

# Ralph Connor And His Million-dollar Sermons



The Rev. Charles Gordon, of Winnipeg (under his pen-name Ralph Connor), still holds his position as the most successful Canadian novelist of all time.

This Winnipeg parson who loved to preach in kilts made a swift fortune with his inspirational novels and never lost his simple faith, even when his wealth vanished as swiftly as it came

By BETH PATERSON

**L**ATE ONE NIGHT in the year 1896 the pastor of a small run-down mission church on the outskirts of Winnipeg walked home through muddy streets after a prayer meeting, sat at his desk and forced himself to write a story.

Rev. Charles William Gordon was thirty-six and had written only sermons until then. But the tale he now laboriously set down into the early hours of the morning was the only hope offered by Presbyterian Church officials in Toronto to raise money for the western missions of which he was secretary. "Write me something to illustrate the need," Gordon had been told by Rev. James A. Macdonald, editor of the church weekly Westminster A Paper For The Home, after church authorities had turned down his request for increased mission grants. The editor had shrugged off Gordon's objection, "But when will I find the time?" And now the over-worked parson was robbing himself of sleep to "illustrate the need."

The story, Christmas Eve in a Lumber Camp, was a sort of fictionalized sermon about how a Presbyterian missionary moved to prayer a camp of hard-drinking lumbermen in British Columbia. But since fiction-writing of any kind was not considered a respectable occupation for a minister, Gordon needed a pseudonym. The mission board letterhead on the desk before him read Brit.Can.Nor.West.Mission. Gordon absentmindedly circled the second and third syllables and arrived at Connor, to which he prefixed Ralph.

The editor believed that Gordon had made a slip of the pen and on that story and on the seven subsequent episodes Gordon wrote for him he used the name Ralph Connor.

The result made Canadian publishing history. By the turn of the century Gordon's eight stories, collected into a volume titled Black Rock, and the two novels which followed, The Sky Pilot and The Man from Glenarry, were having phenomenal sales in bookstores from Calcutta to New York—they were to total five million copies, and with his subsequent twenty-seven novels were to make him Canada's all-time best-selling novelist. Curiosity over his real identity reacted fever pitch before it was revealed after publication of his second book. "Ralph Connor is some man's nom de plume. The world will insist on knowing whose," the St. Louis Globe-Democrat had enthusiastically demanded.

Praise came from as widely different publications as the Manchester Guardian and Harper's Bazaar. He "touches the chords which vibrate luxuriously in the popular heart," wrote the Boston Transcript. The Chicago Tribune found him "so intense that one grinds his teeth lest his sinews snap ere the strain is released." The San Francisco Chronicle commended his "passionate appeals to all that is best in human nature."

In the United States police were called out to control crowds attending lectures he gave. President Woodrow Wilson admired his books and Henry Ford, as Connor's luncheon host, sent a servant to his library to get a pile of them for the author to autograph. When he spoke in a Detroit church the congregation interrupted him boisterously at the beginning of a prayer by singing For He's A Jolly Good Fellow.

Connor's first two novels, concerning the influence of a Presbyterian missionary on the frontier Canadian west, were read throughout Europe and set up in braille. The third, about the immigrant Scottish lumbermen and farmers of Connor's native county near the Ottawa River, was said to have gone into the hands of one in every sixty English-speaking Canadian and was classed as supplementary.

*Continued on page 56*

## A MACLEAN'S FLASHBACK

MACLEAN'S MAGAZINE, NOVEMBER 15, 1953

**More  
than a Life Insurance  
Policy!**

**Better  
than an ordinary  
Savings Plan!**

**DOMINION LIFE OFFERS**

**CORONET**

**A 20 YEAR SAVINGS PLAN**

*but...*

If you die before 65... your family will receive

**ALL DEPOSITS YOU HAVE MADE  
PLUS THE FACE VALUE OF THE POLICY  
PLUS DIVIDENDS LEFT WITH THE POLICY**

The most unusual savings plan ever developed by Dominion Life.

The Coronet is an insured savings plan that protects your family and your savings too.

