This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks, 
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, 
Indistinct in the twilight, 
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic, 
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms. 
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean 
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the hunter?

Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,—

Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,

Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?

Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed!

Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o’er the ocean.

Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pre.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,

Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman’s devotion,

List to the mournful tradition, still sung by the pines of the forest;

List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.
caps and in kirtles
Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs
spinning the golden
Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy
shuttles within doors
Mingled their sounds with the whir of the
wheels and the songs of the maidens.
Solomnly down the street came the parish
priest, and the children
Paused in their play to kiss the hand he
extended to bless them.
Reverend walked he among them; and up
rose matrons and maidens,
Hailing his slow approach with words of
affectionate welcome.
Then came the laborers home from the
field, and serenely the sun sank
Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed.
Anon from the belfry
Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the
roofs of the village
Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of
incense ascending.
Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes
of peace and contentment.
Thus dwelt together in love these simple
Acadian farmers,—
Dwelt in the love of God and of man.
Alike were they free from
Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy,
the vice of republics.
Neither locks had they to their doors, nor
bars to their windows;
But their dwellings were open as day and
the hearts of the owners;
There the richest was poor, and the poorest
lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and
nearer the Basin of Minas,
Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest
farmer of Grand-Pre,
Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him,
directing his household,
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the
pride of the village.

Stalworth and stately in form was the man
of seventy winters;
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is
covered with snow-flakes;
White as the snow were his locks, and his
cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves.
Fair was she to behold, that maiden of
seventeen summers.
Black were her eyes as the berry that
grows on the thorn by the wayside,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed be-
neath the brown shade of her tresses!
Sweet was her breath as the brown of kine
that feed in the meadows.
When in the harvest heat she bore to the
reapers at noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in
sooth was the maiden.
Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn,
while the bell from its turret
Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the
priest with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters
blessings upon them,
Down the long street she passed, with her
chaplet of beads and her missal,
Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle
of blue, and the ear-rings,
Brought in the olden time from France,
and since, as an heirloom,
Handed down from mother to child,
through long generations.
But a celestial brightness—a more ethereal beauty—
Shone on her face and encircled her form,
when, after confession,
Homeward serenely she walked with God’s
benediction upon her.
When she had passed, it seemed like the
ceasing of exquisite music.

Firmly built with rafters of oak, the
house of the farmer
Stood on the side of a hill commanding the
sea; and a shady
Sycamore grew by the door, with a wood-
bine wreathing around it.
Rudely carved was the porch, with seats
beneath; and a footpath
Led through an orchard wide, and disap-
peared in the meadow.
Under the sycamore-tree were hives over-
hung by a penthouse,
Such as the traveller sees in regions remote
by the roadside,
Built o’er a box for the poor, or the blessed
image of Mary.
Farther down, on the slope of the hill, was
the well with its moss-grown
Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a
trough for the horses.
Shielding the house from storms, on the
north, were the barns and the farm-
yard.
There stood the broad wheeled wains and
the antique ploughs and the har-
rows;
There were the folds for the sheep; and
there, in his feathered seraglio,
Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the
cock, with the self-same
Voice that in ages of old had startled the
penitent Peter.
Bursting with hay were the barns, them-
selves a village. In each one
Far o’er the gable projected a roof of
thatch; and a staircase,
Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the
odorous corn-loft.
There too the dove-cot stood, with its meek
and innocent inmates
Murmuring ever of love; while above in
the variant breezes
Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and
sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world,
the farmer of Grand-Pre
Lived on his sunny farm, and Evangeline
governed his household.
Many a youth, as he knelt in church and
opened his missal,
Fixed his eyes upon her as the saint of his
deepest devotion;
Happy was he who might touch her hand
or the hem of her garment!
Many a suitor came to her door, by the
darkness befriended,
And, as he knocked and waited to hear the
sound of her footsteps,
Knew not which beat the louder, his heart
or the knocker of iron;
Or at the joyous feast of the Patron Saint
of the village,
Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the
dance as he whispered
Hurried words of love, that seemed a part
of the music.
But, among all who came, young Gabriel
only was welcome;
Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the
blacksmith,
Who was a mighty man in the village, and
honored of all men;
For, since the birth of time, throughout all
ages and nations,
Has the craft of the smith been held in
repute by the people.
Basil was Benedict’s friend. Their children
from earliest childhood
Grew up together as brother and sister;
and Father Felician,
Priest and pedagogue both in the village,
had taught them their letters
Out of the selfsame book, with the hymns
of the church and the plain-song.
But when the hymn was sung, and the
daily lesson completed,
Swiftly they hurried away to the forge of
Basil the blacksmith.
There at the door they stood, with wonder-
ing eyes to behold him
Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the
horse as a plaything,
Nailing the shoe in its place; while near
him the tire of cart-wheel
Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a
circle of cinders.
Oft on autumnal eves, when without in the
gathering darkness
Bursting with light seemed the smithy,
through every cranny and crevice,
Warm by the forge within they watched
the laboring bellows,
And as its painting ceased, and the sparks
expired in the ashes,
Merrily laughed, and said they were nuns
 going into the chapel.
Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the
swoop of the eagle,
Down the hillside bounding, they glided
away o’er the meadow.
Oft in the barns thy climbed to the pou-
lous nests on the rafters,
Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous
stone, which the swallow
Brings from the shore of the sea to restore
the sight of its fledglings;
Lucky was he who found that stone in the
nest of the swallow!
Thus passed a few swift years, and they no
longer were children.
He was a valiant youth, and his face, like
the face of the morning,
Gladdened the earth with its light, and
ripened thought into action.
She was a woman now, with the heart and
hopes of a woman.
“Sunshine of Saint Eulalie” was she
called; for that was the sunshine
Which, as the farmers believed, would load
their orchards with apples;
She, too, would bring to her husband’s
house delight and abundance,
Filling it with love and the ruddy faces of
children.

II
Now had the season returned, when the
nights grow colder and longer,
And the retreating sun the sign of the
Scorpion enters.
Birds of passage sailed through the leaden
air, from the ice-bound,
Desolate northern bays to the shores of
tropical islands.
Harvests were gathered in; and wild with
the winds of September
Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob
of old with the angel.
All the signs foretold a winter long and
inclement.
Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had
hoarded their honey
Till the hives overflowed; and the Indian
hunters asserted
Cold would the winter be, for thick was the
fur of the foxes.
Such was the advent of autumn. Then
followed that beautiful season,
Called by the pious Acadian peasants the
Summer of All-Saints!
Filled was the air with a dreamy and magi-
cal light; and the landscape
Lay as if new-created in all the freshness
of childhood.
Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the
restless heart of the ocean
Was for a moment consoled. All sounds
were in harmony blended.
Voices of children at play, the crowing of
cocks in the farm-yards.
Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the
cooing of pigeons,
All were subdued and low as the murmurs
of love, and the great sun
Looked with the eye of love through the golden
vapors around him;
While arrayed in his robes of russet and
scarlet and yellow,
Bright with the sheen of the dew, each
glittering tree of the forest
Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian
adorned with mantles and jewels.
Now recommenced the reign of rest and
affection and stillness.
Day with its burden and heat had departed,
and twilight descending
Brought back the evening star to the
sky, and the herds to the home-
stead.
Pawing the ground they came, and resting their necks on each other, And with their nostrils distended inhaling the freshness of evening. Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline’s beautiful heifer, Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon that waved from her collar, Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human affection. Then came the shepherd back with his bleating flocks from the sea-side, Where was their favorite pasture. Behind them followed the watch-dog, Patient, full of importance, and grand in the pride of his instinct, Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and superbly Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the stragglers; Regent of the flocks was he when the shepherd slept; their protector, When from the forest at night, through the starry silence the wolves howled. Late, with the rising moon, returned the wains from the marshes, Laden with briny hay, that filled the air with its odor. Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on their manes and their fetlocks, While aloft on their shoulders the wooden and ponderous saddles, Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned with tassels of crimson, Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks heavy with blossoms. Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and yielded their udders Unto the milkmaid’s hand; whilst loud and in regular cadence Into the sounding pails the foaming streamlets descended. Lowing of cattle and peals of laughter were heard in the farm-yard, Echoed back to the barns. Anon they sank into stillness; Heavily closed with a jarring sound, the valves of the barn-doors, Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a season was silent. In-doors, warm by the wide-mouthed fireplace, idly the farmer Sat in his elbow-chair and watched how the flames and the smoke-wreathes Struggled together like foes in a burning city. Behind him, Nodding and mocking along the wall, with gestures fantastic, Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness. Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair Laughed in the flickering light; and the pewter plates on the dresser Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies the sunshine. Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of Christmas, Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before him Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian vineyards. Close at her father’s side was the gentle Evangeline seated, Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the corner behind her. Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its diligent shuttle, While monotonous drone of the wheel, like the drone of a bagpipe, Followed the old man’s song and united the fragments together. As in a church, when the chant of the choir at intervals ceases, Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words of the priest at the altar, So, in each pause of the song, with measured motion the clock clicked. Thus as they sat, there were footsteps
heard, and suddenly lifted,  
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door  
swung back on its hinges.  
Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it  
was Basil the blacksmith,  
And by her beating heart Evangeline knew  
who was with him.  
“Welcome!” the farmer exclaimed, as  
their footsteps paused on the thresh-  
old,  
“Welcome, Basil my friend! Come,  
take thy place on the settle  
Close by the chimney-side, which is always  
empty without thee;  
Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe  
and the box of tobacco;  
Never so much thyself art thou as when  
through the curling  
Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy friendly  
and jovial face gleams  
Round and red as the harvest moon through  
the midst of the marshes.”  
Then, with a smile of content, thus an-  
swered Basil the blacksmith,  
Taking with easy air the accustomed seat  
by the fireside:--  
“Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever  
thy jest and thy ballad!  
Ever in cheerfulest mood thou art, when  
others are filled with  
Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruin  
before them.  
Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst  
picked up a horseshoe.”  
Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that  
Evangeline brought him,  
And with a coal from the embers had  
lighted, he slowly continued:--  
“Four days now are passed since the Eng-  
lish ships at their anchors  
Ride in the Gaspereau’s mouth, with their  
cannon pointed against us.  
What their design may be is unknown; but all are  
commanded  
On the marrow to meet in the church,  
where his Majesty’s mandate  
Will be proclaimed as law in the land.  
Alas! in the mean time  
Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts of  
the people.”  
Then made answer the farmer: “Perhaps  
some friendlier purpose  
Brings these ships to our shores. Perhaps  
the harvests in England  
By untimely rains or untimelier heat have  
been blighted,  
And from our bustling barns they would feed  
their cattle and children.”  
“No! not thinketh the folk in the village,”  
said, warmly, the blacksmith,  
Shaking his head, as in doubt; then heav-  
ing a sigh he continued:--  
“Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau  
Sejour, nor Port Royal.  
Many have already fled to the forest, and  
lurk on its outskirts,  
Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious  
fate of to-morrow.  
Arms have been taken from us, and war-  
like weapons of all kinds;  
Nothing is left but the blacksmith’s sledge  
and the scythe of the mower.”  
Then with a pleasant smile made answer  
the jovial farmer:--  
“Safer are we unarmed, in the midst of our  
flocks and our cornfields,  
Safer within these peaceful dikes, besieged  
by the ocean,  
Than our fathers in forts, besieged by the  
enemy’s cannon.  
Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night may no  
shadow of sorrow  
Fall on this house and hearth; for this is  
the night of the contract.  
Built are the house and the barn. The  
merry lads of the village  
Strongly have built them and well; and,  
breaking the glebe round about  
them,  
Filled the barn with hay, and the house  
with food for a twelvemonth.  
Rene Leblanc will be here anon, with his
papers and inkhorn.
Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in
the joy of our children?”
As apart by the window she stood, with
her hand in her lover’s,
Blushing Evangeline heard the words that
her father had spoken,
And, as they died on his lips, the worthy
notary entered.

