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Anglo-Saxon Amity

BY

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FELLOW ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

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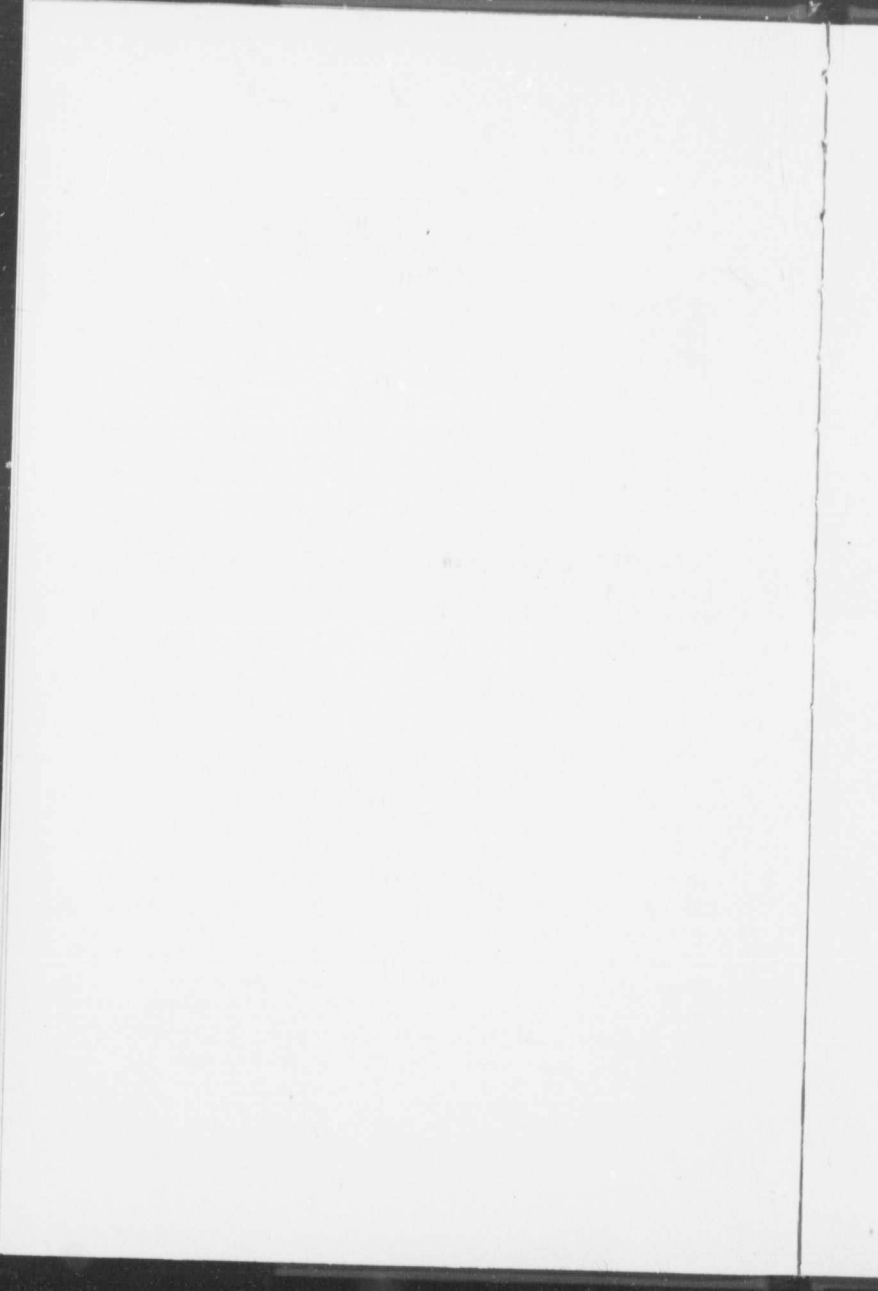
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PREFATORY NOTE



O apology is needed for the appearance in this form of the eloquent address delivered before the Canadian Club at Boston, Dec. 4th, 1905, by Mr. J. S. Willison of Toronto, the well-known Canadian journalist and author. The circumstances which have led to its republication may, however, be briefly explained.