The Dominion Coronet 20 year savings plan should not be confused with ordinary Life Insurance. It is entirely different and will do more for you than any other savings plan.

Your choice of 6 Valuable Options  
available at the end of the 20 year period

 **Dominion Life**  
THE ASSURANCE COMPANY Since 1889  
HEAD OFFICE: WATERLOO, ONTARIO

**ASK YOUR DOMINION LIFE REPRESENTATIVE FOR DETAILS  
OR MAIL THE COUPON BELOW**

The Dominion Life Assurance Company, CC-2724  
Dept. 22M, Waterloo, Ontario.

Please send me a copy of "The Dominion Coronet" booklet, describing the policy and the six valuable options in detail. My age is

Name

Address

**Ralph Connor**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26



MACLEAN'S

reading in United States high schools. Glangary School Days, drawn from his boyhood, had a great vogue among Canadian youths. His reading public, many of whom had previously shunned novels on religious grounds, fondly nicknamed him "the sky pilot." In forty-one years of writing, he gave them thirty books, most of them full-blooded westerns with an evangelical and Temperance appeal.

Connor — at his best — became to everyone except his family, congregation and church associates — accepted the windfall of fame and fortune calmly. His salary was a thousand dollars a year when he wrote his first story for the church magazine, and now he was well on the way toward accumulating a fortune of a million dollars. He was tall and slight, with penetrating eyes — one turned inward — and at that time he wore a dark mustache and closely trimmed beard. An enthusiastic English reader of his books, who came to Winnipeg to hear him preach, described his "white divinity hands," his hesitant manner at the start of his sermons which finally warmed into "what sounded like the utterance of one of the old Hebrew prophets."

Connor continued to think of himself as a minister first and a writer second. Indeed, he had no inflated opinion of his literary ability. "I may not be able to write," he once commented, "but by George I can preach."

At the turn of the century Connor, nearing forty, still untried and with three hugely popular books to his credit, was only at the beginning of a career that was to be marked by success and failure, achievement and disension, acclaim and neglect. He had still to marry and raise a distinguished family, to be elected head of the Presbyterian Church in Canada; to launch furious campaigns against liquor and prostitution and in favor of conscription and the League of Nations; to build an imposing mansion and to satisfy the love for fast horses which he had inherited from his father.

Connor's father, Rev. Daniel Gordon, a dissenter from the Established Church of Scotland, preached for the new Free Church at Glangary, Ont., to a Gaelic-speaking congregation. The Rev. Daniel, an outspoken, fearless preacher, had a taste for the bagpipes and often of an evening paced the manse parlor, filling it with the weird lament of Lachair Na More, unconcerned that few could stand the awful proximity of throbbing drones and shrieking chanter.

**Hard Labor for a Lightweight**

In that manse the future Ralph Connor was born in 1860, one of seven children. His mother was the daughter of another Scottish dissenter from the "Auld Kirk" who had become a Congregational minister at Sherbrooke, Que. A graduate of Mount Holyoke Ladies' Seminary in Massachusetts, she had turned down the principality of a graduate in order to marry the backwoods minister. Later she became the gentle, romantic heroine of many of her son's novels.

When Connor — his family called him Charlie throughout his life — was ten years old, the family moved to the English-Scottish farming settlement of Zorra in western Ontario where he hired out as a laborer. Afterward, he worked his way slowly through the University of Toronto and Knox College, the Presbyterian theological school by tutoring and teaching in rural schools.

At university he determinedly made quarterback on the rugby team although he weighed only one hundred and thirty-five pounds.

He majored in classics and English and kept up a breakneck pace of study, glee club singing, student politics, debating and YMCA work. By diligent saving he spent a year studying in Edinburgh and touring Europe by bicycle after he graduated.

His first parish was Hanff and it appealed to him strongly. Considered by the missions a tough, boozing town, it offered opportunities for evangelism. He organized construction of the first church in Hanmore, Alta., where a cairn marks the event. He played his guitar for singings for the Canmore miners who presented him with a banjo. He toured his parish on a bronco coll and is said to have ridden one of the first safety bicycles in the west. He later drew material for his westerns from the region's vast spaces and mountains.

