

Under the open sky, in the odorous air of
the orchard,
Striped 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Not far withdrawn from these, by the
cider-press and the beehives,
Michael the fiddler was placed, with the
gayest of hearts and of waistcoats.
Shadow and light from the leaves alter-
nately played on his snow-white ³⁹⁰
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 de 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! ⁴⁰⁰

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 ere long was the church with men.
Without, in the churchyard,
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 crowd awaited
the will of the soldiers. ⁴¹⁰

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 has he been; but how
you have answered his kindness,
Let your own hearts reply! To my nat-
ural 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 ⁴²⁰
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 from 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 ever louder a wail of sorrow
and anger, ⁴³⁰
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 his arms uplifted, the figure of
Basil the blacksmith,
As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the
billows.
Flashed was his face and distorted with
passion; and wildly he shouted, —
'Down with the tyrants of England!
we never have sworn them alle-
giance!

Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize
on our homes and our harvests!
More he fain would have said, but the
merciless hand of a soldier
Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged
him down to the pavement. ⁴⁴⁰

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, dis-
tinctly the clock strikes.
'What is this that ye do, my chil-
dren? 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! ⁴⁵⁰
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 over-
flowing with hatred?
Lo! where the crucified Christ from his
cross is gazing upon you!
See! in those sorrowful eyes what meek-
ness and holy compassion!
Hark! how those lips still repeat the
prayer, "O Father, forgive them!"
Let us repeat that prayer in the hour when
the wicked assail us,
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 ⁴⁶⁰
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 trans-
lated,
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 women and children.
Long at her father's door Evangeline stood,
with her right hand ⁴⁷⁰
Shielding her eyes from the level rays of
the sun, that, descending,
Lighted the village street with mysterious
splendor, 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-flow-
ers;
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
door, 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, ⁴⁸⁰
And from the fields of her soul a fragrance
celestial ascended, —
Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and for-
giveness, 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.⁴⁹⁰
 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 returned to the tenantless 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 disconsolate rain fall
 Loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree by the window.⁵⁰⁰
 Keenly the lightning flashed; and the voice of the echoing thunder
 Told her that God was in heaven, and governed 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.

V

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 household goods to the sea-shore,
 Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on their dwellings,⁵¹⁰
 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 little hands they clasped some fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they hurried; 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 churchyard.
 Thither the women and children thronged. On a sudden the church-doors⁵²⁰
 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 inexhaustible fountain!
 Fill our hearts this day with strength and submission and patience!'⁵³⁰
 Then the old men, as they marched, and the women that stood by the wayside
 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 procession approached her,
 And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale with emotion.
 Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly running 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 another⁵⁴⁰
 Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever mischances may happen!'

Smiling she spake these words; then suddenly 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 confusion⁵⁵⁰
 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 reflux 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,⁵⁶⁰
 All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels near them,
 Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian farmers.
 Back to its nethermost 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 from their udders;
 Loning 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,⁵⁷⁰
 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 face of the old man,⁵⁸⁰
 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
 Faltered 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,⁵⁹⁰
 Raising his tearful eyes to the silent stars that above them
 Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs and sorrows of mortals.
 Then sat he 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 stretches its hundred hands upon
the mountain and meadow,
Seizing the rocks and the rivers and piling
huge shadows together.
Broader and ever broader it gleamed on
the roofs 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 ⁶⁰⁰
Thrust through their folds and withdrawn,
like the quivering hands of a mar-
tyr.
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 flashes of
flame intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crowd
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-Pré !'
Loud on a sudden the coeks 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 bark-
ing of dogs interrupted. ⁶¹⁰
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 whirl-
wind,
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 speech-
less, 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. ⁶²¹
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, ob-
livious 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 sad-
dest compassion.
Still the blaze of the burning village illu-
minated the landscape,
Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed
on the faces around her, ⁶³⁰
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 un-
known land of our exile,
Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid
in the churchyard.'
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-Pré.
And as the voice of the priest repeated the
service of sorrow,
Lo! with a mournful sound, like the voice
of a waster congregation, ⁶⁴⁰
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 heav-
ing and hurrying landward.
Then recommenced 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

I

MANY a weary year had passed since the
burning of Grand-Pré,
When on the falling tide the freighted ves-
sels departed,
Bearing a nation, with all its household
gods, into exile,
Exile without an end, and without an ex-
ample in story.
Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Aca-
dians landed;
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow,
when the wind from the northeast
Strikes aslant through the fogs that darken
the Banks of Newfoundland.
Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wan-
dered 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 ¹⁰
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, ²⁰
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; ³⁰
Sometimes in churchyards strayed, and
gazed on the crosses and tomb-
stones,
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 inarticu-
late 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 it 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.' ⁴⁰
'Gabriel Lajeunesse !' said others; 'Oh yes !
we have seen him.
He is a Voyageur in the lowlands of Louisi-
ana.'
Then would they say, 'Dear child ! why
dream and wait for him longer ?
Are there not other youths as fair as Ga-
briel ? others
Who have hearts as tender and true, and
spirits 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.' ¹
Then would Evangeline answer, serenely
but sadly, 'I cannot !
Whither my heart has gone, there follows
my hand, and not elsewhere. ⁵⁰
For when the heart goes before, like a lamp,
and illumines the pathway,
Many things are made clear, that else lie
hidden in darkness.'

¹ There is a common expression in French, '*coiffée
Sainte Catherine*,' meaning to be an old maid.

