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# Literary Translation in Nineteenth-Century Canada

In central Canada, translation from English to French and from French to English is as old as printing itself. When William Brown and Thomas Gilmore published the prospectus of their *Quebec Gazette* on June 21, 1764, they announced their intention of publishing in English and French and of including original pieces in verse and in prose. The former were much more numerous than the latter, but they were not translated, since, as the Printers explained (July 5, 1764), verse translation required poetic gifts. Even prose translation was burdensome "as every paragraph with us requires at least triple the time" (May 29, 1764) and translation was expensive: £ 60 per annum (Oct. 17, 1765)[1].

Journalistic and commercial translation thus date from the beginning of the British Regime. Technical translation, particularly of legal material, soon followed as the new political and judicial structures were put in place, and Joseph-François Perrault's translation of the *Lex parlementaria* (1803)[2] was a landmark in the history of legal translation.

It is hardly possible to speak of literary translation at such an early date, although isolated examples can be cited. The first English-Canadian novel, Frances Brooke's *History of Emily Montague* (1769), was later issued in French, *Voyage dans le Canada, ou Histoire de Miss Montaigu*, "traduit de l'anglais par Madame T. G. M."[3], but neither the novel nor the translation was published in Canada. The same can be said of travel narratives like Isaac Weld's *Travels through the States of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada in the Years 1795, 1796 and 1797* (1799), which appeared in French in 1800[4] and in several other languages as well.

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[1] Marie Tremaine, *A Bibliography of Canadian Imprints, 1751-1800* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952), pp. 630-631.

[2] John Hare et Jean-Pierre Wallot, *Les Imprimés dans le Bas-Canada, T. I: 1800-1810* (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1967), pp. 48-51.

[3] 4 vols (Paris: Léopold Colin, 1809).

[4] 3 vols (Paris: Imprimerie de Munier, 1800).

The present paper does not attempt to provide a systematic history of literary translation in Upper and Lower Canada. It is designed merely to give some idea of the extent and variety of Canadian translation of "belles-lettres" during what Balzac once called "ce *stupide* XIX[e] siècle."[5] I shall begin by citing examples of translation of French-language literary works "done into English" during the last century; I shall then turn to English-language works translated into French, and shall conclude with a fairly detailed case history of one of these.

In the history of French-Canadian, or as it is now called, Québec literature, separately published works begin to appear in the 1830s; but literary production does not gather momentum until the 1860s, at which time active groups in both the old capital, Québec City, and the new commercial centre, Montréal, begin writing and publishing at a greatly increased rate. It is during this latter decade that literary translation makes a significant appearance, although some of the first works to be translated relate to the earlier period. Thus François-Réal Angers's *Les Révélations du crime, ou Cambray et ses complices* (1837), a fictionalized account of robberies committed in the Québec City region in the 1830s, is translated only in 1867, under the sensational title *The Canadian Brigands: An Intensely Exciting Story of Crime in Quebec, Thirty Years Ago!!* On the other hand, Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau's long Indian poem "Donnacona" (1861) was promptly turned into English by Thomas Cole in 1862.

Indeed, in most cases during the 1860s, translation followed rapidly upon the success of the French original. Sometimes this instantaneity was the result of topicality, as when the visiting French poet Edouard Sempé composed a *Cantate en l'honneur de Son Altesse Royale le Prince de Galles* for the Prince's 1860 visit to Canada, and Mrs. R. E. Leprohon immediately put it into English. More frequently, a French-language book was translated because it was thought likely to interest the anglophone reader, as when the ex-rebel Félix Poutré issued his lively *Échappé de la potence: souvenirs d'un prisonnier d'État canadien*

[5] Lettre à Madame Hanska, 15 novembre 1838.

