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Story of Chateaugay.

It is always satisfactory that the party most interested should be enabled to tell his own story, and by a fortunate occurrence this source of satisfaction has been supplied. The Redacteur of the *Courrier d'Ottawa*, Dr. L. E. Dorion, has reproduced most opportunely the narrative of a "Témoins oculaire," dated 3rd November, 1813. This narrative appears to have been published in some of the journals of the day. If a guess may be hazarded as to the authorship, it might be, perhaps not unjustly, ascribed to the late Commander Jacques Viger, of Montreal. Ample in detail and minute in circumstance, it gives, with all the proverbial ease of the French *raconteur*, incidents which correspond in the main with the relations of more pretentious writers. The following account of the Battle of Chateaugay will be little more than the story told by the "Témoins oculaire" done into English. The original will be found in the appendix:

The American army at the Four Corners, under Hampton, after having for some time attracted the attention of our troops, on the 21st October moved direct on our frontier. That same afternoon about 4 p.m. his advanced guard drove in our advanced videttes. They were thrown out to a place called "Piper Road," about ten miles from the church at Chateaugay. Major Henry, of the Beauharnois militia, in command at the English River, notified Major-General de Watteville, who ordered up at once the two companies of the Fifth Incorporated Militia, commanded by Captains Levesque and Debartzch, and about two hundred men of the Militia of Beauharnois. This force advanced about two leagues until, at nightfall, it halted at the extremity of a thick wood into which it would at that moment have been imprudent to penetrate. At daybreak they were joined by Colonel de Salaberry with his Voltigeurs and Captain Fergusson's Light Company of the Canadian Fencibles. Thus composed, de Salaberry pushed on, along the left bank of the river, about a league, and there encountered the enemy. He instantly halted his force. He had some weeks before carefully reconnoitred this very ground, and knew that the whole course of the river presented no better position. The forest was intersected by ravines which drained a swamp on his right, and fell into the river which covered his left. Upon four of these ravines, which were like so many moats, *fossés*, in his front, he threw up breastworks. The three first lines were distant perhaps 200 yards from each other. The fourth was half a mile in the rear, and commanded a ford, by which an assailant coming from the right bank of the Chateaugay might have got into his rear. It was most important to guarantee this, the weak point of the position. Upon each of these lines of defence a parapet of logs was constructed, which extended into the tangled swamp on the right; but the front line of all, following the sinuosities of the ravine in front, formed an obtuse angle to the right of the road, and of the whole position. This whole day—the 22nd—was employed vigorously in strengthening these works, which in strength, natural and artificial, could not be surpassed. They had also the advantage of compelling the assailant to

advance to the attack through a wilderness, remote from his supplies, while our troops had all they required, and were close upon their supports in the rear. The right bank of the river was covered by a thick forest. In the rear, at the ford, care was taken to post about sixty men of the Beauharnois militia.

Nor did the Colonel limit his precautions to the works above spoken of. To secure himself to the utmost, he detached a party of thirty axe-men of the division of Beauharnois to destroy every bridge within a league and a half

ascribed the choice of the ground and the dispositions made. On the 22nd, Major-General de Watteville visited the outposts and approved entirely of the precautions taken, but the labour of strengthening the position continued without intermission up to the 25th October.

When at about 10 a.m. the American skirmishers opened on the *abattis*, Lieutenant Guy, of the Voltigeurs, who was in front with about twenty of his men, fell back, and was supported by Lieutenant Johnson, of the same regiment, in charge of the picket which protected the fatigue party. After a sharp exchange of musketry, the labourers retired within,—the covering party to the front of the *abattis*.

At this moment de Salaberry, who had heard the first firing, rode up from the front line of defences. He brought with him three companies of the Canadian Fencibles under Fergusson, which deployed at once on the right rear of the *abattis*. The company of Captain J. B. Duchesnay was extended on the left, while the company of Captain Juchereau Duchesnay occupied, *en potence*, a position on the left rear among the trees on the bank of the river, so as to take the enemy in flank if they attempted to carry the ford in the rear held by the Beauharnois militia.

It should be observed here that in this part of its course, and between the *abattis* and the ford, the river made a curve or bow so abrupt that at the re-entring elbow of the curve, the fire of the defenders flanked the ford in support of the fire in front.

Then de Salaberry, who had already twice during this campaign tested the American metal—who had longed for another trial—saw his opportunity, and profited by it. He was in the centre of the line—the companies of Fergusson, L'Ecuyer and deBartzch on his right. In the swamp and wood lay Captain Lamothe and a corps of Indians; on the left and left rear the companies of the two Duchesnay's. The place of these troops taken from the first and second lines of defence was supplied from the third and fourth by the Canadian Fencible regiment, under Colonel Macdonell, of Ogdensburg fame.

While these arrangements were being made with precision and rapidity, the enemy debouched from the wood into a large open space in front of the *abattis*. On the left bank of the River Hampton had the supreme command; under him served General Izzard, at the head of the 10th, the 31st and other regiments, amounting to 8,000—or 3,500 men with three squadrons of cavalry and four guns—and yet the artillery was not brought into action. About 2,500 men were thrown on the right bank of the river under Colonel Purdy to force its way through the bush, and take the Canadian force in reserve at the ford below.

The enemy debouched on the plain in front of de Salaberry in column, and advanced in this formation close to the *abattis*, exposing the head of his narrow line to a fire in front, and his flank to the Indians and tirailleurs in the bush and swamp. This was his moment. An American officer had ridden forward, and had attempted to harangue the troops in French. Salaberry seized a rifle, fired, and the orator fell. At the same moment his bugler sounded



LIEUT.-COL. CHARLES DE SALABERRY.
The Hero of Chateaugay, 26th October, 1813.

of his front. And about a mile ahead of the front line of defence above described, he threw down a formidable *abattis* of trees, with the branches extending outwards, and reaching from the bank of the river on his left, three or four across the front to a *savanne* or swamp on the right, which was almost impassable. Thus the four inner lines were effectually covered, and the American artillery, known to number at least ten guns, was rendered useless. They could not be brought into action.

To these admirable arrangements, as much as to the heroism of his men, must be ascribed the brilliant results which ensued, and to the gallant de Salaberry alone must be