

**PROVINCIAL TYPES
IN
AMERICAN FICTION**

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Provincial types in American fiction by Horace Spencer Fiske

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HORACE SPENCER FISKE

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BY

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PREFACE

THE field of American fiction is so wide and so varied that only one phase of it has been touched upon in the present volume, — certain types of American provincial life as studied since the Civil War by authors in New England, the South, the Middle West, and the Far West. The literature of these sections of the country written since the Civil War is so embarrassingly rich that, with one exception, nothing of the flood of very recent fiction is included in the scope of this limited study. The effort of the writer has been to confine himself largely to what is rather indefinitely called "realistic" literature, and to emphasize the truth of characterization found in such fiction as has come to be generally recognized for its special significance and permanent value as a reflection of certain phases of our national life.

The present volume can, of course, be only suggestive, but if it succeeds in stimulating to an appreciative study and enjoyment of the dozen works of fiction considered, it will have largely accomplished its purpose.

In tracing the development of provincial character in any particular novel or story, it has seemed best to give

as much as possible of the author's individuality of conception and flavor of style, rather than to indulge in long descriptive writing and cumbersome paraphrase, — in the hope that the peculiar charm of the author considered may stir a desire for more intimate acquaintance, and so lead on to a genuine appreciation of what is best in American fiction.

HORACE SPENCER FISKE.

CHICAGO, April, 1903.

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PROVINCIAL TYPES IN NEW ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE FIELD

If, in the fiction written in America since the Civil War, there has not yet appeared the long-looked-for great "American" novel, there has nevertheless been written much that is a true and delightful reflection of genuine American character, particularly of that character as seen in the country and in those sections that have been least affected by the progress of a growing national unity. American literature may, in fact, be said to be made up of an aggregation of sectional literatures — the literatures of New England, the South, the Middle West, and the Far West. This aggregation naturally lacks unity, but it is all American; and perhaps at some time these diverse characteristics may be fused by some masterly writer of fiction into a harmonious whole, which shall, by its vast variety yet unifying American spirit, be recognized as *the* great American novel.

From the time of the production of "Rip Van Winkle" and "Sleepy Hollow" by Washington Irving, of the "Leatherstocking Tales" by James Fenimore Cooper, and of "The Scarlet Letter" and "The House of the Seven Gables" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, to the present, the men who have