

Canadian Novels and Novelists.

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I have interpreted the title of this paper in the broadest sense, as including all branches of fiction, the novel proper, the romance, the short-story, etc. When the subject first suggested itself to me, I felt that there was scarcely sufficient substance in it for even a short paper, but upon making a careful examination of the field it appeared that instead of the existing material being meagre, I should have to resort to rigid compression to keep the paper within reasonable bounds. The very interesting section of French-Canadian fiction is consequently omitted altogether, to be dealt with perhaps on some future occasion, and in reviewing the course of the English section of our fiction, I have confined anything like a full treatment of the novelists and their books to the earlier and little-known writers, passing over more recent names as briefly as possible. 1

Under the adverse conditions of pioneer life in a new country the first feeble efforts towards literature, semi-conscious at best, are found to be rather practical and utilitarian than intellectual. This applies especially to the case of Canada. Going back to the earliest beginning of our literary history we find, first, certain rough and ready accounts of explorers and navigators, descriptions of the country, its natives, etc. Then, books of advice (wise or otherwise) to immigrants, and other things of the kind. Following these, we come upon a mass of

1. A somewhat full consideration of the contemporary group of Canadian novelists will be found in an article by the writer, in the *Forum*, New York, August, 1899.