(1862), which was quickly translated with a similarly catchy title as *Escaped from the Gallows: Souvenirs of a Canadian State Prisoner in 1838* (1862). The most celebrated example of translation of a highly successful French original is provided by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé's *Les Anciens Canadiens* (1863), translated the following year by Mrs. Georgianna M. Pennée, the sister of Dr. William Geroge Ward, a leading figure in the Oxford Movement of Catholic revival in England. A quarter of a century later, De Gaspé's novel was retranslated by Charles G. D. Roberts, who considered it "the best historical romance so far produced in French Canada." Roberts completed his translation in less than two months (July-August 1890) with the help of his secretary, Miss Annie Prat, and was paid $200.00 by the New York publishers D. Appleton and Company[6]. The Roberts translation was reissued several times under two separate titles, *The Canadians of Old* and *Cameron of Lochiel*, with distribution in New York (Appleton, 1890, 1897, 1898), Boston (L. C. Page, 1905 and 1910), and Toronto (Hart, or Hart and Riddell, 1891 and 1898). At a still later stage Mrs. Pennée's original translation was revised by Thomas Guthrie Marquis and published by the Musson Book Company in 1929 as *Seigneur d'Haberville*, thus making *Les Anciens Canadiens* the only Canadian novel to have been translated by three separate hands and under three distinct titles.

Two other French-Canadian novels of the 1860s and 1870s were translated specifically for American readers. Henri-Émile Chevalier, a French political exile who had lived in Montréal from 1852 to 1860, reworked one of his Canadian publications after his return to France, under the title *Trente-neuf hommes pour une femme: épisode de la colonisation du Canada* (1862) and it was translatied into English[7] by the editor of the *National Quaterly Review*, Edward Isidore Sears, that same year. At the beginning of the new decade, when the historical novelist Joseph Marmette published his most successful romance, *François de Bienville* (1870), it quickly appeared in English as a serial in the columns of the

[6] E. M. Pomeroy, *Sir Charles G. D. Roberts: A Biography* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1943), pp. 102, 168.

[7] *Legends of the Sea; Thirty-Nine Men for One Woman. An Episode of the Colonization of Canada* (New York: John Bradburn, 1862).

*New York Citizen*[8], translated, as the newspaper delicately inform us, "by a young lady of New York». Another American translation still eudes me: Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain's Indian legend *La Jongleuse* (1861) seems to have appeared in English in the *New York World*; in any event, an English translation by A. W. L.Gompertz was publised in Montréal in 1895[9].

It seems appropriate to conclude this first section of our survey with Louis Fréchette, both because he was the most prominent man of letters in Québec during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and also because he serves as an admirable bridge between the two language communities, having been himself both translated and a translator. During the 1880s several of the longer narrative poems he was then composing for his *magnum opus*, *La Légende d'un peuple* (1887), were faithfully turned into rather pedestrian English verse by the then octogenarian law clerk of the House of Commons, Gustavus William Wicksteed. Fréchette's poems and Wicksteed's parallel translations were published in elegantly printed bilingual booklets: *Les Excommuniés/The Excommunicated* and *Le Drapeau anglais/The British Flag* probably late in 1883, and *Fors l'honneur/All Lost but Honour* in 1884. Fréchette's unique role as the hinge between the two panels of our diptych cannot be better illustrated than by his publication in 1899 and 1900, and in Toronto, of his two collections, *Christmas in French Canada* and *La Noël au Canada: contes et récits*, English- and French-language versions both prepared by Fréchette himself.

As we turn to the second segment of our subject, English-language literary works translated into French, we note that although such translations are more numerous, they appear at about the same time, in the late 1850s, and they reflect the same preoccupations with the topicality or popularity of the originals.

The earliest examples, as one might expect, are from outside Canada. During his residence in Montréal, Henri-Émile Chevalier translated two adventure stories by the

[8] *New York Citizen (and Round Table)*, VII, 363 (June 10, 1871); VIII, 386 (November 18, 1871).

[9] *The Witch: A Canadian Legend* (Montréal: C. O. Beauchemin & Fils, 1895).

American novelist John Hovey Robinson, whose intrepid character Nick Whiffles had survived a series of exciting adventures under various titles. Chevalier's French versions, accurately described as "traductions libres", appeared as serials in the Montréal liberal newspaper *Le Pays*[10]. Chevalier had also announced[11] a French version of a novel by George Albany, but no publication ensued.

