

TRANSACTIONS  
OF THE  
Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.

SESSION OF 1869-'70.

PAPER II.—“EVANGELINE” AND “THE ARCHIVES  
OF NOVA SCOTIA ;” OR, THE POETRY AND  
PROSE OF HISTORY.

BY DR. W. J. ANDERSON, PRESIDENT.

[Read before the Society, Jan'y. 19th, 1870.]

A good many learn history from Shakespeare and Walter Scott, and are apparently as well content as if their information had been derived from more authentic sources; nor is this to be wondered at, when we know that the creations of these demigods of literature contain so much truth as to make the alloy supplied by the imagination readily pass current as having the ring of the true coin.

It is not, then, surprising, that, when Longfellow delighted the world with his beautiful poem of “Evangeline,” the incidents of which adhered so closely to what had been generally accepted as authenticated facts, and which itself was so well calculated to appeal to the higher sympathies of our nature,—it is not surprising that it was received not only by his own countrymen, but by the people of England, almost as a revelation of holy writ. So strongly did this feeling prevail, that at the time of its publication in England, in 1849, it was introduced by the publisher as follows:—  
“The beautiful poem of Evangeline cannot fail to awaken painful feelings in the mind of every thoughtful Englishman.”