

**FRENCH-CANADIAN  
FOLK-SONGS**



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FRENCH-CANADIAN FOLK-SONGS

A thesis submitted as part of the  
requirements for an M.A. degree by

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# FRENCH-CANADIAN FOLK-SONGS

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following are the chief books, articles and manuscripts consulted in writing this thesis:

- 1.- Chansons Populaires du Canada -  
Ernest Gagnon, 1918 edition.
- 2.- Le Foyer Canadien, 1863, 1865,  
especially two articles by F.A.H. Larue on  
French-Canadian Folk-Songs.
- 3.- La Chanson Populaire en France -  
Julien Tiersot.
- 4.- Two booklets, (1st) Refrains de chez nous, (2nd) Refrains  
Canadiens, published by l'Action française,  
Montreal.
- 5.- Chants Populaires du Canada (première série)  
collected by M.E.Z. Massicotte and prepared  
by C.M. Barbeau, reprinted from The Journal  
of American Folk-Lore, Vol. XXXII, No. CXXIII,  
Jan.-Mar. 1919.
- 6.- Chansons et Rondes de Laprairie -  
Gustave Lanctot.
- 7.- Songs from Percé,  
Lorraine Wyman.
- 8.- Ballades et Complaints de Chicoutimi et Charlevoix -  
Collected by C.M. Barbeau and prepared in  
collaboration with J.B. Beck, (not published)
- 9.- Books on French-Canadian life and customs such  
as Taché's "Forestiers et Voyageurs",  
De Gaspé's Mémoires and "Les Anciens Canadiens",  
Hémon's "Maria Chapdelaine", Longstreet's  
"The Laurentians" were also consulted.
- 10.- Songs collected by the writer especially in the  
County of Matane.
- 11.- Véillées du bon vieux temps - Society of American Folk-Lore.\*  
(Quebec Division)

## FRENCH-CANADIAN FOLK-SONGS

### INTRODUCTION.

The collection and the study of the folk-lore of the countries of Europe, has occupied the attention of learned ethnologists, historians and literary men for many years, with the result that England, France, Germany, Italy and other countries can boast at the present day of Museums stored with records and documents on the subject, and most of them have their own journals of folk-lore. Interest in the folk-lore of the American continent took concrete form in 1888, in the founding of a society in the United States called the American Folk-Lore Society, with a periodical entitled the Journal of American Folk-Lore as its official medium of expression. Since 1914, organized effort to make a complete and detailed survey of Canada, for the purpose of gathering into safe-keeping the folk-lore, be it of English, French, Gaelic, Scandinavian or German tradition, has been carried on under the direction of Mr. C.M. Barbeau of the Federal Government, Ottawa, in collaboration with Mr. Massicotte, custodian of the Judicial Archives of Montreal. Before this time, individuals had sought to rescue from oblivion the rich treasury of legend and song to be found in their own country. In the French field of research at least three collections of folk-songs

are known - the first in importance is that of Mr. Ernest Gagnon, of the Academy of Music, Quebec. It is a collection of one hundred melodies, selected by the author from among thousands known to him, and published with annotations in 1865, under the title "Chansons Populaires du Canada". In his comments Mr. Gagnon makes frequent reference to an excellent article by Mr. F.A.H. Larue, which had made its appearance two years previously in the Foyer Canadien. This article is one of two written under the title, "Les Chansons Populaires et Historiques du Canada", which appeared in 1863 and 1865 respectively in the Foyer Canadien. The first article is a comparative study of several French songs popular in Canada, with different versions of the songs known to exist in France. The writer also gives the text of seven "voyageur" songs, and some children's roundelays<sup>(1)</sup> which he believes to be of Canadian origin. The second article deals entirely with songs of historic significance - songs composed by the soldiers during the stirring years from 1665 - 1700, and other songs of more or less literary value. The third well-known collection is that of Mr. P.E. Prevost of St. Jerome, Terrebonne. It consists of sixty songs called "Chansons Canadiennes". There

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(1) Mr. Larue claims that "La poulette grise qui a pendu dans l'église" is of Canadian origin. Versions of this song are known in France, vide Gagnon p. 263.



were also collections for school children which appeared from time to time.

These publications were all due to personal effort, and published at the expense of the author. The work of Mr. Barbeau<sup>(1)(2)</sup> and his colleagues began in a similar manner. At first the searchers enjoyed to a very limited degree any financial support, and had no official recognition from the government. Many of the collections were made privately, and without financial help. It was chiefly through personal encouragement, correspondence and enthusiasm, that collaborators were induced to collect for them, or furnish materials, which are now stored at the Victoria Memorial Museum, Ottawa. In the case of Mr. Massicotte, a phonograph, phonograph blanks and stationery were furnished, and in the summer of 1920 a small appropriation from the Geological Survey, Canada, enabled him to carry on investigations in Champlain County, Que. Of Mr. Barbeau's own surveys, carried on in periods of two weeks to three months in 1914, 1915, 1916, 1918, 1919, two of these expeditions were at his own expense, and the three others were partly subsidized by the Geological Survey.

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(1) Vide Le Foyer Canadien, 1863, p. 363, where reference is made to a collection called "Chansonnier des Colleges."

(2) Vide Report of Department of Mines - 1921, pp. 23 & 27.

Their task was not complete with the collection of materials. Provision had to be made for publication. The American Journal of Folk-Lore through its Editor, Dr. Franz Boas, welcomed their manuscripts for the Journal of American Folk-Lore, with the request that they should raise funds corresponding to the additional expense incurred. Therefore, in Quebec (in 1915), and in Ontario (in 1918), branches of the American Folk-Lore Society were organized, and managed in various ways to obtain the necessary financial help.

In the Annual Report of the Department of Mines for the fiscal year ending March 31st 1921, a complete list is given of the material which had been gathered from 1914 - 1920 and placed in the keeping of the Anthropological Division. In the fields for investigation that had come to the attention of the Department up to that time, the French, the English (Scotch and Irish), the Gaelic (Scotch) and Scandinavian were found to be the most fruitful. The approximate total of French data was given as follows: -

4,140 song texts including those found in the manuscript books,<sup>(1)</sup> in clippings from old newspapers and other sources.

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(1) These manuscript books contain comparatively few songs which are actually old folk-songs. The books serve to indicate at what date literary songs were introduced into Canada. Vide Report of Department of Mines 1921, p.25.

3,037 song melodies recorded on the phonograph;

278 song melodies recorded by ear;

280 folk-tales;

165 anecdotes;

890 photographs.

In the following year further additions to the French collection were reported as being:

257 song texts;

153 song melodies recorded on the phonograph;

19 song melodies recorded by ear;

24 folk-tales;

12 anecdotes,

145 photographs.

The report for the current year has not as yet made its appearance, but the figures quoted above show the great wealth of folk-lore in the French language known in Canada, which has been carefully collected, and accurately recorded, and which gradually is being placed at the disposal of the public. It is to this data that the student of folk-song may turn to discover the qualities peculiar to the folk-song of the French-Canadian peasants, but if he would completely understand, and appreciate them aright, it is necessary to know something of the people from whom the songs have been gleaned. It has been the privilege of the writer to have lived since

earliest childhood in close contact with French-Canadians, chiefly of the peasant class, and to have learned from first-hand observation something of the home life of these happy, lovable people. In this way she has learned something which the most accurate texts<sup>(1)</sup> in museums cannot reproduce, namely, the spirit that underlies the songs, and the meaning as interpreted by them. Therefore, as it is the object of this thesis to give some account of the French-Canadian folk-songs, it will be well to begin by saying something of the French-Canadian peasant, and his relationship to the songs he sings.

