

PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH

By G. MERCER ADAM



O Professor Goldwin Smith, I need hardly remind the reader, Canada is indebted, among other generous acts and undertakings of a worthy citizen, for giving to its literary activities a great impulse in the inception and editorial supervision of *The Canadian Monthly*, with which my own name was modestly associated, first as the head of its firm of publishers, and, later on, and for many years, as its editor. The coming to Canada of this ripe Oxford scholar gave to the national literature such aid as it has received from no other pen, and that not only through the channel of *The Canadian Monthly*,* but through other vehicles, native and foreign, and especially through the home ones of *The Week*, *The Bystander*, and *The Nation*. In this varied series of periodicals the Professor's learned writings have been most helpful to the cause of letters in Canada; while they have been invaluable for the rich thought and independent views expressed by their writer, as well as for the philosophic treatment of great national questions, political, industrial, educational, religious and social, that have come up from time to time for consideration and illuminating comment.

Before his day Canada, it will readily be granted, had no magazine or periodical, if we may except the case of the Province of Quebec, either of so high a character or possessing such vigour and vitality as those we have named. Attempts, it is true, had been made to approach their excellence, in such ventures as the one the present writer was instrumental in founding with Prof. H. Youle Hind, of Trinity College, as editor, in 1863—

* This ran from January 1872 to June 1878 and was then changed to *Rose-Belford's Monthly*, which lasted about four years. No successor was found to take up the work until the founding of *THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE* in 1892.

The British American Magazine—and *The Quarterly*, of St. John, New Brunswick, founded and for some years edited by that versatile journalist and able writer, Dr. George Stewart, now of Quebec. The truth is, that before the advent of Mr. Goldwin Smith, magazine ventures, and one might even say all publishing enterprises of a periodical character outside the party newspapers, had fared badly and were precarious and short-lived undertakings. This arose, in part, from the want of means to sustain them until they could become widely known and gain adequate support from their reading constituencies, and also from the lack of a purse deep enough to remunerate their writers. In part, the reason of these failures, however, may be traced to the fact that the time had hardly come for the launching of ambitious publishing enterprises; while heretofore we had no man to conduct them of commanding ability, whose profession was that of a public writer, historian and *littérateur*, and who had mental gifts and material resources, as well as the energy and enthusiasm which were found in Prof. Goldwin Smith. On his coming hither, the period just then was fortunately favourable to the blossoming out of literature in Canada, as its trade and commerce, stimulated by the recent American Civil War, were good; while, politically, a new era had dawned with Confederation and the acquisition of our Northwest domain, together with the organisation of the administrative machinery of the entire country at the Dominion capital.

At this period in Canada how important was the coming to it of one of the great English writers and thinkers of the era will be readily admitted by all who are familiar not only with what Dr. Goldwin Smith has done for its literature in the past thirty odd years, but with the influence he has ex-