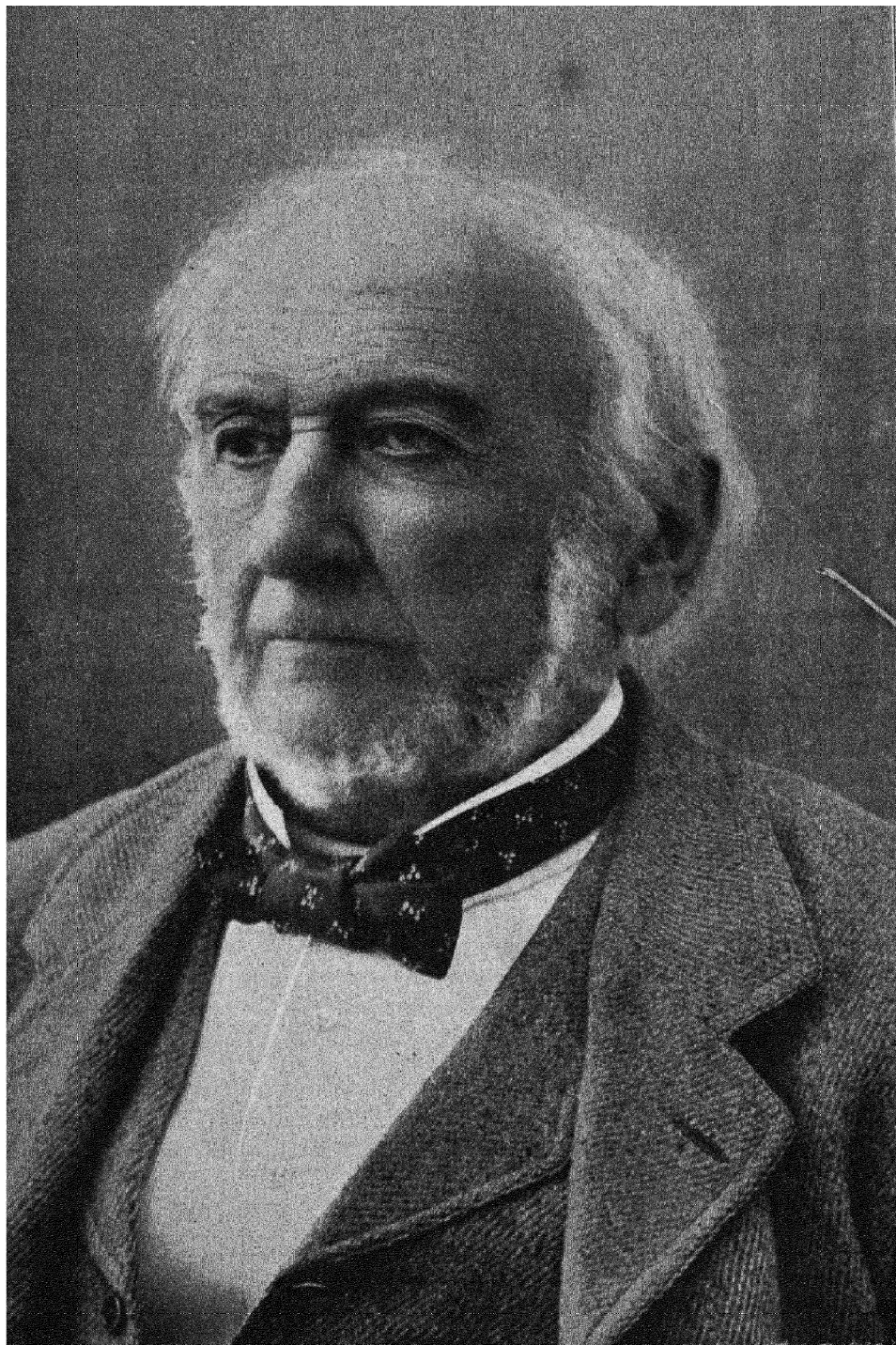


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THE LATEST PORTRAIT OF MR. GLADSTONE.

GLADSTONE

1809—1898

A Character Sketch

BY

W. T. STEAD

WITH PORTRAITS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE.

THE substance of this Character Sketch has already appeared in various magazines and reviews. This, which may with some detract from its novelty, will with others add to its value. Estimates of a man which only appear after his death lack the freshness of impressions noted and reported during his life. It is always best to have testimony delivered in the hearing of the person concerned. This is especially the case when conversations are repeated as to the authenticity of which the deceased alone could have spoken. I have the satisfaction of knowing that the accuracy of the report of my last interview with Mr. Gladstone was made the subject of special remark by those who were present on that occasion. This is the more important because in that interview Mr. Gladstone summed up, within a couple of years of his retirement from public affairs, his own mature and deliberate judgment upon the progress of the Past, the duties of the Present, and the hope for the Future. In it, also, he stated what he regarded as the key to the changes of his long and varied career. In the midst of the multitudinous mass of Gladstoniana which has accumulated in the course of his long and active life, that interview stands out conspicuous and unique. The rest of the Character Sketch may be of little or no value, but the authentic record of Mr. Gladstone's own reflections upon the career on which the whole civilised world is dwelling to-day, possesses an importance of its own which alone is sufficient to justify its publication in a more permanent form than in the pages of a monthly periodical.

