

and scene strictly American. When he had finished reading it, Dr. Holmes wrote the author: "The story is beautiful in conception as in execution. I read it as I should have listened to some exquisite symphony." In the same vein Mr. John Lothrop Motley wrote: "I find it in many respects superior to anything you have published. As it is the longest, so it is the most complete, the most artistically finished, of all your poems. I know nothing better in the language or in any language than the landscape painting." From London Mr. John Forster wrote: "How beautiful and masterly your poem is. . . . Your pictures are charming throughout, radiant with colour, rich in emotion; and you do as much with a single word very often as the best of our old poets."

When he began his poem Longfellow was undecided as to the name he should give his heroine. On the 7th of December, 1845, he wrote in his journal: "I know not what name to give to, — not my new baby, but my new poem. Shall it be 'Gabrielle' or 'Celestine' or 'Evangeline'?" The name he fixed upon he probably finally chose because it seemed to him, as it seems to us, much the most musical of the three. Of the persons who figure as actors in the tale of *Evangeline* only the young René le Blanc had an actual existence.

That Longfellow should have chosen Philadelphia as the place of the meeting of the long separated lovers, Evangeline and Gabriel, is not hard to account for. He knew that many of the Acadians had been set down near the Quaker City, and the terrible yellow fever pestilence there of the year 1795 was an historic event that might well serve as the occasion of Gabriel's death. Once in his earlier life, while waiting in New York for