His parishioners were largely rail-roaders, miners and cowboys. A friend said in describing him: "Several times I heard him preach to a hundred shantymen with a sprinkling of better-born fellows sadly down in fortune. His appeal was that of his books. The sermons were always from the Gospels and the atmosphere was unforgettable. He carried his guitar and sang 'The Sweet Bye and Bye or Shall We Gather at the River and hymns likely to catch some of childhood.' The men sang out strong and full-throated. Lord Aberdeen, then governor-general, once took a service for him and Connor later became his chaplain.

After four years at Hanff Connor took a small church in Winnipeg called the West End Mission. Later it became St. Stephen's Church. Before he moved to Winnipeg he journeyed to Pittsburgh for a substantial year of study, but spent most of his time making plans, at first unauthorized for money and missionaries for western Canada. He returned with pledges of some sixty thousand dollars.

He had been in Winnipeg two years, and had become secretary of the British Canadian North West Mission, when the need for more funds sent him to Toronto — where he received, not money but a fateful assignment to write a fiction story "illustrating the west."

Five years after Connor arrived in Winnipeg, it was whistled that the ladies with whom he bicycled on Saturdays were about to lose him to another member of his congregation. That year, he married Helen, daughter of Dr. John Mark King, principal of Manitoba College. A graduate of the college, she was sixteen years her husband's junior.

A small, nimble woman with candid blue eyes, she lives today in a duplex a few blocks from the big home Connor built for his family in 1913 on a quiet tree-shaded street called Westgate. So punctual as a girl that students throng the classrooms for her daily walks across the college campus, she later unobtrusively kept her husband from missing too many appointments through



tardiness or preoccupation. He is said, however, to have once missed by twenty-four hours a meeting he was to address. Punctuality was not his strong point. At times he kept his congregation waiting for his appearance. Then, warning to his sermon, he would forget time and keep them fastened to their pews until they wondered if their Sunday roasts had yet burnt to a crisp.

Of the children, three have remained in Winnipeg. Gretta and Alison, both married, and Ruth, a professional pianist. Lois, a child welfare worker, lives in Toronto. Mary, the oldest daughter, died some years ago. Marjorie, until recently Canadian vice-consul in New York, is married to an Australian diplomat. King, the only son, a Rhodes scholar, became a minister, taught Christian ethics at the United Theological College in Montreal, later ran unsuccessfully on a CCF ticket in Victoria, was an editor of *The Nation* and the CIBC's correspondent to the United Nations. He is now social affairs officer in the UN division of human rights.

With success and marriage, Connor's horizon widened. Early in the century he went on lecture tours, speaking on religious and social welfare topics in Canada, the United States, Britain, New Zealand and Australia. And he was always working on yet another book. At first he wrote in longhand, in pencil, on school scribbles, sometimes retreating to the seclusion of his young son's bedroom, or laboring in his study until dawn almost broke; later he dictated to a secretary.

#### He Was a Reluctant Writer

Like many another writer, he disliked the physical discipline imposed by writing. He procrastinated and was often irked by the insistence of George Dorn, his American publisher, that he hurry his pace for the annual Christmas trade. Many novels were written under the pressure of a deadline. More than once, Dorn seated him in a New York or Chicago hotel room to finish the last few pages while the presses waited. Once the publisher sent his wife to Kenora with instructions not to return without a manuscript. The author's wife, calmly going about her household duties, took in the unexpected guest for several days. "I think his publishers had an awful time," she reflected recently.

The appeal of Connor's books remained high. Many a tear was shed and many a vow for self-improvement made as people read of the triumphs of his characters over evil and hardship. His novels demanded that men follow God and keep fit. They made moral victories out of physical combat, championed good and either redeemed evil men or brought them to within view of hell's fire. Above all, they suited the times for the call was out to "go west" when the west was considered the last frontier. Among settlers pouring over the newly-completed Canadian Pacific Railway were Britishers and eastern Canadians who had been inspired by his novels. Edward McCourt, professor of English at the University of Saskatchewan, calls him "the west's most effective booster, his books better advertising material than anything ever dreamed up by laissez-faire railroad and government publicity men."

