

Goldwin Smith as an Oxford Man

By KENNETH N. BELL, Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford.

WHEN Professor Goldwin Smith was asked his opinion of the Rhodes Scholarships his answer was a characteristic criticism. He said it might very well be that education in an old country unfitted one for life in a new one. The remark was in some sort a criticism of himself as well as of the Rhodes bequest. For no one ever bore more indelibly the stamp of English education than he. Intellectually he belonged to the finest type turned out by the older universities of England. The famous classical and philosophical course at Oxford, universally known as "Greats," has as its object to produce just such men as he—men of sterling intellectual honesty, whose minds have been trained to take nothing for granted, to bring everything to the touchstone of a true scholar's creed. Not that Goldwin Smith was ever the scholar pure and simple, the man whose only world is the world of books. Oxford, which trains the cabinet ministers and lawyers of Britain, and the civil servants of both Britain and India, has fewer such sons than she is often given credit for. Few journalists have had a knowledge of "current events" more comprehensive than had the late Regius Professor of Oxford. Yet no one will deny that if Goldwin Smith was a journalist he was something more. His originality of view, the sweep of his intellectual horizon and the loftiness of his standards of judgment stamp him as the scholar whom the oldest university of Great Britain honoured with one of her highest distinctions.

Then was Goldwin Smith after all only fit to breathe the rarefied air of an Oxford common room—was he, as he feared the returned Rhodes scholars would be, spoilt for the breezy and strenuous life of Canada by the too exalted standards of an aristocratic and ancient civilisation? Fresh from his graveside one would not willingly say that this was so. But twenty years ago the country was full of attacks on the doctrinaire politician whose ignorance of Canada was only equalled by the vigour with which he displayed it. He found so much to criticise in Canada, that most Canadians felt that his gospel was the gospel of suicide and nothing more. Is it true, then, that when Oxford

sends us the most distinguished of her sons to spend forty years of his life amongst us, it is after all only a solemn warning of how Oxford training spoils those who profit most by it, for Canadian life?

Our memory of Goldwin Smith is an emphatic denial. True that he was such a critic of Canada as no new country has had in its midst since the world began. But the time will come, if it is not here already, when Canada will be proud of the monument which his writings have raised to her, proud of the criticism which, if it was often more than candid, was always inspired by the feelings of a true Canadian patriot. The future Canadian historian will find that the Bystander's matchless style has marked forty years of Canada's annals with a distinction very rare in the history of the American continent. But Goldwin Smith has done something more than illuminate Canadian records with the glamour of an Oxford stylist. His whole life was a testimony of the value to Canada of another side of Oxford training. If ever a man knew how to "play the game" it was Goldwin Smith. Like all true sportsmen, he loved a fight and the joy of good hard hitting according to the rules. But no man was ever less likely to "dodge the referee," to show petty spite, or wantonly to turn a public disagreement into an opportunity for private slander. Again, if he was a ruthless and destructive critic of political democracy, his life was the life of a model citizen. Every duty of citizenship—the duty of charity, of social service, of ready self-sacrifice to the common good—he zealously and persistently fulfilled. This corporate feeling can be learnt anywhere for it is the obvious duty of the civilised man. It becomes part of the nature of the best type of English gentleman, for it is part of his education in school and college. It is what the Rhodes scholars appreciate and value in their three years at Oxford and as shown forth by Goldwin Smith, it is an example which must appeal to every member of a truly democratic community. More than his scholarship, more than his distinction, it is this which made him the pride of Toronto and of Canada. He was an English gentleman, and in honouring him, stern critic as he was of her, Canada honours herself.

His Political Views

By JOHN A. COOPER

IN the first two issues of *The Canadian Monthly*, published in January and February, 1872, appeared two poems entitled "Marching Out" and "Marching In." These poems described the marching out of the last of the British garrison at Quebec, and the marching in of the Canadian troops. They were signed "York," but in my volume I have written the words "Goldwin Smith" below "York." I do not know where I got my information that Goldwin Smith wrote the poems, nor whether it is accurate. Professor Goldwin Smith was the godfather and editor of the publication and it is reasonable to assume that the poems may have been from his pen. In the second poem, the "spirit" of the old garrison addresses the new:

"Old England well hath kept the post,
Keep ye the post as well.

"Rich is the store she leaves her heir
In mine, in farm, in fold,
But she leaves a treasure richer far
Than corn, or mine, or gold.

"Proud will she be to see you grow
In wealth by land and main,
But prouder when misfortune's power
Is met and leaves no stain.

"Swear that if e'er by fortune's spite
To yonder foe it fall,
He shall enter not through the trait'rous gate
But over the ruined wall.

"Swear, if again the invader come
Vaunting, as then he came,
Defeat perchance that flag may know,
But never shall know shame."

If Goldwin Smith wrote those lines, then there need be no charge that he was an annexationist. They breathe a militant spirit of nationalism to which even a jingo could take no exception. Yet the same pen wrote that controversial and historical volume, "Canada and the Canadian Question," which, if it did not advocate annexation, at least predicted that Canada would ultimately be absorbed by the United States. He founded a political philoso-

phy which was the basis of the campaign in favour of "Commercial Union." He furnished a political cry which Sir John Macdonald ultimately met with his famous phrase, "A British subject I was born; a British subject I shall die."

