

ROSE-BELFORD'S
CANADIAN MONTHLY
AND NATIONAL REVIEW.

SEPTEMBER, 1880.

GORDON'S 'MOUNTAIN AND PRAIRIE.*'

BY PRINCIPAL GRANT, D.D.

OUR North-west is a fruitful mother of authors. Her vast plains, billowing away to unknown horizons, give to the traveller an inspiration there is no resisting, and in spite of enemies, he must write a book. So was it in the days of the Verendryes, and of those equally gallant Highlanders—many of them broken chiefs and men from Culloden—who founded the North-West Company. So is it in our day. Milton and Cheadle, Hind, Butler, the Earls of Southesk and Dunraven, Horetzky, Dawson, and a multitudinous host who have been content to figure in newspapers, pamphlets, reports, or blue books, have told the story of the 'Great Lone Land' over and over, dwelling lovingly on every detail of what they saw, and how they lived, while trapping, travelling, and camping. There is a wonderful charm in the free life of forest and prairie, where a few words with an In-

dian guide take the place of newspapers, telegrams, and the tattle of society;—a charm of which, to judge by the circulation of the books describing the life, even readers at home get some faint flavour. For, though we ought by this time to be somewhat tired of the North-West, each new work about it is eagerly bought, even by a Canadian public that is not given to buying books. 'Mountain and Prairie,' just published by the Dawsons of Montreal, is therefore sure of a welcome. It is entitled to a special welcome because of its own merits, the trustworthiness of the author, and the absorbing political interest connected with the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Mr. Gordon travelled over much of the old and some new ground. He writes naturally, without exaggeration of language and sentiment, and without invention of thrilling incidents. He almost apologizes for not having been scalped, or at least scared, by the Indians. He has not even killed 'a grizzly,' for the edification of his readers, nor filled a single chapter with minute descriptions of how his dog

* *Mountain and Prairie*: a Journey from Victoria to Winnipeg, via Peace River Pass, by the Rev. Daniel M. Gordon, B.D., Ottawa. Montreal: Dawson Bros.; Toronto: Willing & Williamson, 1880.