In San Francisco, however, a woman burned Black Hawk along with Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* on the sidewalk in front of her home as "a mixture of depravity and religion." She may have taken exception to the frequent oaths of his characters although they were written as "blatant" and produced such dialogue as "Don't let the blank-blank rattle you like a lot of blank-



**THE HONEYMOON THAT'S NEVER OVER.** A surprising number of people go to Niagara Falls, Ontario, with nothing more bridal than hydro business in mind—then fall in love with the Sheraton-Brock Hotel. One of its charms is the never-the-same drama of the Falls viewed from your room or suite. Just as breathtaking is the "Top O' The Brock" dining room with the Falls as its backdrop, and where the fine food is distinctively Sheraton. The Sheraton-Brock is also an ideal spot for fall, winter, spring conventions.

Free reservations made and confirmed by Sheraton Teletype service. Just call your nearest Sheraton Hotel.



# have a GOOD RUM for your money



Britain's Finest Imported



When good friends get together  
they say O.K. for

# O'Keefe's

NO FINER ALE WAS EVER BREWED A-34-10

blank chickens." Once, carried away with the joy of a story, he let a cowboy call a missionary "a dod-gatted-fool hunter."

Connor's heroes were ministers, doctors and members of the Northwest Mounted Police. Whisky peddlers, operators of gambling halls and red-light houses were his villains. "They stole the prospector's secret, rolled the minor of his wife and invited him drunk out the back door of the saloon. As an alternative to temptation Connor offered God.

"The Sky Pilot, which received widest acclaim, was filmed by Ernest Shipman, a U. S. producer, and had Colleen Moore as heroine. Winnipeg turned out to see it opened grandly at the Walker Theatre by the lieutenant-governor, Sir James Aikins. To Gordon's dismay, his hero was portrayed as an unreal, over-pious fanatic, riding bronco with an umbrella aloft to keep off the sun.

Connor, who loved the outdoors and handled a gun and canoe with expert skill, once remarked, "I should have been an Indian." He was, in fact, honorary chief of three Indian tribes. When he was at work at his Kenora, Ont., summer home and wants failed to come, he chopped the trees by the piano or pulled on the lake. A New York publicist, after visiting him at Kenora, wrote: "I was guided through a trail in the woods to where he stood, alone, bare-headed in sweater and aid clothes, whittling a cone from the root of a tree."

## Anything For a Laugh

Connor was fond of "doing games," as his family called them, even on his honeymoon near Port Arthur left his bride to look for roots in the woods. Malcolm Macdonald, now United Kingdom Commissioner-General in South-East Asia, whom he met at Oxford, carried one away after a visit to Kenora, and others found their way to distant parts of the world.

In the evenings, Connor often played for his children, largely by ear, on the piano, guitar or flute. He had a repertoire of spirituals, French-Canadian and comic songs—among them *Alouette* and *Twain One Dark Night On Lac St. Pierre*—to sing around their bonfires. Malcolm Macdonald recalled in a letter his ability to "unbend more completely than any man of his age I have known . . . his tomfoolery at the lake was absolutely delightful; he made any party . . . by his delightfully lud singing of part songs to the accompaniment of the banjo. I remember the occasion when he disappeared for a while day, pretending he was writing a novel. It was only when we were playing word games in the evening that his success in beating us by many hundreds of marks betrayed that he had labored for hours to write every relevant word he could think of." Ramsey Macdonald, when prime minister of Britain, also visited the family at Kenora with his son and three of his daughters. Connor and his wife later returned the visit at No. 10 Downing Street.

All guests at Kenora suffered at least once from the host's practical jokes. "It was a time-honored custom at a new guest's first meal," a friend related, "for the initiated to hold up the edges of the cloth table cloth and form a trough into which Dr. Gordon would quietly pour his drinking water. The water then ran around the trough and fell on the lap of the unsuspecting guest. No visitor, however celebrated, could maintain any unnecessary dignity after such an initiation."

