

Forum
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RECENT CANADIAN FICTION.

AMONG many good influences which are shaping the course of the young Canadian Dominion—the sturdy Northland—toward a true and virile manhood, none is more significant and far-reaching than the growth of a strong and wholesome native literature. While it would, perhaps, be going too far to say that Canada can boast of any men of genius, in the true sense of the term, it cannot be denied that she has given birth to not a few writers of undoubted talent.

Such men as Sir James Le Moine, Sir John Bourinot, Benjamin Sulte, and the late Dr. Kingsford, among historians; Charles Heavysege, W. W. Campbell, C. G. D. Roberts, the late A. Lampman, Bliss Carnan, and the two Scotts, in verse; and Sir William Dawson, Dr. G. M. Dawson, Grant Allen, and the late J. G. Romanes, in the realm of science, would do credit to any country, and are certainly men of whom Canada has every reason to be proud. And Canadian men-of-letters are no less proud of their native land; for it is a notable fact that, however far abroad they may roam, they never forget the Northland, and never cease to speak and write of it with fondness and pride.

In the enumeration of those who are doing credit to the land of their birth, a very important class has so far been omitted—the novelists. As a matter of fact, until quite recently Canada could scarcely be said to have any novelists. Fiction has been in the past the most unfruitful branch of our intellectual tree. While every decade has produced scores of verse-writers and one or two genuine poets, and every period of the national history has had its more or less capable historians, the rich mines of Canadian history and national characteristics have remained almost untouched by novelists. There is in Canada the broadest possible field for the writer of fiction. The early days of the French occupation teem with incidents of dramatic and romantic interest, such as the interminable conflicts between the French and the English, and between each of these and the Indians; the expulsion of the Acadians, and the stirring incidents of the Jesuit Relations; later, the exodus of the United Empire Loyalists from New England to Canada, the War of 1812, etc. For the analytical novel-