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(1) Many of the songs have been recorded on phonograph records by native singers, but the gestures and setting is a great part of the charm of the songs.



FRENCH-CANADIAN FOLK-SONGS

Chapter I.

The French-Canadian Peasant:

His Relationship to the songs He Sings.

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"Nous sommes venus, il y a trois cents ans, et nous sommes restés.... Nous avons apporté d'outre-mer nos prières et nos chansons: Elles sont toujours les mêmes. Nous avons marqué un plan de continent nouveau, de Gaspé à Montréal, de S. Jean d'Iberville à l'Ungava, en disant: Ici toutes les choses que nous avons apportées avec nous, notre culte, notre langue, nos vertus, et jusqu'à nos faiblesses deviennent des choses sacrées, intangibles et qui devront demeurer jusqu'à la fin . . . . Au pays de Québec rien n'a changé. Rien ne changera, parce que nous sommes un témoignage. De nous-mêmes et de nos destinées, nous n'avons compris clairement que ce devoir-là: persister;... nous maintenir . . . . C'est pourquoi il faut rester dans la province où nos pères sont restés, et vivre comme ils ont vécu, pour obéir au commandement inexprimé qui s'est formé dans leurs coeurs, qui a passé dans les nôtres et que nous devons transmettre à notre tour à de nombreux enfants; Au pays de Québec rien ne doit mourir et

rien ne doit changer..."<sup>(1)</sup> In this thought expressed by Louis Hémon in *Maria Chapdelaine*, can be seen the secret that explains the presence in the twentieth century in the backwoods of Canada of characteristics, and traditions of the old world of France, of the Seventeenth century. While it is an exaggeration to say that the French-Canadian peasant has not changed at all from the time when his ancestors came to Canada, it is true that he has retained the traits and habits of his forebears to such a degree that it is quite possible to discover, by observing his physical features and his customs, and listening to his songs and legends, the district of France from whence they came, and the period at which they migrated to Canada. Most of them can trace their ancestry to the settlers who came chiefly from Normandy,<sup>(2)</sup> Perche, Maine, Poitou, Touraine, Anjou, Saintonge, Angoumois, Guyenne and Gascony, between 1608-1673, and settled in little groups more or less according to the provinces from which they had come. It is not surprising therefore, to discover that most of the songs of old country French tradition found in this country, have

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(1) "*Maria Chapdelaine*", Louis Hémon, Chapter XV, p. 240, in the first edition. *Maria Chapdelaine* is the French-Canadian peasant girl heroine of the novel. Hémon drew the character from life.

(2) These provinces so called up to 1789.

their origin in the Seventeenth century, or anterior to that date. This does not explain the presence in the repertoire of the French peasant of songs unknown in the regions from which the early emigrants came, or again of those of German or European tradition other than French, or of songs of the Eighteenth century. A plausible explanation<sup>(1)</sup> is given that they were probably brought to this country by the soldiers and traders during the years 1665 to 1700, or later by the soldiers of the regiments of Meurons and Watteville<sup>(2)</sup> in 1812. These soldiers were often lodged with the country people, and many of them married French-Canadian wives, and in this way the songs became introduced into popular tradition.

Although the French-Canadian has jealously guarded the traditions of his ancestors, he has developed a nationality peculiarly his own. New occupations and environment have called for expression in song and story, and into these he has unconsciously woven his new characteristics. In considering the French-Canadian peasant, therefore, and his relationship to the songs he sings, it will be well to bear in mind that he

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(1) Vide opinion of Mr. Massicotte expressed in the preface to the publication (reprinted from the Journal of American Folk-Lore, Vol. XXXII, No. CXXII Jan-Mar. 1919), Chants Populaires du Canada, premiere serie, pp. 7 and 8.

(2) These regiments were composed of soldiers from Switzerland, Poland, Flanders and France.

is himself a mixture of the Old World and the New, and that his songs are of two distinct kinds; those of European and those of Canadian origin.

For the purpose of showing the relationship between these peasants and their songs, it will suffice to consider the two most characteristic types, the habitant and the voyageur. The 'habitant'<sup>(1)</sup> is the name given to the French-Canadian who owns a property in the country and lives on it, and works the soil himself. He is one of the most interesting and picturesque figures to be found on the American continent, and has inspired the sculptor,<sup>(2)</sup> the poet,<sup>(3)</sup> and the novelist<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) Vide Chansons Populaires du Canada - Gagnon, p.268, for definition of the word habitant in Canadian sense. 'Habitant' does not mean any French Canadian living in the country.

(2), (3), (4). It will suffice to mention Suzor-Cote as a sculptor who has immortalized the habitant in his bronzes. He is probably even more celebrated for his pictures of French-Canadian scenes and characters. Fréchette, Drummond, etc. are poets who have become famous for their French-Canadian poems, and such stories as Le Chien d'Or, and Hemon's Maria Chapdelaine, are sufficient evidence to show the interest of the novelist. Such men as De Gaspé and Taché and more modern writers such as Longstreth have immortalized the French-Canadian peasants in their character studies. Vide Gaspé's "Mémoires" and "Les Anciens Canadiens", Tache's "Forestiers et Voyageurs", and Longstreth's recent account of a holiday in Canada entitled "The Laurentians", or Como's book on the North Shore, etc. Mr. Julien Tiersot reserves a whole chapter in his book "Histoire de la Chanson Populaire" to the influence of the folk-song in musical art. Mr. Barbeau believes that the French-Canadian folk-songs will influence musicians when they become known, viz. Preface to Veillées du Bon Vieux Temps, pp. 3 and 4.



by the crude yet beautiful setting, and the unconscious poetry of his life. He will prove the inspiration of the musician too when the true worth of his songs is known. Few people can live in a habitant home without feeling something of the atmosphere of toil unsevered from tranquility, that pervades it. From early morn to dusk the whole family works hard, the men and boys in the fields or woods, the women busied with the endless duties of the household. Sometimes as they labour they sing snatches of old ballads, strangely out of keeping with the surroundings, and reminiscent of the songs of the jongleurs of France. It is surprising to hear some old man who may speak almost unintelligibly, use perfect French in singing one song, and lapse into idiomatic language in rendering another. In the first case he is probably singing some song the origin of which is lost in a bygone age, but which was possibly made by a jongleur in the days when those bards were of a certain artistic learning.<sup>(1)</sup> In the second case he is either singing something of his own invention, or that of some other

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(1) This theory that most of the French songs brought to this country by the early immigrants were the product of the jongleurs in the days when they were of artistic learning, is held by Mr. Barbeau, vide *Chants Populaires du Canada (premiere serie)* p.7, and comparative study of songs in Canada with those in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, and in private collections in France, bears out his statement.

French-Canadian bard of little education. For it is a strange fact that most of the songs of purely French origin have been retained in the oral memory in a certain finished form, and have a literary value far in excess of the majority of the folk-songs of native creation, which are the product for the most part, of the unlettered class.