This Character Sketch is what it professes to be, no more and no less. It is not a biography, neither is it a history of Mr. Gladstone's Life and Times. Of such biographies and histories the public will soon have enough and to spare. But for the authentic history of Mr. Gladstone, based upon the voluminous mass of materials which have been carefully collected and arranged for the chosen biographer, the public will have to wait for three years at least, possibly for five. Meantime, those of us to whom Mr. Gladstone had been a kind of tutelary deity, cannot be better employed in bringing each our own little tributary pebble to lay upon his cairn. Our children will never know the Great Man as we knew him, but we may nevertheless, while the memory is still fresh, preserve at least in clear outline the distinctive features of the man whom we alternately extolled and denounced, but whom we always loved. That is the purpose of this Character Sketch, which with all its many shortcomings does help to explain why it was Mr. Gladstone kept for so many years so magical a hold upon the hearts and imagination of his countrymen.

It would serve no good purpose to dwell upon the painful incidents of the last six months, during which the old man of eighty-eight passed by the road of dire disease to the realm where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. Suffice it to say that after having passed over eighty-seven years in almost continuous and unbroken health, Mr. Gladstone began to fail in 1896. His hearing had for some time been somewhat affected, but in 1896 he

began to suffer from weakness of the heart. In September, 1897, he complained of severe pains in the nose and one side of his face. These, which at first were supposed to be neuralgic, were found to proceed from cancer, a fact which was never publicly stated until after his death. Mrs. Gladstone herself was mercifully kept in ignorance of the fell nature of her husband's malady. Mr. Gladstone spent the winter in Cannes. But his sojourn in the Land of Flowers from November 25, 1897, to February 12, 1898, failed to bring him any relief, and in February he returned to England. He spent a month at Bournemouth, but the disease kept on its course, and at last he came home to Hawarden to die.

Mr. Gladstone left Bournemouth on March 22. It was the day of his last public utterance. As the small crowd of bystanders respectfully gathered round the carriage in Bournemouth station several voices were heard saying, "God bless you, sir!" "May the richest blessings rest upon you, sir!" Mr. Gladstone heard the murmurous sound of their benediction as he was entering the train. He halted, turned right round, and facing the crowd, said in that clear sonorous voice which never failed him even to the last hours of his life, "May God bless you all in [or "and"] this place, and the land you love!"

After his return to Hawarden he sank steadily. Opiates were administered constantly, and his mind seldom regained for more than a short interval complete consciousness. Messages of love and sympathy poured in upon him from all quarters. Now and again he revived sufficiently to send a message—as, for instance, when he acknowledged the letter from that "God-sustaining" institution the University of Oxford—but for the most part he lay with closed eyes oblivious of all around. Music cheered him, and the presence of his loved ones, but towards the last days he became hardly conscious, and beyond a firm grasp of the hand and a thrilling "God bless you!" there was little sign of interest in what passed in the sick chamber.

At last, as the dawn was breaking on Ascension Day, May 19, 1898, the Rector began to read the Prayers for the Dying in the chamber of death. Mr. Charles Morley, the nephew of Mr. John Morley, who was in the Castle at the time, thus describes the closing scene in a telegram to the *Daily News* :—

Those who would picture this the last and most pathetic scene in the long-drawn-out illness will imagine a spacious chamber lighted by two tall windows commanding a fine view of the park glades and the Welsh hills. But during his last illness the patient has been unable to bear any strong light upon his face, so that the head of the bed is turned with its back to the window and the foot towards the wall. The couch—the favourite seat of Mrs. Gladstone—is between the bed and the fireplace, the various members of the family sitting or standing—Henry Gladstone, Herbert, Helen, Mrs. Wickham, Mr. and Mrs. Drew, the three doctors, the Rector and his wife—thirteen in all.

The sonorous voice of the Rector as he read those beautiful passages from the service penetrated even to the room in which I was sitting downstairs, but it is very unlikely that Mr. Gladstone himself was conscious of them. He just lay with his face looking upwards, the pale light of artificiality and the cold blue tints of breaking day mingling in one awe-inspiring whole—so cold, so suggestive of death!

For what seemed an age the echoes of the prayers sounded through the silent house. Then came a long and more painful pause, disturbed only by a few hurrying footsteps, the drawing of curtains and blinds to let in the new day, a

lovely morning with the sun streaming in though yet cold, and the valley and wood steeped in the rising mists.

It was just a minute or two after five when I was told that he had passed away. Dr. Habershon informed me. Dr. Dobie expressed his opinion that Mr. Gladstone had not been conscious for some hours. It is probable that the exact moment of his death cannot be given with certainty, as no finger was constantly kept on his pulse. However, it is a matter of small consequence. The end has come, and peace the long-prayed for.

