

Last year Mrs. Cotes published "A Voyage of Consolation," in which she continues the amusing adventures of "An American Girl in London." While her latest work has many of the distinctive qualities which have made her books so popular, especially to the jaded traveller, I was more favorably impressed with some of her earlier books, notably "A Social Departure" and "His Honour and a Lady."

Grant Allen is more generally known as a scientist than as a novelist; and as a writer on scientific subjects he has the happy faculty of presenting the dry facts in a most entertaining style. His latest novel, "Linnet," though perhaps no high literary quality can be claimed for it, will, nevertheless, serve admirably to while away a lazy afternoon. "Miss Cayley's Adventures," which have been recently told in "The Strand Magazine," have also been issued in book form.

Among the new writers, Rev. Mr. Gordon has done the best work, in his "Black Rock: a Tale of the Selkirks." Mr. Gordon has put into this story of the free and vigorous life of the Pacific Slope his own strong personality. He is intensely in earnest, and frankly acknowledges that he would point a moral, in drawing attention to the crying evil of intemperance; but he never degenerates into the sickly sentimentality which turns so many away from the Temperance Movement. He is as sincere a believer in the advantages of total abstinence as the most lachrymose of Temperance lecturers, but is at the same time essentially manly, and looks at the question from a broad-minded standpoint.

The *raison d'être* of the book is thus given by the author in his preface: "Because a man's life is all he has, and because the only hope of the brave young West lies in its men, this story is told." While most "books with a purpose" are an abomination, this one is the exception which proves the rule. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of "Black Rock" is the bracing optimism it teaches. The author has a splendid faith in the power which makes for good in every one; and he has the rare gift of forcing his reader, at least temporarily, into sympathy with his own point of view.

The book is fine in literary quality, strong in ethical insight, and admirable in the manner in which the author has caught and embodied in living characters the rough but sincere and manly spirit of the West.

In point of numbers, the historical novel takes first place in the output of contemporary Canadian writers. From Montreal alone have come, quite recently, half a dozen works of this class. Here, as else-