

and traditions. These songs are the same in spirit, and very frequently in words, as those which their ancestors brought over with them from Brittany, Normandy and Franche-Comté. Some have been adapted to Canadian scenery and associations, but the most of them are essentially European in allusion and style. The people of the North of France have always been famous for their ballads, and the French Canadian preserves the poetic instincts of his nationality. The Canadian lumberer among the pines of the Ottawa and its tributaries, the Métis or half-breeds of what was once the great Lone Land, still sing snatches of the songs which the *coureurs de bois*, who followed Du Ruit and other French explorers, were wont to sing as they paddled over the rivers of the West or camped beneath the pines and the maples of the great forests, and which can even now be heard at many a Breton and Norman festival. There is a sprightliness in the air of these songs which is peculiar to the chansons of Old France. It is impossible to set the music of all of them to the music of the drawing-room, where they seem tame and meaningless, but when they mingle with 'the solemn sough of the forest,' or with the roar of rushing waters, the air seems imbued with the spirit of the surroundings. It has been well observed by Mr. Gagnon, a French Canadian, to whom we are indebted for the only good collection Canada possesses of these songs, that 'many of them have no beauty except on the lips of the peasantry.' Whoever has heard these songs in Canadian homes will admit that there is much truth in his remark, 'There is something sad and soft in the voices which imparts a peculiar charm to these monotonous airs, in which their whole existence seems to be reflected. It is with the voices as with the eyes of the peasantry. These accustomed to wide horizons and a uniform scenery, reflect a quiet, a calm, a monotony if you like, which is not to be found among the inhabitants of cities.'

It may be interesting to the readers of this paper to quote the most popular and poetical of all the Canadian ballads, and at the same time to give a translation from the collection of a Canadian writer, to which we refer at the head of this article :

1. "Song of the Canoe," Translated by H. H. Bennett