When the doctors agreed that the soul of the hero had fled, the weeping family left the room one by one, taking Mrs. Gladstone to her own room.

On the wall opposite the bed in which Mr. Gladstone died, it is said there was hung an illuminated scroll bearing the sacred words—

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.”

Possibly they were the last words his eyes rested on before they closed for ever in death.

His last articulate words were, “Our Father.”

Thus, in perfect peace, surrounded by his children, and by her who for nearly sixty years had been the active helpmate and guardian angel of his life, he entered into rest.

The last letter on political subjects which Mr. Gladstone signed was written before he left Bournemouth. It was addressed to Mr. Dillon. The statesman's last words, therefore, may be said to have been uttered for Ireland, whose cause excited in him during his closing years so passionate a sympathy :—

BOURNEMOUTH, 9th March, 1898.

DEAR MR. DILLON,—I send a word of sympathy for the banquet of St. Patrick.

Your cause is in your own hands : if Ireland is disunited, her cause so long remains hopeless : if, on the contrary, she knows her own mind and is one in spirit, that cause is irresistible.

With kind regards and all good wishes—I am, dear Mr. Dillon, yours faithfully,

The last public letter which he wrote altogether with his own hand was written at Cannes on Christmas Day to the Liberals who dined at the National Liberal Club in his honour on his birthday :—

CANNES, Xmas Day, 1897.

DEAR SIR,

I think your appeal to me a great honour, and in reply I heartily wish that the coming and every subsequent meeting may be addressed to the purposes of truth, justice, honour, peace, good faith, and all that is of good report.

I am afraid I must note this as my last reply for occasions of this kind.

Believe me, very faithfully yours,

W. F. GLADSTONE.

It would be difficult to conceive any message more characteristic, or one with which Mr. Gladstone could more appropriately close his illustrious career.



Photograph by Numa Blanc, Fils.]

ANOTHER PORTRAIT TAKEN AT CANNES IN JANUARY LAST.

GLADSTONE: A CHARACTER SKETCH.

THE greatest Englishman of our time is no more. With Mr. Gladstone's death the curtain may be said to have been rung down upon the epoch in which for nearly half a century he has been the most conspicuous figure. After him there may rise up some son of Anak like unto Mr. Gladstone, but it cannot be said of him as yet as of the rising sun, that "far off the promise of his coming shone." Mr. Gladstone was distinctively the man of the nineteenth century. Prince Bismarck, who still lingers superfluous on the stage, is the only other statesman who can be named in the same breath with Mr. Gladstone. The two sum up fairly well the two great tendencies of our era; the one represents the pacific, the other the military side of the development of the Teutonic race. As was natural, men of such strong antagonistic temperaments never appreciated each other; the man of Blood and Iron never admired the man of the "Silver Streak." Yet both were emphatically men of their century; both commanded for thirty years the love, the gratitude, the devotion of a mighty nation; both had the destinies of empires in their hands; both experienced the difficulties of managing monarchs, and both were marvellously adroit, although in very different ways, in managing their Parliaments. Personally Bismarck and Mr. Gladstone resembled each other in their love for the open air, their dislike of town, their devotion to their family, and, strange though it may seem to some to say it, in the deep religious spirit in which they approached their daily duties. Mr. Gladstone's religion was quite as conspicuous as his politics; he was at various seasons of his life more of an ecclesiastic than a secular statesman. Prince Bismarck is a doctor of divinity of the University of Giessen, and the present Pope made him a knight of the Order of Christ. Orders and titles, however, had no charms for him, but he was never slow to assert his "living evangelical Christian faith." "Were I not a staunch Christian," he declared in the middle of the Franco-German War, "you would never have possessed a Federal Chancellor in my person. Sever my connection with God, and I am the man to pack up my trunks to-morrow and be off to Varzin to reap my oats." These two eminent

Christians, however, had little communion of spirit. Mr. Gladstone's Church, it is to be feared, Prince Bismarck would have described as "nothing more than a totality of priests, their rights and their pretensions"; while Mr. Gladstone would probably have expressed himself as strongly about the pronounced evangelicalism of the doughty German. Both of them, however, had enough in common to make separate onslaughts upon the Papacy, and although neither the May Laws nor the pamphlet on Vaticanism did the Roman Church much harm, they testified to the vigour of their authors' protest against the pretensions of the Infallible One. Each in his way was his own pope, and neither brooked a superior. Both statesmen had an intense love of power; ambition, the last infirmity of noble minds, was theirs to the full. Not a low or unworthy ambition, but a lofty and daring ambition—the ambition of men who, knowing that they were greatly gifted with faculties rarely possessed in such fulness by mere mortals, were impatient of all obstacles which restrained them from the exercise of those faculties in the service of their fellows.

