

Home Journal

GOLDWIN SMITH IS DEAD

"Goldwin Smith is dead!" were the words the wires pulsated to the English speaking world on the afternoon of Tuesday, June 7. Once regius professor of modern history at Oxford, professor of English and constitutional history in Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., known to the English world as its most distinguished publicist, unequalled in his mastery of the mother tongue; journalist, author, historian, critic, art connoisseur and philanthropist; those briefly are the fields in which Goldwin Smith labored with distinction since the middle of the last century—in prose literature, the most eminent English man of letters since the death of Carlyle.

Born in 1823, he was educated at Eton and Oxford, with the view to proceeding for the bar. This ambition, however, was early succeeded by a taste for history, literature and journalism. He came to America in 1864, espoused the cause of the North in the conflict then raging, with a force and effect second only to those exerted by John Bright; lectured on history for a time at Cornell, and in 1872 removed to Toronto, taking up residence in "The Grange," one of the oldest colonial mansions in America. From there he wrote books, pamphlets and articles for the press, in the latter generally expressing unpopular views, but always expressing them in terms the public did not have to guess the meaning of, and in manner such that the writer's sincerity of opinion could never be doubted. He probably aspired for political honors, but had few of the qualities that raise men to eminence in practical politics. Politically he was a Liberal of what the English term the "old school."

Of Goldwin Smith it cannot be said, as has been said of many a master mind in English letters, that his contemporaries and the people of his time were tardy in recognizing and appreciating his genius. Probably we are better able to distinguish mental superiority and uncommon intellectual powers than our forbears were who starved Johnson in the coffee houses of Grub Street, and refused to believe that the author of *Sartor Resartus* could be anything but a "crazy tailor." At any rate Goldwin Smith was early distinguished as a broadminded thinker and writer of unusual clarity and force. His first venture into the field of letters was made in 1855, when with the establishment of *The Saturday Review* he became a regular contributor to its columns, to the columns of many English journals of note and American and Canadian newspapers and periodicals. His splendid mastery of English, combined with an outlook on human affairs that his taste for history and habit of reflection had broadened and deepened to an unusual degree, gave to his contributions to journalism a clearness and felicity of diction, a richness of thought and variety of experience rare in the hastily composed matter common to this class of literature.

As a critic, Goldwin Smith was scarcely ever found on the popular side. His religious views did not keep with those held by the majority of the English speaking public, most of all with those held by members of the Anglican Church. He was a deist, a rationalist, an agnostic, a religious sceptic, and his views on the future state of the soul were such as he expressed with his characteristic candor and freedom of expression in 1867 in the *Review* on the subject of "Last Things." In this article he said: "The Bible, inspired or not, is a book of fables and lies, and its teaching is a delusion."

the decline in religious belief. He notes how powerfully the fortress of theology is affected by modern science, which demands proof before it believes, and which traces how faiths arose often in premature attempts at solving the problem of life, its high aspirations, its humble achievements.

The future, however, will judge Goldwin Smith by his historical works, chief of which are his history of the United States from 1492 to 1871, and "The United Kingdom: A Political History," works in which the political developments of these two nations are sketched and interpreted in a manner to which only the monumental works of Bryce and Greene in the same field of letters are at all to be compared.

In the days when Goldwin Smith was found on the unpopular side of nearly all questions in Canada, and when the outlook was none too bright, J. Castell Hopkins probably voiced the majority when he wrote in *The Westminster Review* in 1894: "Goldwin Smith, in a word, is a great writer, a brilliant controversialist, a master of style, sarcasm and invective; a smouldering volcano of personal animosities. He has done good service to English literature wherever the

PLAIN SPEAKING

Let us speak plain; there is more force
in names
Than most men dream of; and a lie
may keep
Its throne a whole age longer, if it
skulk
Behind the shield of some far-seeming
name.
Let us call tyrants tyrants, and main-
tain
That only freedom comes by grace of
God,
And all that comes not by his grace
must fall;
For men in earnest have no time to
waste
In preaching fig-leaves for the naked
truth.

LOWELL.

English language is spoken, and has honestly tried to benefit the English race by political preachment and international advocacy. . . . His denunciations of the Irish in America has increased their bitterness against Great Britain and promoted similar feelings in England. Vehement abuse of the British Tory party and aristocracy has delighted the American tail-twister, but has hardly aided international friendliness. Minimizing the effects of British connection in Canada may have decreased affection towards England; but pictures of corruption and misgovernment in the United States have not promoted annexation sentiment in the Dominion. . . . He will be remembered not as a national prophet crying in the wilderness before the dawn of a new and better era, but as a light shining with titful brilliance and sometimes baleful intensity in the literature of the English-speaking world during a transition period of its international development."

About a mile and a half from Torquay, in Devonshire, a man has just been made alderman of Bournemouth, whom we are all interested, even though we have never placed foot on English soil. He is the champion whom was drawn the character of "Mr. For the Sweep in Kingsley's incomparable story, 'The Water Babies.'"

The Bones of Tecumseh

The name Tecumseh is associated in Canadian history with stirring events of the War of 1812. The great Indian chief, who fought so loyally for Canada, was killed at the battle of Moraviantown. For nearly a hundred years the place of his burial has been unknown to white men. But recently the remains were believed to have been located by a Wallaceburg man, who received the facts from his grandfather who had known an old chief of the tribe. The grandfather's story was to the effect that Tecumseh's body was first buried in Moraviantown, but later was taken up by his Indian friends and carried to St. Anne's Island in Lake St. Clair. A week or more ago three prominent Wallaceburg men, having gained possession of these facts, went to the exact location on the island and dug up the skeleton supposed to be the Big Chief. Naturally, the Indians were indignant at the desecration of the body of their chief, and protested strongly against the indignity, but their protests were completely disregarded. Canadians, too, feel that beside being an insult to Indian citizens, it is also an affront to a loyal warrior that his bones should be dragged from the dust to be displayed to the curious in an office. It is questionable, too, if this party had any right to so act in regard to any body without the permission of the attorney-general of the province. Ontario people are asking for an authoritative statement on this point.

Mistress in Her Own

On the last day of May there was consummated the greatest piece of empire-building that our generation has seen or is likely to see. That day the new government of United South Africa was proclaimed and the colonies of Transvaal, Cape of Good Hope, Natal and Orange River State were united to form the new dominion. The date is significant—just eight years before, on the last day of May, the Boer leaders reluctantly signed the terms of peace which brought the South African war to a close. In those brief years a conquered nation has become an adopted "daughter in her mother's house and mistress in her own," as free to work out her own destiny as Canada or Australia.

The government is much after the Canadian system. Viscount Herbert Gladstone, son of the Grand Old Man, is the first governor-general. The administrative offices will be at Pretoria, and the high courts at Bloemfontein; parliamentary sessions will be held in Cape Town. The senate has thirty-two elected and eight nominated senators, four of the latter being chosen for the knowledge of the needs of the colored races of the dominion. The assembly consists of 121 members chosen by voters. Members of each house must be naturalized and of European descent. No voter is to be disqualified solely on the ground of race or color.

The new premier of the first ministry of United South Africa is General Louis Botha, who fought with the greatest courage and energy against the British till hope was gone, and then turned to make the best of the future for his people by himself becoming a loyal subject and urging them to do the same. He has been a very large factor in this work of building a new corner to the British Empire. Dr. Jameson, whose part in the brilliant but ill-starred raid made his name known to the world, has become the leader of the Progressive Party in South African politics. Canada can sincerely wish all prosperity to her new sister.