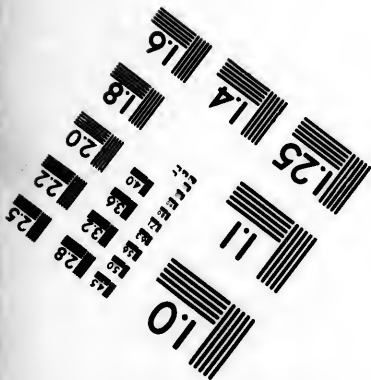
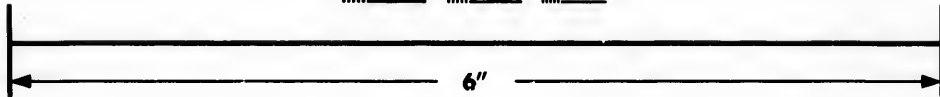
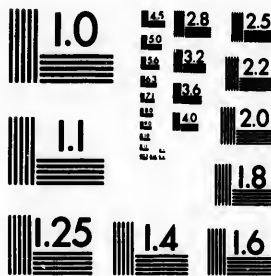


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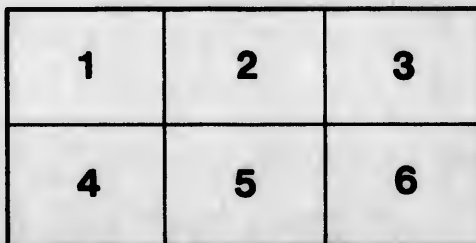
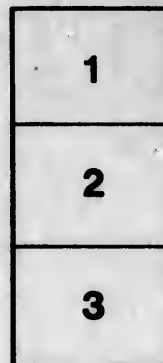
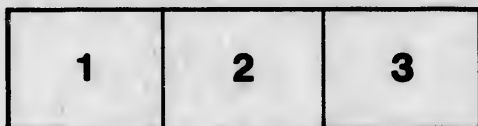
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A RAMBLE
THROUGH
BELGIAN BATTLE FIELDS,

AND A
FEW WAYSIDE THOUGHTS.

FONTENOY—MALPLAQUET—JEMAPPES—LIGNY AND QUATRE BRAS—WATERLOO.

BY A
BRITISH OFFICER.

MONTREAL:
PRINTED BY THE MONTREAL PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY.

1869.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM 1630 TO 1880
BY
JOHN H. COOPER

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A RAMBLE
THROUGH BELGIAN BATTLE FIELDS,
AND A FEW WAYSIDE THOUGHTS.

Battle fields are curious places. There has only been a village with its little street, its church, its pothouse, a few cottages in the midst of gardens, hedges of hawthorn and elders, a blacksmith's forge and a graveyard full of mounds and nettles, —close by, perhaps, there is a river, or a road leads to a great city or mighty fortress.

One day there comes a vast crowd of men and horses, the church and the cottages are full of soldiers, guns roll through the narrow street, horses stand picketed in the gardens, and the fields around are black by day and red by night with the figures and the fires of an army; the villagers fly from their homes, the walls are loopholed, garden hedges are cut through, and the black muzzles of great guns frown behind red earthworks.

All at once these mouths speak, the horses charge, shell and shot crash through the red tiles, bullets whistle and ping through hedge row and orchard, the graveyard has more dead upon its surface than below, men slaughter each other in passages and out-houses, roofs are on fire, blood is on the pavement, wounded men crave water from the duck pond, for a battle is being fought, and to win, or keep this village, is to win, or keep a kingdom; no one ever heard of it before, but henceforth history will have its name; golden letters will flaunt it upon silken standards, a prince or a duke will take his title from it, maps will mark it with crossed swords, and to-morrow when its people come out from their hiding

places and seek their homes again, they will find them ruined, blood-stained, and famous.

FONTENoy.

It is the field of Fontenoy—the sun has gone down behind the tall church spire of Antoing, and twilight thickens over ridge and valley—one by-one the objects grow dim around, and a white mist, like the ghost of battle, creeps up from the swampy hollow which proved so disastrous to the English cavalry on the morning of the fight. Curious, that twilight and mist should make clearer the sight I see, for, in spite of the gloom, the gently sloping ground seems peopled with the old long waistcoated soldiery of the Georges, and the Dutch, and Ligonier, and the dark lines of the French batteries are all before me. Over the fog down by Vezon, Cumberland is learning the bitter lesson that there is no royal road to fighting,—a lesson which eleven months later he will turn to some account against a Highland rabble upon a dreary Scottish moor. Yonder is Saxe, in his litter, sick and in pain, but still with the remnant of his vast strength bearing him bravely through the day; like Cumberland, he is a king's son, too, but in a different way, and the art of war, which we in England fancied a royal baby imbibed at his mother's breast, has been learned by him long ago in the woods of Malplaquet, at Stralsund by the wintry Baltic, and far down in Hungary, when the Turks were battling at Belgrade, against Eugène and his Austrians. He is young still, and yet only five years of his dream remain to him,* but to-day, though in pain, he spends the best hour of it all, winning for himself a pedestal in history, and for his master, half a score of the richest towns in Flanders.

* When Saxe lay on his death-bed, he said one morning to his physician, "Doctor, I have had a fine dream." "Then you have slept," replied the physician. "No, no," returned the Marshal, "I mean my life has been a fine dream."