In poetry one of the most capable Montréal poets of the 1850s, Joseph Lenoir-Rolland, published in the *Journal de l'Instruction publique*, of which he was an editor, skilful French translations and adaptations of poems by Longfellow ("The Open Window", March 1858), Charles Mackay ("The Giant", May 1858; "The Magic Harp", July 1858), Burns ("Caledonia", January 1859), and even a rhythmical version of Goethe's "Der Erlkönig" (February 1860), one of the rare examples in nineteenth-century Québec of a translation from a language other than English. The translations from Mackay were no doubt prompted by the English poet's North American tour in the spring of 1858; the imitation of other poets reflect the variety of Lenoir's own literary tastes.

Translations of English poetry into French were not numerous in nineteenth-century Québec, but at least two of them attracted considerable attention. Many pages of the first collection of poems (1865) published by Léon-Pamphile Le May were taken up with his verse translation of Longfellow's *Evangeline*. It received a mixed reaction: Le May's older contemporary, Octave Crémazie, wrote from France where he was living in a bankrupt's exile: "Je vous avouerai que je ne suis pas enthousiasmé de sa traduction d'*Évangéline*. C'est bien le plus vaste assortiment de chevilles que je connaisse" (À Casgrain, 10 avril 1866). William Kirby, on the other hand, was much more favourable to Le May's version:

> J'ai lu avec attention la traduction de l'Évangéline et je la trouve bien faite, très bien faite. L'Évangéline est une[e] œuvre des plus difficiles à traduire en français et à cause de son metre si different de tout ce qu'exige le génie

[10] "Les Trappeurs de la Baie d'Hudson", *Le Pays*, VII, 87 (19 août 1858) – VIII, 1 (15 janvier 1869); "Le Chasseur noir", *Ibid.*, VIII, 99 (13 septembre 1859) – IX, 24 (10 mars 1860).

[11] *Le Pays*, VIII, 39 (16 avril 1859).

> Français, et à cause de son style idiomatique jusqu'à l'excès. M. Lemay a réussi à merveille de [*sic*] maîtriser ses difficultés et de donner au monde un[e] œuvre qui vaut des applaudissements [*sic*] partout ou l'on comprend votre belle langue. (À Benjamin Sulte, 12 mars 1866)

As was his custom, Le May returned several times to this translation, revising and improving it, and republished it twice more during his lifetime, in 1870 and in 1912. In his preface to the 1870 second edition, Le May outlined his conception of literary translation:

> Je n'ai jamais prétendu faire une traduction tout à fait littérale. J'ai un peu suivi mon caprice. Parfois j'ai ajouté, j'ai retranché, parfois; mais plutôt dans les paroles que dans les idées...

This statement of Le May's will be of interest when we meet him again as the translator of Kirby's *The Golden Dog*.

The other French verse translation by a famous hand was much briefer and need not detain us: in the fall of 1880 Louis Fréchette published his version of Thomas Moore's popular "Canadian Boat-Song" under the title "Chant de batelier"[12].

There was much more translation of fiction, however, and here I shall pass more rapidly. One of the most fascinating publishing histories is that of the French translation of Ebenezer Clemo's *Canadian Homes or the Mystery Solved* (1858), as recounted by Professor Mary Jane Edwards in a recent article in *Canadian Literature*[13], a story in which Henri-Émile Chevalier again has a role.

The most frequently translated novelist of the mid-century was, of course, Mrs. R. E. Leprohon. Her five translated novels, beginning with *Ida Beresford* (translated by Joseph-Édouard Lefebvre de Bellefeuille)[14] and concluding with *Ada Dunmore* (translated by

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[12] *L'Opinion publique*, XI, 44 (28 octobre 1880), 528.

[13] *Canadian Literature*, 81 (Summer 1979), 147-54.

[14] "Ida Beresford, ou La Jeune Fille du grand monde", *L'Ordre*, I, 89 (27 septembre 1859) – II, 26 (21 février 1860).

Auguste Béchard)[15], were widely read in French and frequently republished. It is probable that for many readers *Antoinette de Mirecourt* in Joseph-Auguste Genand's translation[16] seemed to be a French-Canadian novel, as did the other two volumes of the trilogy (*The Manor-House of De Villerai*, translated by Lefebvre de Bellefeuille[17], and *Armand Durand*, translated by Joseph-Auguste Genand[18]). The publishing history of the Leprohon translations has yet to be told, and it may prove to be an interesting one. Of the three French translators, one, Lefebvre de Bellefeuille, was Mrs. Leprohon's nephew by marriage. Two of them, he and Genand, as graduates in law of the Jesuit Collège de Sainte-Marie, were closely connected with the Union catholique (1858) and were editors of the Union's ultramontane newspaper *L'Ordre*, in which the translations appeared. When the full story is told, it will undoubtedly constitute a revealing chapter in the history of literary translation as religious politics.

