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Edmonton: Past and Present

Edmonton has a poet of its own. The following is part of his latest effort, as it appeared in the *Bulletin*:

WE stood as an outpost of the world
On the margin of civilisation,
Where the three-cross flag remained unfurled,

But we scarce were part of a nation;
Exiles far from the motherland
In trading posts stockaded,
And little we thought what the Lord
had planned
As we bartered and trucked and traded.

The wind that rustled the prairie grass
Blew shrill as it broke for cover,
Fresh as it came from the mountain pass

To travel the broad plains over;
And the thunder was heard of the flying hooves,

Where the buffalo wild stampeded
Out over the ridge where the dust-cloud moves,
And the hunters pass unheeded.

Far away from the haunts of men,
The beaver dwelt secluded,
Where the wild duck hid in the marshy fen

And the moose alone intruded,
But the lonely trapper forced his way
And the white-faced axeman followed

'Till they put the stakes of the great survey
In the place where the buffalo wallowed.

Along the stretch of the winding trail,
By the long grass fairly hidden,

The creaking ox-carts seldom fail
To pass where the scouts have ridden,
And this is the trade that the country boasts,

The unvarying load they carry,
The bales of furs from the northern posts
That go out by the old Fort Garry.

The red-coat trooper from "Pile o' Bones"
To the "great lone land" came riding,
Bringing the law with its strident tones

The old log village that stood alone,
Has faded away in the distance,
And a proud new city of brick and stone

Now raises with calm persistence.
Beneath it the broad Saskatchewan flows
As swift and unchanged as ever,
While the steady stream of our commerce grows
With the tide of our own endeavour.

For the points that need deciding;
A law that the land had never known—

The law of the eastern cities—
The law that the white man carries around

For trials and peace committees.

Then the prairie schooners followed fast
Along in straight succession,
And the watching red man stood aghast,

For he knew they took possession;
That the men had come to claim the soil,

To hold what they won securely,
That the earth might yield to an honest toil

And give to the settler surely.

'Twas then that the little frontier post
Crept into civilisation,
When the progress we, as Britishers, boast,

Had brought us into the nation,
And being such, and thinking as such,
With the blood and the brain behind us,

We couldn't refrain from doing as much
As would put us where now you find us.

We used to be in the far Northwest,
And we raised no great objection,
But now our climate has proved of the best,

We proffer a slight correction.
Only that if not in the south,
At least we're the radial centre
Of an inland empire with nothing of drouth,

A land that a world could enter.

The old log village that stood alone,
Has faded away in the distance,
And a proud new city of brick and stone

Now raises with calm persistence.
Beneath it the broad Saskatchewan flows
As swift and unchanged as ever,
While the steady stream of our commerce grows
With the tide of our own endeavour.

—ROBERT T. ANDERSON.

Edmonton, December 19th.

"No Refuge but in Truth."

A SLENDER volume, bound in grey boards, contains seven letters by Mr. Goldwin Smith which appeared last year in the columns of the *New York Sun* and which are now published under the title, "No Refuge but in Truth." Of these epistles, "Man and His Destiny" and "New Faith Linked with Old" are the lengthiest and most significant. In the latter, this profound student of history reaches the conclusion: "It seems to me still that history is a vast struggle, with varying success, toward the attainment of moral perfection, of which, if the advent of Christianity furnished the true ideal, it may be deemed in a certain sense a revelation. Assuredly it may if in this most mysterious world there is, beneath all the conflict of good with evil, a spirit striving toward good and destined in the end to prevail. If there is not such a spirit, if all is matter and chance, we can only say, What a spectacle is History."

The last article in the book, "The Religious Situation," is republished from the *North American Review*. It is a characteristic consideration of

the present attitude of the world towards religious belief and attributes the unrest of to-day partly to the great physical discoveries of recent times. The greatness of Christianity as a civilising force is emphasised, though its "miraculous revelation of the Deity" is questioned. The limitations of evolution, as a theory for the progress of humanity, are delicately indicated. "It may explain even our social and political frame and our habit of conformity to law. But beyond conformity to law, social or political, is there not, in the highest specimens of our race at least, a conception of an ideal of character and an effort to rise to it which seem to point to a more spiritual sphere?"

There are less than seventy pages in this collection of essays by the venerable historian, whose calm and serene twilight outlook follows a day of broad and generous efforts in behalf of toiling humanity—but every one of these pages contains some bit of philosophic truth or conclusion which makes the slender volume a wealth of suggestion. Toronto: William Tyrrell and Company.

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