There is fierce riding and much gesticulation amongst the plumed gentlemen of France, and there are many pretty speeches being made, despite the balls which fly uncomfortably thick from yonder column of fourteen thousand English, which has wedged on into the centre of the French position. "Gentlemen of the French Guard, fire!" roars out Lord Charles Hay; and Comte d'Auteroche, waving his feathered hat, answers, "We cannot fire; be pleased to fire yourselves!" They are only fifty paces asunder; and when the English fire they do it with some effect, for thirty officers, and the Duc de Grammont and five hundred and eighty soldiers are down in the young corn, whose green blades are speckled red with the bluest blood of France. Plenty of good blood is flowing fast enough elsewhere, over the slope and plateau, for the Maison du Roi is there, and the Swiss and the volunteers of Saxe, and half the young gallants of the Court, and the King has come from Versailles, and brought his Dauphin to see the fight, aye, and some of the royal baggage, too, which we mustn't speak about just now.

Louis is over yonder at Notre Dame du Bois and the Dauphin is with him, making ever so many pretty speeches, according to the story books, but despite fine speeches and riding, and gesticulation, the English column is getting uncomfortably close. "What is to be done," asks the King, looking anxiously towards Calonne, where his tête-du-pont marks the lazy Scheldt and the road to Tournay. "Bring up the Maison du Roi," says the Duc de Richelieu, "and the Irish," says Count Lally; and they do bring them up in front and in flank, and with some effect, too; for back over the ridge and down the slope goes the English column, reeling, sick, and bleeding at many wounds, till under the ramparts of Ath, full twenty miles away, Cumberland and Waldeck cry "Halt!" to their beaten army. Oh, how they fumed in England upon hearing the result of that day's fighting on this gently sloping

plain! It wasn't the style of thing they were accustomed to in the old days when Te Deums were chaunted for Blenheim, and Ramilies, and Oudenarde, and Malplaquet—so far, this Hanoverian experiment had been dubious enough. Court morals were scarce better, and now the Te Deums would be all on the other side. But never mind, ye men of England! there are days coming on, and fast enough, too, when this fight of Fontenoy will be forgotten amidst the wild tumult of fiercer battles, when around on every side from Tournay, to Mons, by Nivelles, and on even to Brussels, almost over this same ground, English soldiers will again muster hurriedly during a short summer's night to battle for the grandson of him, who here, with the help of Saxe, and a score of regiments from an Island, where misery and poverty could then, as now, breed bravery, won this fight of Fontenoy.

MALPLAQUET.

Close to the old cathedral church, and near the Gothic Place, in the ancient city of Mons, a lofty tower lifts its great bells and giant clock high over house-tops and surrounding steeple. Some three hundred years ago, the foundations of this tower were laid deep in the rocky hill of Mons, and if sight of battle and sound of siege can give claim to historic celebrity, few buildings can boast more renown than La Tour St. Wadru.

English and French, Dutch and German, Spaniard and Walloon, have marched and countermarched, fought and fallen within sound of its mellow chimes, around it lies the "Cock-pit of Europe," and each window at its summit seems to have been the stage box of the performance.

Look south, Malplaquet is before you—west, Jemappes lies almost underneath. Two curious scenes in the great Drama, called History,—one closing a long war, the other opening a longer one. All quiet enough now, looks the undulating ground beyond

Frameries, and the smoke of Bavay hangs lightly on the horizon. Yet, that broken ground saw wild work enough one foggy morning in September, now just one hundred and sixty years ago. 1709, and another campaign opening. In spite of Blenheim and Ramilies, Turin, and Oudenarde, and half a dozen others—in spite of courtiers and courtezans, France is still able to muster one hundred thousand men, to meet Messieurs Eugène and Marlborough and their high mightinesses of Holland, who, as usual, have got half Europe at their backs—one hundred thousand—but only recruits; the veterans are long since gone—still, French recruits have a wonderful knack of fighting, and there have even been times when a French boy was more than a match for a German man. Villars, doubtful of his men, half fears a fight, burrowing over yonder at Bavay in a vast network of intrenchments, but Eugène and Marlborough want a battle, for the first ever loved fighting, and the last thinks Whig influence declining at St. James, where Tallard, the Blenheim prisoner, is doing more harm to the allied cause on the Thames, than ever he did on the Danube. "Let us go and take Mons," said Eugène to Marlborough, "and perhaps this devil of a fellow will tire of being so prudent." So they move from Tournay to Fontenoy, which has yet to be, by Jemappes, which lies still deeper in the womb of time, and "sit down," as the phrase runs, before this old town where Grimaldi, with five thousand men has taken post. Then from Bavay, Villars moves cautiously up, and, gathering together all their scattered outposts, French, English, Dutch and German, are grouped on the plains of Malplaquet, little short in number of three hundred thousand men.

It's the 11th of September, and a thick fog covers the ground. "At eight o'clock we dispelled it," writes Eugène, "by a general discharge of all our artillery." Germans on right, English in centre, Dutch on left. The French between the wood of

Tanniers and that of Sars, and all the woods, and all the space which lay between, fenced in with levelled trees and bristling with cannon. "It was the most deliberate, solemn, and well ordered battle I have ever seen," writes Blackadder, the Scotch Puritan Colonel, "a noble and fine disposition, and as finely executed, every one was at his post, and I never saw troops engage with more cheerfulness, boldness, and resolution—for myself, I never had a more pleasant day in all my life." And never was there a more bloody day; never was the "Cockpit" more uselessly saturated with human blood—eleven thousand Dutch fell at Tanniers alone. "Almost the whole Dutch force lay extended on the ground," is Eugène's graphic account of it. One regiment loses eight-tenths of its officers—Tulliberdine is killed, Eugène wounded, Villars wounded—all day long through woods, hedges, villages, holes, triple entrenchments, and abattis, the fight goes on, wherever the ground is open the French *Maison du Roi* and the Allied Cavalry furiously mingle, and far into the afternoon, Europe toils against France, and half a dozen nationalities strew Malplaquet with their dead, because, the Pyrenees are thought very necessary mountains.

