

QUAINT FANCIES AND RHYMES,

BY A COLLECTOR.

II.

THE CHAUNT ROYAL.

The Chant Royal is truly no more than a fuller form of the ballad, comprising five verses of eleven lines and envoy of five. The origin of the name is left to the fancy of critics, some holding that it refers to the high quality of this kind of verse; others, that it is taken from the lofty choice of its burdens; and still others, that it was fit to be spoken or sung only before kings. It is a piece of very hard work, and Gleeson White says that "unless the whole poem is constructed with intense care, and has intrinsic beauty of its own of no mean order, the monotony of its sixty-one lines on five sounds is unbearable." Because of its kinship to the ballad, we shall give only one example, chosen on account of Holbein, who inspired, and Austin Dobson, who wrote it:—

THE DANCE OF DEATH.

(CHAUNT ROYAL, AFTER HOLBEIN.)

*Contra vim MORTIS
Non est medicamen in hortis.*

He is the despot's Despot. All must bide,
Later or sooner, the message of his might;
Princes and potentates their heads must hide,
Touched by the awful sigil of his right;
Beside the Kaiser he at eve doth wait
And pours a potion in his cup of state;
The stately Queen his bidding must obey;
No keen-eyed Cardinal shall him affray;
And to the Dame who wantoneth, he saith
"Let be, Sweetheart, to junket and to play."
There is no King more terrible than Death.

The lusty Lord, rejoicing in his pride,
He draweth down; before the armed Knight
With jingling bridle-rein he still doth ride;
He crosseth the strong Captain in the fight;
He beckons the graver Elder from debate,
He hales the Abbott by his slaven pate,
Nor for the Abbess' wailing will delay;
No bawling Mendicant shall say him nay;
E'en to the pyx the Priest he followeth,
Nor can the Greek his chilling finger stay.
There is no King more terrible than Death.

All things must bow to Him. And woe-betide
The wine-Bibber—the Roysterer by night;
Him the feast-master, many bouts defied,
Him 'twixt the pledging and the cup shall smite:
Woe to the Lender at usurious rate,
The haud Rich Man, the hireling Advocate;
Woe to the Judge that selleth right for pay:
Woe to the Thief that like a beast of prey
With creeping head the traveller hurryeth;—
These, in their sin, the sudden sword shall slay.
There is no King more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity—nor will be denied,
When the low hearth is garnished and bright,
Grimly he flingeth the dim portal wide,
And steals the Infant in the Mother's sight;
He hath no pity for the scorned of fate:—
He spares not Lazarus lying at the gate.
Nay, nor the Blind that stumbleth as he may;
Nay, the tired Ploughman,—at the sinking ray,—
In the last furrow,—feels an icy breath,
And knows the hand hath turned the team astray.
There is no King more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity. For the new-made Bride,
Blithe with the promise of her life's delight,
That wanders gladly by her Husband's side,
He with the clatter of his drum doth fright;
He scares the Virgin at the convent gate;
The Maid half-won, the Lover passionate;
He hath no grace for weakness or decay;
The tender Wife, the Widow bent and grey,—
The feeble sire whose footstep faltereth—
All these he leadech by the lonely way.
There is no King more terrible than death.

ENVOY.

Youth, for whose ear and monishing of late,
I sang of Prodigals and lost estate,
Have thou thy joy of living and be gay;
But know not less than there must come a day,—
Aye, and perchance e'en now it hasteneth,—
When thine own heart shall speak to thee and say:
There is no King more terrible than Death.

As this poem clever and powerful though it be,
is suited to convey feelings of gloom, we shall
close by lighting it with the envoy of John Payne's
bright chaunt royal, entitled "The God of Love:—"

God above gods, High and Eternal King,
To whom the spherul symphonies do sing,
I find no whither from thy power to flee,
Save in thy pinions vast o'ershadowing.
Thou art my Lord to whom I bend the knee.

CANADA, MY LAND, MY LOVE.