These two, Bismarck and Gladstone, were until the other day the compendium of Anglo-Germanic genius in the difficult art of the government of men in the second half of the nineteenth century. Now Mr. Gladstone has gone, and Bismarck alone is left—for a little time. Before the twentieth century is out of its swaddling clothes Bismarck also will have been summoned hence. The old generation is rapidly passing away, and the new generation, no longer under the old leadership, stands confronting the new problems of the new time.

There is something extremely pathetic, with a pathos almost too deep for tears, in the spectacle which the world has witnessed for the last few months in the sick chamber at Hawarden. There are very few now living to whom Mr. Gladstone has not been the most familiar symbol of constant and superb physical vigour. Other men far his juniors might be knocked up by the strain of constant and exciting work. Mr. Gladstone never wilted. He always came up to time; always seemed to have inexhaustible stores of energy as yet untapped. He rested himself by doing harder work than most men perform in their ordinary labour. For eighty-nine years he lived and laboured amongst us, a splendid example of the sound mind in the sound body, the envy and despair of his rivals, the admiration and wonder of his friends. And now this superb physique has itself been made, if not the instrument, then the prolonger of his sufferings. The Inquisitor who racked the heretic to death did so in the recesses of the torture chamber. Mr. Gladstone has been slowly tortured to death before the eyes of the whole world. Cancer is a terrible malady, and of all forms of cancer few are more terrible than that which, eating into the bone of the nose, slowly drives its victim sightless to the grave.

The story of the maiden martyrs of the Solway, who were bound

to stakos at low tide, and left to be drowned by the slowly rising water, has often been told as one of the most piteous episodes in the annals of martyrdom. The slow creep upwards of the ice-cold waters, the visible rising, as it were, of the river of death to engulf the life of the victim—who has not shuddered at the memory of the scene? But at Hawarden for months past mankind has witnessed a scene not less terrible. The aged statesman, nearing his ninetieth year, but still stalwart and strong, chained down by an inexorable decree to a bed of torture, to wait day after day, night after night, the slow and ruthless march of the living death.

No wonder that Mr. Gladstone, when the truth first broke upon him that the end was at hand—and such an end—is said to have prayed with plaintive earnestness that the merciful Lord would mercifully end his days. As other men pray for life, Mr. Gladstone prayed for death. And yet death came not. For some time there was even a reluctance to administer opiates, but the racking torment of fierce pain overcame the scruples which at first forbade the use of anæsthetics. From that time onwards it was but a slow, steady sinking into the grave, the dulling of the pain being purchased by almost continuous lethargy, from which in the last days the mind regained consciousness for an hour or two and then relapsed into coma. During these periods of awakening Mr. Gladstone was seldom heard to speak save of the other world which he was slowly approaching, and of the Almighty, Infinite, and Invisible God to whom he was conscious that he must render an account for all deeds done in the body. The affairs of this world no longer possessed for him any significance. It is doubtful whether the painful silences of Hawarden were broken by the echo of the American guns that thundered in the Philippines and in the West Indies. At times he would slowly raise his right hand and declare in solemn tones as of one giving testimony which might not again be repeated, "My faith is strong! My faith is strong!" To those old and intimate friends who were admitted to take the last farewell he spoke ever with unflinching confidence, not merely of the reality of life after death, but of the certainty that those who parted in tears would meet hereafter in another and better world.

Behind the dying statesman stretched a vista of the longest and most brilliant parliamentary career that mortal man has ever boasted. Around him stood the whole nation, and not this nation only, in reverent sympathy. The voice of detraction was stilled. Opponents and friends vied with each other in paying tributes to his genius, his patriotism, his virtue. But in the solemn vigil in the valley of the shadow of death his mind dwelt on none of the incidents of his glorious record, nor was he concerned with the verdict of his contemporaries. Their criticism or their eulogies he recked not of, but he was intensely grateful for their prayers. When the Nonconformists

sent him an affectionate message assuring him of their prayers, he expressed his intense gratitude for "this very practical sympathy of earnest intercession," and repeated with that thrilling emphasis which he alone could impart to the familiar words, the concluding verse of the Psalter, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!"

Seen from the standpoint of a death-bed, the perspective of affairs varies greatly from that of the busy world. Mr. Gladstone had made wars, maintained peace, had built navies and helped in the founding of empires, but none of all these things of his past dwelt with him in the chamber of death.

Its mighty clamours, wars, and world-noised deeds
Are silent now in dust,
Gone like a tremble of the huddling reeds
Beneath some sudden gust.

What Mr. Gladstone dwelt on to the exclusion of almost all other things was that which he shared in common with the poorest peasant in the land—the consciousness of the loving presence of his Lord. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

That which cheered him most of all the news he heard during the last trying months was the report that his granddaughter, a bright, spirituelle young maiden of twenty, had decided to dedicate herself to the work of a Christian missionary to the heathen who sit in darkness. The dying statesman thrilled with joy at the thought that his grandchild had chosen the better part. To his illumined eye, nothing in this world was worth talking of or living for save the great commission to preach Christ and Him crucified as the living witness of the love of God for man. There is nothing better than that, nothing indeed to be compared to it. Again and again would he revert to it, but always with complacent, triumphant joy. So it was with him as it was with one even greater than he, who, when he went down with steady foot into the chill waters of the river of death, comforted himself with reflecting on the marvellous loving-kindness of the Lord, even while he lamented that he had been such an unprofitable servant.

