

George of Cappadocia and St. Edward the Confessor), had its solemn annual convention at Windsor on St. George's Day (April 23) as early as the reign of Edward the Third, whereas the former was not founded until 1831. The insignia are a red enamelled cross with forked arms, with golden rim and knobs; the obverse centre is composed of a blue enamelled disc, representing the image of Saint Gregory, in the golden ring around which are inscribed the words: S. Gregorius Magnus. The reverse disc, which is also blue enamelled, contains the legend, "Pro Deo et Principe," as well as "S. Gregorius Magnus," in the surrounding golden ring. The ribbon is crimson with yellow borders.

It is well to keep up the memories of our national glories. Among these the name of Chateauguay is a name of pride, associated as it is with a feat of arms in which both the chief races of the Dominion, but the French more especially, have such an honourable record. It is not the least noteworthy feature in the enthusiasm for historical study, to which of late we have more than once referred, that it has given birth to a number of fruitful organizations throughout the Dominion. One of these bears the name of the "Chateauguay Literary and Historical Society," and that it is no idle or mere dilettante body, pluming itself on a grandly suggestive title, while leaving to others the burden and heat of this day of research, is amply evident from the first fruits of its operations. As the Society for Historical Studies yielded Mr. Gerald E. Hart's valuable monograph on "The Fall of New France," and a magazine, *Canadiana*, now successfully closing its first year of existence, so this Chateauguay Society has entered the field of publication with an admirable "Account of the Battle of Chateauguay," having for a frontispiece a portrait of the hero, De Salaberry, and furnished with a sketch of the scene adapted by the author from Bouchette's map, drawn shortly after the victory. This "Account" (which we recommend our readers to obtain from the publisher, Mr. Drysdale) was originally delivered as a lecture by Mr. W. D. Lighthall, who had the deserved honour of inaugurating the labours of the society of which he is an honorary member. As printed, it is made still more valuable by local and personal notes by Mr. W. Patterson, M.A., the society's corresponding-secretary.

The Oregon question took a long time to solve itself, and the solution is not one which we can recall with pleasure. The Buchanan-Pakenham treaty ended, as so many boundary treaties have ended, in a compromise which gave England the second best place. It was the same with the later Juan de Fuca award. The boundary between British Columbia and Alaska still remains unsettled, though the question has come up again and again in recent years. Considerable help in the identification of the places mentioned in the Russo-British agreement of 1825 may be obtained from a study of Vancouver's careful and accurate maps. His survey of the whole western coast of North America was a task to which he devoted remarkable skill and pains, and his performance of it is as worthy of grateful recognition as are the warlike exploits of some of his more famous contemporaries and colleagues. It also deserved to be remembered that the island which bears his name and which constitutes so important a portion of our Pacific province was named the Island of Quadra and Vancouver, at the request of Don Quadra, the

Spanish naval commander, in token of the happy meeting and friendly intercourse of those two estimable and patriotic men. The Hudson's Bay colony of Vancouver, on the Columbia, in which Sir George Simpson took so much pride, was lost to us by the settlement of 1849. Most of the early names (names generally of navigators or their vessels) have been allowed to stand on the maps both of the British and American possessions. A few, such as New Cornwall, New Hanover and New Albion, have been sacrificed to political and other exigencies.

### CHRISTMASTIDE.

Once more the season of Christmas comes to us with all its hallowed associations. As it approaches, a glow of tender kindness towards all that breathes seems to warm our hearts, chilled so often by much of which we disapprove in ourselves and others. The world sometimes seems so wholly a scene of struggle—that struggle for existence that gives no quarter, but only a harsh *ve victis*—that we are tempted to forget its gentler aspects. And it is because Christmas—more than any day in all the round year—brings us cessation of the strife and din and worry that we welcome it so cordially. This transforming power it owes to its universality. Every one looks forward to it, every one is ready for it when it arrives. And as it is *de rigueur* to be cheery and amiable, all faces are wreathed in smiles, all hands waiting to be clasped, and cold shoulders are out of the question. We would scorn to side with those who blame Charles Dickens for making Christmas a feast of obligation. Such persons must be either so wrapped up in themselves that they grudge poor people their holiday, or else they are blind to the interests of the community. Even from a business standpoint, the abolition of Christmas would be disastrous. But the commercial catastrophe would be nothing to the infelicity that it would be sure to cause to millions of the most guiltless of the world's population. The amount of keen, honest, wholesome enjoyment that would thus be driven from the face of the earth is not to be measured. Happily no such assault is intended, but the very thought of it may help us to realize what a vital force Christmas is in modern society.