Connor swam with his children, played tennis and pitched, they com-

plained, too fast a softball. In his sixties he aquaplaned, and the year he died, was still chopping wood. In the winter, he curled in the Winnipeg bonapetia and was an ardent hockey fan. Once, when he was in the city as a moderator, he attracted the attention of a colleague by snowballing his study window. Before the war he raced his registered trolley, King Monarchs, on the Red River in winter.

In his sixties Connor took singing lessons. In church, he sometimes stopped his congregation's singing to demonstrate how to enunciate with more vigor and better rhythm, or by leading them or by stepping back to sing tenor in a quartet completed by choir members.

Connor took an especial interest in the welfare of a settlement of eastern Europeans in the north end of the city among whom Margaret Scott, a pioneer nurse and social worker in Winnipeg, was working. Their story he told in *The Foreigner* published in 1922. They were, he felt, receiving too little sympathy. All were welcomed to his church. A social worker, after attending a week of nightly meetings at the church, reported that "I met some of the most richly-socialized of the extraordinary type that I ever encountered anywhere. They were infidels with regard to almost every accepted social, economic and religious doctrine, and they said so in the most brutal fashion imaginable." Another listener remarked: ". . . how deftly he handled them, taking their questions and putting them better than they could themselves, even the reddest of the red. I think that spirit of fairness was one of the big things in his life."

Meanwhile the minister was pouring money into a building program for his church. Seven times during the first twenty years of his ministry it was enlarged at a total cost of more than a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. A church-house was built for a "brotherhood" he had formed among the men of the congregation, for an soccer team and youth groups. He himself bought the thirty-thousand-dollar site. There were rooms to sleep about thirty young men, free physical training and a paid secretary-gymnasium instructor.

By 1914 he was in the thick of a fight for temperance laws in Manitoba. His opponents did not spare him. The Winnipeg Telegram labeled him "Parson Truasher" and shouted "Banish the Har Leader." He had, the Telegram found, an "ill-balanced mind" incapable of reacting normally against "outrages practiced in the interest of the Liberal party." At a political rally during a Portage la Prairie by-election he was accused of being a shareholder in a hotel. A cheque endorsed by him in payment of dividends had been seen. "This was a gross charge, for hotels were then synonymous with bars. Connor stood before a rally at Portage and amid cries of "shut up" and "too holy, eh?," angrily pointed out that the

When You Have Read  
This Magazine . . .

please send it to a member of the armed forces serving overseas. If you know no one in the services, enquire locally if some organization is collecting magazines for shipment. In most areas some organization is performing this valuable service.



## Certificate of Pedigree



This is the mark of the rightful heir to the family title—Harris Tweed—the fabric of the world renown. Spun from finest Scottish Wool, dyed and hand-woven, with the generation-to-generation skill of the Crofters of the Outer Hebrides.



★ Look for the mark on the cloth  
★ Look for the label on the garment

Imported by THE HARRIS TWEED ASSOCIATION LTD.



Don't Neglect Slipping

## FALSE TEETH

Do false teeth drop, slip or wobble when you talk, eat, laugh or sneeze? Don't be annoyed and embarrassed by such handicaps. FASTERTH, an alkaline non-acid powder to sprinkle on your plates, keeps false teeth more firmly set. Gives confident feeling of security and added comfort. No gumming, gummy, nasty taste or itching. Get FASTERTH today at any drug store.

**"EXPORT"**  
CANADA'S FINEST  
CIGARETTE

cheque came from a temperance hotel which had failed through the machinations of the Conservative "liquor party."

War was shortly declared and prohibition adopted as a war measure. Captain C. W. Gordon (to revert to his own name) has heard enough of patriotism and fifty-five years old, went overseas in kilts with the 43rd Canadian Expeditionary Force. On arrival he became a major and senior chaplain of the Canadian forces in England.

He went to the western front as senior chaplain of the Canadian 9th Brigade and witnessed almost the total loss of his regiment, many of them members of his congregation. Before he left the front in 1916, he said final rites for his colonel who was killed on the Somme.