That the friendship existing between Great Britain and the United States may be sincere and permanent is the hope of every well-wisher of both countries. Their amity is a factor in international policy which makes for peace and the best interests of civilisation. Canada, as the most important self-governing colonial state of the Empire, and the nearest neighbour of the great Republic, has a potent influence in preserving the good understanding that has so happily developed in recent years. Thousands of Canadians reside in the United States. They remain staunchly attached to their native land, and are apt to remember the past, as Canadians at home are disposed to do, for its angry controversies and apparent injustices, rather than its peaceful and honourable achievements. Every speech that allays these memories and lays stress upon the natural affiliations and common interests of Canada and the United States is a true act of statesmanship. Mr. Willison's address at Boston is a most courageous and notable deliverance upon the duty of Canadians in respect to the broader interests of the British Empire.

The venerable Canadian statesman and jurist, Sir James Gowan, K.C.M.G., struck with the importance of the address as a contributory influence in a movement which he has long had at heart—a cordial understanding between the Empire and the American Republic—suggested its being brought to

the attention of those persons on both sides of the ocean who are, equally with himself, interested in a cause so noble and so patriotic. The permission of the author to republish for this purpose was obtained. A committee gladly undertook the responsibility. The address is therefore presented under the auspices and authority of the following committee: Sir James Gowan, K.C.M.G., member of the Canadian Senate; Sir Sandford Fleming, Chancellor of Queen's University; Mr. Byron E. Walker, D.C.L., General Manager of the Canadian Bank of Commerce; Rev. D. M. Gordon, D.D., Principal of Queen's University; James Bain, D.C.L., Chief Librarian of the Public Library, Toronto; Prof. A. B. Macallum, Ph.D., University of Toronto; John Hoskin, LL.D., K.C., Chairman Board of Trustees, University of Toronto; Mr. John A. Cooper, LL.B., Editor of *The Canadian Magazine*.

TORONTO, February 20th, 1906.

Anglo-Saxon Amity

IT is a privilege to come to Boston and to receive this welcome from so many Canadians who still cherish the land of their birth and still reverence the flag which floats over the homes of their kindred and the graves of their fathers. Boston, in its traditions and in its institutions, peculiarly and essentially expresses the political genius of the Anglo-Saxon race, its social culture, its ethical spirit, its love of art and letters, its respect for elementary human rights, and its steadfast loyalty to the sane and simple maxims of free government. Here a nation was born in poverty and travail and revolution, and the world stands in awe at the amazing fruitage of that birth. For generations the spirit of New England was the moral force of this Republic, and all down the years this commonwealth of Massachusetts has contributed mightily to the dignity and sanity, the social excellence and the political efficiency of American institutions.

If we deplore the old quarrel which separated the Thirteen Colonies from the Mother Country, it is because we now understand what potent agencies for the world's peace and the world's good lie in a union of affection and interest between the United States and the British communities. If we think that Samuel Adams had some of the characteristics of the revolutionary radical, and something of the art of the practical politician it is not that we would deny his

zeal for freedom, or maintain that there could be any other issue to the relations between the King and his Colonies than separation and independence. If we remember Bunker Hill it is not in humiliation nor in anger, but in reverence for heroic men and the "wounds which do not shame." We associate with Boston Common the imperishable traditions of human freedom, the steady devotion of martyrs and enthusiasts to austere creeds and sacred convictions, the stern patriotism of the founders of a Commonwealth, and the evangelical ardour of Garrison and Phillips who, through peril and persecution, proclaimed the faith which at length seized upon the soul and conscience of the North and West, and inspired the Union armies through years of desperate civil conflict. In the history of New England, as in the history of Old England, we read the common story of the glorious struggle of the English-speaking race for the enthronement of moral principles and the enlargement of civil and religious freedom, and we forget that some of its chapters were written in estrangement and in anger.