What a world of memories and dead hopes gather round the name! In the scattered empire of the English folk especially it is associated with all that gives the word home its best significance. Wherever they go they take it with them, and with it the inseparable plum-pudding.

"Whose smoking sweets delicious scents disclose."

But in Canada the observance of Christmas dates back to a period long before its cession to Great Britain. From their old homes the Norman and the Breton had brought usages, the origin of which is lost in the mists of antiquity. Some of these have reference to the Christmas season. Of course, the Day of the Nativity is one of the Church's higher festivals, if not its crowning feast. From the years of earliest colonization there was Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, with *pain benit* and anthems duly sung. In 1645, for instance, it is on record that the first bell for the midnight service sounded at eleven o'clock. A little before half-past eleven the warning note was heard and the choristers began to sing "Venez, mon Dieu" and "Chantons Noel." Even the names of the musicians on that memorable occasion have been

preserved—Monsieur de la Ferté took the bass, while Saint-Martin played the violin. Another member played a German flute. Shortly before midnight the *Te Deum* was chanted, and, just as the cannon announced the hour of twelve, the Mass began. The consecrated bread was afterwards distributed. How much this solemn service is appreciated by the Catholics and by many of the Protestants of this province, the disappointment experienced during an interval of interdict sufficiently showed.

Of the Midnight Mass, the Hon. Hector Fabre, C.M.G., says that it recalls the customs of those Norman and Breton towns which so many Canadians regard as their ancestral homes. *La Guignolée*—the invocation of which is preserved by Mr. Ernest Gagnon in his *Chansons Populaires du Canada*—is associated more often with New Year's Day than with Christmas. As, however, the Christmas season really ends with Epiphany (still called in some places old Christmas Day), it is comprised within the range of Christmas usages. If the usual derivation (*gui, l'an neuf*) be correct, we have in it a parallel to the mistletoe usages so familiar in connection with the English Christmas. It is to be noted, however, that a large proportion of the mistletoe used in England for Christmas decoration is obtained from the orchards of Normandy. The gathering of *gui (viscum)* by the Druids is mentioned by Pliny the Elder, and many of our readers will doubtless recall the lines in the opening scene of Bellini's opera of "Norma":

Il sacro vischio à mieter  
Norma verrà?

The connection of the mistletoe with the slaying of Baldur in the Scandinavian mythology may also be recalled. The "baleful mistletoe" is mentioned in *Titus Andronicus*.

But, whatever legends cluster around this phase of Christmas observance, only what is bright and hopeful must be linked with it when lovers pass under the mistletoe bough. Only what is joyous and of good report can have place in this central feast of Christendom. It is a festival, for the enjoyment of which our Canadian winter is admirably suited. It is the festival of the hearth. It summons home all wanderers and brings together parted friends. It calls up loving thoughts of the absent, and is but poorly kept if, in the hour of enjoyment, no heed be taken of those who mourn, who languish on beds of sickness, or who wage war with the wolf of poverty. To moralize, however, is not our place, but rather to bid good cheer to all our readers and their friends, wishing them whatever may be in every best sense most worthy of acceptance in the time-honoured phrase:

A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

### CHRISTMAS EVE.

Deep on the sloping hillsides lies the snow,  
Steep slanting to the trampled road, that down  
Leads to the outspread silent sleeping town,  
Whose lights upon the southern sky upthrow  
A shimmering radiance nearing to the glow  
Of the Aurora banners of the north, outthrown  
Across the deepening dark blue sky, star-strown,  
And on the ragged fences, bright there show  
Jewels of frost, grasped from the gleaming dress  
Of Winter fair, as o'er the fields yestreen  
She passed, and touching with her light caress  
All nature into sleep, she caused to throw,  
On dreamless forms, her coveredlet of snow.

Ottawa, 1889.

J. E. MACPHERSON.