FICTION AND MONTREAL, 1769-1885:

A BIBLIOGRAPHY

The discovery of early Canadian fiction and the recovery of bibliographical information about it are two of the most challenging problems for students of this literature. Several difficulties are involved. The bibliographies which itemize these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century stories and the material related to them are often inaccurate. Some works listed as fiction are not strictly speaking "narrative writing drawn from the imagination of the author rather than from history or fact." Others are attributed to the wrong author or to "Anonymous," when they were actually written by identifiable authors. The date and place of publication of still others is imprecise. When, as is occasionally the case, the name of the library where the work can be found is included, this information is often misleading. Finally, the bibliographies are usually incomplete.

There are many reasons for these difficulties. The authors themselves sometimes chose to describe their non-fiction as "fairy fiction" and their fiction as "fact." Often they published their stories anonymously or used their initials only as pseudonyms. Usually they submitted their short stories, novelettes, and novels to periodicals before they published them in book form, and frequently, for many reasons, they never did republish them in this way. This habit of publishing fiction in periodicals, in fact, appears to be the main reason for both the inaccuracy and the incompleteness of most bibliographies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Canadian fiction. It is in the periodicals published in Canada between 1769 and 1885 that many short stories, novelettes, and novels written by Canadians and much information about both the works and their authors can be found. And it is precisely this source that has been until recently largely ignored by bibliographers of Canadian fiction.

It was the realization of the importance of these Canadian periodicals in Canadian literary history that led me to pursue in them my search for Canadian fiction published before 1885 and to find out as much as I could about its authors and the dates and places of its original publication. In my case, I was specifically interested in fiction where Montreal was used either as a point of reference, a partial setting, or a complete setting. But the stories that used Montreal as a locale include much of the fiction that was published in Canada before 1885. And the bibliographical information I found about them seems typical of most early Canadian fiction.

The fiction about Montreal published between 1769 and 1885 is representative of early Canadian fiction in many ways. About two-thirds of the stories are short

stories, novelettes, and novels published originally in Canadian periodicals. While all mention Montreal in some way and many discuss in detail local and national events and issues, most are influenced by both the form and content of their contemporary, non-Canadian fiction. Some of their international characteristics are due to the fact that their authors either were not Canadians or were aiming their works primarily at a non-Canadian reading public, even though they may have first published them in Canada. Most of the stories are "popular fiction" to the extent that they were not only published in the popular press, but also written for a wide and varied reading public and conventionalized in form and content in order to produce an immediate and intense emotional response from the reader. Although only a few succeed in arousing more than the most transitory thoughts and feelings, all provide at least glimpses of, and attitudes to, some aspects of Canadian life before the twentieth century.

It is both to provide more accurate and complete bibliographical information about this early fiction about Montreal and to inform and remind scholars of its existence that I am publishing this bibliography. The bibliography itself is divided into two parts. The first section, "Reference Material," is a short list of the works that I found most useful in giving information about the fiction, its authors, and its publication. The second, "Primary Material," is the bibliography of the fiction about Montreal published between 1769 and 1885. For all entries, I have actually seen the item described in the publication mentioned. With a few exceptions, the most notable being the novels of May Agnes Early Fleming and those of James De Mille, I am fairly certain that the bibliographical information provided about the stories is that of their original publication.

I

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MARY JANE EDWARDS