The other major novelist of the period whose translated novels were often taken for French-language originals, was John Talon Lesperance, whose *The Bastonnais: A Tale of the American Invasion in Canada* (1877) was frequently republished in the French version of Aristide Piché[19], while his *Rosalba, or Faithful to Two Loves: An Episode of the Rebellion of 1837-1838* (1870) was twice serialized in the French translation of Emmanuel Blain de Saint-Aubin[20]. Non-Canadian fiction also appeared in French translation, sometimes

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[15] "Ada Dummore, ou Une veille de Noël remarquable", *Le Pionnier de Sherbrooke*, VII, 29 (18 avril 1873) – VIII, 8 (21 novembre 1873).

[16] *Antoinette de Mirecourt, ou Mariage secret et chagrins cachés* (C. O. Beauchemin & Valois, 1865).

[17] *Le Manoir de Villerai: roman historique canadien sous la domination française* (Montréal: De Plinguet, 1861).

[18] *Armand Durand, ou La Promesse accomplie* (Montréal: J. B. Rolland & fils, 1869).

[19] *Les Bastonnais* (Montréal: C. O. Beauchemin & fils, 1896).

[20] "Rosalba ou Les Deux Amours: épisode de la rébellion de 1837", *L'Opinion publique*, VII, 17 (27 avril 1876) – VII, 23 (8 juin 1876).

acknowledged, as in the case of Louis Fréchette's translation of William Dean Howell's *A Chance Acquaintance*; it was published in *La Revue de Montréal* (1879-1880) as "Une rencontre fortuite" and later in book form as *Une Rencontre: Roman de deux touristes sur les Saint-Laurent et le Saguenay*[21]. At other times the existence of the English original was not so readily admitted. When Frédéric Houde adapted Scott's *Kenilworth* to a Canadian location, changing the names of the characters and modifying the temporal and spatial setting, before serializing the disguised novel in his newspaper *Le Nouveau Monde* under the title "Le Manoir mystérieux, ou Les Victimes del'ambition"[22], the source of his fiction went unnoticed for more than thirty years until Lionel Léveillé revealed it in 1914[23].

I have held back the most important translated English-Canadian novel of the nineteenth century until the last, in order to recount in some detail how and why it came to be translated, and what went on behind the scenes.

The publishing history of the English original of William Kirby's historical romance *The Golden Dog* is well known to us since the publication of Dr. Elizabeth Brady's excellent bibliographical essay in the *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada*[24]. The history of the French translation of Kirby's novel is, however, less completely known, and it is perhaps appropriate to review it here.

Within a few weeks after the publication of *The Golden Dog* in February 1877, the novel was favourably reviewed in several French-language periodicals. Pantaléon Hudon praised it highly in the influential *Revue canadienne*[25], James MacPherson Le Moine, one

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[21] (Montréal: Société de publication française, 1893). Fréchette's relations with his in-laws, the Howells, are documented in James Doyle, *Annie Howells and Achille Fréchette* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

[22] *Le Nouveau Monde*, XIV, 67-112 (20 octobre – 14 décembre 1880).

[23] "Curiosités littéraires: Roman canadien inédit par ... Walter Scott", *Le Nationaliste*, XI, 12 (10 mai 1914), 1.

[24] XV (1976), 24-48.