The great contribution which the habitant makes to the folk-songs of Canada, is his faithful preservation, and spirited presentation, of the songs which are his inheritance from his French ancestors. In the evenings, gathered around the kitchen table in summer, and as near the stove as possible in winter, the family meet, and beguile the time with games, stories and songs. On these occasions, the fiddle, the accordion, the Jew's harp, or the harmonica played by the father or son, usually a self-taught musician, may enliven the proceedings and inspire a dance; but the songs are usually sung without the accompaniment of any instrument. The father, not unlike the precentor in the old Presbyterian church, takes the lead at these family gatherings. The choice of song may range from the long lament of seemingly endless verses, sung to a tune not unlike a Gregorian chant, to the rollicking song with short quick chorus, based on some old drinking song. The leader may sing the first line, which is then taken up and repeated by the company, then the second line, and so on

through the whole song. New lines containing references to events of local interest may be added to the original, or gaps due to defective memory filled up from his lively imagination. Again, the song may take the form of a solo, with some oft-recurring phrase as refrain, or the company may sing ballads, and church hymns in unison. Seldom, however, does one hear these peasants singing in harmony. The reason is that the greater number of the tunes belong to the old school of melody,<sup>(1)</sup> and cannot be made to conform to modern rules of harmony. To the unaccustomed ear on first hearing some of the songs, the impression is that the singer is not singing true, but familiarity with them leads to an appreciation of their peculiar charm and beauty. Sometimes these gatherings are "veillées" in the original sense of the term, and the company combine some light work such as corn-husking, or pea-shelling, with the pleasures of social intercourse with neighbours and friends. Some twenty-five years ago these gatherings were very popular, and sometimes, as at quilting parties the company would amuse themselves by making up a song, thus

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(1) Mr. Gagnon is of this impression, vide *Chansons Populaires*, p. 324. Mr. Tiersot claims that most of the folk-songs of France are in the major key, viz. *La Chanson Populaire en France*, p. 322. Observation would show that the Canadian tunes are mostly of the old musical form.

giving evidence for the Grimm's theory that folk-song is the product of communal effort. On the other hand it must be understood, that the term folk-song has come to be applied to all songs that are the peculiar property of the folk, and not necessarily their creation, and the presence in the repertoire of an illiterate peasant of songs such as that of Pyramus and ~~Thisbe~~<sup>(1)</sup> is evidence to substantiate the claim of the adherents to Schlegel's theory that behind each song of the folk there is an individual.<sup>(2)</sup>

Old customs closely connected with the folk-songs, were the celebrations of certain feasts, such as St-Jean Baptiste, le premier Mai, Guignolée. These celebrations were always accompanied by songs, many of them made for the occasion. In that of St-Jean Baptiste day celebration the song was dedicated to the saint, on May-day it was an eulogy in honour of the Lord of the Manor who had deigned to accept their Maypole, and supplied them with

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(1) A French version of this song was collected by Mr. Barbeau in 1916 in Canada. It is also well known in France, vide Tiersot, Chansons Populaires de France, pp. 5 and 8.

(2) The vogageur songs would also bear out this theory.



a feast. The custom of Guignolée<sup>(1)</sup> was connected with New Year's Eve. It was an old custom of making a pilgrimage from house to house the night before New Year's day, in order to collect for the poor. They also in some districts, would collect wax for the altar candles in the church. As the company approached the house, they beat time with a long stick, singing a song in which appeared the word Guignolée. This custom has died out in Canada, also in France, and it is now more like a masquerade, not unlike that practised on the eve of All Saints Day. The song remains however, and is to be heard by request in certain parts of the country. New Year's Day, itself, is the great family feast of the French Canadian, and on that day the company vie with one another to see who can eat the most, laugh the heartiest, dance the longest, tell the best story, and sing the most pleasing songs. Weddings and christenings are seldom celebrated in the country without a social gathering of a

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(1) An interesting account of the origin and growth of this custom is given by Mr. Tiersot in "La Chanson Populaire en France", p. 188. He points out that even if the disputed etymology of the word "Au qui l'an neuf" which would seem to attach the celebration to the Druid custom of collecting the mistletoe that is probably of Celtic origin as in the breton word eginan, the gallic word eginyn or eginard, the Irish word eigan, the Gaelic eigin all show extraction from a common root. Taché and Gagnon believe the custom was derived from the old Druid one.

nature similar to that of Jour de l'An, only, if possible, more expansive and elaborate. On these occasions the guests contribute largely to the entertainment, and the village "chanteur", and "raconteur", and "violonneux", all play their part. The great charm of the songs as sung by the country people, is the spontaneity and carefree way in which the singer renders them. The men have deep naturally musical voices, but not of a remarkable quality such as the miners of Wales or the Russian peasants. They are little concerned with beauty of sound, but show a remarkable sense of rhythm. Often the songs are monotonous, but the plaintive air of many of them is haunting and appealing.

In the hamlets on the banks of the St. Lawrence, the farmer is also at times a fisherman. It is quite common to hear men, as they row in from the fishing grounds, singing a long story in time to the slow steady pull of the oars; and from the schooners and bateaux at anchor in the stream, one often hears snatches of song, very similar to those heard from the barges on the rivers of Normandy and Brittany. It is from the Gaspé fishermen that most of the Breton songs are to be heard.

In sharp contrast to the habitant, with his quiet

home-loving habits, is the voyageur, <sup>(1)</sup> a roving spirit of many trades. Penetrating the wilds, and ranging from coast to coast, he is not unlike a jongleur, for he carries with him the songs of his people. He is also a bard, and most of the Canadian songs are of his creation. Some of them tell of life in the shanties, others suggest the dip of the paddle in some still lake, or they may be songs of the wild. The songs of the raftsmen as they pilot the logs down the rivers, are often of his authorship. He has spread the songs of the Old World and the New, wherever he has been on his travels. Unfortunately this type is dying out in Canada, but "the songs remain though he the singer passeth;" and they form the nucleus of the folk-song which is to be essentially French-Canadian.

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(1) Taché in his sketches entitled *Forestiers et Voyageurs* describes the Voyageur as a man who may be at one and the same time or successively an explorer, an interpreter, a wood-cutter, a colonist, a hunter, a fisherman, a soldier or a sailor. The type of voyageur most common in Canada to-day is the guide-interpreter and the wood-cutter.

FRENCH-CANADIAN FOLK-SONGS

Chapter II.

Songs of European Origin.

Folk-song is the expression in the idiom of the people of their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears or other emotions, or a chronicle in song-form of events, real or fictitious arising as naturally from their consciousness as a song from a bird. As the song of one bird differs from another, so the folk-song of one people may be said to differ from another, each displaying characteristics peculiar to the group or race to which they belong. This definition is true of the songs which are the product of the folk, but in many countries the term "folk-song" has a much broader meaning and is used to designate all the songs which are the property of the peasants and not necessarily their creation. This is the case in Canada where, with the exception of the songs of the Indian aborigines the folk-song consists chiefly of songs of European origin with a comparatively small number of native productions. The majority of so-called French Canadian folk-songs are of European tradition, and versions of many of the songs most popular among the folk in Canada, are also



to be found today in the land of their forebears. The famous "A la Claire Fontaine", which has come to be regarded as the special property of the Canadian habitant, is of French origin, and variations of it are known in Normandy, Franche-Comte and Brittany. Mr. F.A.H. Larue,<sup>(1)</sup> in an article to which reference has already been made, draws a comparison between three French versions of this song and the familiar Canadian one. The chief difference between them lies in the fact that the French ballads express the regret on the part of a young girl for the loss of her lover, while in the Canadian version a young man laments the loss of his sweetheart because he had refused her a bunch of roses. The haunting refrain "Il-y-a longtemps que je t'aime" is found only in the Canadian version. Many songs once popular in France have died out there, but are to be found, often in strangely new garb, but still recognizable, in the country districts of Canada. Such an one is the well known children's song, "Sur le pont d'Avignon", which according to Mr. Champfleury owed its popularity to the world-wide interest aroused by the construction of the Avignon bridge, in the eleventh or twelfth century. Three versions of this song, - "Hier sur le pont d'Avignon", "Sur le pont d'Avignon", and "Sur le pont

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(1) Vide Foyer Canadien 1863.

d'Avignon tout le monde y passe" ~~are~~ sung by both English and French children in the province of Quebec, while in France they are no longer in vogue.