L'étranger voit avec un œil d'envie
Du Saint-Laurent le majestueux cours;
A son aspect le Canadien s'écrie:—
O Canada, mon pays, mes amours.

—SIR GEO. CARTIER.

I.

Great lone land by foot untrodden save where wandering
hunter passes,
Where the caribou and beaver hide in stream and leafy
glade;
Treeless prairie, trackless forest, beetling crags and dank
morasses,
Lakes majestic, rushing rivers, seething rapids, wild cas-
cade!

Kannata,† in silence sleeping;
The solemn pines a vigil keeping,
Where the forest children nestle 'neath their shade.

II.

"Aca nada!‡—nothing find we—this the Eldorado vaunted,
Where the stones are precious jewels and the sands with
gold are bright!—

False Colombo, base impostor: home of ghouls and demon-
haunted,
Cheerless land of rock and jungle, buried in a wintry
night!"

Aca nada—barren, fruitless:
Cursed the Don his errand bootless,
And the flag of proud Castile floated out of sight.

III.

See we now a Royal blazon—azure field and lilies golden—
Spread its folds where Gaspé's breezes kiss the bosom of
the sea!

"Good Saint Lawrence, patron, hail! for dangers passed
to thee beholden;
In Heaven's name we raise our standard, the sword and
cross our charter free.

Canada, O new-born nation;
Join in praise and invocaton;
Te Deum shall its benediction be!"

IV.

Nouvelle France,§ anon we hail thee, fearless hearts, though
few in number;

Soldiers, statesmen, churchmen, laymen, serve thy cause
with burning zeal,
Proving faith by life's devotion; Rouse ye now from
dreamy slumber!

Hear the roar of faction's clamour—see the gleam of foe-
men's steel!

Wolfe and Montcalm—heroes dying;
The Fleur-de-Lys 'mid carnage lying,
While loud the British guns victorious peal."||

V.

Ours to guard this peerless birthright, speak we tongue of
France or Britain;

Ours the thrilling inspiration born of noble deeds well
done!
Do and dare; gird on thy manhood; see in flaming letters
written;

"The weak is now a mighty NATION!"* enduring firm
while Time shall run.

Canada! the crowning glory:
Theme for poets' sweetest story,
Our native land! for us through travail won.

Montreal.

SAMUEL M. BAYLIS.

* * * * * "The name Canada goes back to within half a century of the discovery of the continent by Colombo. We find it first used in Cartier's account of his voyage given by Ramusio, 1556. It was used for a century and a half before we find any allusion to its meaning, and this no doubt accounts for the difference of opinion on the subject.—George Bryce, M.A., LL.D.

† "Kannata," which is pronounced 'Cannada,' and signifies a collection of dwellings."—Father Charlevoix.

* * * * * Doubtless signified, in the native tongue, clusters of cabins or villages.—F. X. Garneau.

‡ "The Spaniards were the first who discovered Canada; but, at their first arriving, having found nothing considerable in it, they abandoned the country and called it 'Il capo di nada,' i.e., Cape of Nothing.—Father Hennepin.

* * * * * "An ancient tradition goes that the Castilians * * * when they perceived no appearance of mines, pronounced the two words, 'Aca nada'—nothing here.—Charlevoix.

* * * * * "It is evident no reliance can be placed on this as the origin of the name Canada."—Bryce.

§ "Canada continued the sole name of the country, discovered by the French on the banks of the St. Lawrence, until 1609, in which year the Canadian explorer, Champlain, having given at Fontainebleau, before the French King, Henry IV., an account of the country, it received the name 'La Nouvelle France.'—Bryce—Garneau.

|| "September 18, 1759, Quebec capitulated. Before night, floated from the walls of this American Gibraltar the broad banner of England, where it has ever since remained untouched by an enemy's hand."—J. A. Boyd, M.A.

* "It was on Dominion Day, July 1st, 1867, that the Royal proclamation, dated on the 22nd May preceding at Windsor Castle, joined the four leading members of the Confederation—Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick—into a united Canada.—Bryce.

