

The number of French-Canadians residing in the United States may be put at one million souls, if not more. There is not probably an adult among them unaware of the existence of a certain song called *Le Canadien Errant*. The wonderful popularity of the few lines merits a notice in COURRIER DU LIVRE. Here are the facts :

Antoine Gérin-Lajoie had the singular good fortune of acquiring great celebrity in the Province of Quebec before leaving college. A tragedy and a song made him famous during the year 1842, and although he afterwards produced three or four works of much greater merit, his name is principally known as the author of *Le Canadien Errant*.

It is merely an expression of home-sickness placed in the mouth of Canadians exiled to Australia after the insurrection of 1837-38. The tune adopted was already familiar to the whole population. In a short time the words were familiarly known to every individual. The years rolled on, and another class of "exiles" formed itself amongst those emigrating to the United States, and the song followed them there. Sing that poetry in any place you wish on the face of the continent, and if a French-Canadian happens to stand within hearing distance (which is likely to be the case), he will come to you.

The fascinating power of these common enough verses is illustrated by a long series of anecdotes that have become popular in their turn, the song thus becoming for two millions and a half of French-Canadians now living an outburst expressive of their longing for home.

The best translation of it was made, in 1864, by George T. Lanigan, a clever writer and a good scholar.