The disaster to his regiment greatly upset him. The death of his colonel, who had been his lawyer in Winnipeg, brought a shock of another kind. When Connor left for overseas in 1915, he had, he felt, left his affairs in good order. He had a hundred thousand dollar life insurance policy and had signed a will bequeathing an estate of one million dollars. Most of his money had been invested in real estate on the edge of Winnipeg by his lawyer. The land was being subdivided into building lots and there was talk of Winnipeg becoming the Chicago of Canada. The values had collapsed in 1913 but Connor was assured by his lawyer, who had formed eight land companies, that his investments were secure. With the lawyer's death came the staggering news from Winnipeg that Connor's money had been misused. Daron, his publisher, who talked to Connor soon afterward, wrote in his memoirs that "it seemed almost impossible to convince Dr. Gordon that he was the victim of criminal mismanagement or worse. When it partially dawned on him, his charity was almost too Christ-like and forbearing. . . ." Connor seldom referred to the loss and forbade discussion of it in his home.

He went on to other duties that called for all his buoyancy. In 1917, the British Government sent him to the United States to urge the United States to join the Allied cause. He gave impassioned public addresses and went to President Wilson's request to the White House where he bluntly told Wilson "the British despise you." Wilson took this equably and confided in him that "something will happen shortly."

When Connor arrived in Winnipeg in 1917 he was met at the CPR station by a band of pipers. Crowds thronged St. Stephen's Church to hear him. Thousands were turned away for lack of standing room. Canadian and United States newspapers carried a picture of him still firmly stamped in people's memories—killed, leaning whimsically on a cane. In his chaplain's kilts he preached under the open sky to American tourists at Lunenburg. He had endeared himself to many Canadians, and especially in servitude, when, in spite of his advocacy of temperance, he had fought an attempt by temperance organizations to cut the troops' rum ration.

After the war he returned to St. Stephen's pulpit. In 1926 he was appointed to the full-time paid job of chairman of the Manitoba Council of Industry, an arbitration board set up after the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, and left an assistant to carry on much of his church work. Under his chairmanship the board settled more than a hundred labor disputes.

He was chosen moderator of the Presbyterian general assembly in 1921 when the church was battling over union with the Methodist and Con-

## KOHLER ELECTRIC PLANTS

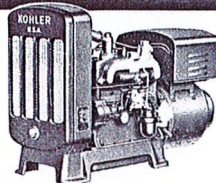
INDEPENDENT SOURCE OF ELECTRICITY

### SOLE SOURCE

For ranches, camps, oil drilling rigs, pipe-lines, mines, lumber camps, work boats.

**PORTABLE AND MOBILE**  
For power saws, drills, Sanders, pipe threaders and cutters, hedge and tree trimmers, public address systems, excavators, draglines, tractors, fire trucks.

**AUTOMATIC STAND-BY**  
When storms or accidents cut off central station power, plants take over critical loads. Write for folder 17-N



Model 264, 2 KW, 115/230 volt AC Automatic. Sizes from 500 watts to 30 KW.

### SOLED AND SERVICED BY:

Finning Tractor & Equipment Co., Ltd. Vancouver, B. C.  
Power Electric & Equipment Co., Ltd. Calgary, Alberta  
Tibbitts Electric Co., Ltd. Regina, Sask.  
A. A. Murphy & Sons, Ltd. Saskatoon, Sask.  
Munford Mellett, Ltd. Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Geo. W. Crothers, Ltd. Leaside, Toronto, Ontario  
Williams Hardware Co., Ltd. Kenora, Ontario

Mussons Canada Ltd. Montreal, Quebec  
Austin Bros. Ltd. Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Tractors & Equipment Ltd. Fredericton, N. B.  
Newfoundland Tractor & Equipment Co., Ltd. St. John's, Newfoundland  
Moore's Electric, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory  
Hudson's Bay Co., Fur Trade Dept. Winnipeg, For Northwest Territories

Kohler Co., Kohler, Wisconsin. Established 1873

## KOHLER OF KOHLER

PLUMBING FIXTURES • HEATING EQUIPMENT • ELECTRIC PLANTS  
AIR-COOLED ENGINES • PRECISION COILS

Two Great Wines with but a Single Name

**74** Canadian Sherry is one of the most popular of Bright's great Canadian wines.

**74** Canadian Sherry can be served at any time—in any company. No mixing, bother—it's ready-to-serve the moment you buy it. It's smooth and mild—a sherry you'll enjoy an appetizer, you'll prize. And it's so reasonable in price!