"I think it is not too much to estimate the loss of both armies, at forty thousand men," says Eugène; "those who were not killed died of fatigue; I gave some rest to the remains of my troops, buried all I could, and then marched to Mons." Marched to Mons and took it after twenty-seven days of siege; La Tour St. Wadru, you may be sure, rung out its welcome to the Germans, and dozed off into silence again—and what says Villars of this fight at Malplaquet? "If it pleases God," he writes to the king, "to favor your Majesty with the loss of another such battle, your enemies will be destroyed." He did not err much.

JEMAPPES.

And now move a few paces to the right and look out from the western window on the sunlit plain below. Three miles from Mons stands the village of Jemappes, a village of tall chimneys, sending volumes of black smoke into the clear blue sky, a village of much industry, and of many memories. Here is a view which this west window of St. Wadru once had. Two armies in line of battle, and for a wonder no red coats—only the blue of Republican France, and the white clad soldiers from the Danube. From Cuesmes to Jemappes the Austrians hold the pear-shaped ridge which lies west of Mons—opposite, Dumouriez has drawn up his volunteers, the right to attack Cuesmes, the centre Flenu, the left Jemappes. There are forty thousand Frenchmen, and scarce half as many Austrians, but Duke Albert holds the ridge, and the black muzzles of fourteen heavy batteries frown ominously down upon the half-disciplined volunteers, who, on this damp, cold, foggy November morning are to win the first of that wondrous series, which will close three and twenty years later at an unknown hamlet called Mont St. Jean. The first of the series, and the others will follow in quick succession; I say the first, because Valmy's cannonade was scarce a battle, but his fight here at the wood of Flenu, this charge of the young volunteers, singing the Hymn of the Marseillaise—from Cifley to Cuesmes, this is a battle of a new order, and through the smoke and fog of that November morning, a glimpse reaches us of other fights in a gigantic age which is drawing nigh. Who are these soldiers who sing while they fight? They are children of the Revolution. And who are those who stand against them? They are the old soldiers of Divine Right. Precision against rapidity, pipeclay against patriotism, Frederick going out, Napoleon coming in. This giant Revolution is only an infant, yet the old

men are unequal to it. Here it is over the frontier at Mons. Four years hence it will be at Mantua, eight at the Pyramids, twelve at Vienna, sixteen at Berlin, twenty at Moscow, and there it ends—perhaps. I wonder if any one amongst the Austrian batteries on the ridge, or in the blue-coated column in the valley, had even that day a faint notion of the time which was at hand. Poor Dumouriez little understood the true meaning of the song which gave him victory. "The Republic is a mere chimera," he says, "I was only deceived by it for three days." Alas! he was never so much deceived as at the moment when he spoke these words. Confident of his mission, full of weaning France from the Revolution, and bringing her back a repentant child to the foot of a Bourbon throne,—believing he could play with a fierce young giant, the same game which Monk played with a worn out and decrepid commonwealth,—until all of a sudden, over there, in the low swampy meadows of Condé, young Davoust's bullets came whistling into his hermaphroditic staff,* and a canal† bank robbed the guillotine of another head, to give it decently to earth thirty years later in the quiet graveyard of a Berkshire village. Well, Dumouriez was not the only one who made that mistake either. Over in England about this time,—aye, and for a good many years after,—we were indulging in strange delusions with regard to this hurricane which men called the Revolution.

Nelson thought it nearly dead in '95; ten years later, he himself lay dying in the dark cockpit of a ship named "Victory"—outside, the hush of a mighty struggle that had been, lay brood-

* At Jemappes, two young French ladies, named Fernig, served with their father upon the staff of General Dumouriez.

† At the moment when Dumouriez was about to carry into execution his long-contemplated desertion to the allied side, he was met near Condé by Capt. Davoust, who commanded a small body of men. The future victor of Eekmuhl did not long hesitate as to his movements. He ordered his men to fire upon the General and his staff. Some were shot down; the others sought safety in flight, Dumouriez only escaping by swimming his horse across the canal.

ing over the water, and yet even then, with another name and in another garb, the Revolution was swooping down towards Vienna, and Austerlitz already loomed upon the horizon. Yes, there was the strange vitality of a living truth moving the haggard masses in that terrible time. It lay under the ruins of the Bastille, under the massacre of the multitude of prisoners, under the basket of the guillotine, under all the "red ruin and breaking down of laws," with which the eighteenth century of Christ's Dominion closed over the world.

Do we know the full meaning of that word Revolution yet? It is doubtful—it is even more than doubtful, we are not altogether so enthusiastic upon some hobbies as we were. Divine Right would not, perhaps, take us such a wild-goose chase as it did under an imbecile King, and an obedient Commons, some seventy years ago—but we are still distant from the day when we can hear this word Revolution without feeling a thrill of horror, seeing more of September 2nd, than of August 10th, or June 20th, looking more to the debtor side of blood, than to the credit side of freedom, and thinking of a murdered king instead of a liberated people.

It is, the old, old story which Shakespeare has so well told for us, from '93 to '15 we made "liars of our memory," and now "we credit our own lie." Truth may be stranger than fiction, but fiction is often stronger than truth, and it sometimes takes ever such a long time to read aright the logic of facts. But I am forgetting,—so think the bells, at least; for with many loud vibrations they rouse me from my reverie, and the rafters shake, and the great tower seems to quiver as innumerable tongues fling down the hour of eleven upon the roof-tops beneath.

