was one of the leaders in this remarkable " Combat des Trentes," of which the following account is given in

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- Battle of Otterbourne (historically the same as the foray of Chevy Chace), ..... August 15, 1388
- Combat des Trentes ..... March 27, 1351

the *Histoire de Bretagne*, quoted in a note to Johnes' edition of Froissart, Vol. II, p. 191 :—

" After the death of Sir Thomas Daggeworth, the King appointed Sir Walter Bentley, Commander in Brittany. The English, being much irritated at the death of Daggeworth, and not being able to revenge themselves on those who slew him, did so on the whole country, by burning and destroying it. The Marshal de Beaumanoir, desirous of putting a stop to this, sent to Bembro, who commanded in Ploermel, for a passport to hold a conference with him. The Marshal reprobated the conduct of the English, and high words passed between them ; for Bembro had been the companion in arms to Daggeworth. At last, one of them proposed a combat of thirty on each side. The place appointed for it was at the half-way oak tree between Josselin and Ploèrmel, and the day was fixed for the 27th March, 1351, being the fourth Sunday in Lent. Beaumanoir chose nine knights and twenty-one esquires. Bembro could not find a sufficient number of English in his garrison—there were but twenty—the remainder were Germans and Bretons. Bembro first entered the field of battle, and drew up his troop. Beaumanoir did the same. Each made a short harangue to his men, exhorting them to support their own honour and that of their nation. Bembro added, that there was an old prophecy of Merlin, which promised victory to the English. The signal was given for the attack. Their arms were not similar, for each was to choose such as he liked. Billefort fought with a mallet 25 lbs. weight, and others with what arms they chose. The advantage at first was with the English, as the Bretons had lost five of their men. Beaumanoir exhorted them not to mind this, as they stopped to take breath ; when each party having had some refreshment, the combat was renewed. Bembro was killed. On seeing this, Croquart cried out, Compagnons, don't let us think of the prophecies of Merlin, but depend on our courage and arms ; keep your-

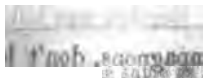
selves close together, be firm, and fight as I do.' Beaumanoir, being wounded, was quitting the field to quench his thirst, when Geoffry du Bois called out, Beaumanoir, drink thy blood, and thy hurt will go off.' This made him ashamed and return to the battle. The Bretons at last gained the day, by one of their party breaking, on horseback, the ranks of the English—the greater part of whom were killed. Knollys, Calverty, and Croquart were made prisoners, and carried to the Castle of Josselin. Tintimiac on the side of the Bretons, and Croquart on the English, obtained the prize of valour. Such was the issue of this famous Combat of Thirty, so glorious to the Bretons, but which decided nothing as to the possession of the Duchy of Brittany.\*

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• The Chronicler adds in the text, with respect to Croquart, " He'was originally but a poor boy, and had been page to the Lord d'Ercle in Holland. He had the reputation of being the most expert man-at-arms of the country. He was said to be worth 40,000 crowns, not including his horses, of which he had twenty or thirty, very handsome and strong, and of a deep roan colour. King John offered to knight him, and to marry him very richly if he would quit the English party, and promised to *give* him 2,000 livres.a year ; but Croquart would not listen to him. It chanced one day as he was riding a young horse, which he had just purchased for 300 crowns, and was putting him to his full speed, that the horse ran away with him, and in leaping a ditch, stumbled into it, and broke his master's neck." Such was the end of Croquart.

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NOTE.

The anonymous correspondent through whose valuable agency the interesting narrative of a " Temoin oculaire has been revived, after an oblivion of fifty years, expatiates on the apparent apathy of his fellow countrymen, and points to the monument on Queenston Heights as an example and a reproach. He asks why nothing has been done to commemorate the scene of this great national exploit, and to point out to posterity the battle field of Chateauguay. This whiter will be pleased to hear that the subject has not been altogether neglected, and that although much remains to be done, a step has been taken in the right direction, which, it is hoped, may lead to more prictical results. There is, in the immediate vicinity of the battle field, a piece of Ordnance property, in superficies about five acres, occupied by an old block house. On the suggestion of the officer in charge, this piece of land has been set apart as the site of a future national monument. Through the active instrumentality of the Hon. Sir Etienne Tachê, the Hon. George E. Cartier, Attorney General, and the Hon. P. Vankoughnet, then Commissioner of Crown Lands, an Order in Council was passed, dated 7th December, 1859, " reserving this piece of land from sale, and appropriating it for the purpose of erecting a monument commemorative of that distinguished feat of Canadian arms—the Battle of Chateauguay."