[25] *La Revue canadienne*, XIV, 3 (mars 1877), 227.

of Kirby's Québec City correspondents, reviewed it enthusiastically in the *Journal de Québec*[26]; and Benjamin Sulte, a long-standing friend of Kirby's, wrote a lengthy and extremely flattering review for the Montréal illustrated weekly *L'Opinion publique*[27]. It was Sulte who, in a letter to Kirby (9 avril 1877)[28], first raised the desirability of a French translation of the novel. He returned to the subject a month later, declaring that a very capable translator would be required, and promising to give the matter some thought. "Ce sera déjà une assez forte affaire de trouver un traducteur approprié à cette tâche. Comme c'est moi qui ai parlé de l'entreprise le premier, je ne cesserai pas d'y penser, et s'il se présente une occasion, je vous la signalerai avec empressement" (Sulte à Kirby, 17 mai 1877). But, absorbed in his own writing–he was then publishing an average of a book a year–Sulter let the matter rest for nearly three years. Then he wrote again to Kirby (28 février 1880) to say that George Bull Burland, owner of *L'Opinion publique*, had approached him about translating the novel for publication in the weekly *feuilleton* section, with the possibility of subsequent book publication in France, and to inquire on what terms Kirby would give his authorization for a translation. Kirby, having failed to obtain either American or Canadian copyright for his original novel, was determined not to be defrauded again on the translation. He therefore sought advice from three experienced friends: the Reverend William Henry Withrow, editor of the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*; Senator Josiah Burr Plumb, who made inquiries at the copyright office of the Department of Agriculture; and the Toronto editor and publisher G. Mercer Adam. All assured him that he could copyright a French translation by printing it either in Canada or in France, and outlined the necessary legal steps. The Reverend W. H. Withrow included some down-to-earth financial advice to Kirby:

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[26] *Le Journal de Québec*, (4 avril 1877), 2.

[27] *L'Opinion publique*, VIII, 18 (3 mai 1877), 208.

[28] The letters referred to in the remaining pages are preserved in the Archives of Ontario, Kirby Collection, Series A-1 (correspondence with J. M. Le Moine), Series A-2 (correspondence with B. Sulte), and Series E-9 (file concerning L'Étendard Publishing Co.). Letters in French are identified in French, letters in English are identified in English, in parentheses in the text.

> I think the best plan is to arrange for a percentage on sales... I suppose, if Sulte translates the book and assists in its publication in Paris, he will want a share of the royalty–probably half. The royalty should not be less than 10%–which would give you only 5% each... If you give Sulte half of the royalty on the Paris Ed., I think he should give you half of what he gets from Burland for the use of it in *L'Opinion Publique*. Could you arrange with Sulte to translate it yourself? In that case you should have a much larger share of the royalty on French sales. (Withrow to Kirby, March 4, 1880)

The scheme bore no fruit, however, for *L'Opinion publique* was already in in financial difficulty: Burland's company sold the weekly in January 1881 and it ceased publication in December 1998.

After the demise of *L'Opinion publique*, a new candidate appeared to propose translation of Kirby's novel. Louis Fréchette, Québec's most prominent literary figure since his recognition by the French Academy in August 1880, wrote to Kirby in English (January 17, 1884) saying he had been offered "so much a page by one of our literary journals" in Montréal, and asking what terms Kirby would impose. Kirby replied graciously but cautiously (January 21, 1884), saying the he had been intending to make inquiries in France on this subject, but inviting Fréchette to make an offer. Fréchette responded (January 27, 1884) by suggesting that Kirby might have the French market and Fréchette the Canadian one. Since this proposition implied that Kirby would have to make his own publishing arrangements, he replied flatly: "I shall never... publish at my own risk" (January 31, 1884). Thus the second attempt at translating *The Golden Dog* collapsed like the first.

The third attempt would, however, be successful. In 1883 or 1884–he could not later remember which year–a leading ultramontane newspaper owner and political figure in Montréal, Senator François-Xavier-Anselme Trudel, had read *The Golden Dog* and decided that Kirby and his novel must be made known to French-speaking Canadians. Having consulted several persons, among them Sulte and Senator Plumb, Trudek wrote Kirby six closely written foolscap pages to propose having a French translation made for publication in his Montréal newspaper *L'Étendard*, with a book version to follow. "Je désire", he wrote,

"faire traduire *Le Chien d'Or* & le répandre autant que possible parmi la population française du Canada, des États-Unis et même de la vieille France..." (Trudel à Kirby, lettre du 25 avril 1884).