III

Bent like a laboring oar, that oils in the
surf of the oceans,
Bent, but not broken, by age was the form
of the notary public;
Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken floss
of the maize, hung
Over his shoulders; his forehead was high;
and glasses with horn bows
Sat astride on his nose, with a look of
wisdom supernal.
Father of twenty children was he, and
more than a hundred
Children’s children rode on his knee, and
heard his great watch tick.
Four long years in the times of the war
had he languished a captive,
Suffering much in an old French fort as
the friend of the English.
Now, though warier grown, without all
guile or suspicion,
Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and
simple, and childlike.
He was beloved by all, and most of all by
the children;
For he told them tales of the Loup-garou
in the forest,
And of the goblin that came in the night
to water the horses,
And of the white Letiche, the ghost of a
child who unchristened
Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the
chambers of children;
And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked
in the stable,

And how the fever was cured by a spider
shut up in a nutshell,
And of the marvelous powers of four-
leaved clover and horseshoes,
With whatsoever else was writ in the lore
of the village.
Then up rose form his seat by the fireside
Basil the blacksmith,
Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and
slowly extended his right hand,
“Father Leblanc, “ he exclaimed, “thou
hast heard the talk in the village,
And, perchance, canst tell us some news
of these ships and their errand.”
Then with modest demeanor made answer
the notary public,--
“Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth, yet
am never the wiser;
And what their errand may be I know not
better than others.
Yet am I not of those who imagine a some
evil intention
Brings them here, for we are at peace;
and why then molest us?”
“God’s name!” shouted the hasty and
somewhat irascible blacksmith;
“Must we in all things look for the how,
and the why, and the wherefore?
Daily injustice is done, and might is the
right of the strongest!”
But without heeding his warmth, continued
the notary public,--
“Man is unjust, but God is just; and
finally justice
Triumphs; and well I remember a story,
that often consoled me,
When as a captive I lay in the old French
fort as Port Royal.”
This was the old man’s favorite tale, and
he loved to repeat it.
When his neighbors complained that any
injustice was done them.
“Once in an ancient city, whose name I no
longer remember,
Raised aloft on a column, a brazen statue


of Justice
Stood in the public square, upholding the
scales in its left hand,
And in its right a sword, as an emblem
that justice presided
Over the laws of the land, and the hearts
and homes of the people.
Even the birds had built their nests in the
scales of the balance,
Having no fear of the sword that flashed
in the sunshine above them.
But in the course of time the laws of the
land were corrupted;
Might took the place of right, and the weak
were oppressed, and the mighty
Ruled with an iron rod. Then it chanced
in a nobleman’s palace
That a necklace of pearl’s was lost, and
erelong a suspicion
Fell on an orphan girl who lived as a maid
in the household.
She, after form of trial condemned to die
on the scaffold,
Patiently met her doom at the foot of the
statue of Justice.
As to her Father in heaven her innocent
spirit ascended,
Lo! o’er the city a tempest rose; and the
bolts of the thunder
Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled in
wrath form its left hand
Down on the pavement below the clattering
scales of the balance,
And in the hollow thereof was found the
nest of the magpie,
Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of
pearls was inwoven.”
Silenced, but not convinced, when the story
was ended, the blacksmith
Stood like a man who fain would speak,
but findeth no language;
All his thought were congealed into lines
on his face, as the vapors
Freeze in fantastic shapes on the window-
panes in the winter.
Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp
on the table,
Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter tankard
with home-brewed
Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its
strength in the village of Grand-
Pre;
While from his pocket the notary drew his
papers and inkhorn,
Wrote with a steady hand the date and the
age of the parties,
Naming the dower of the bride in flocks of
sheep and in cattle.
Orderly all things proceeded, and duly and
well were completed,
And the great seal of the law was set like
a sun on the margin.
Then from his leathered pouch the farmer
threw on the table
Three times the old man’s fee in solid
pieces of silver;
And the notary rising, and blessing the
bride and the bridegroom,
Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and drank
to their welfare.
Wiping the foam from his lip, he solemnly
bowed and departed,
While in silence the others sat and mused
by the fireside,
Till Evangeline brought the draught-board
out of its corner.
Soon was the game begun. In friendly
contention the old men
Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful
manoeuvre,
Laughed when a man was crowned, or a
breach was made in the king-row.
Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom of
a window’s embrasure,
Sat the lovers, and whispered together, be-
holding the moon rise
Over the pallid sea, and the silvery mists
of the meadows.
Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows
of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-
nots of the angels.
Thus was the evening passed. Anon the bell from the belfry Rang out the hour of nine, the village curfew, and straightway Rose the guests and departed; and silence reigned in the household. Many a farewell word and sweet good-night on the door-step Lingered long in Evangeline’s heart, and filled it with gladness. Carefully then were covered the embers that glowed on the hearth-stone, And in the oaken stairs resounded the tread of the farmer. Soon with a soundless step the foot of Evangeline followed. Up the staircase moved a luminous space in the darkness, Lighted less by the lamp than the shining face of the maiden. Silent she passed the hall, and entered the door of her chamber. Simple that chamber was, with its curtains of white, and its clothes-press Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves were carefully folded Linen and woolen stuffs, by the hand of Evangeline woven. This was the precious dower she would bring to her husband in marriage, Better than flocks and herds, being proofs of her skill as a housewife. Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the mellow and radiant moonlight Streamed through the windows, and lighted the room, till the heart of the maiden Swelled and obeyed its power, like the tremulous tides of the ocean. Ah! she was fair, exceeding fair to behold, as she stood with Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming floor of her chamber! Little she dreamed that below, among the trees of the orchard, Waited her lover and watched for the gleam of her lamp and her shadow. Yet were her thoughts of him, and at times a feeling of sadness Passed o’er her soul, as the sailing shade of clouds in the moonlight Flitted across the floor and darkened the room for a moment. And, as she gazed from the window, she saw serenely the moon pass Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star followed her footsteps, As out of Abraham’s tent young Ishmael wandered with Hagar!

