

# The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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## GOLDWIN SMITH AGAIN.

Prof. Goldwin Smith is at it again. Strange man is Mr. Smith; he has a very common name and were he simply John or Thomas Smith, there would be nothing to distinguish him from hundreds of others bearing the same names. But Goldwin is very uncommon. Reverse it, and you have the meaning in which it is most applicable to the Professor—*win gold*, also win fame or notoriety. In literature Mr. Smith is an "all round man;" also he is "a square man." He could "square a circle" as easily as round a perfect English sentence. If he thought the result would be injurious to the hated "Irish and their foolish ideas of Home Rule." He is like the proverbial character with the "square head"; he has a face on every side of it. He beats Janus out completely—Janus had only two faces, Smith has four. One of them smiles in the direction of England; a second grins at Canada; a third snickers in the direction of the United States; and the fourth grows radiant in the contemplation of Goldwin Smith himself. This extraordinary professor has a splendid knack of couching false theories in good grammatical English. He cares not how meaningless his expressions provided they do not sin, in construction, against the rules of prosody and Rhetoric. In the July number of the North American Review, Mr. Goldwin Smith has an article entitled, "Problems and Perils of British Politics." For fine cut language and super-sublime audacity (cheek it is called in America), his contribution is a model.

Of course Ireland and Home Rule have to come in for a certain amount of attention. It is thus that the sage Professor delivers himself: "Home Rule, as a popular movement, is dead. As a popular movement, indeed, apart from the agrarian agitation, it never had in it much life. What the Irish people wanted was, not political change, but the land. It was because they were persuaded that an Irish Parliament would give them the land that they shouted for the political change. Having got the land they cared little for the political change, and they could scarcely be lashed into showing the slightest resentment when the Home Rule Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords. They have contributed but sparingly to the Home Rule fund, while the hat has been sent round amongst their friends in the United States; a system which is the more significant, as they are very generous by nature and usually give freely to any object near their hearts. All the

agitations in Ireland for the repeal of the union, when not combined with agrarianism, have been utterly weak, O'Connell's agitation not less than the rest."

Poor sophist! Such a mixture of false statements and absurd contradictions was never penned in shorter space or in finer English. Let us take his assertions one after the other; assertions entirely unaccompanied by any proof—totally gratuitous and wonderfully untrue. If Professor Goldwin Smith is prepared to stake his reputation upon this master-stroke of his, in one of the leading magazines of the world, we are prepared to show that a very bad and unenviable reputation must be his—at least as an expounder of history and a political theorist. He could not have done a better service to Home Rule than to have thus attacked it.

"Home Rule, as a popular movement, is dead." Who says so? Goldwin Smith. What evidence does Goldwin Smith produce to substantiate this gratuitous assertion? Simply this: "As a popular movement, indeed, apart from the agrarian agitation, it never had in it much life." It had sufficient life to transform in a few years the whole aspect of British politics, to increase the representation of Ireland's cause at Westminster from a score of members to eighty, to secure the balance of power between the two great contending parties of the Empire, to make Europe look on with astonishment, to awaken an enthusiasm in America such as was only surpassed by that of the battle for Independence, to stimulate into activity the most disheartened peasantry in the world, to open out avenues of preferment for Irish Catholics—avenues long closed by the tyrannic laws enacted by men whom Mr. Smith so admires and pretends to love, to make the whole machinery of a vast Empire's government stand still until the voice of Ireland was not only heard, but answered, and to bring into existence the most openly disloyal of all factions, that of the parliamentary Unionists. If, as a popular movement, Home Rule were dead (as the Professor dogmatically states) then the whole universe would have been shaken had it been alive. In fact, it has been the liveliest political corpse that this century has ever known. So much life was there in it that Goldwin Smith cleared out of England when it began to assert its strength; and if it be dead today, its ghost must be very potent, for it has once more scared the Professor out of his senses and caused him to fly across the Atlantic.

He then tells us that it is not an Irish Parliament the people of Ireland want, it is the land they are after. We scarcely credited Mr. Goldwin Smith with so much stupidity. He argues that if they got the land they would not care for the Parliament. Suppose it is the land they want; how does he expect they are ever going to secure it unless they enjoy legislative autonomy? Does he suppose that the Irish want the honor of a parliament house, merely for show-sake, and that they do not expect to reap any material benefits from a native legislature? He certainly does not sincerely take them to be a nation of fools, or of children, who may be satisfied with a meaningless decoration, or an empty title. But he is not honest. If he were to put it thus, he would be telling the truth and not distorting facts: "The Irish want Home Rule, a local legislature, political autonomy, in order that they may enjoy the same rights and privileges that belong to the citizens of all constitutionally governed countries; that they may be enabled to purchase the land, if they are able to do so; to enjoy

the just fruits of their labor; to be saved from famine, emigration, and all the miseries attendant on the existing system." These are some of the reasons why the Irish want Home Rule; and so far is it from being a dead issue, that its vitality is stronger to-day than ever it was.