Hung by German hands while Mons was still a German fortress, these bells have chimed the hour to many a generation. Through "every swift vicissitude of changeful time unchanged they've

stood," and Villars and Vendôme, Bouffleurs and Eugène, Marlborough and Cumberland, Saxe, Clairfait and Dumouriez, have heard one after the other Time's heavy hand tell off the passing hour on these great bells, which themselves seem to take no heed of time, sleeping aloft amidst the dusty rafters of St. Wadru's Tower. Where the fight which opened the conquering career of the Revolution once raged, there now burns many a furnace-fire, fed from the rich veins of coal which lie deep beneath the ridge of Jemappes, and from Flenu to Cuesmes the smoke of industry hangs almost as thickly now as ever did the smoke of cannon on the day of battle. There is one solitary advantage which the losing army has over the winning one, it has not to bury its own dead—that meritorious work of charity usually devolves upon the winning side, and to dig a trench and to crowd bodies of friends and foes into its full depths are works which the victor of to-day has often to execute on to-morrow. But at Jemappes the dead pits had already been dug deep and dark enough,—where coal had been taken up dead bodies could be put down, so into the shafts of three coal mines went twelve thousand men and horses, and German, and Frenchmen, found alike their level under the hill which they had died to win or keep.

If any wanderer should, in this age of hurried travelling from one capital to another, think fit to pause a while by the tower crowned hill of Mons, wishing to see the scene where the Revolution first measured its strength aggressively against confederated Europe, let him not seek the battle field itself,—huge piles of rubbish—the navy with his barrow—tall chimneys ever as smoke—gaunt brick factories and flaming furnaces—dust, smoke and smuts—all these he will find from Cuesmes to Jemappes, but let him in the early light of a summer morning ascend the worn steps of La Tour St. Wadru and take his station in the deep recess of the western window under the clock—then he will have

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beneath a glorious prospect—glorious even for him to whom the past is a blank, but oh! how glorious to him who can still see a faint vision of the blue-coated volunteers of the Revolution, and who can sit amidst the dusty rafters with hand the history of Europe lying in the mists of morning at his feet.

LIGNY AND QUATRE BRAS.

An autumn evening, and the sun going down in a haze of golden light, over the scattered trees, where once had been the wood of Boissu—evening, the ploughman ending his work, and the partridges commencing theirs—a perfume of clover blossom, a rustle of leaves from the trees along the roadside, and over all, a sense of mournful quiet which is nowhere more profoundly felt than on a scene of bygone battle. In a field to the left of the road which runs south from the village of Genappe, to the village of Franes, and, within a very short distance of the hamlet of Quatre Bras, a man marked with dust and bearing traces of fatigue, is engaged in an occupation which, though apparently unmeaning, seems at least to interest him. He is looking at the landscape. He has come a very long way, and the heat which during the day had been intense, has done more to fatigue him than either dust or distance. If any police inspector, or commissary, misled by the strange garb which this man wore, and by the broken language which he spoke, had followed his footsteps since the early morning, deeming his presence in the land to bode no good to prince or peasant—a strange medley of confused ideas would have rewarded, in all probability, his labors. At nine o'clock in the morning, he might have overheard this stranger enquiring of some wayfarer in the outskirts of Fleurus, the road to Sombreffe—shortly afterwards, he would have seen him closely inspecting the exterior of a house in which history says the Emperor Napoleon slept after his last day of victory at Ligny. A little later he might have again

observed him crossing the ridge of ground by the Tomb, and, under a burning sun, descending the slight incline which leads to the village of Ligny—later again he might have seen him ascending the slopes of Bry and pausing long amid the stubble ridges around the mill of Bussy—later still he would have seen him at various places along the great paved highway which runs nearly east and west from Sombreffe to Quatre Bras—and still later when the fiery sun was going down in the west, beyond Nivelles, he would have again seen this solitary wayfarer upon the wide undulating battle plain which stretches from Quatre Bras to Frasnes.

Yet, in all the journey of that hot September day, in every question asked of peasant or passer by, there was no reason for suspicion or alarm—the stranger was only a soldier treading in peace the same ground which other soldiers had trodden in war—looking at fields upon which brave men had looked for the last time, and toiling along roads over which armies had toiled fainting from defeat, or flushed with victory. He had a little of the enthusiastic in his nature, and could see in the stubble hill of Ligny, the battle ridge of Blucher's defeat; he had a little of the imaginative too, and the poplar trees rustling around the small enclosures of the village could recall the thunder storm in the June evening when the Old Guard, mounting from the flaming houses, pierced the Prussian centre, and Cuirassiers, whose armour glimmered in the twilight, rolled back the Hulans of Blucher from Bry to Bussy. He had read in earlier times and in distant lands of the three days campaign which closed the chapter of Elba and opened that of St. Helena, and now, while the sun beat down between the elm trees upon the paved highway on the Namur and Nivelles road, he toiled along under his knapsack, forgetting dust and distance in the memories of the scene around him. All these places, towns, villages and hamlets had had hitherto for him an