Thereupon the priest, her friend and father-confessor,
Said, with a smile, 'O daughter! thy God thus speaketh 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 springs, 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.⁶⁰
Therefore accomplish thy 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 change-ful year of existence,
But as a traveller follows a streamlet's course through the valley:⁷⁰
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 shipwrecked⁸⁰
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 wilderness sombre with forests,
Day after day they glided adown the turbulent river;
Night after night, by their blazing fires, encamped on its borders.
Now through rushing chutes, among green islands, where plumelike⁹⁰
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 luxuriant 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.¹⁰⁰
They, too, swerved from their course; and entering the Bayou of Plaquemine,
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 tenebrous 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 the cedar-trees returning 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,¹¹⁰
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 forebodings 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 faintly¹²⁰
Floated before her eyes, and beckoned her on through the moonlight.
It was the thought of her brain that assumed 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, at the prow of the boat, rose one of the oarsmen,
And, as a signal sound, if others 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.¹³⁰
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 on 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.¹⁴⁰

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.¹⁵⁰
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 ¹⁶⁰
Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory of
regions celestial.

Nearer, and ever nearer, among the
numberless islands,
Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away
o'er the water,
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. ¹⁷⁰

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. ¹⁸⁰

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, ¹⁹⁰

On the banks of the Têche, are the towns
of St. Maur and St. Martin.

There the long-wandering bride shall be
given again to 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; ²⁰⁰

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 inex-
pressible 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 mock-
ing-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, ²¹⁰

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 Têche, where it
flows through the green Opelous-
sas,

And, through the amber air, above the
crest of the woodland, ²²⁰

Saw the column of smoke that arose from
a neighboring dwelling; —

Sounds of a horn they heard, and the dis-
tant lowing of cattle.

III

Near to the bank of the river, o'ershad-
owed 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
herdsman. A garden

Girded it round about with a belt of luxuri-
ant 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, ²³⁰

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 per-
petual symbol,

Scenes of endless wooing, and endless con-
tentions 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 thin blue column of
smoke rose.

In the rear of the house, from the garden
gate, ran a pathway ²⁴⁰

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 motion-
less calm in the tropics,

Stood a cluster of trees, with tangled cord-
age of grape-vines.

Just where the woodlands met the flow-
ery surf of the prairie,

Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish sad-
dle 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. ²⁵⁰

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 gazed, then bellow-
ing rushed o'er the prairie,

And the whole mass became a cloud, a
shade in the distance. ²⁶⁰

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 exclama-
tions of wonder;

When they beheld his face, they recognized
Basil the blacksmith.

Hearty his welcome was, as he led his
guests to the garden.

There in an arbor of roses with endless question 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 ²⁷⁰
 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 shade 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 to-day he departed.
 Foolish boy! he has left me alone with my herds and my horses. ²⁸⁰
 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,
 Tedious even to me, that at length I be-
 thought me, and sent him
 Unto the town 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 forests, on rivers trapping the beaver.
 Therefore be of good cheer; we will follow the fugitive lover; ²⁹⁰
 He is not far on his way, and 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 ³⁰⁰
 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 marvelled to see the wealth of the ci-devant blacksmith,
 All his domains and his herds, and his patriarchal demeanor;
 Much they marvelled 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, ³¹⁰
 Entered the hall of the house, where already the supper of Basil
 Waited his late return; and they rested and feasted together.

Over the joyous feast the sudden darkness descended.
 All was silent without, and, illuming 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 lamplight.
 Then from his station aloft, at the head of the table, the herdsman
 Poured forth his 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: — ³²⁰

'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. ³³⁰
 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 these 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, ³⁴⁰
 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 comrades and neighbors:
 Friend clasped friend in his arms; and they who before were as strangers,

Meeting in exile, became straightway as friends to each other,
 Drawn by the gentle bond of a common country together.
 But in the neighboring hall a strain of music, proceeding ³⁵⁰
 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 ³⁶⁰
 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 darkened 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 ³⁷⁰
 Seemed to inundate her soul with indefinable 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 fire-flies

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 fire-flies,³⁸⁰
 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 thy 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 thy slumbers!
 When shall these eyes behold, these arms be folded about thee?'
 Loud and sudden and near the notes of a whippoorwill sounded
 Like a flute in the woods; and anon, through the neighboring thickets,³⁹⁰
 Farther and farther away it floated and dropped into silence.
 'Patience!' whispered the oaks from oracular caverns of darkness:
 And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh responded, 'To-morrow!'
 Bright rose the sun next day; and all the flowers of the garden
 Bathed his 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 descended⁴⁰⁰
 Down to the river's brink, where the boatmen already were waiting.

Thus beginning their journey with morning, 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,⁴¹⁰
 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 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 precipitate leaps the Nebraska;
 And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout and the Spanish sierras,⁴²⁰
 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 roebuck;

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,⁴³⁰
 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 smokes from the camps of these savage marauders;
 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 is the sky, the clear and crystalline heaven,
 Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.⁴⁴⁰
 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 Fata Morgana
 Showed them her lakes of light, that retreated and vanished before them.⁴⁵⁰
 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 Camanches,
 Where her Canadian husband, a Coureur-des-Bois, had been murdered.
 Touched were their hearts at her story, and warmest and friendliest welcome
 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,⁴⁶⁰
 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 her 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,⁴⁷⁰
 She in turn related her love and all its disasters.
 Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat, and when she had ended
 Still was mute; but at length, as if a mysterious 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,⁴⁸⁰