**74** Canadian Port is the largest-selling premium port wine in Canada today.

**74** Canadian Port is the ideal dessert wine—delightful with cheese or pastry. It's a full-bodied fine port you'll enjoy—buy a bottle soon. You'll like it, your friends will like it. It costs so little, adds so much.

fine Canadian  
**Bright's Wines**  
SINCE 1874

For your free colourful copy of "THE STORY OF PRESIDENT CHAMPAGNE" write Bright's Wines, Leaside, Quebec.



Attractive Mrs. Lily Itkas of Connecticut is a hardworking wife and mother.

## "I wash 9000 pieces of glassware a year... but I'm proud of my pretty hands!"

When lovely Lily Itkas lifts a glass to toast her husband, he can see at a glance that her hands are as soft and pretty as a bride's. Yet those very same hands have to wash thousands of glasses a year. (And so do yours!)

Detergents make lighter work for Lily. Detergent suds really melt away dirt and grease. But unfortunately — those suds can also take away the natural oils and youthful softness of your hands!

How does Lily keep her hands so nice? She never forgets this simple step. After detergents or any harsh cleanser — pure, white Jergens Lotion goes right on her hands.

15¢, 37¢, 45¢, 51.15



Use JERGENS LOTION—avoid detergent hands

Being liquid, Jergens Lotion penetrates the skin instantly (doesn't merely "coat" the surface). In seconds, it actually helps replace the softening moisture your hands need.

There are two ingredients in Jergens

Lotion that doctors use so frequently. And women use for such more Jergens Lotion than any other hand care in the world. You ought to use Lily's lovely hands. They're two of the best reasons for remembering to use Jergens Lotion!

So keep on using detergents, and keep on using Jergens Lotion. You can tell your husband about your hard work — but don't ever let him feel it in your soft and pretty hands.

gregational churches. With Dr. James Endicott of the Methodist church — his son of the same name is known today in Canada for his support of Communism — Connor toured Canada speaking on behalf of union. It came in 1925 with the formation of the United Church of Canada.

In spite of the loss of most of his wealth, Connor continued his openhandedness. During the depression he gave handouts to a steady stream of unemployed at his door. One of his daughters recalls how the family waited apprehensively at the dinner table while he answered the ring of the doorbell. Unfurlingly, he returned with a lighter pocket. "Poor chap," he would say. "He just wanted his fare to Port William."

His literary output continued unabated. After the war his westerns were replaced by novels about Cape Breton, the Niagara Peninsula and Quebec. His "begonia" novels gave a new twist to an occasional "dumb" and "what the hell." But his writing lost much of its rudeness and vigor and to his bewilderment and sorrow, was less popular. The postwar generation was disenchanted and its disenchantment had no room for an optimistic belief in moral regeneration.

There was nothing in his appearance to indicate he felt any disenchantment himself. Animated, alert, walking with long strides, wearing a close-clipped white mustache, he was still the life of gatherings at his home. As long as he could afford it, he kept up payments on his heavy life insurance policy and met the taxes on his big residence and real estate holdings. He was finally forced to let the policy go and the taxes slide.

### He Survives in Classrooms

In 1937, the year of his death, a Boston University theology professor tried to interest Cecil B. De Mille in producing movies of some of the early Connor novels, but nothing came of it. Ralph Connor was all but forgotten outside Canada.

Today Connor's books are still fairly popular with Canadian children although royalties come in regularly for only the two Glenary books and one of the less famous westerns. Still classed by schools as supplementary reading, well-thumbed sets will be found in their old bindings in Winnipeg school libraries and excerpts from them in Manitoba school readers.

Finally, in this last year of his life, the University of Manitoba added an honorary doctorate of laws to the honorary degrees he already held from Queen's and Glasgow universities. By then, his honors also included a CMG and an OBE.