ideal existence of their own,—they had lived in a haze of history and around their names had shone the glory of battles—and now they were before him, lying under the sunlight, silent in the summer afternoon, without sight or sound save those of rest and husbandry, but still, so incorporated in the ideal of war that the ways of peace seemed to sit strangely upon them. Milestones moss-covered with age, finger posts bleached by rain and time, might well seem so many headstones and crosses set up to mark that greatest graveyard of human glory—the campaign ground of 1815—Quatre Bras eight kilometres, Sombreffe four. To Wavre—to Mont St. Jean—to Frasnès—to Fleurus—to Waterloo, to Ligny—such were the names that met his gaze upon the old road posts where paths branched away over great plains of stubble, all quivering in the sun. Midway between Sombreffe and Quatre Bras, and in the neighborhood of Marbais, a slight elevation flanks the road on the right. From its summit the eye ranges over a large extent of country, and the smoke of Fleurus, the tall chimneys of Charleroi, and the white houses of Quatre Bras are visible south-east, south and west, but in the opposite direction from Fleurus an object appears upon the north-western horizon which at once centres upon it the gaze of the traveller, it is the upper part of a cone, distant but still distinct against the sky, having on its summit a huge square like block which the eye fails to resolve, but which the memory already knows is the lion of Waterloo. Standing on that elevated ridge near Marbais, the traveller had before him the campaign ground of 1815, he stood not very far removed from the centre of that great square which has for its four corners Ligny, Quatre Bras, Waterloo and Wavre—that square in which Napoleon moved, giant-like and irresistible, while Ney on the left and Grouchy on the right, won Waterloo for Wellington—brought back the Bourbons, and made the rock of St. Helena famous—~~one~~ at Quatre Bras, the other at Wavre. So thought the traveller, at least, as he

sat to rest awhile on that elevated spot, while his eye traced the wide landscape from Frasnes to Fleurus; but the five kilometres, which the last road-post marked, had yet to be traversed, Quatre Bras seen, and the question of a night's lodging solved before the sun (which was already beginning to droop towards the west) had reached the horizon—so with a knapsack, which seemed heavier at every step, the wanderer resumed his road and did not halt again until the hamlet at the four roads, with its half dozen white houses had been reached, and the last rays of the setting sun were falling athwart the scattered trees of Boissu. He was on the field of Quatre Bras. An undulating plain, unbroken by wall or hedge lay around him, the stubble was crisp under foot, and in some places corn stacks still stood where the rye had been gathered in—many people would have said there was little to see, and the ploughmen, as they unyoked their teams for the night, thought probably that the strange wayfarer was up to no good at that hour upon their land. But neither was his presence any harm. This Quatre Bras had for him a kind of personal interest, and the contrast between the past and present of a battle field had here even a deeper meaning than had the other fields over which his fancy had led him.

On the 16th June, 1815, a regiment, worn and tired by three and twenty miles of dusty march, reached the field of Quatre Bras. Boissu had been taken, Brunswick had fallen, and between the lulls of the cannonade came, ever and anon, amongst the wearied squares of British infantry, the fierce rush of the iron horsemen of L'Heretier and Kellerman. The regiment just arrived upon the field moved through the tall rye to the inner slope of the ridge, which is the last ground wave overlooking, at the northern side, the little valley of Gemioncourt—here it halted, having close by the remnants of two other battalions formed into a single square. Presently, from the outer slope of the ridge, a

horseman galloped back towards Quatre Bras, shouting, as he rode, "Prepare for cavalry: they are coming!" The officer who commanded the regiment, thus warned, placed his men in square. At that instant another horseman rode up from a different direction, and halting against the bayonets of the men, he demanded, in a loud voice, what had been done. "I have formed square," replied the Colonel, "to resist cavalry." "There are more coming," answered the first speaker; "deploy into line." He was a Prince, and in that day Princes, like Kings, could do no wrong. So they proceeded to form line just as the wild cannonade from the heights of Frasnes sunk suddenly into ominous silence. It was the calm before the tempest. At once the ridge in front grew dark with huge straight-sworded, steel-clad horsemen, and through the tall and tangled rye there swept the 8th Cuirassiers of Kellerman's Division. Before this rush of horses no men in line could stand; from right to left the regiment became a shapeless wreck. The Cuirassiers swept on towards Quatre Bras, bearing with them a single colour; and one hundred and fifty dead and dying men remained amidst the blood-stained corn to attest the impetuosity of French cavalry and the imbecility of a Dutch Prince. The man whose steps we have followed from Fleurus, and who now sat in the sunset on the stubble-covered ridge of Gemioncourt, bore, when at home, the same numbers which that regiment had worn in the fight at Quatre Bras. The autumn twilight had begun to fade when the sense of wanting a supper and a bed roused from his dream of battle the solitary wayfarer. A peasant passing the road answered the inquiries made by him, and wandering across the fields, he reached the little village of Frasnes, which had begun to close its doors against the night. In this village (the headquarters of Marshal Ney on the night of the 16th June) he found a homely supper and a bed, which, though small, was white and clean, and cool, after the fiery heat of the long September day. In the room

where he slept, St. Donat the Protector against lightning, in a suit of complete armour, looked angrily from an engraving upon the wall; another engraving represented three men struck by lightning while sheltering under a corn-stack, and underneath was written "Genappe, 1844,"—these, with the likeness of Leopold, King of the Belgians, and a portrait of the old lady of the house, at a former period of her existence, completed the decorations of the apartment. The Genappe lightning scene was suggestive. It was over this same village of Genappe that "an awfully loud thunder-clap burst forth" as the English army wound its way on the 17th June, 1815, through rain and mud, to the foot of Mont St. Jean. Was Genappe, then, a favorite target for the clouds?

WATERLOO FROM THE SOUTHWARD.

Through Quatre Bras, through Genappe, by Rossomme, by Caillou, along the paved Charleroi and Brussels Road, till the crest of the last ground wave was reached, and from the ridge of La Belle Alliance, under a cloudless sky, a traveller saw the field of Waterloo. He had reached this ridge from the southward, preferring, in his fancy, to follow the footsteps of the French army, and to see the fields of Ligny and Quatre Bras before venturing on that of Waterloo; neither did he desire to make his entry to the latter place, upon the top of the Brussels coach, in company with that distinguished worthy, the British snob,—a person who invariably signalises his presence in the Belgian capital by making a picnic excursion to the field of the mighty dead, and whose chief delight it is to imbibe beer along the roadside, beating time to "Rule Britannia," or whistling "See, the conquering hero comes!" as the coach lumbers heavily along through the Forest of Soignies. No; better, far, to come alone; and gaze quietly upon the spot. Sentiment? Perhaps so, call it what you will; but never mind, this

men was satisfied with it, and as it was his own, he carried it without a name.