IV

Pleasantly rose the next morn the sun on the village of Grand Pre. Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air the Basin of Minas, Where the ships, with their wavering shadows, were riding at anchor. Life had long been astir in the village, and clamorous labor Knocked with its hundred hands at the golden ages of the morning. Now from the country around, from the farms and neighboring hamlets, Came in their holiday dresses the blithe Acadian peasants. Many a glad good-morrow and jocund laugh from the young folk Made the bright air brighter, as up from the numerous meadows, Where no path could be seen but the track of wheels in the greensward, Group after group appeared, and joined, or passed on the highway. Long ere noon, in the village all sounds of labor were silenced. Thronged were the streets with people; and noisy groups at the house-doors Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and gossiped together.
Every house was an inn, where all were welcomed and feasted;
For with this simple people, who lived like brothers together,
All things were held in common, and what one had was another’s.
Yet under Benedict’s roof hospitality seemed more abundant:
For Evangeline stood among the guests of her father;
Bright was her face with smiles, and words of welcome and gladness
Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed the cup as she gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous air of the orchard,
Stript of its golden fruit, was spread the feast of betrothal.
There in the shade of the porch were the priest and the notary seated;
There good Benedict sat, and sturdy Basil the blacksmith.
Not far withdrawn from these, by the cinder-press and the beehives,
Michael the fiddler was placed, with the gayest of hearts and of waistcoats.
Shadow and light from the leaves alternately played on his snow-white
Hair, as it waved in the wind; and the jolly face of the fiddler
Glowed like a living coal when the ashes are blown from the embers.
Gayly the old man sang to the vibrant sound of his fiddle,
Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres, and Le Carillon du Dunquerque,
And anon with his wooden shoes beat time to the music.
Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of the dizzying dances
Under the orchard-trees and down the path to the meadows;
Old folk and young together, and children mingled among them.

Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline, Benedict’s daughter!
Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel, son of the blacksmith!

So passed the morning away. And lo! with a summons sonorous
Sounded the bell from its tower, and over the meadows a drum beat.
Thronged ereelong was the church with men. Without, in the church yard,
Waited the women. They stood by the graves, and hung on the headstones
Garlands of autumn-leaves and evergreens fresh from the forest.
Then came the guard from the ships, and marching proudly among them
Entered the sacred portal. With loud and dissonant clangor
Echoed the sound of their brazen drums from ceiling and casement,--
Echoed a moment only, and slowly the ponderous portal
Closed, and in silence the crown awaited the will of the soldiers.
Then uprose their commander, and spake from the steps of the altar,
Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals, the royal commission.
“You are convened this day,” he said, “by his Majesty’s orders.
Clement and kind he has been; but how you have answered his kindness,
Let your own hearts reply! To my natural make and my temper
Painful the task is I do, which to you I know must be grievous.
Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver the will of our monarch;
Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings, and cattle of all kinds
Forfeited be to the crown; and that you yourselves from this province
Be transported to other lands. God grant you may dwell there.
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and peaceable people!
Prisoners now I declare you; for such is his Majesty’s pleasure!”
As, when the air is serene in sultry solstice of summer,
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly sling of the hailstones
Beats down the farmer’s corn in the field and shatters his windows,
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground with thatch form the house-roofs,
Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break their enclosures;
So on the hearts of the people descended the words of the speaker.
Silent a moment they stood in speechless wonder, and then rose
Louder and even louder a wail of sorrow and anger,
And, by one impulse moved, they madly rushed to the door-way.
Vain was the hope of escape; and cries and fierce imprecations
Rang through the house of prayer; and high o’er the heads of the others
Rose, with this arms uplifted, the figure of Basil the blacksmith,
As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the billows.
Flushed was his face and distorted with passion; and wildly he shouted,—
“Down with the tyrants of England! we never have sworn them allegiance!
Death to those foreign soldiers, who seize on our homes and our harvests!”
More he fain would have said, but the merciless hand of the soldier
Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged him down to the pavement.

In the midst of the strife and tumult of angry contention,
Lo! the door of the chancel opened, and Father Felician
Entered, with serious mien, and ascended the steps of the altar.
Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture he awed into silence
All that clamorous throng; and thus he spake to his people;
Deep were his tones and solemn; in accents measured and mournful
Spake he, as, after the tocsin’s alarum, distinctly the clock strikes.
“What is this that ye do, my children? what madness has seized you?
Forty years of my life have I labored among you, and taught you,
Not in word alone, but in deed, to love one another!
Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils and prayers and privations?
Have you so soon forgotten all lessons of love and forgiveness?
This is the house of the Prince of Peace, and would you profane it
Thus with violent deeds and hearts overflowing with hatred?
Lo! where the crucified Christ form his cross is gazing upon you!
See! in those sorrowful eyes what meekness and holy compassion!
Hark! how those lips still repeat the prayer, ‘O Father, forgive them!’
Let us repeat it now, and say, ‘O Father, forgive them!’”
Few were his words of rebuke, but deep in the hearts of his people
Sank they, and sobs of contrition succeeded the passionate outbreak,
While they repeated his prayer, and said, “O Father, forgive them!”

Then came the evening service. The tapers gleamed from the altar.
Fervent and deep was the voice of the priest, and the people responded,
Not with their lips alone, but their hearts; and the Ave Maria
Sang they, and fell on their knees, and
their souls, with devotion translated,
Rose on the ardor of prayer, like Elijah
ascending to heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village the
 tidings of ill, and on all sides
Wandered, wailing, from house to house
the woman and children.
Long at her father’s door Evangeline stood,
 with her right hand
Shielding her eyes from the level rays of
the sun, that descending,
Lighted the village street with mysterious
spleandor, and roofed each
Peasant’s cottage with golden thatch, and
emblazoned its windows.
Long within had been spread the snow-
white cloth on the table;
There stood the wheaten loaf, and the
 honey fragrant with wild-flowers;
There stood the tankard of ale, and
the cheese fresh brought from the
dairy,
And, at the head of the board, the great
 arm-chair of the farmer.
Thus did Evangeline wait at her father’s
doors, as the sunset
Threw the long shadows of trees o’er the
broad ambrosial meadows.
Ah! on her spirit within a deeper shadow
had fallen,
And from the fields of her soul a fragrance
celestial ascended,—
Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and
forgiveness and patience!
Then, all-forgetful of self, she wandered
into the village,
Cheering with looks and words the mourn-
ful hearts of the women,
As o’er the darkening fields with lingering
steps they departed,
Urged by their household cares, and the
weary feet of their children.
Down sank the great red sun, and in
golden, glimmering vapors

Veiled the light of his face, like the
Prophet descending from Sinai.
Sweetly over the village the bell of the
Angelus sounded.

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the
church Evangeline lingered.
All was silent within; and in vain at the
door and the windows
Stood she, and listened and looked, till,
overcome by emotion,
“Gabriel!” cried she aloud with tremulous
voice; but no answer
Came from the graves of the dead, nor the
gloomier grave of the living.
Slowly at length she retuned to the tenant-
less house of her father.
Smouldered the fire on the hearth, on the
board was the supper untasted,
Empty and drear was each room, and
haunted with phantoms of terror.
Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the
floor of her chamber.
In the dead of the night she heard the dis-
consolate rain fall
Loud on the withered leaves of the syca-
more-tree by the window.
Keenly the lightening flashed; and the voice
of the echoing thunder
Told her that God was in heaven, and gov-
erned the world he created!
Then she remembered the tale she had
heard of the justice of Heaven;
Soothed was her troubled soul, and she
peacefully slumbered till morning.

Four times the sun had risen and set; and
now on the fifth day
Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping
maids of the farm-house.
Soon o’er the yellow fields, in silent and
mournful procession,
Came from the neighboring hamlets and
farms the Acadian women,
Driving in ponderous wains their house-
hold goods to the sea-shore,
Pausing and looking back to gaze once
more on their dwelling,
Ere they were shut from sight by the
winding road and the woodland.
Close at their sides their children ran, and
urged on the oxen,
While in their hands they clasped
some fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau’s mouth they hur-
ried; and there on the sea-beach
Piled in confusion lay the household goods
of the peasants.
All day long between the shore and the
ships did the boats ply;
All day long the wains came laboring down
from the village.
Late in the afternoon, when the sun was
near to his setting,
Echoed far o’er the fields came the roll of
drums from the church yard.
Thither the women and children thronged.
On a sudden the church-doors
Opened, and forth came the guard, and
marching in gloomy procession
Followed the long imprisoned, but patient,
Acadian farmers,
Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from
their homes and their country,
Sing as they go, and in singing forget they
are weary and wayworn,
So with songs on their lips the Acadian
peasants descended
Down from the church to the shore, amid
their wives and their daughters.
Foremost the young men came; and, raising
together their voices,
Sang with tremulous lips a chant of the
Catholic Missions:--
“Sacred heart of the Saviour! O inex-
haustible fountain!
Fill our hearts this day with strength and
submission and patience!”

