



Canadians of Old

Phillipe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé

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Canadians of Old - one of the cornerstones of Canadian literature-appeared in 1863, in the midst of the American Civil War and on the brink of Canadian Confederation. It offered the first genuine fictional exploration of the pivotal event in the emerging nation's past and was enthusiastically received by Canadian readers, both French and English. The author was one of the last Canadian seigneurs and a descendent of some of New France's most distinguished families. His novel is the bittersweet tale of a family caught in the web of war-a story of friendship, love, and conflicting loyalties. He draws on personal and family memories to paint a picture of mid-eighteenth-century Quebec before and after the Seven Years' War: rollicking schooldays in Quebec, rural and family life on the seigneurie, Indian encounters, the great battle, and the trials of reconstruction in a shattered society. The first English translation of de Gaspé's novel appeared in 1864. This version was marred by a wordy and convoluted prose style and has long been out of print. The second, by Charles G. D. Roberts in 1890, provided a readable but somewhat cavalier version that omitted numerous details and left untranslated de Gaspé's delightful and evocative "Notes and Clarifications." With this new translation by an award-winning translator, English-language readers will at last be able to appreciate de Gaspé's book in its entirety.

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