Your writers, too, are embraced in that common record and that common inheritance. To Motley and Prescott, to Parkman and Hawthorne, to Emerson, touched with the gentleness of divinity, you gave birth and habitation, but they sit at our hearthstones as closely and as familiarly as at any hearthstone in New England. So Longfellow and Lowell, and Bryant and Poe, and the good old saint, Whittier, are of our household as well as of yours, and in our regard and homage there is no reserve. One other, too, and he is of our very inner circle, smiling, serene,

tender and very wise, the Autocrat, with all his sweet sentiment and wholesome mirth and fine simplicity, we claim as the world's own and rejoice that his kingdom is so wide, so secure and so intimate in the hearts of the English-speaking people. It is not strange, therefore, that men who cherish free institutions, and love books, and esteem culture and reverence ideas and ideals, should honour Boston and Massachusetts, and move about these streets with something of the curious awe and quiet solemnity which descend upon the Briton from over seas when he first sets foot in St. Paul's or in Westminster Abbey. We are the common heirs of British traditions and the common repository of the splendid achievements of the race, and whatever the flag that flies over our heads, or whatever the form of government to which we subscribe, we are common workers for the social betterment and the moral progress of mankind.

But while we Canadians recognise this common origin and these common interests and obligations, we have no expectation, despite the imaginative fervour of certain after-dinner speeches, that there will be any political reunion between Great Britain and the United States, that there will be any political union between the United States and Canada, or that there will be any political separation between Canada and Great Britain. In the century that has passed since this Republic was founded, we have discovered in the principle of colonial autonomy the secret of an intimate and natural alliance between the British Islands and the outlying British communities. In this relation there is no subservience and no dependence. There is nothing which checks

the free growth of national spirit in Canada, or limits the ample sovereignty of the Canadian Parliament. In the defence of the Empire we give or we withhold as suits our duty and our interest. In the adjustment of our trade relations we are primarily concerned for our own industrial development. In the evolution of the Imperial relationship, the sense of nationalism is the conscious and determining motive of the Canadian people. Our loyalty to Great Britain does not depend upon fiscal preferences. The fiscal attitude of Washington has ceased to be the nightmare of Canada. If it would not be ungracious, I would think it fair to say that Washington has contributed very materially to the growth of that industrial confidence which now possesses Canada and that abounding national spirit which now animates her people. There were years when the American tariff bore heavily upon Canada, when our farmers passed through the long agony of low prices and closed markets, when our industrial equipment exceeded the consuming capacity of our population, when our railway corporations hung upon the verge of bankruptcy, and our western territories lay vacant and silent. Shut out from the markets of this nation, we had no option but to revolutionise our agricultural methods, adapt our production to the markets of the Old World, create at enormous cost our own channels of transportation, and protect our industries from the destructive competition of this country from which we were rigidly excluded. It was a hard lesson, but it has been well learned, and it is very likely that the teaching of our adversity will be the faith of our prosperity. The industrial policy under

which this Republic has so wonderfully prospered, seems likely to be the settled industrial policy of Canada, and from that path we are unlikely to be diverted either by trade negotiations with Washington, or fiscal arrangements with Westminster. In this decision there is no hint of disloyalty to the Imperial connection, nor any sense of infidelity to the supreme obligation to maintain neighbourly intercourse and sympathetic relations with the United States. But in this way only can we rear a solid and symmetrical national structure, instinct with moral energy and high patriotic temper, and in this way only can we provide employment for our own people, traffic for our great carrying corporations, customers for our factories, and markets for our products, and these are among the essential material elements of national unity and national expansion.