Then the old men, as they marched, and
the women that stood by the way-
side
Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds
in the sunshine above them
Mingled their notes therewith, like voices
of spirits departed.

Half-way down to the shore Evangeline
waited in silence,
Not overcome with grief, but strong in the
hour of affliction,--
Calmly and sadly she waited, until the pro-
cession approached her,
And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale
with emotion.
Tears filled her eyes, and, eagerly run-
ing to meet him,
Clasped she his hands, and laid her head on
his shoulder, and whispered,--
“Gabriel! be of good cheer! for if we
love one another
Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever
mischances may happen!”
Smiling she spake these words; then sud-
denly paused, for her father
Saw she slowly advancing. Alas! how
changed was his aspect!
Gone was the glow from his cheek, and the
fire from his eye, and his footstep
Heavier seemed with the weight of the
heavy heart in his bosom.
But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped
his neck and embraced him,
Speaking words of endearment where words
of comfort availed not.
Thus to the Gaspereau’s mouth moved on
that mournful procession.

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult
and stir of embarking.
Busily plied the freighted boats; and in
the confusion
Wives were torn from their husbands, and
mothers, too late saw their children
Left on the land, extending their arms, with wildest entreaties.
So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,
While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood with her father.
Half the task was not done when the sun went down, and the twilight
Deepened and darkened around; and in haste the refluent ocean
Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the sand-beach
Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and the slippery sea-weed.
Farther back in the midst of the household goods and the wagons,
Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after a battle,
All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels near them,
Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian farmers.
Back to its northernmost caves retreated the bellowing ocean,
Dragging adown the beach the rattling pebbles, and leaving
Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats of the sailors.
Then, as the night descended, the herds returned from their pastures;
Sweet was the moist still air with the odor of milk form their utters;
Lowing they waited, and long, at the well-known bars of the farm-yard,—
Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the hand of the milk-maid.
Silence reigned in the streets; from the church no Angelus sounded,
Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no lights from the windows.

But on the shores meanwhile the evening fires had been kindled,
Built of the drift-wood thrown on the sands from wrecks in the tempest.
Round them shapes of gloom and sorrowful faces were gathered,
Voices of women were heard, and of men, and the crying of children.
Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth to hearth in his parish,
Wandered the faithful priest, consoling and blessing and cheering,
Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita’s desolate sea-shore.
Thus he approached the place where Evangeline sat with her father,
And in the flickering light beheld the fate of the old man,
Haggard and hollow and wan, and without either thought or emotion,
E’en as the face of a clock from which the hands have been taken.
Vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses to cheer him,
Vainly offered him food; yet he moved not, he looked not, he spake not,
But with a vacant stare, ever gazed at the flickering fire-light.

“Benedicite!” murmured the priest, in tones of compassion.
More he fain would have said, but his heart was full, and his accents
Falterered and paused on his lips, as the feet of a child on a threshold,
Hushed by the scene he beholds, and the awful presence of sorrow.
Silently, therefore he laid his hand on the head of the maiden,
Raising his tearful eyes to the silent stars that above them
Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs and sorrows of mortals.
Then he sat down at her side, and they wept together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light, as in autumn the blood-red
Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven, and o’er the horizon
Titan-like stretched its hundred hands upon the mountain and meadow,
Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and piling huge shadows together.
Broader and even broader it gleamed on the roof of the village,
Gleamed on the sky and sea, and the ships that lay in the roadstead.
Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of flame were
Thrust through their folds and withdrawn, like the quivering hands of a martyr.
Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the burning thatch, and, uplifting,
Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from a hundred house-tops
Started the sheeted smoke with flashed of flame intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crown on the shore and on shipboard.
Speechless at first they stood, then cried aloud in their anguish,
“We shall behold no more our homes in the village of Grand-Pre!”
Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow in the farm-yards,
Thinking the day had dawned; and anon the lowing of cattle
Came on the evening breeze, by the barking of dogs interrupted.
Then rose a sound of dread, such as startles the sleeping encampments
Far in the western prairies or forests that skirt the Nebraska,
When the wild horses affrighted sweep by with the speed of the whirlwind,
Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes rush to the river.
Such was the sound that arose on the night, as the herds and the horses
Broke through their folds and fences, and madly rushed o’er the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speechless, the priest and the maiden
Gazed on the scene of terror that reddened and widened before them;

And as they turned at length to speak to their silent companion,
Lo! from his seat he had fallen, and stretched abroad on the sea-shore
Motionless lay his form, from which the soul had departed.
Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless head, and the maiden
Knelt at her father’s side, and wailed aloud in her terror.
Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with her head on his bosom.
Through the long night she lay in deep, oblivia slumber;
And when she awoke from the trance, she beheld a multitude near her.
Faces of friends she beheld, that were mournfully gazing upon her,
Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of saddest compassion.
Still the blaze of the burning village illuminated the landscape,
Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed on the faces around her,
And like the day of doom it seemed to her wavering senses.
Then a familiar voice she heard, as it said to the people,—
“Let us bury him here by the sea. When a happier season
Brings us again to our homes from the unknown land of our exile,
Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid in the church-yard.”
Such were the words of the priest. And there in haste by the sea-side,
Having the glare of the burning village for funeral torches,
But without bell or book, they buried the farmer of Grand-Pre.
And as the voice of the priest repeated the service of sorrow,
Lo! with a mournful sound, like the voice of a vast congregation,
Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar with the dirges.
'T was the returning tide, that afar from 
the waste of the ocean, 
With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and hurrying landward. 
Then recommended once more the stir and noise of embarking; 
And with the ebb of the tide the ships sailed out of the harbor, 
Leaving behind them the dead on the shore, 
and the village in ruins.

Part the Second

Many a weary year had passed since the burning of Grand-Pre, 
When on the falling tide the freighted vessels departed, 
Bearing a nation, with all its household gods, into exile, 
Exile without an end, and without an example in story. 
Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Acadians landed; 
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow, 
when the wind from the north-east 
Strikes aslant through the fogs that darken the Banks of Newfoundland. 
Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wandered from city to city, 
From the cold lakes of the North, to sultry Southern savannas,—
From the bleak shores of the sea to the lands where the Father of Waters 
Seizes the hills in his hands, and drags them down to the ocean, 
Deep in their sands to bury the scattered bones of the mammoth. 
Friends they sought and homes; and many, despairing, heart-broken, 
Asked of the earth but a grave, and no longer a friend nor a fireside. 
Written their history stands on tablets of stone in the churchyards. 
Long among them was seen a maiden who waited and wandered, 
Lowly and meek in spirit, and patiently suffering all things. 
Fair was she and young: but, alas! before her extended, 
Dreary and vast and silent, the desert of life, with its pathway. 
Marked by the graves of those who had sorrowed and suffered before her, 
Passions long extinguished, and hopes long dead and abandoned, 
As the emigrant’s way o’er the Western desert is marked by 
Camp-fires long consumed, and bones that bleach in the sunshine. 
Something there was in her life incomplete, imperfect, unfinished; 
As if a morning of June, with all its music and sunshine, 
Suddenly paused in the sky, and fading, slowly descended 
Into the east again, from whence it late had arisen. 
Sometimes she lingered in towns, till, urged by the fever within her, 
Urged by a restless longing, the hunger and thirst of the spirit, 
She would commence again her endless search and endeavor; 
Sometimes in churchyards strayed, and gazed on the crosses and tombstones, 
Sat by some nameless grave, and thought that perhaps in its bosom 
He was already at rest, and she longed to slumber beside him. 
Sometimes a rumor, a hearsay, an inarticulate whisper, 
Came with its airy hand to point and beckon her forward. 
Sometimes she spake with those who had seen her beloved and known him, 
But in was long ago, in some far-off place or forgotten. 
“Gabriel Lajeunesse!” they said; “Oh yes! we have seen him.
He was with Basil the blacksmith, and both have gone to the prairies; Coureurs-des-Bois are they, and famous hunters and trappers.”

“Gabriel Lajeunesse!” said others; “Oh yes! we have seen him. He is a voyageur in the lowlands of Louisiana.”

Then they would say, “Dear child! why dream and wait for him longer? Are there not other youths as fair as Gabriel? others Who have hearts as tender and true, and sprits as loyal? Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the notary’s son, who has loved thee Many a tedious year; come, give him thy hand and be happy! Thou art too fair to be left to braid St. Catherine’s tresses.”

Then would Evangeline answer, serenely but sadly, “I cannot! Whither my heart has gone, there follows my hand, and not elsewhere. For when the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illuminates the pathway, Many things are made clear, and else lie hidden in darkness.”

Thereupon the priest, her friends and father-confessor, Said, with a smile!, “O daughter! thy God thus speakith within thee! Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was wasted; If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning Back to their spring, like the rain, shall fill them full of refreshment; That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain. Patience; accomplish thy labor; accomplish thy work of affection! Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient endurance is godlike, Therefore accomplish they labor of love, till the heart is made godlike.