He then tells us that "they could scarcely be lashed into showing the slightest resentment when the Home Rule Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords." He is right; and he regrets that it is so. In the days of oppression, of weakness, of impotency, the Irish were often driven to despair, and often did they manifest their feelings by much noise and little action. But now they have gathered a strength that they are able to use; they don't need to raise an awful out-cry, because they hold the balance of power, they possess the ballot, they know and feel that they are able to eventually overthrow the power that thwarts them. It is this calmness, this determination, this confidence, that Goldwin Smith dreads, and that he and his anti-Irish friends would like to destroy. Both he and the Times would rejoice could they only lash the Irish into some unreasonable excitement or excess of action; but the Irish have grown too cunning for them, and this cry of the baffled Professor is the howl of vexation.

As to his remarks about the failure of all repeal movements—even O'Connell's—they are not worthy of reply, much less of serious attention. The fact is simply this: Professor Goldwin Smith is sufficiently keen-sighted to perceive the inevitable result of all the peaceful agitations for Home Rule; he sees clearly that an Irish legislature is necessary and that it must come. But he is not honest enough to admit his own convictions, so he rushes into the North American Review and stultifies himself in the eyes of all observant and reasoning men, while he attempts to blind his readers with the dust of his own prejudice and to set them to sleep with the delicious opiate of his fine English—a drug that is as attractive as it is deadly. Home Rule, however, does not depend upon the Professor; it will be alive and kicking long after he is in oblivion.

## GLADSTONE'S VISIT.

It appears that Mr. Depew, of New York, is securing a circular, signed by a couple of hundred representative citizens of the United States, requesting Mr. Gladstone to visit America this year. We hope most sincerely that the invitation will be accepted by the Grand Old Man. There can only be one obstacle in the way—and that would have to be on the part of the ex Premier himself. He may, perhaps, consider that he is too old and that the trans-Atlantic trip would be too much for his system. Still we think that this objection might be easily overcome. Of course no person would wish—even for the extraordinary pleasure of beholding and hearing the most popular statesman alive—that he should sacrifice one hour of his life in coming to America. But, considering the rapidity with which the ocean steamers now traverse the Atlantic, the wonderful accommodations on board those floating palaces, and the great attention that such a personage would receive, we are confident that a journey to America would not be any more trying upon the aged champion of a people's rights than are the trips that he takes to the continent.

The visit of Gladstone would serve a two-fold purpose; it would give the people of America a splendid opportunity of testifying their deep sense of appreciation of that this great man has

done, during the past few years, for the cause of liberty, of justice and of Ireland; while it would be the crowning reward of the veteran premier, the occasion of his grandest triumph, and a living evidence to him of the esteem, love and veneration in which he is held by the people of the New World. To-day he can only form vague ideas—from reports, correspondence and hear say—of the popularity which he has achieved in America. But were he once brought face to face with the people of this continent he would return home a gratified and happy man—having tasted of that immortality that certainly will be his. Therefore, we repeat, do we hope that the influence brought to bear will be sufficiently strong to carry the day and to brush away all objections—on his side—to the prospered triumphal march through the cities of the New World.

There is a deep and potent gratitude in the Celtic heart. Some other nations are revengeful, and often they forget all the good of years in presence of one act of enmity, or they do not take into consideration all the benefits, blessings and reparations, as long as the dark memories of the far away past survive; not so with the Irish. The children of our race are willing to bury all past differences the moment they become the object of any kindly or well-intended deed. They forgive and forget, and are prepared to take to their bosom the one who seriously becomes their benefactor. In the "Foray of Con O'Donnell," we find the Celtic bard giving a splendid illustration of this beautiful characteristic: Con O'Donnell, the chieftain, has been at war with MacJohn, the head of a rival clan; peace is restored and the former thus addresses the latter:

"MacJohn I stretch to yours and you,  
This hand, beneath God's blessed sun,  
And, for the wrong that I might do,  
Forgive the wrong that I have done."

The clouds that fitted across the earlier life-sky of the Grand Old Man are lost entirely in space, and are completely forgotten in presence of the refulgence of that magnificent sunset. Let Gladstone cross the Atlantic, and here—on the shores of a new continent—he will learn more, in one week, of the true power of Irish gratitude than he could possibly ever know, while amidst the scenes of political strife at home. Again we express the hope that he may come; and if he does, Mr. Depew and all the others will deserve the undying thanks of the people of America.

THE wonderful and beneficial results of the Catholic Reading Circles of the United States challenge the attention of the world. We are pleased to learn that in Montreal a couple of Reading Circles have been established, and we trust that, after the vacation, others will be formed and that the good work will be carried on extensively. We would advise all of those who are interested in the extending of Catholic literature and the splendid efforts being made in the direction of self-culture and self-instruction, if they can possibly do so, to attend the coming session of the Catholic Summer School of America, at Plattsburgh, N.Y. On next Sunday the session will be opened and during the four ensuing weeks a series of lectures will be given on various important and interesting subjects. To attend the school will be a real vacation combined with a partial education.

THE Utica Globe of last week has a portrait of the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS and a sketch of his life. We thank the Globe for its kind remarks, and especially for stating that our paper has been raised to the front-rank of Catholic journals on the continent.