For many long and lean years there was a steady movement of the young men of our country into your great cities, into your busy factories, into the wide fertile areas of your western States. They knew the strange wild life of the Californian gold fields. They took the long trails to the prairies and the Pacific slope. They marched and fought and died under this flag. Adventurers some of them, brave men all of them, they never dishonoured the flag for which they battled, nor shamed the stock from which they sprung. They lie in their faded coats of blue under the battlefields of the South. They fell before Santiago and in the jungles of the Philippines. Their bones rest in many a quiet valley and on many a lonely hillside in the old paths of the explorers and traders and hunters who challenged

the dominion of the primeval wilderness, and set forever outward the boundary posts of American civilisation. We rejoice in their valour, in their eager quest of adventure, in their brave and rash and confident dealing with fate and fortune, and we like to think that they have contributed something to the industrial efficiency and the moral quality of this Republic? But more went out from us than we could spare, and we gave sorrowfully and grudgingly.

As one of our poets said:—

"Out from our bounds they're going, scores, hundreds, day by day,
O'er country roads and city streets they take their lingering way.
We send our best and brightest forth, our nation's hope and pride,
More precious to our country's weal than all her wealth beside."

I am one of a family of six, all born on Canadian soil and of British stock. For many years my two sisters have lived in one of the border States, the wives of Canadians who are American citizens. One brother settled long ago on the sunny slopes of California. The other two have made their homes in one of the western agricultural States. All are American citizens. My father lives under this flag. My good old mother is taking her long sleep beneath the sod of your western prairie. All over my country there are men and women who have just such close and cherished relations with citizens of this Republic, and it cannot, therefore, be weak and unbecoming if we should say as Abram said to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we are brethren."

All these are so many pledges of interest and good-neighbourhood, and we are glad that these sons of

Canada have found contentment and free citizenship in this commonwealth. But the drain was heavy, and our sense of loss was profound. We needed population, and, most of all, we needed our own sons to settle our great vacant territories, to give energy to our industrial forces, and tone and character to the social and political fabric. Hence I violate no obligation of social courtesy, and utter no sentiment of narrow nativism when I declare that we have been greatly concerned to check this movement of Canadians towards the United States, and that we have profound gratitude and satisfaction in the splendid revival of domestic patriotism which has come upon Canada, and in the truer value which Canadians are now setting upon their own national inheritance. At last we are a light upon a hilltop and the nations see from afar. At last the movement of population is towards Canada. North and west the march of settlement proceeds, and hope and confidence and courage abound. We are taking rich treasures of lead and silver and gold out of the mountains of British Columbia. We are rearing new cities on the western plains and in the valleys of the Pacific. We are sending the railway over hills and through frowning passes, and across great stretches of virgin land before which the foot of civilisation has paused for centuries. We are filling these wide leagues of western prairie with a choice immigration from the Old World, and from some of the populous States of this Republic. A growing commerce is passing out of our seaports on the Atlantic and on the Pacific. An increasing volume of the products of the West is passing through our canals

and over our great through railways, and on by the mighty St. Lawrence—which we shall make the chief traffic way of the continent—to the eager markets over seas. We are building more factories and employing more workmen and at better wages in all our centres of population. Our manufactures, as well as our agricultural products are getting firmer hold upon foreign markets. Our young men have learned that distant fields are no greener than the smiling fields at home. We are absorbed in the development of our natural resources, in the settlement of our western Provinces, and in the keener prosecution of industrial and agricultural pursuits in our older communities. We are a united and a confident people. The industrial East aspires to sympathetic community of interest with the agricultural West, and in all the Provinces a robust national sentiment prevails. We lie closer than ever before to the heart of the Empire to which we belong. We hold more firmly than ever before our great place on this new continent. We know as never before that the day of our strength is at hand, and that long before this century has run its course, Canada will be a name of power among the nations.