Purified, strengthened, perfected, and rendered more worthy of heaven!”

Cheered by the good man’s words, Evangeline labored and waited. Still in her heart she heard the funeral dirge of the ocean, But with its sound there was mingled a voice that whispered, “Despair not!”

Thus did that poor soul wander in want and cheerless discomfort, Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards and thorns of existence. Let me essay, O Muse! to follow the wanderer’s footsteps;-- Not through each devious path, each changeful year of existence, But as a traveler follows a streamlet’s course through the valley: Far from its margin at times, and seeing the gleam of its water Here and there, in some open space, and at intervals only; Then drawing nearer its banks, through sylvan glooms that conceal it, Though he behold it not, he can hear its continuous murmur; Happy, at length, if he find the spot where it reaches an outlet.

II.

It was the month of May. Far down the Beautiful River, Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth of the Wabash, Into the golden stream of the broad and swift Mississippi, Floated a cumbrous boat, that was rowed by Acadian boatmen. It was a band of exiles: a raft, as it were, from the shipwrecked Nation, scattered along the coast, now floating together, Bound by the bonds of a common belief and a common misfortune;
Men and women and children, who, guided  
by hope or by hearsay,  
Sought for their kith and their kin among  
the few-acred farmers  
On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of  
fair Opelousas.  
With them Evangeline went, and her guide,  
the Father Felician.  
Onward o’er sunken sands, through a wil- 
derness somber with forests,  
Day after day they glided adown the turbu- 
lent river;  
Night after night, by the blazing fires,  
encamped on its borders.  
Now through rusting chutes, among green  
islands, where plumelike  
Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests,  
they swept with the current,  
Then emerged into broad lagoons, where  
silvery sand-bars  
Lay in the stream, and along the wimpling  
waves of their margin,  
Shining with snow-white plumes, large  
flocks of pelicans waded.  
Level the landscape grew, and along the  
shores of the river,  
Shaded by china-trees, in the midst of lux- 
uriant gardens,  
Stood the houses of planters, with negro- 
cabins and dove-cots.  
They were approaching the region where  
reigns perpetual summer,  
Where through the Golden Coast, and  
groves of orange and citron,  
Sweeps with majestic curve the river away  
to the eastward.  
They, too, swerved from their course; and,  
entering the Bayou of Plaque- 
mine,  
Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and  
devious waters,  
Which, like a network of steel, extended in  
every direction.  
Over their heads the towering and tene- 
brous boughs of the cypress  
Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses  
in mid-air  
Waved like banners that hang on the walls  
of ancient cathedrals.  
Deathlike the silence seemed, and unbroken,  
save by the herons  
Home to their roosts in their cedar-trees re- 
turning at sunset,  
Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon with  
demoniac laughter.  
Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced and  
gleamed on the water,  
Gleamed on the columns of cypress and  
cedar sustaining the arches,  
Down through whose broken vaults it fell  
as through chinks in a ruin.  
Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange were  
all things around them;  
And o’er their spirits there came a feeling  
of wonder and sadness, --  
Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that  
cannot be compassed.  
As, at the tramp of a horse’s hoof on the  
turf of the prairies,  
Far in advance are closed the leaves of the  
shrinking mimosa,  
So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad fore- 
bodings of evil,  
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke  
of doom has attained it.  
But, Evangeline’s heart was sustained by a  
vision, that faintly  
Floated before her eyes, and beckoned her  
on through the moonlight.  
It was the thought of her brain that as- 
sumed the shape of a phantom.  
Through those shadowy aisles had Gabriel  
wandered before her,  
And every stroke of the oar now brought  
him nearer and nearer.  

Then in his place, the prow of the  
boat, rose one of the oarsmen,  
And, as a signal sound, if other like them  
peradventure  
Sailed on those gloomy and midnight  
streams, blew a blast on his bugle.
Wild through the dark colonnades and corridors leafy the blast rang,
Breaking the seal of silence, and giving tongues to the forest.
Soundless above them the banners of moss just stirred to the music.
Multitudinous echoes awoke and died in the distance,
Over the watery floor, and beneath the reverberant branches;
But not a voice replied; no answer came from the darkness;
And, when the echoes had ceased, like a sense of pain was the silence.
Then Evangeline slept; but the boatmen rowed through the midnight,
Silent at times, then singing familiar Canadian boat-songs,
Such as they sang of old in their own Acadian rivers,
While through the night were heard the mysterious sounds of the desert,
Far off, --indistinct,--as of wave or wind in the forest,
Mixed with the whoop of the crane and the roar of the grim alligator.

Thus ere another noon they emerged from the shades; and before them
Lay in the golden sun, the lakes of the Atchafalaya.
Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the slight undulations
Made by the passing oars, and, resplendent in beauty, the lotus
Lifted her golden crown above the heads of the boatmen.
Faint was the air with the odorous breath of magnolia blossoms,
And with the heat of noon; and numberless sylvan islands,
Fragrant and thickly embowered with blossoming hedges of roses,
Near to whose shores they glided along, invited to slumber.
Soon by the fairest of these their weary oars were suspended.
Under the boughs of Wachita willows, that grew by the margin,
Safely their boat was moored; and scattered about on the greensward,
Tired with their midnight toil, the weary travellers slumbered.
Over them vast and high extended the cope of a cedar.
Swinging from its great arms, the trumpet-flower and the grapevine
Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the ladder of Jacob,
On whose pendulous stairs the angels ascending, descending,
Were the swift humming-birds, that flitted from blossom to blossom.
Such was the vision Evangeline saw as she slumbered beneath it.
Filled was her heart with love, and the dawn of an opening heaven
Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory of religions celestial.

Nearer, and even nearer among the numberless islands,
Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away o’er the water,
Northward its prow was turned, to the land of the bison and beaver.
At the helm sat a youth, with countenance thoughtful and careworn.
Dark and neglected locks overshadowed his brow, and a sadness
Somewhat beyond his years on his face was
Near to these legsibly written.

Urged on its course by the sinewy arms of hunters and trappers. Northward its prow was turned, to the land of the bison and beaver. At the helm sat a youth, with countenance thoughtful and careworn. Dark and neglected locks overshadowed his brow, and a sadness. Somewhat beyond his years on his face was legibly written. Gabriel was it, who, weary with waiting, unhappy and restless, Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of self and of sorrow. Swiftly they glided along, close under the lee of the island, But by the opposite bank, and behind a screen of palmettos, So that they saw not the boat, where it lay concealed in the willows; All undisturbed by the dash of their oars, and unseen, were the sleepers. Angel of God was there none to awaken the slumbering maiden. Swiftly they glided away, like the shade of a cloud on the prairie. After the sound of their oars on the tholes had died in the distance, As from a magic trance the sleepers awoke, and the maiden Said with a sigh to the friendly priest, “O Father Felician! Something says in my heart that near me Gabriel wanders. Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague superstition? Or has an angel passed, and revealed the truth to my spirit?” Then, with a blush, she added, “Alas for my credulous fancy! Unto ears like thine such words as these have no meaning.” But made answer the reverend man, and

he smiled as he answered.--
“Daughter, thy words are not idle; nor are they to me without meaning. Feeling is deep and still; and the word that floats on the surface Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where the anchor is hidden. Therefore trust to thy heart, and to what the world calls illusions. Gabriel truly is near thee; for not far away to the southward, On the banks of the Teche, are the towns of St. Maur and St. Martin. There the long-wandering bride shall be given again her bridegroom, There the long-absent pastor regain his flock and his sheepfold. Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and forests of fruit-trees; Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest of heavens Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls of the forest. They who dwell there have named it the Eden of Louisiana!”

With these words of cheer they arose and continued their journey. Softly the evening came. The sun from the western horizon Like a magician extended his golden wand o’er the landscape; Twinkling vapors arose; and sky and water and forest Seemed all on fire at the touch, and melted and mingled together. Hanging between two skies, a cloud with edges of silver, Floated the boat, with its dripping oars, on the motionless water. Filled was Evangeline’s heart with inexpressible sweetness.
Touched by the magic spell, the sacred fountains of feeling
Glowed with the light of love, as the skies and waters around her.
Then from a neighboring thicket the mocking-bird, wildest of singers,
Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung o’er the water,
Shook from his little throat such floods of delirious music,
That the whole air and the woods and the waves seemed silent to listen.
Plaintive at first were the tones and sad:
then soaring to madness
Seemed they to follow or guide the revel of frenzied Bacchantes.
Single notes were then heard, in sorrowful, low lamentation;
Till, having gathered them all, he flung them abroad in derision,
As when, after a storm, a gust of wind through the tree-tops
Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal shower on the branches.
With such a prelude as this, and hearts that throbbed with emotion,
Slowly they entered the Teche, where it flows through the green Opelousas,
And, through the amber air, above the crest of the woodland,
Saw the column of smoke that arose from a neighboring dwelling;--
Sounds of a horn they heard, and the distant lowing of cattle.