It is something, nay, is it not perhaps the greatest of all the things we have to learn from him, in life and in death, to trust in God in all our work for man, knowing that there is a Hand in the darkness ever near, which, if we but grasp it in trusting confidence, will lead us in a sure path out of darkness into light, and in the midst of the storm and turmoil of life will keep us in perfect peace.

I.—FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

FIRST impressions are deepest, freshest, and most permanent. Never shall I forget the first time I ever saw Mr. Gladstone: it was also the first time I heard the stirring strains of his impassioned eloquence. It was a memorable day in 1876, standing out foremost among many such—the day when Mr. Gladstone, who had retired the previous year from the leadership of the party in order to carry out his views as to the best method of spending the closing years of his life, emerged from his retirement in order to lead the national outburst against the Turkish Alliance. ¶ As I came up from Darlington, which had honourably distinguished itself by the promptitude and vigour of its protest before even Mr. Gladstone had spoken, I watched the sun rise over the Eastern fens and thought that I had seen the day dawn destined to be for ever memorable in the annals of human freedom. A strange new sense of the reality of the romance of history came to me, a feeling that I was that day to take, however humble, a part in a meeting that linked the prosaic present to the great days of old. Mr. Gladstone seemed but the last of a long line of national heroes, stretching through the Lion Heart and Hereward and Harold and Alfred to the purple haze of Arthurian romance. I was only twenty-seven, and it was the first occasion on which I had been at the centre of things. The sun that rose in splendour was soon obscured with rain clouds, and the muster at Blackheath assembled under the most depressing circumstances. But nothing, not even the drip from a thousand umbrellas, could abate the enthusiasm of the immense concourse which assembled to greet Mr. Gladstone.

Looking back over the account I wrote of that famous gathering, I find the following description of Mr. Gladstone as I first saw him when he launched the country into the Atrocity agitation which revolutionised English policy in the East, and paved the way for the liberation of the Christian East:—

Mr. Gladstone
in 1876.

Mr. Gladstone is not tall, neither is he stout. He is the contrary—spare and somewhat wiry. But it was difficult to think of his body when looking at his face. Such a marvellously expressive face I do not ever remember to have seen. Every muscle seemed alive, every inch of it seemed to speak. It was in perpetual motion. Now it rippled over with a genial smile, then the smile disappeared, and the horror expressed by his words reflected on his countenance, and then again, his high-wrought feeling gleamed out from his flashing eye, and the listener might have imagined he was hearing the outpourings of one of the prophets who brought the message of Jehovah to Israel. A benevolent face, too, it was; one from which the kindness enthroned in the heart looks out upon you through the eyes, and leavens every feature with such mildness and sweetness that it is difficult to conceive that he whose face rivals the tenderness of that of a woman has proved himself the best man upon the field, not upon one occasion, but upon hundreds, whenever in the halls of St. Stephen's the signal has been given for battle.

Much has been written of Mr. Gladstone as an orator, and only His Blackheath speech.

those who have been under the spell of the magician can rightly understand the hold which he exercises over his audience. I don't think I can do better than reproduce here what I wrote then. I have never heard Mr. Gladstone to greater advantage, nor has any other single speech of his left so deep a dent in history. After describing the opening of his speech at Blackheath, I went on as follows :—

When at length, drawing his proofs to a close, he declared that the Government of Turkey was as deeply dyed in blood, hand and arm, as the vilest of mercenaries, the tremendous energy of the speaker was reflected by his audience, and a roar went up from the whole of the great throng—a roar which might justly be regarded as the inarticulate condemnation which Democracy was pronouncing upon the Ottomans, the emphatic attestation by the English people of the guilt of the Turks. Mr. Gladstone only occasionally rose to the height of fervid expression. He did so when he declared that all the massacres and outrages which form the worst pages of English history concentrated into one blot would not be worthy to appear upon one of the pages which hereafter will consign to eternal infamy the proceedings of the Turks in Bulgaria. The man's soul seemed to go out of him in the extraordinary earnestness with which he hurled his anathemas at the heads of the devastators of Bulgaria. A remarkable instance of this was afforded his hearers in the concentrated scorn and indignation, indescribable by us, with which in replying to the excuse that it was only a few irregulars who had committed these atrocities, he pronounced the words, "Irregulars and regulars they are all alike." It is but a simple sentence, but falling as it did red hot from Mr. Gladstone's lips upon an immense multitude all fully roused to the immense importance of the occasion, it had a marvellous effect. The wonderful compass of his voice, the withering emphasis with which he pronounced each syllable, will never leave the memory of those who heard it. But the most sustained, and perhaps the finest portion of his speech, was that in which he explained the terms on which he would address the Turks. As if he were addressing the Ottomans, he paused, and then drawing himself up to his full height, he began with a measured solemn cadence, sentence slowly following sentence: "You shall receive your regular tribute, retain your titular sovereignty, your empire shall not be invaded, but," then Mr. Gladstone's eye kindled, and lifting his clenched hand on high, he proceeded in tones which rang clear as a clarion on every ear, "but never again as the years roll in their course, so far as it is in our power to determine, never again shall the hand of violence be raised by you, never again shall the floodgate of lust be open to you, never again shall the dice refinements of cruelty be devised by you for the sake of making mankind miserable."