If that shall come to pass, what will be the relations between Canada and the United States? Is there any reason why we should not neighbour with this country in the blessings of an enduring peace, and labour together for the high and beneficent ends of a common civilisation? There should never arise a question between these two countries that will be worth a shot in anger. We were hurt and angry at the Alaskan settlement, but not so much over the

result of the arbitration, as the method by which the result was obtained. The question could have been settled between Ottawa and Washington, with as certain assurance of a satisfactory termination and with more regard for our dignity than was manifested by the British plenipotentiary. But we were not in the mood to commit an international indiscretion, nor in any mind to test the strength of our position in the Empire by dragging Great Britain into an open quarrel on our account. We shall never ask more than we have a right to demand under the fair reading of international law and the fair interpretation of solemn treaties, and when all is said, this great nation, in this twentieth century, cannot afford under any circumstances of the future, to refuse us judgment upon the facts and the records. If the peace of this continent is ever broken, it will not be through the arrogance or insolence of Canada, nor with the sanction of the enlightened and educated opinion of this country. We cannot but think that regard for justice and fair-dealing is influential in this Republic, that the moral sentiment, below the surface roar of party controversy, is very powerful when it finds expression, and that like Sir Walter Scott's old hound Maida, when it speaks, its thunder shakes the hills.

When we think of the teeming output of your printing presses, the unprecedented circulation of the world's best books among this eighty millions of people, the incalculable moral power of your churches and religious organisations, the magnificent provision which you are making for university culture and scientific education, your passion for industrial efficiency which war destroys, and your eager devotion to the

ideals of civilisation, we cannot but feel that despite the clamour of faction, and the rhetoric of the stump, and the devious manœuvres of the political boss, there is a deep sense of justice at the heart of this people, and a moral force which is omnipotent for fair-dealing. We are, therefore, encouraged to seek the friendship of the United States upon fair considerations of common interest and in order that we may the better harvest the gains of civilisation for mankind. But we seek this good understanding upon a basis of strict political equality and without touch or taint of servility. In Great Britain, the Throne, the Government and the people manifest only affection and good-will towards the United States, and the blame will lie at Washington if any other spirit obtains in Canada. We do not ask to be bribed or coddled. We desire only that sympathy shall beget sympathy, and that confidence shall inspire confidence, and that through the changes and shocks of time we shall stand together for the spread of Anglo-Saxon civilisation and the integrity of the English-speaking nations. The American people sowed this half of the continent with graves rather than have their flag dishonoured or their country dismembered. We are of the same brood, as proud of our free institutions and as jealous for the independence and integrity of our young commonwealth. So let us go on together in peace and in neighbourly intercourse and in hearty co-operation. Why should we look for menace to British institutions in the greatness and prosperity of the Republic, and the growth and development of its colonies, and why should not the glory and honour of the common Mother Country

and the strength and stability of her world-wide possessions touch the springs of sympathy and of kinship in the United States?

We go about this wonderful country and we rejoice in its triumphant progress and in the abounding activities of its commercial and industrial life. We read that in commemoration of some great historic event, or at the inauguration of some great civic undertaking, the old soldiers of the Confederacy march side by side with the veterans in blue, and we are glad that the old wound has been healed. We go into the public squares and we stand at the base of the monuments that preserve the gaunt frame and the patient, enduring face of Lincoln and we yield homage to as divine a man as ever was born of woman. We look at your noble legislative buildings, your great libraries, and hospitals and universities, your institutions of charity, your temples of art and schools of science, and we marvel at your amazing devotion of wealth and skill and energy to the alleviation of misfortune, the enrichment of the intellect, and the endowment of all those higher pursuits which make for the grace and the beauty of life, and the dignity and the power of man. And while we bare the head to the Sovereign who sits upon the throne of Imperial Britain, and lift the eyes in reverence to the old flag that's braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze, we yet rejoice to see the Union Jack hang entwined, as to-night, with the starry flag of the Republic, and we pray that through all the generations these flags may so hang, and these nations be united for the preservation of the world's peace and the prosecution of all the good ends of civilisation.