It was thought that folk-songs had no definitely planned structure other than that suggested by instinct until Dancieux announced his re-discovery of the intricate and fixed rules of ancient popular prosody. The French folk-songs show a definite structure based on these rules. They have great variety in line structure and for the most part follow the rules of assonance rather than rhyme. The verse form most commonly found is (1) the ballad with continuous uninterrupted verse, (2) the ballad with chorus after each verse, and (3) the song in which the chorus is made by repeating one line or more. The comparative study of the songs of French tradition found in America with those of France reveals the fact that the old country French songs found in Canada have retained the same peculiarities in form, and to some degree, in diction of the originals. There is such variety of form that a classification according to subject rather than form is advisable. The songs might be roughly classified into the following categories:-

Songs of love,

Songs of adventure,

Songs of death or punishment,

Religious and moral songs,

Comic songs.

The type of love songs ranges from the dignified and artistically beautiful "Damon et Henriette"<sup>(1)</sup> to the quaintly amusing song, "J'ai fait une maitresse".<sup>(2)</sup> Damon et Henriette is a well known theme full of the atmosphere of the days of chivalry. It deals with the story of the daughter of a rich baron banished to a convent by her irate father to prevent her marrying a man of whom he disapproved. Punishment comes to the father by the death of his son on the battlefield, and remorseful, he thinks to bring home his daughter. She having heard of the supposed death of her lover in a far country, decides not to return, but to take the veil. The day before the vows are to be pronounced the lover returns. There is a happy re-union, and the stirring ballad full of action ends with the reconciliation with the parent and the union of the lovers. Another ballad of artistic worth is that of "Pyramus and Thisbe"<sup>(3)</sup> of which the version known in Canada consists of some forty verses dealing with the sad plight of that unhappy pair. There are many love songs in which a prison tower forms the background. Such are "Gilère"<sup>(4)</sup> and "Le flambeau d'amour".<sup>(5)</sup> Yet another type is

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(1) Vide Chants Populaires du Canada, p. 15.

(2) Vide Gagnon's collection, p. 137.

(3) - (4) - (5) - Taken from collection lent by Mr. Barbeau.

that which has as its subject the adventures of lovers of unequal station in life. "Les fers au pieds",<sup>(1)</sup> is the story of a poor man's love for a princess, while "La fille du géolier"<sup>(2)</sup> is the love of a prisoner for the keeper's daughter. All these songs deal with action. "Dans les prisons de ~~Loudeas~~",<sup>(3)</sup> or as it is more commonly known "Dans les prisons de Nantes"<sup>(4)</sup> is a different type. It is not an ordinary narrative ballad, for the story is interrupted by the recurrence in each verse of two lines that have nothing to do with the tale, one verse will suffice to illustrate the form.

Dans les prisons de ~~Loudeas~~

Lui a-t-un prisonier.

Gai, faluron, fallurette,

Lui a-t-un prisonier,

Gai faluron don de.

The lines underlined appear in the same position in all the verses. Yet another form is the love duet, as for example "Si tu mets anguille" or a similar one "J'ai fait une maitresse."

The best songs of adventure are those describing events in which soldiers and sailors play the principal parts.

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(1) - (2) - (3) taken from collection lent by Mr. Barbeau.

(4) Vide Gagnon's collection, p. 28.

Many of the martial songs are written in a metre which suggests the rat-a-tat-tat of the kettle drum as in "Les Jeune Conscrits".<sup>(1)</sup>

"Je suis un jeune conscrit  
De l'annee dix-huit-cent dix  
Faut quitter le Languedoc  
Le Languedoc  
Le Languedoc  
Faut quitter le Languedoc  
Avec le sac sur dos."

Here the beat of the drum is suggested by the repetition of the four short syllables in the centre of each verse. Again in the song "Dis-moi tambour",<sup>(2)</sup> the same idea of the beat of the drum is brought out by the recurrence of the line "ra-a-raderida." Personal patriotism and love of one's country, personal devotion to or defence of some noble cause forms the theme for many of the songs of this type. In fact most of the songs of adventure are personal in character.

Songs of the sailors tell at great length and with descriptions and detail of death scenes and storms at sea and meetings with pirates. Among the best known are "Les Forbans" and "Le Navire de Bayonne."

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(1) - (2) - Taken from collection lent by Mr. Barbeau.

The songs of death, crime and punishment are naturally tragic in tone and oftentimes lurid, as can be seen in "La prison <sup>du</sup> bois d'or". This is the tale of a young man who neglects his religious duties, falls into evil ways and finally murders his parents and his sister. On his way to punishment he cries in a loud voice a warning to parents to learn from his folly, not to allow their children to go uncorrected. This was written in the form of a ballad of many verses, and has all the elements of melodrama. Invariably in these songs crime is followed by retribution and a moral is drawn as a warning.

Faults of waywardness and disobedience, etc. also always meet with punishment as in the song of "Hélène", where an accidental drowning is pointed out as the direct result of disobedience.

Religious folk-songs may be divided into songs of adoration and those of narration. The first type includes Noël's and songs addressed to the Virgin. One of the most beautiful of the Noël's is the well-known "D'ou Vien<sup>t</sup> tu Bér<sup>g</sup>ère", and the one beginning with the verses:

Dans son étable<sup>(1)</sup>  
Que Jésus est charmant  
Qu'il est aimable  
Dans son abaissement.

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(1) Taken from Maria Chapdelaine.

Tous les palais des rois  
N'ont rien de comparables  
Au b  autes que je vois  
Dans cet   table.

Among the narrative religious songs, mystical or miraculous, the best known are "Adam et Eve", which is the bible story of the garden of Eden; "Notre Seigneur"<sup>is a song</sup> relating how our Lord in the form of a poor man asks for shelter at the door of a labourer's cottage. He is sent to the barn to sleep, and next morning a crucifix is found in the place where the stranger has lain. "La Sainte Vierge", ~~this~~ tells of the blessed Virgin begging alms of those she meets on the road rewarding the charitable and punishing the cruel and selfish. "Un Juif   rrant" is plainly the French version of the world-known legend of the "Wandering Jew".

Lastly, there are the comic songs, frequently describing practical jokes, or telling amusing tales. "La Servant   et l'Apoth  caire " is a specimen of the former. In it an apothecary plays a practical joke on a servant, by selling her blacking instead of rouge, which she unwittingly applies to her face.

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N.B. The songs treated in this chapter have been songs with a certain literary and artistic value. In every case their relationship to the songs of France has been established by personal investigation and comparative study of the writer, with the exception of the two No  ls, the identity of which she could not establish.

FRENCH-CANADIAN FOLK-SONGS

Chapter III

Songs of Canadian Creation

In France in the early centuries of the middle ages while historians and clerks were recording the events of that time in the language<sup>(1)</sup> of the learned, the folk sought to preserve in their memory through the medium of verse and song the events which had struck their imagination. In the same way in Canada while the clergy and the men of letters were endeavoring to preserve the history of the French-Canadian in learned authentic documents, the folk expressed in song the incidents which had arrested their attention. This process of recording events still goes on in Canada to-day, but the appearance of the learned document is more frequent now than that of the new folk-song. To reconstruct the history of the French-Canadian people from data furnished by the songs of popular tradition would give a fantastic and quite unsatisfactory result for the singers have often submerged the important events to anecdotes and happenings interesting to themselves but not of general interest. However, the songs of Canadian creation may be said to be "faithful mirrors"<sup>(2)</sup> reflecting

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(1) Latin.

