

# **THE BLUE BOOK OF FICTION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649224425

The blue book of fiction by Hamilton W. Mabie

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
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**HAMILTON W. MABIE**

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# The Blue Book of Fiction

A List of Novels Worth Reading  
Chosen From Many  
Literatures

By  
Hamilton W. Mabie

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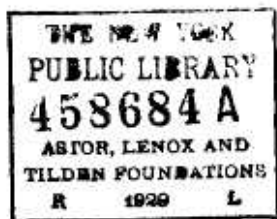
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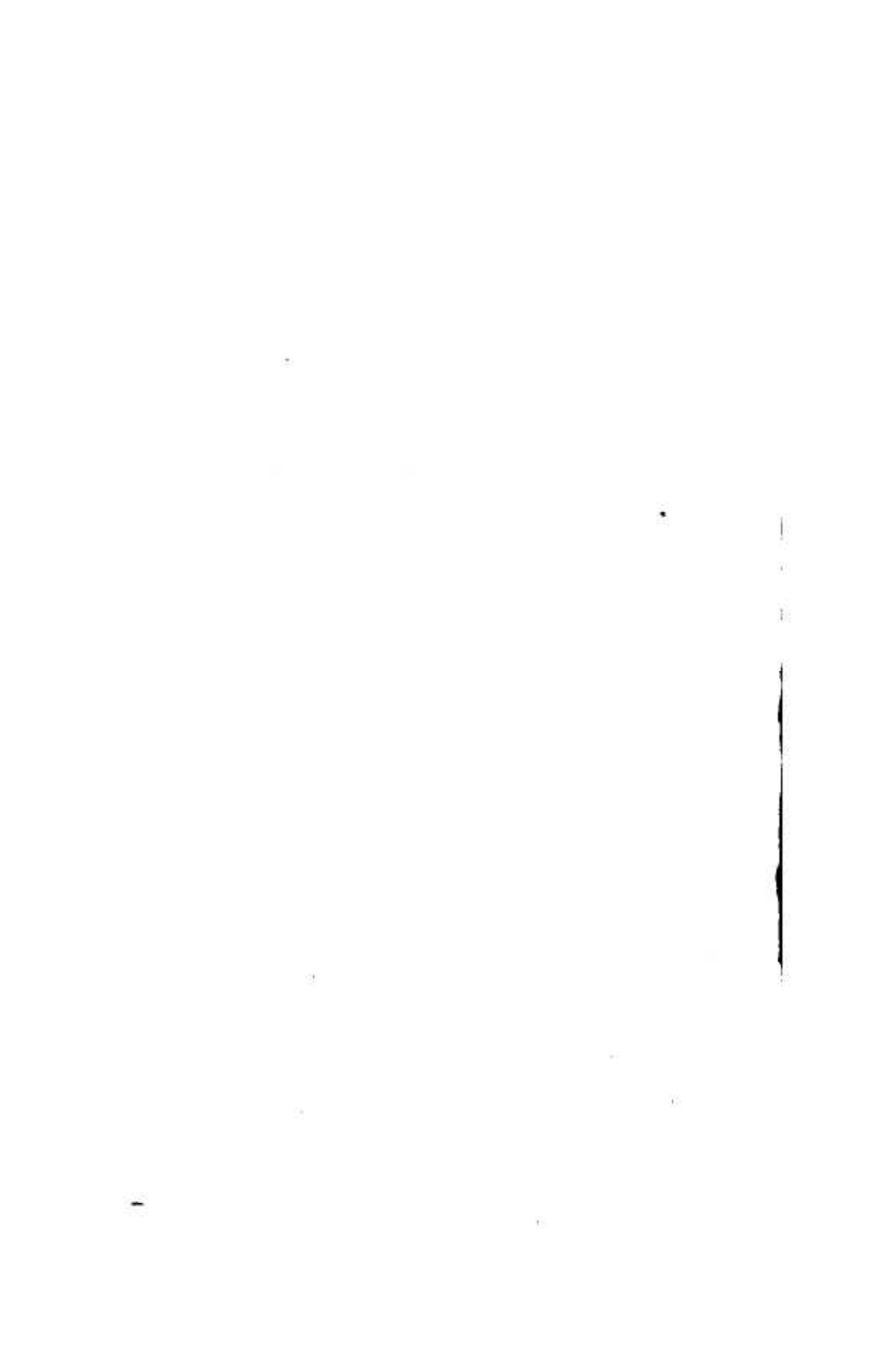
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ROY WOOD  
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**The Blue Book  
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## A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

**F**ROM the earliest times, fiction in various forms has held a high place in the regard and interest of serious men and women.

No other literary form, save the drama, with which it is closely related, has presented life with such frankness and vividness. In no other form has the genius of human portraiture found such scope and achieved such triumph.

To fiction in its great examples has been committed the moralization of life, the dramatic revelation of the inescapable sequence between what a man does and what befalls him, and the moving and convincing demonstration of the truth of the maxim that character is destiny.

But fiction not only plays the part of prophet and teacher; it is also a delightful

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companion, a teller of moving tales, a spinner of pastime stories, a raconteur of the old romance of love, adventure and fortune.

In all these functions, fiction is presented in the following lists, which offer material for the most serious study of a great art, for companionship in the myriad experiences through which men and women pass, for stimulus to the imagination, escape from drudgery, and a playground for the spirit; and playgrounds are as important as workshops.

To make a complete list of the novels which for one reason or another are regarded as worth reading would defeat the object of this compilation of titles; its modest purpose is to put into the hands of readers a small handbook of good fiction, accessible in English.

The stories of classical quality will be found between its covers, in company with stories of lower rank and less distinction, but entitled to recognition. "Vanity Fair" is in

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many respects the greatest novel in English fiction; but there is plenty of room for "Cranford" and for "Lorna Doone." "The Scarlet Letter" and "The Rise of Silas Lapham" may safely be put in a foremost place in American fiction; but they do not exclude "The Golden House," and "The Queen's Twin."

The endeavor has been made in this selection to include with the best, the good; and to exclude the cheap, the vulgar, and the immoral. There has been no effort to exercise rigid moral censorship; and yet there are many stories which students of the art of literature may very properly read that have no place in a list for general reading. Such stories have been excluded.

There are many novels included which are addressed to mature readers, to whom knowledge of life has brought ripe judgment and a sober sense of the meaning of the tragic possibilities of human experience. It is well to remind some readers that the coarseness of Fielding and Smollett offends against