III.
Near to the bank of the river, o’ershadowed by oaks, from whose branches
Garlands of Spanish moss and of mystic mistletoe flaunted,
Such as the Druids cut down with golden hatchets at Yule-tide,
Stood, secluded and still, the house of the herdmen.  A garden
Girded it round about with a belt of luxury-blossoms,
Filling the air with fragrance.  The house itself was of timbers
Hewn from the cypress-tree, and carefully fitted together.
Large and low was the roof; and on slender columns supported,
Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled, a broad and spacious veranda,
Haunt of the humming-bird and the bee, extended around it.
At each end of the house, amid the flowers of the garden,
Stationed the dove-cots were, as love’s perpetual symbol,
Scenes of endless wooing, and endless contentions of rivals.
Silence reigned o’er the place.  The line of shadow and sunshine
Ran near the tops of the trees; but the house itself was in shadow,
And from its chimney-top, ascending and slowly expanding
Into the evening air, a think blue column of smoke rose.
In the read of the house, form the garden gate, ran a pathway
Through the great groves of oak to the skirts of the limitless prairie,
Into whose sea of flowers the sun was slowly descending.
Full in his track of light, like ships with shadowy canvas
Hanging loose from their spars in a motionless calm in the tropics,
Stood a cluster of trees, with tangled cordage of grape-vines.

Just where the woodlands met the flowery surf of the prairie,
Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish saddle and stirrups,
Sat a herdsman, arrayed in gaiters and doublet of deerskin,
Broad and brown was the face that from under the Spanish sombrero Gazed on the peaceful scene, with the lordly look of its master. Round about him were numberless herds of kine, that were grazing Quietly in the meadows, and breathing the vapory freshness That uprose from the river, and spread itself over the landscape. Slowly lifting the horn that hung at his side, and expanding Fully his broad, deep chest, he blew a blast, that resounded Wildly and sweet and far, through the still damp air of the evening. Suddenly out of the grass the long white horns of the cattle Rose like flakes of foam on the adverse currents of ocean. Silent a moment they grazed, then bellowing rushed o’er the prairie, And the whole mass became a cloud, a shade in the distance. Then, as the herdsman turned to the house, through the gate of the garden Saw he the forms of the priest and the maiden advancing to meet him. Suddenly down from his horse he sprang in amazement, and forward Rushed with extended arms and exclamations of wonder; When they beheld his face, they recognized Basil the blacksmith. Heartly his welcome was, as he led his guests to the garden. There in an arbor of roses with endless questions and answer Gave they vent to their hearts, and renewed their friendly embraces, Laughing and weeping by turns, or sitting silent and thoughtful. Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not; and now dark doubts and misgivings Stole o’er the maiden’s heart; and Basil, somewhat embarrassed, Broke the silence and said, “If you came by the Atchafalaya, How have you nowhere encountered my Gabriel’s boat on the bayous?” Over Evangeline’s face at the words of Basil a shadow passed. Tears came into her eyes, and she said, with a tremulous accent, “Gone? is Gabriel gone?” and, concealing her face on his shoulder, All her o’erburdened heart gave way, and she wept and lamented. Then the good Basil said, -- and his voice grew blithe as he said it,-- “Be of good cheer, my child; it is only today he departed. Foolish boy! he has left me alone with my herds and my horses. Moody and restless grown, and tried and troubled, his spirit Could no longer endure the calm of this quiet existence, Thinking ever of thee, uncertain and sorrowful ever, Ever silent, or speaking only of thee and his troubles, He at length had become so tedious to men and to maidens, Tedium even to me, that at length I be-thought me, and sent him Unto the towns of Adayes to trade for mules with the Spaniards. Thence he will follow the Indian trails to the Ozark Mountains, Hunting for furs in the forest, on rivers trapping the beaver. Therefore be of good cheer; we will follow the fugitive lover; He is not far on his way, an the Fates and the streams are against him. Up and away to-morrow, and through the red dew of the morning We will follow him fast, and bring him back to his prison.”
Then glad voices were heard, and up from the banks of the river, Borne aloft on his comrades’ arms, came Michael the fiddler. Long under Basil’s roof had he lived like a god on Olympus, Having no other care than dispensing music to mortals. Far renowned was he for his silver locks and his fiddle. “Long live Michael,” they cried, “our brave Acadian minstrel!” As they bore him aloft in triumphal procession; and straightway Father Felician advanced with Evangeline, greeting the old man Kindly and oft, and recalling the past, while Basil, enraptured, Hailed with hilarious joy his old companions and gossips, Laughing loud and long, and embracing mothers and daughters. Much they marveled to see the wealth of the ci-devant blacksmith, All his domains and his herds, and his patriarchal demeanor; Much they marveled to hear his tales of the soil and the climate, And of the prairies, whose numberless herds were his who would take them; Each one thought in his heart, that he, too, would go and do likewise. Thus they ascended the steps, and crossing the breezy veranda, Entered the hall of the house, where already the supper of Basil Waited his return; and they rested and feasted together. Over the joyous feast the sudden darkness descended. All was silent without, and, illuminating the landscape with silver, Fair rose the dewy moon and the myriad stars; but within doors, Brighter than these, shone the faces of friends in the glimmering lamp-light. Then from his station aloft, at the head of the table, the herdsman Poured forth hid heart and his wine together in endless profusion. Lighting his pipe, that was filled with sweet Natchitoches tobacco, Thus he spake to his guests, who listened, and smiled as they listened:— “Welcome once more, my friends, who long have been friendless and homeless, Welcome once more to a home, that is better perchance than the old one! Here no hungry winter congeals our blood like the rivers; Here no stony ground provokes the wrath of the farmer. Smoothly the ploughshare runs through the soil, as a keel through the water. All the year round the orange-groves are in blossom; and grass grows More in a single night than a whole Canadian summer. Here, too, numberless herds run wild and unclaimed in the prairies; Here, too, lands may be had for the asking, and forests of timber With a few blows of the axe are hewn and framed into houses. After your houses are built, and your fields are yellow with harvests, No King George of England shall drive you away from your homesteads, Burning your dwellings and barns, and stealing your farms and your cattle.” Speaking those words, he blew a wrathful cloud from his nostrils, While his huge, brown hand came thundering down on the table, So that the guests all started; and Father Felician, astounded, Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff
half-way to his nostrils.
But the brave Basil resumed, and his
words were milder and gayer:--
“Only beware of the fever, my friends,
beware of the fever!
For it is not like that of our cold Acadian
climate,
Cured by wearing a spider hung round
one’s neck in a nutshell!”
Then there were voices heard at the door,
and footsteps approaching
Sounded upon the stairs and the floor of
the breezy veranda.
It was the neighboring Creoles and small
Acadian planters,
Who had been summoned all to the house
of Basil the Herdsman.
Merry the meeting was of ancient com-
rades and neighbors.
Friend clasped friend in his arms; and
they who before were as strangers,
Meeting in exile, became straightway as
friends to each others,
Drawn by the gentle bond of a common
country together.
But in the neighboring hall a strain of
music, proceeding
From the accordant strings of Michael’s
melodious fiddle,
Broke up all further speech. Away, like
children delighted,
All things forgotten beside, they gave
themselves to the maddening
Whirl of the giddy dance, as it swept and
swayed to the music,
Dreamlike, with beaming eyes and the rush
of fluttering garments.

Meanwhile, apart, at the head of the
hall, the priest and the herdsman
Sat, conversing together of past and present
and future;
While Evangeline stood like one entranced,
for within her
Olden memories rose, and loud in the midst
of the music

Heard she the sound of the sea, and an
irrepressible sadness
Came o’er her heart, and unseen she stole
forth into the garden.
Beautiful was the night. Behind the black
wall of the forest,
Tipping its summit with silver, arose the
moon. On the river
Fell here and there through the branches a
tremulous gleam of the moonlight,
Like the sweet thoughts of love on a dark-
ened and devious spirit.
Nearer and round about her, the manifold
flowers of the garden
Poured out their souls in odors, that were
their prayers and confessions
Unto the night, as it went its way, like a
silent Carthusian.
Fuller of fragrance than they, and as heavy
with shadows and night-dews,
Hung the heart of the maiden. The calm
and the magical moonlight
Seemed to inundate her soul with indefin-
able longings,
As, through the garden-gate, and beneath
the shade of the oak-trees,
Passed she along the path to the edge of
the measureless prairie.
Silent it lay, with a silvery haze upon it,
and fireflies
Gleamed and floated away in mingled and
infinite numbers.
Over her head the stars, the thoughts of
God in the heavens,
Shone on the eyes of man, who had ceased
to marvel and worship,
Save when a blazing comet was seen on the
walls of that temple,
As if a hand had appeared and written
upon them, “Upharsin.”
And the soul of the maiden, between the
stars and the fireflies,
Wandered alone, and she cried, “O, Gabriel!
O my beloved!
Art thou so near unto me, and yet I cannot
behold thee?
Art thou so near unto me, and yet thy voice
does not reach me?
Ah! How often they feet have trod this path
to the prairie!
Ah! How often thine eyes have looked on
the woodlands around me!
Ah! How often beneath this oak, returning
from labor,
Thou hast lain down to rest, and to dream
of me in my slumbers!
When shall these eyes behold, these arms
be folded about thee?”
Loud and sudden and near the roots of a
whippoorwill sounded
Like a flute in the woods; and anon,
through the neighboring thickets,
Farther and farther away it floated and
dropped into silence.
“Patience!” whispered the oaks from orac-
ular caverns of darkness:
And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh re-
sponded, “Tomorrow!”

