

And yet it had no artificial boom ; no heralding of its merits to an expectant world ; and it was moreover quite free from any tinge of sensationalism, to appeal to the jaded taste of a public surfeited with new fiction. The author's name given on the title-page was Ralph Connor, but this soon became recognized as a *nom-de-plume*, and it leaked out that the author was Rev. C. W. Gordon, of Winnipeg, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church.

The origin of "Black Rock" was as modest as its appearance. It seems that Mr. Gordon, anxious to raise funds for his mission in the far west, discussed the matter with the editor of the *Westminster*, a Toronto magazine. The editor suggested that he should put his appeal before the public in the popular form of fiction, and Mr. Gordon, after some hesitation, agreed to this, and sent to the *Westminster* a sketch of a mining camp in the Rockies, such a camp as formed the scene of his own missionary labours. This afterwards became the first chapter of "Black Rock," and was followed by others, until the story was completed. It is not particularly well constructed, so far as plot is concerned, but this weakness is more than redeemed by the freshness and originality of its treatment. It is a strong, sincere, and very dramatic piece of work—altogether one of the best bits of fiction produced by a Canadian.

A beautiful little idyl of the Foot-hills of the Rockies, called "Beyond the Marshes," was Mr. Gordon's next contribution to Canadian literature. This sketch was prefaced by a sympathetic introduction, by the Countess of Aberdeen.

In the "Sky Pilot" ¹ Mr Gordon changed his scene from the Pacific Slope of the Rockies to the foothills and plains on the eastern side of the mountains—somewhere in the neighborhood of Calgary or Fort McLeod. This book has, if anything, had a wider success than "Black Rock," and the two books have reached an enormous circulation in the United

1. The Sky Pilot. A tale of the Foothills. By Ralph Connor. Toronto. The Westminster Co., 1899. New ed. 1899.