(2) Phrase used by Mr. F.A.H. Larue, vide Foyer Canadian 1863, p. 358, par. 2.



the customs and environment of the country-people. Crude in form as they sometimes are there is a naive simplicity, a sincerity and a picturesqueness about these songs that makes a strong appeal to the heart and mind. Too much emphasis has been laid upon the imperfections and crudities found in the form and diction and not enough upon the fact that there is a certain artistic value in them because they give in the idiomatic language of the peasant a word picture of his personality, life and surroundings. True, they have not such literary value as the songs brought from the old country but it must be borne in mind that the majority of the songs brought over from France were not the creation of the folk but the product of the jongleurs at a time when those bards were men of artistic learning. The French folk-songs of Canadian creation are for the most part the product of the unlettered class but unlike the songs of Brittany and Provence and Flanders these songs are not composed in a patois. Even in the songs where anglicisms and colloquialisms have crept in it is quite possible for the average French scholar to understand the main thread of the narrative or thought. Take for example the famous voyageur song of the "Raftsmans".<sup>(1)</sup>

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Vide Veillées du bon vieux temps, p.22.

(1) This song is reproduced as far as possible as the raftsmen or "flotteurs" sing it. Rafmagn is written as pronounced.

- (1) Là yòu c'qui sont<sup>(1)</sup> tous les ragmagn'?  
Là yòu c'qui sont tous les ragmagn'?  
Dans les chanquiers<sup>(2)</sup> i'<sup>(3)</sup> sont montés.

Refrain: Bagn sur la rign,

Laissez passer les rafmagn',

Bagn sur la rign bagn bagn.

- (2) Dans les chanquiers i' sont montés.  
Dans les chanquiers i' sont montés.  
Et par Bytown<sup>(4)</sup> i' sont passés.

Refrain.

- (3) C'est pour ben<sup>(5)</sup> s'habiller.  
(4) Des bell(es) p(e)tit(es) bott(es)<sup>(6)</sup> dans leurs  
gros pieds.

- 
- (1) Là yòu c'qui sont = où est-ce qu'ils sont - where are they  
(2) Chanquiers = chantiers = shanties.  
(3) i' = ils. French-Canadians very often elide or ignore the final syllable.  
(4) Bytown is the old name for Ottawa - several songs mention this town. It was the last point of civilization which the shantymen left before going into the wilds of the Ottawa River district.  
(5) Ben = bien.  
(6) Bottes = the name given to high boots which reach almost to the knee, usually made of cowhide.

- (5) Chez la Gauthier i' sont allés.
- (6) Sa fillette i(1)s ont embrassé.
- (7) Du bon rhum ont avalé.
- (8) Et leur gosier fort abreuvé.
- (9) Ben de l'argent ont dépensé.
- (10) Des provisions ont emporté.
- (11) Vers l'Outaouais<sup>(1)</sup>s(e) sont dirigés.
- (12) En canots d'écorce sont montés.
- (13) Et du plaisir i' s(e) sont donné.
- (14) Dans les chanquiers sont arrivés.
- (15) Des manches de hache ont fabriqué.
- (16) Que l'Outaouais<sup>(2)</sup>fut étonnée.
- (17) Tant faisaient d(e) bruit leurs hach(es) trempé(e)s.
- (18) A jouer franc a la cagnée!
- (19) Pour les estomacs restaurer.
- (20) Des porcs and beans<sup>(3)</sup>i(1)s ont mangé.
- (21) Apres avoir fort ben diné.

- 
- (1) Outaouais is an ancient spelling for the modern Ottawa river.
  - (2) The habitant or voyageur who lives near to nature very often addresses or refers to the rivers as though they were personified.
  - (3) Pork and beans, a standard dish, in the shanty bill of fare is almost invariably referred to by French Canadians as "porcs-un-beentz".

- (22) Une pip(e) de plat(r)e i(l)s ont fumé.
- (23) Et pris du rhum a leur coucher.
- (24) Quand le chanquier fut terminé.
- (25) Avec leur argent ben gagné.
- (26) Afin de r(e)voir la m(è)re Gauthier.
- (27) Sur le chemin d'Aylmer sont passés.
- (28) Et leurs goussets ont dechargé.
- (29) Le médecin ont consulté.

This song can lay no claim to literary value apart from its etymological worth, but nevertheless it has great merit. It is an excellent reproduction of the customs and language of the wood-cutter and raftsmen of the Gatineau.<sup>(1)</sup> It conforms to the rules of ancient prosody, the line formation being of eight syllables with monorhymed assonances in e.

By way of contrast take the following song also of French-Canadian origin which is attributed to a pilot of Bellechasse County.

Aventures de marins canadiens. (Vide Chants Populaires du Canada, p. 79.)

(1) (C'est) un(e) chanson d'exemple que je vais vous chanter.

En revenant de France je l'y ai composée,

Le quinze novembre un samedi matin,

Un jour bien remarquable que je n'oublierai point.

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(1) River in Ontario.

- (2) Nous avons levé l'ancre le vent nous adonnait  
Nous avons mis les voiles pour passer devant chez-moi  
Quand nous fum(es) à l'église, à l'église d(e) Saint  
Vallier,  
Que ma peine est étrange! Rien ne peut me consoler.
- (3) J'ai toujours en mémoire(e)  
Ma femme et mes enfants,  
Qui me sont si chers,  
Qui sont mon propre sang.  
C'est leurs tendres caresses,  
Le jour que j'ai parti,  
Qui causent me tristesse,  
Redoublent mon ennui, etc.

There follow eleven verses in which the composer is ostensibly giving an account of a trip made to England and France, but his interest is centred in his own personal feelings of homesickness, etc., and the countries visited are merely mentioned as it were "en passant". The singer moralizes upon life and the dangers that beset man and terminates his song with the assertion that when he got safely home he made a vow that he would never travel again in all his life. The verse form<sup>(1)</sup> would seem to show that the

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(1) Vide Chants Populaires du Canada (première série) p.14,  
par. 2.

author had only an instinctive knowledge of the rules of ancient prosody, for there is no definite plan, more than half the verses being of lines of twelve syllables and the remainder of six syllables. The majority of French-Canadian authors of folk-song seem to have had but an instinctive knowledge of these rules and of those governing ancient melody but this does not seem to have restricted them in their choice of subject. The songs range from the biting satire, such as that directed against the gold prospectors who went to the Klondyke during the gold rush or against an individual as in "Jaquot Hugues", to the lament of a voyageur for his lost love, or the tragic account of some drowning accident. Owing to the great variety of subject it will be well to group the songs into categories, such as the following:

1. Songs of the voyageurs.
2. Narrative songs.
3. Anecdotes.
4. Satires.
5. Political songs.

In the first category one would include all songs commonly called voyageur songs as well as the songs of the canoe-guides, the rower, the raftsmen, the log-drivers and the songs of the shanties and of the survey gangs. The two most famous voyageur bards are Cadieux and Pierre or

Pierriche Falcon, the songster of the Red River. Cadieux was a voyageur-interpreter married to an Algonquin Indian who as a rule passed the winter in hunting and in the summer acted as interpreter between the Indians and the traders. One year, having passed the hunting season at Seven Rapids on the Ottawa River in an encampment of several families, he was awaiting the arrival of the Indians who were due to come down the Ottawa with furs for Montreal. Suddenly one day it was reported that hostile Indians were coming down the river. The only means of escape was by shooting the rapids but in order to give the families time to escape a diversion to attract the Iroquois away from the river had to be undertaken. Cadieux and a young Algonquin volunteered to sacrifice themselves. When the danger was over three men returned to look for the interpreter and his comrade and on a little path near the house where Cadieux had lived they found a wooden cross placed at the head of a ditch in which lay the body of Cadieux half-buried under the green branches and on his breast lay a leaf\* of birch bark covered with writing. The writing proved to be the following song.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) From account given by Tache.