Bright rose the sun next day; and all the
flowers of the garden
Bathed in shining feet with their tears,
and anointed his tresses
With the delicious balm that they bore in
their vases of crystal.
“Farewell!” said the priest, as he stood at
the shadowy threshold;
“See that you bring us the Prodigal Son
from his fasting and famine,
And, too, the Foolish Virgin, who slept when
the bridegroom was coming.”
“Farewell!” answered the maiden, and,
smiling, with Basil descended
Down to the river’s brink, where the boat-
men already were waiting.
Thus beginning their journey with morn-
ing, and sunshine, and gladness,
Swiftly they followed the flight of him who
was speeding before them,
Blown by the blast of fate like a dead leaf
over the desert.
Not that day, nor the next, nor yet the day
that succeeded,
Found they the trace of his course, in lake
or forest or river,
Nor, after many days, had they found him;
but vague and uncertain
Rumors alone were their guides through a
wild and desolate country;
Till, at the little inn of the Spanish town of
Adayes,
Weary and worn, they alighted, and learned
from the garrulous landlord,
That on the day before, with horses and
guides and companions,
Gabriel left the village, and took the road
of the prairies.

IV
Far in the West there lies a desert land,
where the mountains
Lift, through the perpetual snows, their lofty
and luminous summits.
Down from their jagged, deep ravines,
where the gorge, like a gateway,
Opens a passage rude to the wheels of the
emigrant’s wagon,
Westward the Oregon flows and the Walle-
way and Owyhee.
Eastward, with devious course, among the
Wind-river Mountains,
Through the Sweet-water Valley precipi-
tate leaps the Nebraska;
And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout
and the Spanish sierras,
Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept
by the wind of the desert,
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound,
descend to the ocean,
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud
and solemn vibrations.
Spreading between these streams are the
wondrous, beautiful prairies;
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow
and sunshine,
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and
purple amorphas.
Over them wandered the buffalo herds, and
the elk and the roe-buck;
Over them wandered the wolves, and herds
of riderless horses;
Fires that blast and blight, and winds that
are weary with travel;
Over them wander the scattered tribes of
Ishmael’s children,
Staining the desert with blood; and above
their terrible war-trails
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic,
the vulture,
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain
slaughtered in battle,
By invisible stairs ascending and scaling
the heavens.
Here and there rise groves from the margins
of swift-running rivers;
And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite
monk of the desert,
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for
roots by the brook-side,
And over all its sky, the clear and crys-
talline heaven,
Like the protecting hand of God inverted
above them.

Into this wonderful land, at the base of
the Ozark Mountains,
Gabriel far had entered, with hunters and
trappers behind him.
Day after day, with their Indian guides, the
maiden and Basil
Followed his flying steps, and thought each
day to o’ertake him.
Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw,
the smoke of his camp-fire,
Rise in the morning air from the distant
plain; but at nightfall,
When they had reached the place, they
found only embers and ashes.
And, though their hearts were sad at times
and their bodies were weary,
Hope still guided them on, as the magic of
Fata Morgana
Showed them her lakes of light, then re-
treated and vanished before them.

Once, as they sat by their evening fire,
there silently entered
Into their little camp an Indian woman,
whose features
Wore deep traces of sorrow, and patience
as great as her sorrow.
She was a Shawnee woman returning home
to her people,
From the far-off hunting-grounds of the
cruel Comanches,
Where her Canadian husband, a Coureur-
des-Bois, had been murdered.
Touched were their hearts at her story,
and warmest and friendliest wel-
come
Gave they, with words of cheer, and she
sat and feasted among them
On the buffalo-meat and the venison cooked
on the embers.
But when their meal was done, and Basil
and all his companions,
Worn with the long day’s march and the
chase of the deer and the bison,
Stretched themselves on the ground, and
slept where the quivering fire-light
Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and their
forms wrapped up in their blankets,
Then at the door of Evangeline’s tent she
sat and repeated
Slowly, with soft, low voice, and the charm
of her Indian accent,
All the tale of love, with its pleasures,
and pains, and reverses.
Much Evangeline wept at the tale, and to
know that another
Hapless heart like her own had loved and
had been disappointed.
Moved to the depths of her soul by pity
and woman’s compassion,
Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who had
suffered was near her,
She in turn related her love and all its dis-
asters.
Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat, and
when she had ended
Still was mute; but at length, as if a mys-
terious horror
Passed through her brain, she spake, and
repeated the tale of the Mowis;
Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who won
and wedded a maiden,
But, when the morning came, arose and
passed from the wigwam,
Fading and melting away and dissolving
into the sunshine,
Till she beheld him no more, though she
followed far into the forest.
Then, in those sweet, low tones, that seemed
like a weird incantation,
Told she the tale of the fair Lilinau, who
was wooed by a phantom,
That through the pines o’er her father’s
lodge, in the hush of the twilight,
Breathed like the evening wind, and whis-
pered love to the maiden,
Till she followed his green and waving
plume through the forest,
And nevermore returned, nor was seen
again by her people.
Silent with wonder and strange surprise,
Evangeline listened
To the soft flow of her magical words, till
the region around her
Seemed like enchanted ground, and her
swarthy guest the enchantress.
Slowly over the tops of the Ozark Moun-
tains the moon rose,
Lighting the little tent, and with a mys-
terious splendor
Touching the somber leaves, and embracing
and filling the woodland.
With a delicious sound the brook rushed
by, and the branches
Swayed and sighed overhead in scarcely
audible whispers.
Filled with the thoughts of love was Evan-
geline’s heart, but a secret,
Subtile sense crept in of pain and indefinite
terror,
As the cold, poisonous snake creeps into
the nest of the swallow.
It was no earthly fear. A breath from the
region of spirits
Seemed to float in the air of night; and
she felt for a moment
That, like the Indian maid, she, too, was
pursuing a phantom.
With this thought she slept, and the fear
and the phantom had vanished.

Early upon the morrow the march was
resumed; and the Shawnee
Said, as they journeyed along, “On the
western slope of these mountains
Dwells in his little village the Black Robe
chief of the Mission.
Much he teaches the people, and tells them
of Mary and Jesus.
Loud laugh their hearts with joy, and weep
with pain, as they hear him.”
Then with a sudden and secret emotion,
Evangeline answered,
“Let us go to the Mission, for there good
tidings await us!”
Thither they turned their steeds; and be-
hind a spur of the mountains,
Just as the sun went down, they heard a
murmur of voices,
And in a meadow green and broad, by the
bank of a river,
Saw the tents of the Christians, the tents
of the Jesuit Mission.
Under a towering oak, that stood in the
midst of the village,
Knelt the Black Robe chief with his chil-
dren. A crucifix fastened
High on the trunk of the tree, and over-
shadowed by grapevines,
Looked with its agonized face on the multu-
tude kneeling beneath it.
This was their rural chapel. Aloft, through
the intricate arches
Of its aerial roof, arose the chant of their
vespers,
Mingling its notes with the soft susurrus
and sighs of the branches.
Silent, with heads uncovered, the travelers,
nearer approaching.
Knelt on the swarded floor, and joined in the evening devotions.
But when the service was done, and the benediction had fallen
Forth from the hands of the priest, like seed from the hands of the sower,
Slowly the reverend man advanced to the strangers, and bade them
Welcome; and when they replied, he smiles with benignant expression,
And, with rods of kindness, conducted them into his wigwam.
There upon mats and skins they reposed, and on cakes of the maize-ear
Feasted, and slaked their thirst from the water-gourd of the teacher.
Soon was their story told; and the priest with solemnity answered:--
“Not six suns have risen and set since Gabriel, seated
On this mat by my side, where now he maiden reposes,
Told me this same sad tale; then arose and continued his journey!”
Soft was the voice of the priest, and he spake with an accent of kindness;
But on Evangeline’s heart fell his words as in winter the snow-flakes
Fall into some lone nest from which the birds have deported.
“Far to the north he has gone,” continues the priest; “but in autumn,
When the chase is done, will return again to the Mission.”
Then Evangeline said, and her voice was meek and submissive,
“Let me remain with thee, for my soul is sad and afflicted.”
So seemed it wise and well unto all; and betimes on the morrow,
Mounting his Mexican steed, with his Indian guides and companions,
Homeward Basil returned, and Evangeline stayed at the Mission.
Slowly, slowly, slowly the days succeeded
Gabriel came not.
But on the breath of the summer winds a rumor was wafted
Sweeter than song of bird, or hue or odor of blossom.
Far to the north and east, it said, in the Michigan forests,
Gabriel had his lodge by the banks of the Saginaw River.
And, with returning guides, that sought the lakes of St. Lawrence,
Saying a sad farewell, Evangeline went from the Mission.
When over weary ways, by long and perilous marches,
She had attained at length the depths of the Michigan forests,
Found she the hunter’s lodge deserted and fallen to ruin!

