

His first book was entitled "Strange Happenings," and was published in 1882, before he had left his boyhood's home in Ontario. He offered the manuscript to all the leading newspapers of the province, but they would not look at it. He then tried the *Detroit Free Press*, which not only accepted it, and what is more to the point, paid generously for it, but offered him a position on the staff of the paper. "Strange Happenings" consists of a humorous account of a voyage in a small boat around the southern shore of Lake Erie. It is not unlike Jerome K. Jerome's "Three Men in a Boat" in style and plan. Possibly there existed some unconscious affinity between them, for we find in after years the two novels joining in the establishment of that amusing little monthly, the *London Idler*; which, by the way, has sadly degenerated, in other hands, from the brightness and humour of its first numbers.

In 1892 Mr. Barr published "In a Steamer Chair," and after that, "From Whose Bourne," (1893), "The Face and the Mask," (1894), "In the Midst of Alarms,"—a humorous account of the Fenian Raid in the Sixties—(1894),¹ "A Woman Intervenes," (1896), "The Mutable Many," (1896), "One Day's Courtship," (1897), and "Tekla" (1898.)

A couple of years ago:—last volume made its appearance in Toronto, under the title "Black Rock."² Being unassuming, it did not at first attract much attention. Its publishers were, fortunately, not of that enterprising type which announces a hundred-thousand edition before the book is on the market. "Black Rock" was therefore left to make its own way in the world, as any good book should, and its subsequent success is a striking tribute to the soundness of public taste. Slowly but surely the book gained ground, as one reader recommended it to another, until "Black Rock" became recognized as one of the strongest books of the year.

1. Mr. Barr was a Canadian volunteer at the time of the Fenian Raid.

2. *Black Rock*. By Ralph Connor. Toronto: The Westminster Company, 1898. New edition, Toronto, 1899, with an introduction.