A slope—a valley—a hill—to the left a grove of old trees—in the foreground a white-washed farmhouse with enclosure—a mighty mound with a lion on its summit—ploughmen turning the yellow earth—pigeons skimming over the fields—a faint murmur of leaves—and over all a noon-day sun and a sky without a cloud—a common Flemish Landscape and nothing more—take away the lion mound, and every English shire will furnish you with a better prospect. Yes, with this difference, the slope won't be La Belle Alliance—the farmhouse won't be La-Haye Sainte—the trees won't be those of Hougomont—the ridge won't be Mont St. Jean—the valley won't be the Tomb of the Old Guard. This slope, this valley, and yonder ridge, together make that hinge of history called Waterloo which has been oiled by so much blood. There is an idea that a battle ridge, to be strong, should be rough and abrupt; it is erroneous, the gradual incline is the really strong position, and the long, gentle slopes, beautiful in peace, become terrible in war, for they are the same which the farmer loves to scatter with grain, and the gunner to scar with grape-shot.

From this ridge of La Belle Alliance, where the wayfarer sat, silently looking at the scene before him, a curious sight had met the glance of the great Emperor, about mid-day, on the 18th June, 1815. Looking towards the right, while all the space in front shook with the thunder of his attack, he noticed upon the heights of St. Lambert motionless objects, which might mean trees, and might mean men; if men, they might be Frenchmen: they were the Prussians. And this was Waterloo—so often thought of by this traveller—pictured—brain-sketched—studied—fancied under every phase of light and shade, until here, at length, under the sunlight, lay stretched the field itself. Yet, perhaps, it was not altogether easy for this wayfarer, looking down upon the

Field of Waterloo, to realize, to the utmost, the scene that lay before him—true, Hougomont, La-Haye Sainte and La Belle Alliance were there—true, the very turf of the knoll where he sat had been pressed by the hoofs of the Emperor's charger. But what then? Had not all *that* been shrouded in a mist of vapour, lit at times by the red glare of battle, and here on this day was the sun blazing down upon the field, and the ploughman turning the yellow earth, as though forty thousand corpses had never strewn yonder valley, as though the yellow earth had never drunk human gore, till its broad face grew crimson, as though the sun itself had never gone down upon a wild scene of slaughter when Divine Right, after three and twenty years of struggle, got its foot just here upon the neck of the Revolution.

In the dim twilight of the past these men of Waterloo, loomed like giants, in the full daylight of the present, the scene of their exploits seemed dwarfed—so, with a feeling of disappointment, which he strove to hide as though ashamed of its presence, the wanderer rose from the spot, where for some time he had surveyed the scene, and crossing the valley in the direction of the lion mound, approached the whitewashed building which calls itself Hotel and Musée de Waterloo. As he drew near to this institution, in which human skulls, leg-bones, armour, etc., are separated from the beer department by a narrow passage, he was set upon by the many guides who cluster thickly around the building—old and young proffered their false bullets and falser sentiment, and were as ready to lie to him in English, as the next minute they would have lied to French and German in their native tongues. But he was in no humour for listening, and passed on into the house to rest, until evening had dispersed the visitors, and the field had resumed the quietude of darkness.

When night fell he wandered out again over the field—the visitors had long gone back to Brussels, the lying guides had

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disappeared. Whither would he go? The trees of Hougomont showed darkly against the western sky, and toward them he directed his footsteps. It was one of those glorious nights so frequent in tropic regions, so seldom seen in Northern climes. The harvest moon rose, blood-coloured, over Wavre—along the southern horizon summer lightnings flashed at intervals from a dense black cloud. The lion mound rose dark and solemn, throwing a vast shadow along the slope of Mont St. Jean. Within the enclosures of Hougomont reigned that silence which the night wind sometimes renders deeper by breaking. The dew lay heavy upon the grass. In little hollows white streaks of vapour clung shroud-like to the ground. Apple trees, growing at intervals, stood in the open space dimly in the moonlight. The stillness of the night was heard in this enclosure—the uncertainty of moonlight was visible in it—the memory of the dead was felt in it. The wind often sings a requiem, and moonlight is, perhaps, a graveyard's best illuminator. This mighty death-bed—this huge grave seemed at home with the night—day would have profaned it. Light, which makes visible many things, hides more—you may see a house when you cannot behold a star—there is more of the real, less of the ideal, more of earth, less of heaven; and the past which has so much of night around it, sometimes requires darkness to behold it. Between the orchard and the garden of Hougomont there stands a well known wall; though high, it is easily crossed, for the rents of cannon shot and the loopholes for musketry are still upon its surface, and although these apertures made it difficult to pass on the day of battle, they make it easy enough now. Although ruined, it cost a great deal in its day, and consumed quantities of that material which men build power, and destroy walls with—blood. Three thousand lives were lost around it. The traveller crossed the wall and stood beneath a grove of high trees, into which the moonlight could not enter. Through

the dark branches he could see, in the misty light, an open space which seemed a garden, and further off a ruined building. In this old grove they stored a portion of the harvest which death reaped on the 15th June, 1815, and where the traveller crossed the wall there stood, under the shadow, a square block of masonry which was a tomb. Aloft in the trees, some birds seemed to keep watch over the dead; the sounds of footsteps beneath startled them, and they flew away into the outer light, flapping noisily against the branches.