DRINKING SONG.

FROM THE VAUX DE VIRE OF BASSELIN.

What time a good companion drinks
The evil days go by:—
I'll drink to thee with all my heart
Until my cup run dry.

I've drank my share, as all may see:
No hiding *that*, Perdy!
Now, then, to him who drinks with grace
A royal health, say I.

What time a good companion drinks
The evil days go by.

Montreal.

WM. MCLENNAN.

THE KEEPER'S SON.

FROM ANDRÉ THEURIET.

Black is the night, and as though in fight
Their arms the trees of the forest wave,
And not a sound can be heard around,
But rain that rushes and winds that rave.

The doors are shut in yon woodland hut:
An aged sire and his fearless sons,
Three poachers keen, with a bloodhound lean,
Crouch in the thicket, and load their guns.

Within the gloom of that hut's low room
An infant sleeps by the grandam's bed,
While a maiden fair near the slumbering pair
Sits at a spindle, with drooping head.

A flickering lamp through the midnight damp
Illumes her cheek with a feeble light,
Aiding to trace a sweet flower-like face
And curls that stray o'er a neck snow-white.

Fair is her form, but her bosom warm
Fitfully heaves like the ocean's breast:
Is it fright or care, or the stifling air,
Or waiting that causes her wild unrest?

The hinges weak of the frail door creak,
And a rainy squall from the outer gloom
Driveth a boy, the fair maiden's joy,
Into the shadowy, silent room.

Clasped in her arms, he rebukes alarms,
And cries: "Sweet Alice, what need of fright?"
She pleadeth, "Oh! speak soft and low:
My grandam's slumber is ever light!"

Their hearts beat high with ecstasy,
And the maiden wipes, while she softly speaks,
The raindrops cold that, like tears, have roll'd
Down her boy-lover's white brow and cheeks.

"My love is wild for thee, sweet child!"
He cried. She murmurs: "Eve, morn and noon
For thee I sigh; but, my darling, why
Wert thou the son of the Keeper born?"

For, higher far than our forests are,
A barrier rises to part us twain:
And I dread his ire, should my jealous sire
Learn that I love and am lov'd again."

He soothed her fears, and he kissed the tears
That overflowed from her soft brown eyes;
But while deep joy thrilled the maid and boy,
Day swiftly follows the night that flies.

Far off they hear shrill chanticleer—
"Bird, if I owned thee, thou soon hadst died,"
The lover speaks, while the morning breaks,
And the maiden opens the casement wide.

The storm is o'er, and the blithe larks soar
Aloft like specks in the clear blue sky:
One more sweet kiss, full of passion's bliss,
Now till eve cometh again, "Good-bye."

Swift as a deer, with no sense of fear,
The youthful lover then lightly broke
Through the thicket's maze, over which thick haze
Swam like a quivering wreath of smoke.

But the poachers bold, wet, famished, cold,
With empty game-bags behind their backs,
Were homeward beating a slow retreat—
Fur and feather alike each lacks.

A light branch stirred, and their quick ears heard;
"Shoot!" the same instant exclaimed the sire:
Three shots ring out, and three voices shout:
"The game has fallen before our fire."

Deep bayed the hound with a doleful sound,
The sire press'd onward, then shrank aghast—
'Mid the brushwood dyed with a yellow tide,
The son of the Keeper had breathed his last!

Montreal.

GEO. MURRAY.

SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN.

As once, to him who his adventurous keel
Urged through Atlantic waves, (a man, I ween,
Full rich in evidence of things unseen,
Which to his soaring reason made appeal!)
The wished-for continent did itself reveal,
Not by its towering hills or groves of green,—
For still an ocean wide did intervene;—
But odours on his senses 'gan to steal,
Wafted from the new world, more sweet than aught
In that he left behind; and now he felt,
With what delight! that he on truth had built:—
So, he who long his heavenward course hath held,
Finds, as he nears the port, his voyage fraught
With sweetest *sense* of things yet unbeheld.

Montreal.

H. M.