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LATOUR: A BALLAD OF ACADIE.

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BY JAMES HANNAY.

Of all the gallant Frenchmen whose names and deeds endure
In old Acadian annals, the greatest was Latour.
Son of a Huguenot father, husband of Huguenot bride;
He clung still to the ancient faith in which his grandsires died.
While yet a simple school-boy unto this land he came;
Little he thought what stirring tales would gather round his name:
That here before his life was spent 'twould be his lot to know
Misfortunes great and triumphs grand—success, care, joy and woe.
Five years he dwelt with Biencourt among the Micmac braves,
Whose wigwams were on Restigouche and hard by Fundy's waves.
None followed up more keenly the Mohawk foeman's trail:
The grim old warriors loved him, altho' his face was pale.
He built a potent fortress beside that harbour deep,
Thro' which the broad and strong St. John flows with a mighty sweep.
Down from the fall's great rapid the river rushes free;
It doubles round a point of land and turns towards the sea.
A bow-shot off, an island divides the racing tides,
Whose current for a thousand years has frayed its rocky sides;
But bold would be the swimmer, and strong his arm and sure,
To venture o'er the narrow strait and cross to fort Latour.
The Danube's tide is sluggish, slow is the Severn's stream,
Compared to this swift current; it passes like a dream.
Yet still the ancient rampart a rugged front uprears,
Tho' this strong tide hath sapped its base more than two hundred years.
Strong were its earthen bastions, its palisades were tall,
Heavy and great the cannon that frowned above the wall;
And bold and true its soldiers, all men of fair Rochelle—
Stout Huguenots who knew no fear, but loved Latour full well.
But none within that fortress, tho' tried in many a fray—
Sons of the gallant men who fought on Ivry's bloody day—
Possessed more dauntless courage to dare or to endure,
So kind and yet so brave a heart, as the wife of Lord Latour.
Her father was a noble—last of an ancient line,
Which civil strife had stricken as the lightning blasts the pine.
Her grandsire fell at Ivry, charging by Henry's side,
When the last onset broke their ranks and quelled the Leaguers' pride.
Cruel and fierce was D'Aulnay: he held Latour in hate:
His fort was at Port Royal, and there he dwelt in state.
High o'er that ancient river its gloomy bastions rose,
Scowling defiance upon all who dared to be his foes.