\* should read "piece"

Petit Rocher de la Haute Montagne

- (1) Petit Rocher de la haute montagne,  
Je viens finir ici cette campagne!  
Ah! doux échoes, entendez mes soupirs;  
En languissant je vais bientôt mourir.
- (2) Petits oiseaux, vos douces harmonies,  
Quand vous chantez me rattache à la vie:  
Ah! si j'avais des ailes comme vous  
Je s'rais heureux avant qu'il fût jour!
- (3) Seul en ce bois j'ai vu le soucis!  
Pensant toujours a mes si chers amis  
Je demandais: Helas! sont-ils noyés?  
Les Iroquois les auraient-ils tués?
- (4) Un de ces jours que, m'étant éloigné  
En revenant je vis une fumée  
Je me suis dit: Ah! grand Dieu qu'est ceci?  
Les Iroquois m'ont-ils pris mon logis?
- (5) Je me suis mis un peu a l'ambassade,  
Afin de voir si c'était embuscade;  
Alors je vis trois visages français . . . .  
M'ont mis le coeur d'une trop grande joie!



- (6) Mes genoux plient, ma faible voix s'arrête,  
Je tombe --- Hélas! à partir ils s'appretent:  
Je reste seul .... Pas un qui me console  
Quand la mort vient par un si grand désolé!
- (7) Un loup hurlant visite près de ma cabane  
Voir si mon feu n'avait plus de boucane;  
Je lui ai dit: Retire-toi d'ici;  
Ce, par ma fois, je perc'rai ton habit!
- (8) Un noir corbeau, volant à l'aventure  
Vient se percher tout pres de ma toiture:  
Je lui ai dit: Mangeur de chair humaine  
Va t'en chercher autre viande que mienne.
- (9) Va-t'en la-bas, dans ces bois et marais  
Tu trouveras plusieurs corps d'iroquois  
Tu trouveras des chars, aussi des os;  
Va t'en plus loin laisse-moi en repos!
- (10) Rossignolet va dire à sa maitresse<sup>(1)</sup>  
A mes enfants qu'un adieu je leur laisse;  
Que j'ai gardé mon amour et me foi  
Et désormais faut renoncer a moi!

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(1) This word in the French-Canadian songs has always the meaning of wife or fiancée-(Note of Mr. Taché).

(11) C'est donc ici que le mond' m'abandonne

Mais j'ai secours en vous Sauveur des hommes!

Très Sainte Vierge, ah! m'abandonnez pas

Permettez-moi d'mourir entre vos bras.<sup>(1)</sup>

Apart from the romantic conditions under which this song was written it is remarkable for the thoughts expressed so beautifully and clearly by a man who is supposed to have lived all his life a roving existence in the woods.

The songs of Pierre Falcon are for the most part narrative songs depicting the uprising of the Bois-brulés<sup>(2)</sup> against Lord Selkirk in 1816 and upon other occasions.

1. Voulez-vous écouter chanter )  
Une chanson de vérité ) bis

Le dix-neuf de Juin, la bande des Bois-Brulés  
Sont arrivés comme de braves guerriers.

II. En arrivant a le grenouillère

Nous avons fait trois prisonniers

Trois prisonniers des Arkanys<sup>(3)</sup>

Qui sont ici pour piller notre pays.

---

(1) Other versions of this song are known to exist, notably one recorded by Mr. Larue, vide Foyer Canadien 1863, p.371.

(2) Name given to the half-breeds living in the North-West.

(3) Arkanys - inhabitants of the Orkney Islands.

III. Étant sur le point de débarquer

Deux de nos gens se sont écriés

" " " " " "

Voilà l'anglais qui vient nous attaquer.

IV. Tout aussitôt nous avons deviné

Nous avons été les rencontrer

J'avons cerné la bande des grenadiers

Ils sont immobilisés, ils sont tous démontés.

V. J'avons agi comme des gens d'honneur

" envoyé un ambassadeur

Le gouverneur, voulez-vous arrêter

Un petit moment nous voulons vous parler?

VI. Le gouverneur qui est enragé

Il dit à ses soldats: tirez

Le premier coup c'est l'anglais qui a tiré

L'ambassadeur ils ont manqué tuer.

VII. Le gouverneur qui se croit empereur

Il veut agir avec rigueur

Le gouverneur qui se croit empereur

À son malheur, agit trop de rigueur.

VIII. Ayant vu passer tous ces Bois-Brulés  
Il a parti pour les épouvanter  
Étant parti pour les épouvanter  
Il s'est trompé, il s'est bien fait tuer.

IX. Il s'est bien fait tuer -  
Quantité de ses grenadiers  
J'avons tué presque toute son armée  
Quatre ou cinq se sont sauvés.

X. Si vous aviez vu tous ces Anglais  
Tous ces Bois-Brulés après  
De butte en butte les Anglais culbutaient  
Les Bois-Brulés jettèrent des cris de joie.

XI. Qui en a composé la chanson  
Pierriche Falcon, ce bon garçon  
Elle a été faite et composée  
Sur la victoire que nous avons gagnée,  
or Elle a été faite et composée  
Chanter la gloire des Bois-Brulés.

In another song by Pierriche Falcon, he says that he made up the song while sitting at the table drinking and singing, which shows that for the most part they evidently were improvised on the spur of the moment. An interesting

account of the character of Pierre Falcon is given by Mr. Barbeau who quotes verbatim from the Remarkable History of the Hudson Bay Company (pp. 235-236) of Dr. G. Bryce. He<sup>(1)</sup> was a French half-breed who could neither read nor write. He was the bard or poet of his people, and the songs given above show his great ability to describe the striking events of his time. The seven songs which follow were collected by Mr. Larue from voyageurs.

I.

1. C'est dans la ville de Bytown, Mon capitain je rencontraï;  
Il a tiré son écritoire - Du papier pour m'engager  
Helas! j'ai en la promptitude - Helas! je me s'ut engagé
2. M'y promenant dedans la ville - Ma maîtresse j'ai rencontré  
Et qu'a vous donc jolie maitresse - Et qu'a vous donc tant  
a pleurer  
Et tout le monde dedans la ville - Dis'nt que vous êtes  
engagé.
3. Ceux qui vous ont dit ça la belle - Vous ont bien dit la  
verité  
Mais vous irens dans l'écurie - Nous trouverons chevaux  
sellés  
Mais les brides sont sur les selles - Nos amours il faut nous  
quitter.

(1) Pierre Falcon

4. Quand vous serez dedans ces îles - Mon cher amant, vous  
m'oublierez

Mais si vous fait's un long voyage - Pensez-vous bien de  
m'epouser?

En attendant de vos nouvelles - Mon cher amant je languirai.

5. Pour t'épouser, charmante belle - Tu ne m'en as jamais parlé  
Mais tu yas fait la difficile - Le plus souvent tu m'as r'fuse.  
À présent j'en ai t'une autre - Qui y est bien plus à mon gré.

## II.

1. Parmi les voyageurs, lui y a de bons enfants  
Et qui ne mangent guère mais qui boivent souvent  
Et la pipe à la bouche, et le verre à la main  
Ils disent: camarades, versez-moi du vin.
2. Lorsque nous faisons rout', la charge sur le dos  
En disant: camarades, ah! grand Dieu, qu'il fait chaud!  
Que la chaleur est grande! il faut nous rafraichir  
À le fin du voyage on prendra du plaisir.
3. A bonjour donc, Wannon, ma charmante dison  
C'est-i-toi qui porte des souliers si mignons  
Garnis de rubans blancs, par derrier' par devant  
Ce sont des voyageurs, qui t'en ont fait présent.

III.