To the man who, standing under the shadow of these trees at midnight, saw here Hougomont for the first time, it seemed as if night had forever wrapt its shroud over the ruins and the weed-grown garden. He did not ask himself what was this place like by day? Day would have here been as great an anomaly as a corpse with staring eyes. The actual gloom of night seemed to stretch forth its phantom hand to grasp the ideal gloom of the vanished past, and where light failed to show more than a mere outline of things, the shadow, and the darkness, and the moonlight, and the night wind revealed strange glimpses of that terrible twilight, when the glare of the burning chateau showed a stiffened corpse or mangled wretch under every hedge and in every hollow. Here, at least, there was no disappointment.

There are times when the mind takes no heed of time and a minute becomes an hour, and an hour a minute. This was such a time. When the traveller emerged again upon the open field, leaving behind him the rustling trees of Hougomont, the moon had risen high in the heavens, and its now yellow light showed distinctly the undulations of the ground—over stubble, where a covey of partridges rose from his feet and vanished into the gloom, through patches of clover which sparkled in the moonlight, the traveller wandered along that valley, which has on one side Mont St. Jean and on the other La Belle Alliance. This valley repre-

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sents the conventional twelve paces across which the Revolution and Divine Right fought their last gigantic duel. It was into this gloomy arena that Donzelot, Bachelu and Ney led their different columns, and marked the hours of that long summer afternoon by striking ponderous blows upon the iron mass which crested Mont St. Jean, sounding that knell whose echo reached through the trees of Soignies, far beyond Brussels, and shook the hills from Liege to Ostend. It was on the last spur overlooking this valley, at 7.30 in the evening, that the Emperor took his stand while the Guard, in double column, with Ney and Friant, and Michel, and Poret de Morvae, passed by for its last charge. Four hundred yards behind, the Prussian shot and shell fell fast around La Belle Alliance, and the roar of Blucher's guns from Plancoit was scarce muffled by the thunder of the closer cannonade which raged around the bronzed battalions. Here was made the last desperate throw of the ruined demi-god; when struck in front, and flank and rear, the vast mass which obeyed him trembled in the twilight. And when that last throw was made, it was from this valley, so quiet now, that the terrible cry of "*Sauve qui peut*" went shuddering through a twilight, deepened with gore, to tell Orange and Nassau, and Brunswick and Guelph, and Hapsburg and Romanoff, and Bourbon and Hohenzollern, to rest easy under their crowns that night—that night, almost the first for three and twenty years.

History tells of other battle gloamings, but of none like this one. There is a mournful solemnity, a depth of ruin, a vastness of disaster about it, to which nothing that the world has yet seen can approach. Describe it—futile; paint it—almost impossible. Shadows of cloud mixing with mists of earth—in the west the dull glow of a lurid sunset—twilight closing over interminable space—half in the shadow, half in the lurid glow, a huge eagle wings his flight into deep obscurity. Such a sombre creation of a

painter's fancy the traveller who stood in the valley of Mont St. Jean once saw—apparently a sombre meaningless picture,—in reality not so; for in its dim depths there seemed the realization of a vast sorrow, and a sense of unutterable gloom hung brooding over the canvas. To that picture the twilight of Waterloo had ever borne a strange kinship. There was ever around it the dull haze of smoke at night, and the red glare of a dying conflagration broke out at intervals through the cloud rifts. The eagle, too, was not wanting; its dusky shadow filled the horizon far away towards Rossomme and Genappe, and Quatre Bras, and further still, where over a stormy ocean there rose against a distant sky, a prison rock which had its birth at Waterloo.

Upon the field of Waterloo, at that part of the ridge of Mont St. Jean which formed the right centre of the English army, and in front of the spot where Halkett's brigade was posted, there stands, as everybody is aware, a lofty mound surmounted by a colossal lion.

This mound is a conspicuous object. From afar it indicates the whereabouts of Waterloo, but close at hand it obscures the battle-field. It is a statue too large for the pedestal—it dwarfs Hougomont, La Haye Sainte and the whole ridge of Mont St. Jean. Hills were levelled to build it, and those which were left seemed dwarfed beside it. Guide books would call it a striking object, and they would be right. It is a monstrously striking object, but, like every monstrosity, it has its use.

“I have been to the grave of Napoleon,” said an Englishman to me, one day, at St. Helena; “I have been to the grave of Napoleon, but I was disappointed; there was really nothing to see there.” The mound at Waterloo prevents a similar remark being made upon the Field of Waterloo. It fills the pupil of the eye of the cockney; it is something tangible, something real. He

can touch it, place his feet upon it, and therefore it appeals to his senses. If he has one regret in the world upon the subject of this monument, it is, perhaps, that he cannot inscribe Smith, Brown, Jones or Bull with a knife upon it. This mound is an epitome of a certain class, by no means a limited one; it has at the summit a very large and massive lion, at the base a very commodious beer shop. Between these two extremes you may find a vast amount of enthusiasm of a metal which is essentially Britannic.