While at Kenora in Sept., 1937, he fell ill and was taken to the Misericordia Hospital for an abdominal operation from which he never rallied. He died on October 31, his reminiscences, "Postscript to Adventure" — just completed. His estate amounted to less than nine thousand dollars and his home was taken over by the city for taxes. Now owned by the University Women's Club of Winnipeg, this red brick mansion building is formally called Ralph Connor House although the name is not in common usage. Hundreds of letters came in his family after his death.

The Free Press devoted almost five columns to the city's "most famous citizen." His funeral, unannounced by flowers, was followed by burial in Old Kildonn Cemetery beyond the city limits. There a simple granite headstone identifies him as Gordon and Connor, "Minister of the Gospel — Author — Canadian." ★

under it. Gardiner's jurisdiction embraces Greater Toronto's conglomerations of thirteen separate communities — the city of Toronto, the townships of York, East York, North York, Etobicoke and Scarborough, the town of New Toronto, Mimico, Weston and Leaside, and the villages of Lang Branch, Swansea and Forest Hill.

There are no viable dividing lines between these communities, in which a million and a quarter people — a twelfth of the national population — are packed into only two hundred and fifty of Canada's three million seven hundred thousand square miles. A stranger can tell where one ends and another begins. The Olden Hamber theatre straddles the borders of three of them — Toronto, York and Swansea. It pays taxes to all three, but once when its manager tried to summon a policeman to evict a noisy patron the police department of each of the three insisted the theatre was not in its territory.

Although the thirteen communities are geographically and socially mixed in politics they've been like Kilkenny cats. They jiggled and debated for years but couldn't even get together on the shape of no-parking signs. Each went its own way as long as it could.

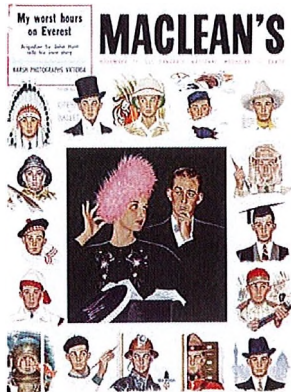
Lack of intelligent planning merely inconvenienced citizens before the war. During and after the war, when tens of thousands of new families moved to Greater Toronto, the inconvenience deepened to real hardship. Travelling to and from work became an ordeal, the housing supply gave out, there weren't enough watermain and sewers, and some schools were so overcrowded that classes had to be staggered. Meanwhile, lands that already have been reserved for park purposes were vanishing, gobbled up by new developments, and so much waste and sewage was spilling into Lake Ontario that swimming and fishing had to be forbidden. Unless it's rapidly corrected, the situation could soon be even worse than it is now, for the rate of Greater Toronto's growth shows no signs of slackening and is, instead, destined to be accelerated by the St. Lawrence Seaway. Gardiner predicts Greater Toronto will have two million residents in twenty years.

There was a time when Fred Gardiner didn't worry too much about what was happening to Toronto. As a corporation lawyer, partner in the firm of Parkinson, Gardiner, Roberts, Anderson and Conlin, and as an officer of several substantial companies, he was busy. But in a campaign for a seat in the legislature he was defeated, in fact, is reputed to be the richest village in Canada. He's a prominent Progressive Conservative and a former Ontario vice-president of the party. Once when he was discussing an official legislation at a campaign rally a heckler shouted, "You're from Forest Hill. What do you know about it?" The implication was that nobody from the rarefied heights of Forest Hill could appreciate the burlesque of municipal legislation at the seven other suburbs.

Gardiner silenced the heckler with the laughing retort that his was the "smallest house with the biggest mortgage in Forest Hill." Actually, it was one of the largest houses with no mortgage. Yet Gardiner knew what it was like to be in modest circumstances. When he was born in Toronto fifty-eight years ago his father, David Gardiner, who had come to Canada from Ireland, was gauged in the old Central Prison, where he later rose to be deputy governor. Fred Gardiner

# Ralph Connor And His Million-dollar Sermons

MACLEAN'S | NOVEMBER 15 1953



Reprinted from the Maclean's Archive

<https://archive.macleans.ca/article/19531115020/print>