



Introduction to Evangeline

A rare enchantment rests upon the place
Where Gabriel wooed and won Evangeline,
O'er all the Minas marshland, emerald-green,
Lies the soft spell of a romantic race.

THE subtle spirit of romance that envelops the ancient country of Acadie or Acadia, now Nova Scotia, and that belongs in equal measure to few other parts of the American continent, can hardly be said to have its source in any special episode of the history of the country, but rather seems to be begotten largely by the landscape itself. Yet there are certain definite facts of the history that stir the imagination of all readers and quicken the interest of even the most casual visitor to the Acadian shores. The country called Acadie or Acadia, which in the widest interpretation ever given its boundaries included the peninsula of Nova Scotia, the province of New Brunswick, and a certain portion of eastern Maine, was first visited by French explorers in 1604. In that year the adventurous Samuel de Champlain, "the first great name in Canadian history," with his noble associates, Sieur de Monts, who had been commissioned lieutenant-general of Acadie, and Monsieur Jean de Biencourt Poutrincourt, crossed the ocean from Havre de Grace or Dieppe and sailed into the Bay of Fundy, and from there into the sheltered Annapolis Basin. On the shores of the Basin, a little farther down than the present town of Annapolis, the party landed and for a short time stayed.