

our. That would touch the imagination and give a basis for your appeal for help.

When the first article reached Macdonald, it was full of matter crammed with possibilities, but was not good copy, and was sent back for recasting. When it came back it was in the form in which the first chapter now appears in "Black Rock," a tale of the Selkirks, and like so many other books of note, it grew under its author's hand, was contributed serially and was not at first in book form. It did not create a great sensation at first. It was a venture into a new field. In fact, it went begging in the markets of United States and Mr. Hodder, of Hodder & Stoughton, who brought it out in England and Canada, had many qualms about it. It is interesting in the light of today to know that the American publishers rejected it because there was too much religion and temperance and fighting in it. It seems incredible now to think that they did not see to what a great constituency this would appeal, but conservatism is ever the characteristic of the publisher. It was followed by the "Sky Pilot" and these books really set the pace and gave the start to that vast literature about the life in the great plains and among the mountain fastnesses of the North West.

FROM RALPH CONNOR TO ZANE GREY

From Ralph Connor to Zane Grey would make an interesting study. By the way, the pseudonym under which Dr. Gordon wrote has an interesting history. It was felt that he would have a freer hand to write and say what he really thought if it were under an assumed name. Macdonald telegraphed him to suggest a name. He wired back Connor. Macdonald thought it was a mistake for "Connor," adopted that name, and that it might look more complete, prefaced it with "Ralph." Gordon was not altogether pleased. He said: "I meant 'Cannon.' 'Ralph Connor' isn't bad—rather Irish for me, but I guess I can stand it. I'll try to live up to it."

But he took a sly revenge out of Macdonald. In the fight in Slavin's saloon, Connor says, "What's up?" "Mr. Connor," said Sandy solemnly, "It is a gentleman you are, though your name is against you."

In these early books he had the healthy tone of the wind-swept country, and was far from the emotional trick of the English novelists of that time—even the Kail-yard school.

GORDON GAVE A DISTINCT TYPE

He gave us a distinct type of literature in fiction and he has had hundreds of imitators (including himself). I know it is the fashion among some of my friends today to sneer at this type of fiction, but I cannot accept their judgment. One must look at these things

from a larger standpoint than the preference of the few dilettantes to whom the crude is vulgar, or those who prefer the sex complexes of the modern society novel or the rattle of the garbage cans on Main Street. I think it was a wholesome change in literature and it has justified its origin in the now great city of the Western plains.

LITERATURE'S LURE AND GLORY

And now I hope that whether you think I have proved my case or not, there have been some facts in this little and hasty survey that will be new and interesting and make you feel that it is not out of place in a club that calls itself Canadian.

May I add in closing that there may be some here who may say that in some cases the influence is not as clear as a logical proposition in Euclid should be. To such I would say that in matters of human interest like literature, you can prove nothing and by way of consolation let me remind you of the saying of Dean Inge: "History does not repeat itself, but it marvellously resembles itself."

There is a glory in our literature—not the glory of the perfect but a far greater glory—that of the imperfect, full of possibilities and ever alluring to the optimism of youth.

LITERARY NOTES

By RODERICK RANDOM.

The Convention of the Canadian Authors' Association has passed and gone leaving behind some very pleasant memories to those who attended it. The weather was all that could be desired and

the programme arranged by the local members passed off practically without a hitch. The business proceedings were on the whole harmonious and, if there were certain moments that were not devoid of tension, these only testified to the earnestness and practical interest which marked the various sessions.

Experiences were related by prominent writers, Arthur Heming, Philip Grove and others, which showed forth both the prosperous and seamy sides of the literary profession from the standpoint of financial gain and from these it was borne in upon the listeners with greater force than ever that success, from a practical standpoint depends as much on a knowledge of how to market one's output as upon its quality and extent. Craftsmanship and diligence alone will hardly win adequate recognition.

The discussion on "A Theory of Book Reviewing" was introduced by an excellent paper by William Arthur Deacon, author of "Pens and Pirates," and literary editor of the Toronto Saturday Night, who was unfortunately unable to be present in person. Mr. Deacon, in an illuminating and arresting manner, explained the proper province of the book-reviewer, as he regarded it, and made an earnest plea for greater sincerity and more constructiveness. Mr. Deacon's paper was followed by an eloquent address from John Elson also of Toronto, author of "The Scarlet Sash," who treated the subject from the newspaper man's standpoint.

The sail to Indian River and the dinner afterwards at Wigwam Inn was a halcyon occasion not to be forgotten by those who were there. The keynote for the programme was set by the singing by Mrs. H. R. N. Clyne of Agassiz's beautiful setting of Kipling's idealistic poem, "L'Envoi," to "The Light That Failed."



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Mr. Percy Gomery

Mr. Gomery, the present Chairman of the British Columbia branch of the Canadian Authors' Association came into prominence a year or two ago as the writer of "A Scamper 'Cross Canada," the story of the adventures of himself and the not less noteworthy "Skipper" (Mrs. Gomery), in a journey by auto from Eastern Canada to Vancouver, made as far as possible on Canadian soil, and frequently over ground that would have been held impassable for a car. That travel-record is readily written, and, like the author of it, has a humour all its own. The chapter on the impression made on the writer in the heart of the Rocky Mountains is a vivid one, and in itself likely to hold the reader.

A banker by profession, Mr. Gomery finds relaxation in contributing special articles to various periodicals. As Chairman, he has a manner all his own, and, as he demonstrated when presiding at the C. A. A. function at the Wigwam Inn, he is apt to say the expected thing in an unexpected and usually happy and arresting way.