Here the pent-up feeling of the multitude found vent in a tremendous roar of applause, in which the end of the sentence was entirely lost. There was a rhythm almost as of a chant in the way in which Mr. Gladstone pronounced these solemn words, and carried awe into every heart. It was as if the High Priest of Humanity were pronouncing the doom which was impending over the guilty empire. In different style, but quite as emphatic, was his abrupt and decisive declaration that if these outrages reported as taking place in Servia were facts, they ought to be stopped. James Russell Lowell, speaking of Theodore Parker, described the secret of his oratory in words which may well be applied to Mr. Gladstone :—

"Every word that he speaks has been fiercely furnace-d
In the blast of a life that has struggled in earnest.
. . . His periods fall on you stroke after stroke,
Like the blows of a lumberer felling an oak."

Mr. Gladstone seems to deliver himself of the conclusion of some of his periods as the hunter hurls the spear at his victim, with muscles quivering and the whole

energy of the man concentrate into the single act. Nor should we omit another notable characteristic of his oratory—the solemnity with which the foremost statesman of our land appealed to the consciousness of his hearers, that if England suffered her wretched jealousies to thwart the freeing of these peoples she had nothing to anticipate but a just judgment at the hands of the Almighty. The address was throughout permeated by a religious spirit. In its lofty appeal to man's better nature, in its earnest pleading of the cause of the oppressed, in its constant recognition of the superintendence and government of the Almighty, it was much more a religious address than many a score of sermons that were preached on the following Sunday. In eloquence, in lofty spirituality, in keen sagacity, and in earnest sympathy, Mr. Gladstone's speech at Blackheath reveals the marvellous combination of qualities which have made him the idol of the popular heart, the heaven-sent leader of Englishmen whenever they have any serious work to do that must be done.

Mr. Gladstone sat down amidst a tempest of applause. A vote of thanks to the chairman was moved and seconded, and not over well received. And then rose a strange cry, a blending of cries, from thousands of voices. It was difficult to make out anything distinctly. Some were calling for Granville, others for Carrington, but over and above all these voices was one vast plaintive, semi-articulate cry—a cry that was also a prayer, an outburst from the popular hearts—of “Lead us!” “Lead us!” “Lead us!” It was the call which the nation addressed to Mr. Gladstone. He was not deaf to that, nor was he deaf to the appeal.

Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons had a different style “That eye!” from that which he employed in Blackheath or in Midlothian. His voice was a wonderful organ. Like a Cremona violin it seemed to improve with age. But the voice alone, wide as was its compass, and wonderful its penetrating faculty, would have failed to produce the effect that Mr. Gladstone commanded had it not been supplemented by the flashing fire of his eyes. Mr. Thaddeus, who painted a well-known portrait of Mr. Gladstone, told me that he had never painted such an eye in his life. It was the eye of an eagle that gazes untroubled at the sun. A good man in the west country who once met Mr. Gladstone on the platform at a wayside railway station, wrote afterwards to Hawarden, “You may not recollect me, but I remember you. You looked at me, and oh that eye! It went right through me.” That eye went right through many others besides that west-countryman. It is right to say “eye” rather than “eyes,” for it was only one eye that had that extraordinary piercing power. No one on whom it was turned in wrath or even in quick inquiry could forget it.

Like all great orators Mr. Gladstone's personality was more or less suffused among his hearers. It was a kind of hypnotism to which an audience temporarily succumbed. In the House of Commons, except when concluding a great debate, that peculiar magnetic power was less plainly manifest than when he was swaying at will the fierce democracy. But for argumentative cogency and sledge hammer cogency, some of his great parliamentary performances were unrivalled.

His gifts of exposition.

