

## INTRODUCTION

*The World for Sale* is a tale of the primitive and lonely West and North, but the primitiveness and loneliness is not like that to be found in *Pierre and His People*. Pierre's wanderings took place in a period when civilization had made but scant marks upon the broad bosom of the prairie land, and towns and villages were few and far scattered. The Lebanon and Manitou of this story had no existence in the time of Pierre, except that where Manitou stands there was a Hudson's Bay Company's post at which Indians, half-breeds, and chance settlers occasionally gathered for trade and exchange—furs, groceries, clothing, blankets, tobacco, and other things; and in the long winters the post was as isolated as an oasis in the Sahara.

That old life was lonely and primitive, but it had its compensating balance of bright sun, wild animal life, and an air as vivid and virile as ever stirred the veins of man. Sometimes the still, bright cold was broken by a terrific storm, which ravaged, smothered, and entombed the stray traveller in ravines of death. That was in winter; but in summer, what had been called, fifty years ago, an alkali desert was an everlasting stretch of untilled soil, with unsown crops, and here and there herds of buffalo, which were stalked by alert Red Indians, half-breeds, and white pioneer hunters.

The stories in *Pierre and His People* were true to the life of that time; the incidents in *The World for Sale*, and the whole narrative, are true to the life of a very few years ago. Railways have pierced and opened up lonely regions of the Sagalac, and there are two thriving towns where, in the