- (1) Écoutez la chanson - Que je vais vous chanter  
Nous chanson nouvelle - Nouvell'ment composée  
Un soir dans un chantier - Étant bien estropiée  
C'est par un vendredi - J'ai bien manqué mourir'.
- (2) Sans aucun sacrement, - Depuis bientôt deux ans!  
Malheur est arrivé, - au chantier d'Abacis.  
Que le bon Dieu bénisse - Le chantier d'Abacis  
Ou j'ai manqué mourir - Avant qu'il soit midi.
- (3) Si jamais je retourne - Au pays d'ou je viens!  
Je promets au bon Dieu - à la très-Sainte Vierge  
Qu'à mon arrivée - Grand' messe sera chantée.  
Pour tous ces voyageurs - Qui sont dans la misère,  
Grand Dieu, il faut le voir - Le printemps et l'été,  
Tout du long de l'année.
- (4) Un homm' fait son devoir - Mais pourtant on le blesse  
S'il perd une minute - On vient le menacer  
Qu'il va être chargé - D'un piastre par journée,

IV.

Salut à mon pays - après un' longue absence,  
De mes anciens amis - O douce souvenance!  
Dans ce desert affreux - Où malgré moi je nage,  
L'aurore des cieux - Vient bénir mon courage.

Refrain: Salut, Français salut  
Après un long séjour  
Le laurier sur le front  
T'annonce mon retour.

Sur ses genoux tremblants - Je vois ma bonne mère  
Sortir de sa chaumière - Venir en chansonnant  
Et elle a reconnu - L'objet de sa tendresse  
Mon fils est revenu - Pour calmer ma vieillesse.

V.

1. J'su t'un amant bien désolé - D'avoir perdu ma bien aimée  
Oui je l'ai perdu sans ressource - Jamais je prendrai d'amitié.
2. La bell' m'avait cent fois promis - qu'ell' resterait toujours  
ici.  
A présent m'y voilà - En arrière des autres.
3. Ma belle m'avait cent fois promis - qu'ell' resterait  
toujours ici,  
Lorsqu'ell' me quitte pour un autre - A présent m' voilà  
en arrière des autres.



VI.

1. Nous étions trois soldats - Du régiment passé  
Pour l'amour d'une fille - Nous avons déserté  
Mon faluron dondaine - Mon faluron dondé.
2. Dans mon chemin rencontré - La mariée chaussee
3. Beau soldat, beau soldat, - Montre-moi ton congé
4. Le congé que je porte - Il est dessous mes pieds
5. L'ont pris, l'ont emmené - Aux prisons enchainé
6. Il y fut six semaines - Sans être interrogé
7. Au bout de la septième - Son procès fut jugé
8. Il fut juge à prendre - A prendre et étrangler.
9. Aux quatr' coins de la ville, - Au milieu du marché
10. Quand fut sur la potence, - il demande à parler.

VII.

1. Voilà les voyageurs qu'arrivent (bis)  
Bien mal chaussés, bien mal vêtus  
Pauvre soldat, d'où reviens-tu?

2. Madam' je reviens de la guerre (bis)  
Madam', tirez-nous du vin blanc  
Les voyageurs boiv'nt sans argent.
3. Les voyageurs s'sont mi t'a table (bis)  
Ils s'sont mi t'à boire, à chanter  
Et l'hotesse s'est mi t'a pleurer.
4. Ah! qu'avez-vous, jolie hôtesse? (bis)  
Regrettez-vous votre vin blanc?  
Les voyageurs boiv'nt sans argent.
5. Ce n'est pas mon vin que je regrette (bis)  
C'est la chanson que vous chantez  
Mon défunt mari le savait.
6. J'ai t'un mari dans le voyage (bis)  
Y a ben sept ans qu'il est parti  
Je crois que c'est lui qu'est ici.
7. Ah! taisez-vous, méchante femme, (bis)  
Je n'vous ai laisse qu'un enfant  
En voila quatr' dès à présent.
8. J'ai donc reçu de fausses lettres (bis)  
Que vous étiez mort, enterré  
Aussi je me suis mariée.

These seven songs all have the common characteristic of being the product of the voyageurs, but each one has a distinctiveness of its own. The first is one of a series in which Bytown figures. In this song the voyageur is a soldier bidding adieu to a sweetheart. The second is a song in which the singer claims that among the voyageurs there are jolly good fellows who eat little but drink much. It gives a picture of the customs and is also a drinking song. The third is an account of an episode which happened to the singer while in the shanty. The fourth shows the spirit of the voyageur as set forth by Tache "a man whose heart is ever turned towards home." The fifth is a dirge or lament of a lover who had been jilted by a girl. The sixth is not unlike the military songs of European origin. It deals with a deserter and his punishment. The seventh belongs to the cycle called by Tiersot the "return of the warrior cycle". It reminds one of "Marie Anson". Other songs which have been classed as voyageur songs are the songs of the canotier,<sup>(1)</sup> the rameur,<sup>(2)</sup> the flotteur,<sup>(3)</sup> the draveur<sup>(4)</sup> - songs of the shanties and of the survey gangs.

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- (1) Canotier, means either canoe-guide or an oarsman.
- (2) Rameur, means an oarsman.
- (3) Flotteur, is the name given to the raftsmen, and
- (4) Draveur, means a log-driver.

An example of a song by a canotier is the well-known "Mon canot d'écorce."<sup>(1)</sup> In a few words the author paints a picture of a lonely voyageur in a bark canoe going all the way down the coast of the St. Lawrence, through rapids and eddies, portaging when necessary, using his canoe as a tent at night, meeting with different tribes of Indians, etc. Then the bard sums up what has really been an eulogy to his canoe with the expressed desire that when the time comes he may die in his canoe and be buried at the water's edge and that his canoe be upturned over his grave. The verse form of the song is that of the ballad with uninterrupted verse sequence.

Another song which suggests the dip of the paddle but rather more by its rhythm than from the tableaux depicted is that called "Envoyons de l'avant nos gens." One can hear the paddle as the men descend the rivers after a hard winter in the shanty. The song is full of colloquialisms and is of interest for the local colour found in it.

1. Quand on pâtre du chanquier

Mes chers amis, tous, le coeur j'ai

Pour aller voir tous nos parents

Mes chers amis, le coeur content.

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(1) Vide Chants Populaires du Canada - Barbeau, p. 78.

Refrain: Envoyons, de l'avant nos gens

Envoyons de l'avant.

2. Pour aller voir tous nos parents  
Mes chers amis le coeur content  
Mais qu'on arrive au Canada  
I(l) va falloir mouiller ça.
3. Ah mais qu(e) ça soie tout mouille  
Vous allez voir qu(e) ça va marcher! - - -
4. Mais que nos amis nous voiy(en) t arriver  
I(l)s vont s(e) mett(re) a rire, a chanter.
5. Dimanche au soir, a la veillée  
Nous irons voir nos compagnies.
6. I(l)s vont nous dire mais en entrant.  
V(oi) là mon amant! J'ai l(e) coeur content.
7. Et au milieu de la veillée  
I(l)s vont nous parler d(e) leurs cavaliers.
8. I(l)s vont nous dire, mais en partant  
As-tu fréquenté des amants? -
9. Qui a composé la chanson?  
Ce sont trois jolis garçons.

10. Ont composé cette chanson

En tapant sur nos flacons.

An example of the songs of the raftsmen has been given in the song of that title. The following, "Les Draveurs de la Gatineau" is also a picture of the gangs of men coming down the river from the shanties but this time it is in the capacity of log-drivers. Many Anglicisms such as le 'foreman', le 'hard-work', les 'frocks' appear in it and one Indian word 'rabaska' - meaning a big canoe is used. One verse will suffice to give an idea of the song.