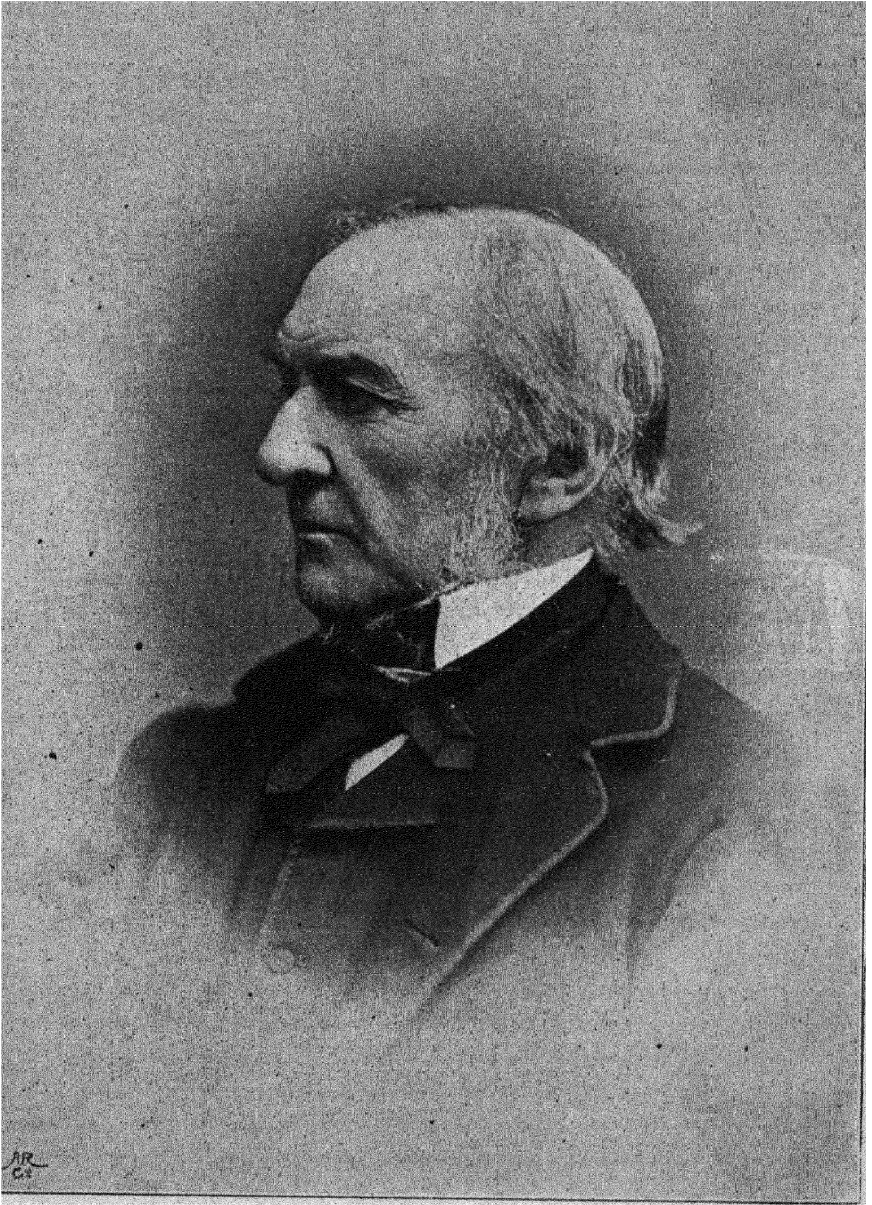
As an expositor of an intricate and involved subject Mr. Gladstone

was a veritable genius. In his Budget speeches he made financial figures as fascinating as a fairy tale, and he could make even a speech on the Irish Land question interesting. As a sophist no one could beat him. The marvellous subtlety of his intellect enabled him to make whatever cause he undertook to defend appear for the time the only possible cause that a decent man could espouse. "He is plausible," wrote a critic in 1838, "even when most in error," a characteristic which he never lost; and equally true is another observation of the same critic that, "when it suits himself or his party, he can apply himself with the strictest closeness to the real point at issue; when to evade the point is deemed most politic, no man can wander from it more widely." Mr. Russell recalls that when an eminent man once asked Mr. Gladstone, "Do you ever feel nervous in public speaking?" he replied, "In opening a subject often, in reply never." Some of his replies were masterpieces of vigorous argument and decisive logic, and many of them were improvised without a moment for preparation. One was that famous oration in which he demolished Mr. Disraeli's Budget in December, 1852; another was that in which he replied to Lord Palmerston on the Don Pacifico question; but perhaps the most famous of all was that in which he summed up the debate on the Franchise in reply to Mr. Lowe, in the memorable speech in which he warned his opponents, "You cannot fight against the future. Time is on our side."

His dramatic
power.

As an orator Mr. Gladstone had every grace but one. He never cultivated the virtue of brevity. But in him this was no defect, for so sweet and silvery was his speech that his hearers regretted when the stream ceased to flow. One quality which he possessed in eminent degree has hardly been sufficiently recognised as contributing to his success as an orator. He was a born actor. I have already referred to the marvellous flexibility of his features. He had indeed a speaking face. But it was not only in his countenance that you saw his dramatic gift. He acted as he spoke. Not that he ventured into the region where southern orators alone are at ease, but within the restricted limits of gesture and action allowed to an English speaker he was *facile princeps*. From the highest tragedy to the lightest comedy, and sometimes even to the broadest farce, Mr. Gladstone was everywhere at home.

