

**AN INTRODUCTION  
TO THE STUDY OF  
ENGLISH FICTION**

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An Introduction to the Study of English Fiction by William Edward Simonds

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**WILLIAM EDWARD SIMONDS**

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AN INTRODUCTION  
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STUDY OF ENGLISH FICTION.

BY

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**GENERAL**

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To the Memory  
OF  
BERNHARD TEN BRINK,

This Book is Dedicated

WITH A PUPIL'S REVERENCE AND A FRIEND'S  
AFFECTION.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THERE was a time when by people with pretensions to a careful conscience the "novel" was regarded somewhat dubiously. That time, let us hope, is of the past. The existence of the novel as a form of fiction requires no vindication; no apology is needed for its pre-eminence in the popular taste of the day. Not only are we compelled to recognize the present supremacy of the novel in literature, we have also come to the point of appreciating its utility and power.

The development of English fiction, the evolution of the English novel, forms in itself an interesting story; and an acquaintance with that story is essential to an apprehension of the real qualities of our fiction and to an intelligent estimate of its originality and its merits. To tell this story in outline and to indicate the characteristics of successive epochs in its growth is the purpose of this volume. The teacher may find it difficult to recognize the "text-book" in the preliminary chapters: he is reminded that these chapters form but the preface, and that his text-book begins with what comes after.

With reference to the Selections, a word may be not amiss. The translations from "Beowulf" and "King Horn" are rude enough, and it might have been wiser in the writer to utilize the labors of a more clever translator; he preferred, however, a version original albeit uncouth,

and has been as faithful as he was able to be to the spirit of the text. The Selections which follow are chosen because of special features which seem to fit them for the purpose. Those illustrative of the Elizabethan age are, outside the larger libraries, scarcely accessible to the general student. Because of this fact, a typical romance of that age, "Forbonius and Prisceria," has been incorporated entire. In other cases an incident or episode, in itself complete, has suggested the Selection which has been introduced.

The following pages contain no attempt at formal biography or scientific criticism. No reference has been made to "The Golden Ass" of Apuleius, nor does there appear any discussion of the relation of the novel to the drama; the inter-relation of the English and Spanish romances of the sixteenth century, and that of the French and English tales of an earlier period, receive slight comment. All these omissions will be noted, and may with many similar topics be made the subject of special investigation by the student. To provide a bare introduction to the study of English fiction is the purpose of the book. Its compiler believes thoroughly in the principles of the inductive method, and complacently recognizes the subordination of the essays to the texts they are intended to introduce. If through these pages there be gained a better, a more intelligent acquaintance with these works and with the literature which they represent, the purpose of this Introduction will be accomplished.

W. E. S.

GALESBURG, ILLINOIS,  
May 1, 1894.



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