Thus did the long sad years glide on,
and in seasons and places
Divers and distant far was seen the wandering maiden;--
Now in the Tents of Grace of the meek Moravian Missions,
Now in the noisy camps and the battle-fields of the army,
Now in secluded hamlets, in towns and populous cities.
Like a phantom she came, and passed away unremembered.
Fair was she and young, when in hope began the long journey;
Faded was she and old, when in disappointment it ended.
Each succeeding year stole something away from her beauty,
Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the gloom and the shadow.
Then there appeared and spread faint streaks of gray o’er her forehead,
Dawn of another life, that broke o’er her earthly horizon,
As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks of the morning.

In that delightful land which is washed by the Delaware waters,
Guarding in sylvan shades the name of Penn the apostle,
Stands on the banks of its beautiful stream the city he founded.
There all the air is balm, and the peach id the emblem of beauty,
And the streets still reecho the names of the trees of the forest,
As if they fain would appease the Dryads whose haunts they molested.
There from the troubled sea had Evangeline landed, an exile,
Finding among the children of Penn a home and a country.
There old Rene Leblanc had died; and when he departed,
Saw at his side only one of all his hundred descendants.
Something at least there was in the friendly streets of the city,
Something that spake to her heart, and made her no longer a stranger;
And her ear was pleased with the Thee and Thou of the Quakers,
For it recalled the past, the old Acadian country,
Where all men were equal, and all were brothers and sisters.
So, when the fruitless search, the disappointed endeavor,
Ended, to recommence no more upon the earth, uncomplaining,
Thither, as leaves to the light, were turned her thoughts and her footsteps.
As from the mountain’s top the rainy mists of the morning
Roll away, and afar we behold the landscape below us,
Sun-illumined, with shining rivers and cities and hamlets,
So fell the mists from her mind, and she saw the world far below her,
Dark no longer, but all illuminated with love;
and the pathway
Which she had climbed so far, lying smooth
and fair in the distance.
Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her
heart was his image,
Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as
last she beheld him,
Only more beautiful made by his death-like
silence and absence.
Into her thoughts of him time entered not,
for it was not.
Over him years had no power; he was not
changed, but transfigured;
He had become to her heart as one who is
dead, and not absent;
Patience and abnegation of self, and devo-
tion to others,
This was the lesson a life of trial and sor-
row had taught her,
So was her love diffused, but, like to some
odorous spices,
Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling
the air with aroma.
Other hope had she none, nor wish in life,
but to follow
Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred
feet of her Saviour.
Thus many years she lived as a Sister of
Mercy; frequenting
Lonely and wretched roofs in the crowded
lanes of the city,
Where distress and want conceal them-
selves from the sunlight,
Where disease and sorrow in garrets lan-
guished neglected.
Night after night, when the world was
asleep, as the watchman repeated
Loud, through the gusty streets, that all
was well in the city,
High at some lonely window he saw the
light of her taper.
Day after day, in the gray of the dawn, as
slow through the suburbs
Plodded the German farmer, with flowers
and fruits for the market,
Met he that meek, pale face, returning home
from its watchings.

Then it came to pass that a pestilence
fell on the city,
Presaged by wondrous signs, and mostly by
flocks of wild pigeons,
Darkened the sun in their flight, with
naught in their craws but an acorn.
And, as the tides of the sea arise in the
month of September,
Flooding some silver stream, till it spreads
to a lake in the meadow,
So death flooded life, and o’erflowing
its natural margin,
Spread to a brackish lake, the silver
stream of existence.
Wealth had no power to bribe, nor beauty
to charm, the oppressor;
But all perished alike beneath the scourge
of his anger;--
Only, alas! the poor, who had neither
friends nor attendants,
Crept away to die in the almshouse, home
of the homeless.
Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst
of meadows and woodlands;--
Now the city surrounds it; but still, with
its gateway and wicket
Meek, in the midst of splendor, its humble
walls seemed to echo
Softly the words of the Lord: “The poor
ye always have with you.”
Thither, by night and by day, came the
Sister of Mercy. The dying
Looked up into her face, and thought, in-
deed, to behold there
Gleams of celestial light encircle her fore-
head with splendor,
Such as the artist paints o’er the brows of
saints and apostles,
Or such as hangs by night o’er a city seen
at a distance.
Into their eyes it seemed the lamps of the
city celestial,
Into whose shining gates erelong their
spirits would enter.
Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through the streets, deserted and silent,
Wending her quiet way, she entered the door of the almshouse.
Sweet on the summer air was the odor of flowers in the garden;
And she paused on her way to gather the fairest among them,
That the dying once more might rejoice in their fragrance and beauty.
Then, as she mounted the stairs to the corridors, cooled by the east-wind,
Distant and soft on her ear fell the chimes from the belfry of Christ Church,
While, intermingled with these, across the meadows were wafted
Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the Swedes in their church at Wicaco.
Soft as descending wings fell the calm of the hour on her spirit:
Something within her said, “At length thy trials are ended;”
And, with light in her looks, she entered the chamber of sickness.
Noiselessly moved about the assiduous, careful attendants,
Moistening the feverish lip, and the aching brow, and in silence
Closing the sightless eyes of the dead, and concealing their faces,
Where on their pallets they lay, like drifts of snow by the roadside.
Many a languid head, upraised as Evangeline entered,
Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze while she passed, for her presence
Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun on the walls of a prison.
And, as she looked around, she saw how Death, the consoler,
Laying his hand upon many a heart, had healed it forever.
Many familiar forms had disappeared in the night time;
Vacant their places were, or filled already by strangers.
Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling of wonder,
Still she stood, with her colorless lips apart, while a shudder
Ran through her frame, and, forgotten, the flowerets dropped from her fingers,
And from her eyes and cheeks the light and bloom of the morning.
Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such terrible anguish,
That the dying heard it, and started up from their pillows.
On the pallet before her was stretched the form of an old man.
Long, and thin, and gray were the locks that shaded his temples;
But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for a moment
Seemed to assume once more the forms of its earlier manhood;
So are wont to be changed the faces of those who are dying.
Hot and red on his lips still burned the flush of the fever,
As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had besprinkled its portals,
That the Angel of Death might see the sign, and pass over.
Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit exhausted
Seemed to be sinking down through infinite depths in the darkness,
Darkness of slumber and death, forever sinking and sinking.
Then through those realms of shade, in multiplied reverberations,
Heard he that cry of pain, and through the hush that succeeded
Whispered in a gentle voice, in accents tender and saint-like,
“Gabriel! O my beloved!” and died away into silence.
Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the
home of his childhood,  
Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan  
rivers among them,  
Village, and mountain, and woodlands; and  
walking under their shadow,  
As in the days of her youth, Evangeline  
rose in his vision.  
Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly he  
lifted his eyelids,  
Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline  
kneel by his bedside.  
Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for  
the accents unuttered  
Died on his lips, and their motion revealed  
what his tongue would have spoken.  
Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangeline,  
kneeling beside him,  
Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on  
her bosom.  
Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it sud-  
denly sank into darkness,  
As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of  
wind at a casement.  

All was ended now, the hope, and the  
fear, and the sorrow,  
All was aching of heart, the restless, unsat-  
isfied longing,  
All the dull, deep pain, and constant an-  
guish of patience!  
And, as she pressed once more the lifeless  
head to her bosom,  
Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured,  
“Father, I thank thee!”

Still stands the forest primeval; but far  
away from its shadow,  
Side by side, in their nameless graves, the  
lovers are sleeping.  
Under the humble walls of the little Catho-  
lic churchyard,  
In the heart of the city, they lie, unknown  
and unnoticed.  
Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flow-  
ing beside them,  
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where  
theyrs are at rest and forever,  
Thousands of aching brains, where theirs  
no longer are busy,  
Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs  
have ceased from their labors,  
Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have  
completed their journey!

Still stands the forest primeval; but un-  
der the shade of its branches  
Dwells another race, with other customs  
and language.  
Only along the shore of the mournful and  
misty Atlantic  
Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose fa-  
thers from exile  
Wandered back to their native land to die  
in its bosom.  
In the fisherman’s cot the wheel and the  
loom are still busy;  
Maidens still wear their Norman caps and  
their kirtles of homespun,  
And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline’s  
story,  
While from its rocky caverns the deep-  
voiced, neighboring ocean  
Speaks, and in accents diconsolate answers  
the wail of the forest.