Trudel was not a man to let the grass grow under his feet. He had already contacted Félicité Angers ("Laure Conan"), Québec's first woman novelist, as a possible translator; he also outlined in the same letter some minor changes he thought would be required if the novel were to be offered to French-speaking Catholic readers. Kirby acknowledged his letter courteously and, remembering the Reverend Mr. Withrow's advice, requested a percentage of the sales. Trudel agreed (3 mai 1884), although expressing the hope that the figure would be a moderate one: "Notre établissement", he added, "est nouveau et *pauvre*". Now intent upon his project, Trudel had already prepared a list of possible translators in case Félicité Angers declined, which she did. Sulte had begged off saying he did not have time for the task. Trudel's next choice, he declared, was "Mr. Pamphyle [*sic*] Le May qui a fait une traduction très appréciée d'*Evangeline*", and he added three more names, all of recognized Québec writers, in case Le May did not accept. Trudel closed his lengthy letter by a postcript reporting that he had consulted a priest and had been assured that the novel would thus be suitable not only for family reading but even for circulation in convents, a point whose importance the shrewd Trudel could readily recognize.

When Kirby gave his consent in principle (8 mai 1884) an English-language contract was drawn up (May 15, 1884) assuring Kirby of a copyright for the French translation, and granting him a ten per cent royalty on any book publication after the serial appearance in *L'Étendard*. Trudel sent the draft contract to Kirby with a covering letter (16 mai 1884) confirming the Le May would be the translator, and expressing the hope that publication of the serial version could begin by the French-Canadian national holiday, St. John the Baptist's Day.

Kirby made only minor changes in the draft, setting a time-limit of 5 years for the terms concerning book publication and binding himself not to permit any other translation or publication in French during that time. He then forwarded the revised contract to Trudel with a covering letter in English (May 26, 1884) approving Le May as translator but

expressing the hope that Sulte would consent to revise the translation. Trudel and his administrator, J. A. Prendergast, signed the revised contract and returned it to Kirby (May 31, 1884) with an English letter explaining that the Québec Legislature was still in session, and Le May, as its Librarian, would be delayed in starting the translation. Meantime Le May had learned of Fréchette's previous negotiations with Kirby, and he wrote Kirby (2 juin 1884) to be reassured that no one else had been authorized to translate the novel.

Le May, born at Lotbinière on January 5, 1837, was a contemporary of Louis Fréchette and Alfred Garneau, the other principal poets of the Québec Movement of 1860. Educated at the venerable Petit Séminaire de Québec and at the newly founded (1852) Université Laval, he was called to the bar in 1865 but never practised. He became instead a translator for the parliament of United Canada, and after the Confederation of 1867 was for a quarter of a century the first Librarian of the Legislative Assembly of the new Province of Québec. Twice gold medalist in the poetry competitions held by the Université laval, and author of five volumes of poetry, three novels, a novella, and a play, Le May was one of the most respected men of letters in Québec when he began his translation of *The Golden Dog*.

In the interval the indefatigable Trudel had had 50,000 copies of a prospectus printed up to advertise the translation, and sent samples of it to Kirby (2 août 1884) together with the first instalments of Le May's French version. Kirby thanked him (8 juillet; erreur pour 8 août 1884) while demurring somewhat at the toned-down passages in the translation: "il faudra bien *ne pas trop adoucir*", he chided. Kirby also objected to a suggestion in the prospectus that Sulte had provided a plan and notes for the novel, and asked that each instalment of the serial publication bear a statement of copyright registration. Kirby had applied for an interim copyright on the translation, which was registered on August 12, 1884; the official copyright followed eight months later (April 4, 1885).

Publication of the serial translation began in *L'Étendard* on August 30, 1884 and continued until February 16, 1885 for a total of 138 instalments. Le May finished his translation at the beginning of November 1884, having spent five months on it and having been paid $400 for his pains (Le Moine to Kirby, February 20, 1885). Le May wrote to Kirby (8 novembre 1884) to announce the completion of the work, and added, "J'ai pleuré

plus d'une fois en écrivant..." The tribute of another reader had been published as a letter to the editor of *L'Étendard*: a confirmed opponent of novels had been persuaded by his wife to dip into *Le Chien d'or* and had been unable to stop reading it: "Quel admirable ouvrage! C'est un vrai monument de littérature nationale et de patriotisme!"[29]