Nevertheless, the mound is not altogether useless. There are few better standpoints in the world for looking at the Revolution than this spot, which was so long deemed its tomb. The Tomb of Revolution and the Trophy of Divine Right, the mighty dam which was to chain for ever the waves of Democracy—the grand monument of Kings, with the King of the Forest on its summit, looking towards France, to scare back the French Idea—all this was grand—grand to many more even than the poor Cockney tourist whose brain shadowed forth a faint idea that the whole thing had something to say to “Rule Britannia” and “God Save,” and “The British Lion.” But all this is changed; the mound has taught that lesson long enough—it is teaching another lesson now. Waterloo—the Hinge of History—the Avenger of Thrones—the prelude to St. Helena—that is all past. But Waterloo, the forgotten sequel to Cressy or Malplaquet—Waterloo, the Dead Letter of History—defeated by time—that is all present. “Very often,” says a great writer, “a battle lost is progress gained.” It is true of Waterloo. Won by Monarchy, it has been a gain to Revolution. Democracy running to seed, was clipped at Mont St. Jean, and it has grown strong at the root—Sampson blind, and a prisoner, regains his strength, and is thought a plaything. The Revolution, poor old giant, is also deemed harmless, after Waterloo and the Kings commence to play with it. It is a dangerous game, and Gaza should have warned the Tuilleries.

If any person wishes to see aright the Lion Mound at Waterloo, let him, in the early morning, when the sun is low over Wavre, and the mists hang heavy around the trees of Hougomont—when the British tourist is still far away in Brussels and the lying guides are asleep after the night's debauch—when the lark is out over the field, and, if it is spring time, the daw is busy at the nest, which, as if in mockery of man, he builds yearly under the lion's paw—let him then go up the granite steps of the mound, or better still, ascend from the side of Hugomont or La Belle Alliance, by the steep bank of earth itself. The rain marks will give him footing, the stunted bushes will assist him, and from the summit a view far reaching over the great plains of Flanders will burst upon his sight.

If possible, let this man, whoever he may be, take with him that "Element of well-being"—Individuality—and let him leave in the Musée at the base any fine old ideas about the British Lion and Rule Britannia which he may have heretofore entertained. It is just possible that he will also have to abandon the old delusion of duty, which, in that tight island of ours, we so frequently indulge in.

If we go to war with the Chinese because they don't want to get drunk upon our opium—if we annex half Asia, clear the Maori from New Zealand, or knock Prince Satsuma's city into ruins, Duty will be sure to figure somewhere in the performance.

"England expects every man to do his duty," said Nelson, on that famous day when he bore down upon the fleets of France and Spain. What was that duty? "To hate a Frenchman as you would the devil." 'Twas our duty to put one Ferdinand in Spain, and another Ferdinand in Naples, to suppress the Revolution, and to make this fair land of Flanders, which has France written in every town, village and homestead, a border province for the greasy Dutchman.

The fact is, we like to make show of a sort of principle when-

ever we fight for interest. Glory won't do, for the French fly that flag; so we run up our big bunting, labelled "Duty," and, like Charity, it covereth a multitude of sins. Well, never mind about that; right or wrong, we did suppress this Revolution.

Oh! yes, we did. We put a son of St. Louis back into the Tuilleries; we parcelled Italy into twenty States, and we played the devil with the Rhine—and then we killed the Revolution at Waterloo, and buried it in the grave under the willow-tree at St. Helena—at least we thought we did. But, somehow or other, there came three days scuffling, we can hardly call it fighting, in the streets of Paris, and lo! the dead revolution stirred and breathed, and thrones trembled, and kings grew pale, and Waterloo became history.

Hark! even now this undeing of Waterloo is abroad. Universal Suffrage—Reform—Democracy. In London, Rome or Madrid—under different names, but still the same unconquerable, never-dying Revolution.

Many hands are against it, yet it thrives. The Church excommunicates it—the soldier shoots it—the rich bribe it—the judge condemns it—but still it lives, spreads and multiplies. Seventy years ago it was France—now it is Europe, and the day approaches when it must be the world.

We will close with an extract—one discovered by mere accident—and singular, by reason of a strange coincidence.

On the 3rd of June, 1826, a man visited the field of Waterloo, and in a visitor's book, which at that time was kept in the farm house of La Belle Alliance, he wrote the following:—

"I this day visited the field of Waterloo, where Napoleon, by the misconduct of an officer, was obliged to yield the palm of victory to superior numbers, and that his son may one day avenge his death and shake Europe to its centre is the wish of a sincere American."

The man who wrote the above signed himself "Junius Brutus Booth," Citizen of the United States." Thirty-nine years later his son fires a pistol-shot in a theatre in Washington, and a continent is shaken to its centre.

There is a strange equality in war. That bit of lead we call a bullet is a sad leveller; it knows no distinction between peer and peasant, but is the same grim life-taker to either. Brunswick goes down before it at Quatre Bras—Turenne at Sasbach—Moore at Corunna—Berwick at Philipsburg—Charles at Fredericks-huld—Sydney at Zutphen—as easily as any poor conscript from the Rhineland.

No where does man pay the penalty of life so readily as on the battle field. Nay, there that penalty seems even to wear a strange charm of its own.

Death is abroad and men go to meet him—smoke hides his fleshless arms—roar of cannon deadens his hoarse rattle—the strong fall before him, not the weak—the sword and not the sheet is in his victim's grasp—men run not from but to him, and his sight makes bolder instead of terrifying. Then comes the morrow—the trench dug, perhaps, for the cannon holds the dead; all alike, too, for the battle's graveyard knows no pauper's corner.

Far away in dim cathedrals, and amidst the hum of cities, they build, perchance, great monuments to soldier-princes, but the proudest grave that earth can give to soldier-prince or soldier-private, is the grave beneath the turf whereon he fell. The plough may turn the sod above it, the grain may grow and ripen, the lark sing, the reaper, in summer, work his sickle, and the winter snow lie deep upon it—what of all that? These men did their work and went to sleep at tattoo of the battle-drum, nor will they wake until the last great trumpet is sounding forth its vast *réveille*.

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