Adieu charmente rive

Du beau Ka (ka) bongué

Voilà le temps qui arrive

Il faut donc se quitter.

Les drom se réunissent - les rames rassemblées

Jack Boyd les conduira cent hommes rassemblés

Cent hommes rassemblés.

Of the songs of the shanties probably the best known is the song to be found under several titles and in different forms, the chorus of which is "Dans les chantiers nous hivernons." This is one of the versions of it given by Mr. Gagnon.

"Dans les chantiers nous hivernons."

I. Voici l'hiver arrivé

Les rivières sont gelées

C'est le temps d'aller au bois

Manger du lard et des pois.

Dans les chantiers nous hivernons,

Dans les chantiers nous hivernons.

II. Pauv' voyageur que t'as d'la misère!

Souvent tu couches par terre

À la pluie au mauvais temps

À la rigueur de tous les temps

Dans les chantiers nous hivernons, etc.

III. Quand tu arrivé à Quebec

Souvent tu fais un gros bec

Tu vas trouver ton bourgeois

Qu'est là assis à son comptoi

Dans les chantiers nous hivernons, etc.

IV. Quand tu retourn' chez ton père

Aussi pour revoir ta mère

Le bonhomme est à la porté

La bonn'femme fait la gargotte.

Dans les chantiers nous hivernons, etc.

V.    À bonjour donc, mon cher enfant!  
      Nous apport'tu ben d'l'argent?  
      Que l'diable emport les chantiers!  
      Jamais d'ma vie j'y r'tournerai!  
      Dans les chantiers, ah! n'hivernons pas (bis)

This is a perfect picture of customs

The narrative songs of purely Canadian origin are usually accounts of events of more or less tragic nature of local interest, such as death by drowning or accident of some one known in the neighbourhood. The disaster of the Titanic and the sinking of the Empress of Ireland have both been recounted in song.<sup>(1)</sup> Sometimes the narrative songs are of a lighter character but more frequently are tragic. The songs recounting anecdotes are often classed under the same heading but they have a quality of their own and are in a more cheerful vein. The two following will illustrate this point; "Le petit-bois de l'Aille" and "Bal chez Boulé". The former is the name of a concession road in the Parish of Cap Santé, and the incident recounted takes place there.

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(1) Reference is made to these songs in a collection of Mr. Barbeau's.

(2) Vide Gagnon p. 143.



Qui veut savoir le liste  
Des ~~m~~rogn' à présent?  
C'est dans le Petit bois d'l'Aille  
Y'en a-t-un régiment  
Eét moi le capitaine  
Et François le Gros, marchand  
Édouard y porte enseigne  
Au bout du régiment.

Par un dimanche au soir  
M'en allant promener  
Et moi et puis François  
Tous deux de compagnie  
Nous avons 'fe' veiller  
Je vais vous raconter  
Le tous qui m'est arrivé.

J'y allumai ma pipe  
Comme c'était la façon  
Disant quelques paroles  
Au gens de la maison  
Je dis a Délime  
Me permettez-vous  
De m'eloigner des autres  
Pour m'approcher de vous.

Ah! oui vraiment dit-elle  
Avec un grand plaisir  
Tu es venue ce soir  
C'est seul'ment pour en rire;  
Tu es trop infidèle  
Pour me parler d'amour  
T'as ta p'tit Jeremie  
Que tu aimes toujours.

Revenons au bonhomme  
Qu'est dans son lit couche  
Créant à haute voix:  
"Luna va te coucher!  
Les gens de la campagne  
Des villes et des faubourgs  
Retirez - vous d'icite .  
Car il fait bientôt jour!"

The hero took the hint.

"Bal chez Boule" is the story of a young man who went uninvited to a ball with a young lady and had the misfortune to trip the daughter of the house. He was put out by the irate father but the young lady was allowed to remain. Both these anecdotes are true.

"Jacqu~~ut~~ Hugues" is an example of a French Canadian satire. This Jacqu~~ut~~ Hughes<sup>(1)</sup> was a French-Canadian living in the county of Rimouski who was called le sauvage on account of his tanned skin and his costume. He wore mitasses<sup>(2)</sup> with ornaments of "babiche". He caught a whale, and after he had extracted the oil instead of giving away free the residu, he decided to sell it, and to weigh his merchandise with a romaine<sup>(3)</sup> These facts were enough to inspire a song. But some little time later when Hugues began to try for a place as a member of parliament, the following song was circulated about him.

Dans l'comté de Rimouski  
A l'election nouvelle  
Jacquot Hug's s'est présente  
Il sentait la baleine!  
Il avait pour renconfort  
Tous les cretons de son bord  
Romaine, Romaine, Romaine.

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(1) Gagnon, p. 270.

(2) Gloves trimmed with leather ~~trim~~ by Indians

(3) A scale.

Quand il etait cantinier  
Il vendait de l'eau forte  
Il sauvait baptiser  
Sans demander main forte  
C'est p'tit Paul qui charriait l'eau  
Madam' rinçait le tonneau . . . .  
À force, à force, à force.

Il ne se souvenait pas  
De ses mitasses à franges  
Il eut donné ses écus  
Pour entrer dans la chambre.  
C'est c'qu'on n'aurait jamais vu:  
Un Sauvage d'être élu!  
Peau noire, peau noire, peau noire.

En s'en revenant chez lui  
Il faisait la grimace;  
Le mond s'est bien aperçu  
Qu'il avait le coeur plasque.  
Il dit qu'il a vendu,  
Mais à présent n'en vend plus.  
Aïtrape, aïtrape, aïtrape.

Qu'en a composé la chanson  
C'est un garçon de gloire  
Il ne vous dit pas son nom  
Ça vous reste à savoir.  
Il esper' que ses amis  
Chanterons tous avec lui  
Romaine, sauvage, peau noire.

The clever hits at the man's peculiarities are very good. The whole song is rounded out and finished.

Another type of satire is the song "Le départ pour le Klondyke".<sup>(1)</sup> It is a song directed by a person who did not go on the gold rush expedition against those who did.

Mr. Larue gives an interesting number of songs of political and historic interest of a satiric nature, songs written by the French and French-Canadian soldiers and officers during the bitter years of 1665-1670. The satire and irony is levelled at the English whom the French defeated at various battles. Other interesting political songs are "Chapleau et son nouveau gouvernement"<sup>(2)</sup> and "l'Enfant Terrible."

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(1) Chants Populaires du Canada.

(2) These songs are the product of a man called "Galette Madame" who used to sell cakes and sing songs on a square in Montreal.

### CONCLUSION

The following are the conclusions arrived at in this study.

Firstly. There is a great wealth of folk-song in the French language to be found in Canada. It is of two distinct kinds, namely (1) songs of European origin, and (2) those of native creation.

Secondly. The peasants have retained in oral memory the songs brought over from France very often exactly as they were when introduced into this country. In most instances the verse structure and diction has been retained. In some cases crudities of speech have crept in. On the whole, the result of Canadian environment has tended to purify any unpleasant points, such as lax moral outlook. Free love is in the Canadian versions either omitted or transformed into honest affection.

Thirdly. The songs of European origin are of greater literary value than the songs of native creation, probably because the songs brought to this country were the product of bards or jongleurs of a certain artistic learning, whereas those of Canadian origin are for the most part the creation of the unlettered class.

Fourthly. The chief value of the songs of European

origin rests in their literary worth and the light they throw on the traits of their French forebears.

Fifthly. The value of the songs of native creation rests in the fact that they are the spontaneous expression of the folk in their own language and mirror the customs of the new world.

This thesis, touching only the fringes of the great wealth of French-Canadian folk-song <sup>has ~~been an~~</sup> endeavoured to show in some measure the interest and value of the subject.