Le May's translation, as might have been expected from his remarks in the preface to *Évangéline*, was a very free one and would deserve a study in itself. Although remaining faithful to the spirit of Kirby's text. Le May did not hesitate to shorten passages he found too long, deleting sentences or whole paragraphs; he occasionally threw chapters together, or even added details from his own knowledge and background. His version was thus both a French translation and a French-Canadian adaptation by an experienced creative writer familiar with the needs of the new audience to which the translation was directed. The fact that Le May's *Chien d'or* was republished posthumously with his revisions in 1926 and re-issued as recently as 1971, even being adapted as a play (1906) by the Montréal novelist Rodolphe Girard[30], probably indicates that Le May struck the right note for the time.

Nevertheless, in March 1885 a somewhat chastened Trudel wrote to Kirby to announce that he had managed, with considerable difficulty, to persuade his colleagues to proceed with the book edition; the serial publication had not been a great success, and had even drawn some malicious criticism that *L'Étendard* was publishing a novel of questionable moral value. The wily Trudel had several times inserted in the notes to the serial instalments references to Kirby's English and Protestant status, in the hope of fending off criticism of his newspaper, but the sniping had not stopped. The two-volume edition, although dated 1884, did not appear until well into 1885, and the sales were not impressive, many potential readers having already read the serial version. Writing to Le Moine in February 1886, Trudel sadly but unrepentantly summed up the experience:

Les dépenses de publication & de traduction, eu égard à nos modestes

[29] *L'Étendard*, II, 212 (l5 octobre 1884), 2.

[30] "Le Chien d'or, drame en cinq actes", typescript preserved in the Département des manuscrits, Bibliothèque nationale du Québec.

> ressources, ont été considérables, et malheureusement, *comme* d'ailleurs notre administration s'y attendait, le succès n'a pas couronné cette tentative de faire lire & apprécier un livre si éminemment canadien... N'importe, je ne regrette pas l'argent que nous avons perdu en voulant lancer le *Chien d'or*. (13 février 1886)

The last word, however, came from the modest translator. Le May wrote to Kirby in April 1886:

> ... Je vous l'ai déjà dit, le Chien d'or m'a fort intéressé. J'ai éprouvé un vif plaisir à le traduire, et pourtant, la tâche était ardue pour un traducteur qui ne sait pas l'anglais–." (20 avril 1886)

If the translator's role was over, the author's was not. Kirby seems to have had difficulty in collecting his royalties from *L'Étendard*, particularly during the period of instability following Senator Trudel's death on January 17, 1890. Le Moine advised Kirby to seek the help of the literary editor of the *Montreal Gazette*, John Reade, if he should find it necessary to sue (Le Moine to Kirby, April 15, 1890). But that is another chapter in Kirby's troubled career. We have followed this case history far enough to demonstrate that literary translation in nineteenth-century Canada, even of a major novel, was no easy matter for the novelist, the publisher, or the translator[31].

To conclude this rapid survey of literary translation in nineteenth-century Canada, a few general observations may now be made:

1) Literary translation appears in a limited way in both Upper and Lower Canada about 1860, and it continues spasmodically until the end of the century.

2) Translation of literary works takes place in both directions, from English to French and from French to English, with the former being somewhat more frequent that the latter.

3) The genres represented are poetry and fiction; dramatic literature and essays are not a significant element.

4) In this period, literary translation is a random and unorganized activity, possessing no

[31] The "case history" presented here is an abridged version of an article to appear in the *Papers* of the Bibliographical Society of Canada, XX (1981).

recognized tradition of theory or practice.

5) Nineteenth-century literary translation is usually done by journalists and authors as a remunerative sideline. The remuneration is determined by the local circumstances and by personal negotiation. The literary translator, unlike his governmental or journalistic counterpart, has no social or economic status.

In short, this preliminary inquiry into the nature and extent of literary translation during the last century suggests that more systematic investigation would be rewarding, and the history of literary translation in Canada that will eventually be written will indeed have a nineteenth-century chapter.

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Source : David M. Hayne, «Literary Translation in Nineteenth-Century Canada», dans Camille La Bossière (dir.), *Translation in Canadian Literature*, Ottawa, Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, coll. «Reappraisals: Canadian Writers», 1983, p. 35-46.