In the light of history and in the light of cold logic, absorption of Canada by the United States was not an impossibility in the seventies. Economically it would have been beneficial. As Goldwin Smith was a cold logician, he declared that the natural trend of North American trade was north and south, and that to try to drive Canadian trade east and west was a task too superlative to be attempted by wise men. Yet so far as developments have gone Goldwin Smith was wrong. Inherited British stubbornness has enabled Canadians to do that which forty years ago he thought impossible. To-day Canada's trade, Canada's development and Canada's national life-blood flows east and west, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. To-day Canada is economically, commercially and politically independent of her southern neighbour. The impossible has become a reality. What the future holds in store for us no one may accurately prophesy.

His influence as a scholar, as a journalist and as a publicist had been greater, far greater, had his political views been otherwise. There were always a large number of people who hated him because of his anti-imperialism. I do not know any incident which better illustrates the attitude of the public towards Goldwin Smith than one in which the Canadian Club of Toronto was concerned some years ago. Certain prominent members were rather afraid to ask the Professor to speak, but the majority of the executive decided that he should be invited. He accepted and came. The meeting took place on the first floor of the now departed Webb's restaurant. The members received him enthusiastically, and the meeting was a tremendous success. A year or two afterwards he again spoke to the Club with great success. None appreciated the pleasant result more than the Professor, and to mark his appreciation, he sent every member of the Club an autograph copy of "Shakespeare: The Man," with his compliments.

Although he was the first president of the National Club of Toronto, the members of that institution were not proud of the fact. Nor were they willing, until quite recently, to hang his portrait on their walls beside the portraits of other past presidents.

Because of Goldwin Smith's views as to our ultimate destiny, he never exercised a dominating political influence. Possibly he never aspired to political leadership; certainly it was difficult to attain it on the lines of policy laid down in that volume. Hence, he was more or less forced to content himself with intellectual leadership. Through his articles, books and addresses, he exercised an influence which was everything but political. He made Canadian literature possible; he created an interest in art, foreign and native; he raised the standards of education and scholarship; he elevated the ideals of journalism; he broadened the conception of citizenship. He was a living link between the culture and scholarship of early Victorian England and the culture and scholarship of Canada that is to be.

PUBLIC OPINION

Editor, *Canadian Courier*:

Sir,—I beg to offer the following comment on your remarks on "When Laurier Comes West" in your issue of May 21st. You say, "He (Laurier) will listen to what the people of that portion of Canada have to say." Will he? What possible chance has the Premier to learn the thought of the average man of affairs whose life is centred in his work and home, who belongs not to either party organisation, but who, at election time, after attending a meeting or two on each side, votes for the candidate he prefers; the man who with others of his kind is Canada, and whose vote is the sane controlling element in the country's politics? And this man could tell Sir Wilfrid, or any other Premier or would-be Premier, some things worth their attention.

But, throughout his tour, hurried and confined strictly to the beaten paths, the Premier will, every moment of the time, be surrounded—hedged in—by the officers, committee and heelers of the local political association in each place he visits. He will hear as much as he chooses of what they have to say, but, so far as "the people" are concerned Laurier will do the talking. Such of them as care to jostle for a place with those of the faith, will listen to him and the rest will scan his talk in next day's paper.

On the subject of reciprocity with the United States, if his ear be placed to the ground, he will learn, I venture, that Canada has outgrown the idea of kow-towing to that country for any supposed favours; that she has no notion of going one hair's-breadth more than half way to meet her large neighbour; that she feels within herself all the forces necessary for her full development as a part of the great Empire to which she belongs, and is quite ready to endure some temporary inconvenience if necessary, while her own citizens, manufacturers included, are working out the problem of supplying her many and widely various needs.

A. E. WHITE.

New Westminster, June 7th, 1910.

Editor, *Canadian Courier*:

Sir,—In your editorial columns in your issue of June 4th you make reference to Banff in the following words: "And the excellent C. P. R. hotels at Banff, Lake Louise and elsewhere." As a resident of Banff I wish to ask that you would endeavour to correct the impression that unfortunately prevails to a large extent regarding the hotel accommodation here. Besides the C. P. R. hotel, which was in 1887 the only first class hotel in Banff, there are five or six hotels offering accommodation quite on a par with the average first class hotel of the east, and of these some are far superior to the average.

Also, you might make known, through your widely read paper, that the visitors to the west can be accommodated with the best of service all the year round (though the C. P. R. hotel only remains open through the summer months). By making this correction of the prevalent misapprehension of the conditions here you will be doing the gateway of the National Park only simple justice.

Another feature that might influence prospective visitors is the fact that there is a large number of furnished cottages to be secured here and parties wishing to spend a lengthy vacation can do so at a moderate expense by renting a suitable cottage and keeping house during their stay.

W. ALEXANDER.

Banff, June 7th, 1910.