The mere physical endurance entailed by some of his great speeches was in itself wonderful. Mr. Gladstone repeatedly spoke for three hours at the close of a long and exciting debate, which came on the heels of a day full of arduous and exhausting ministerial work. When he made the great Budget speech of 1853, which established his reputation as a financier, he spoke five hours, and, what is perhaps even more remarkable, his hearers followed him with unabated interest even to the end.



Photograph by Elliott and Fry.]

MR. GLADSTONE IN 1879.

II.—THE GRAND OLD MAN.

It is difficult, not to say impossible, for any of us to realise adequately the effect of Mr. Gladstone's death upon English public life. He was a hero, already installed, even during his lifetime, in a foremost place among the chosen immortals who for good or for ill influence most deeply the destinies of our English race. Poignant indeed is the regret and aching the sense of loss with which we learn that Mr. Gladstone is no more.

Politics in England very much resemble the view of eastern London as you may see it every day from Waterloo Bridge. There is crowded life in the busy city and on the restless river. There are palaces and hovels, churches and warehouses, a great multitudinous expanse of offices and of dwellings. But the centre of the great panorama of the life of the Imperial city is not on the river or on the streets, in palace or courts or park. It is in mid-heaven, in the great dome which the genius of Wren reared over the Cathedral of St. Paul. No more stately or beautiful dome ever crowned a city's glory and a city's pride. When you are sufficiently far away in the purple haze of the Campagna, the dome of St. Peter's looms majestic against the horizon. But the sense of immensity disappears as you approach it; the dome seems dwarfed by the cathedral from which it springs. It is far otherwise with St. Paul's. Over the many-steepled city and its towering streets the great dome rises and rests easily regnant, sitting like some great queen enthroned in a purer air far above "steaming London's central roar," which bustles below. What St. Paul's is to the city, so Mr. Gladstone has been to the political world. Imagine St. Paul's blotted out, and in that eyeless socket of the city that would be left by its disappearance we have England without its leading statesman. Mr. Gladstone has been so long part and parcel of the life of the English-speaking race, that it is as if death had torn with rude hands a thread woven into the very warp and woof of our national existence. It matters not whether we loved him or whether we hated him: he was a part of us—the most conspicuous and shining part. We had to be talking of him for good or for ill all the time. He was no comet sweeping in wide eclipse through the heavens; he was rather as the sun—always with us, the centre of our system, the giver of light and warmth. We complain of the sun's heat sometimes, or lament that he spares us so little of his genial rays, but even when we grumble most the thought of a sunless

world never startles our imagination in nightmare. So it was with Mr. Gladstone. He was always with us. It seemed as if he must be always with us; and his departure seems not so much a disaster, but rather as if something had dropped out of the order of nature.

Looking back over the great career which has filled so nobly the canvas of three-quarters of a century, we see much in it to fill the heart with gratitude and praise. The gods have no better boon to give to mortals than a great and good man. As long as England produces men like Mr. Gladstone, the sentiment of loyalty, the habit of trust, the fervour and force of enthusiasm will not die out. The continually increasing and ever widening recognition of the sterling greatness of Mr. Gladstone was a welcome testimony to the soundness of our national judgment. England, like bluff old King Hal, dearly loves a man, and in Mr. Gladstone she found a man whom she was proud to follow. There was no servility in her devotion and her pride. Many a time and oft she rebuked her brilliant chief, sometimes wisely, sometimes foolishly, but even in her most wrathful moments her indignation was full of regret. She stormed at him all the more because she felt what an incalculable power for good he would have been on the other side. Her very censures were veiled compliments and her freest denunciations ungrudging tributes to his genius and his worth. It has been of immense benefit to our democracy that just as it was attaining man's estate and arriving at full enfranchisement the common people had such an uncommon man to lead them; it is indeed of the richest of the Lord's mercies to God's Englishmen that for the last quarter of a century they have had such an old man as Mr. Gladstone to teach them how to rule and such an old woman as Her Majesty to teach them how to reign. Between them, Mr. Gladstone and Queen Victoria have done more than any two, or than any two hundred, to give our crowned republic's crowning common sense a fair chance to adjust itself to the new conditions of the times.

A national,
hero.

What concerns us now is not so much what Mr. Gladstone was, but that we are now without the continual inspiration of his presence and the stimulus of his indomitable spirit. For the very wonderful vitality of the man, his omnipresent activity and the immense ascendancy which he rightfully exerted have, like all other things, to be paid for. Nature exacts her compensations without ruth.

We may, if we please, exult in the magnificence of the growth of the mighty cedar, but beneath the shade of its far-spreading branches we must not expect to rear fresh trees. And the penalty of having had for so long so supreme a party leader as Mr. Gladstone is that we have no successor ready to take his place. I remember well fencing with this question when the Tsar asked me who was to succeed Mr. Gladstone. I said simply: "Mr. Gladstone can have no

successor. We shall no doubt have to put some one in his place after he goes, but successor, no—there is only one Mr. Gladstone.”

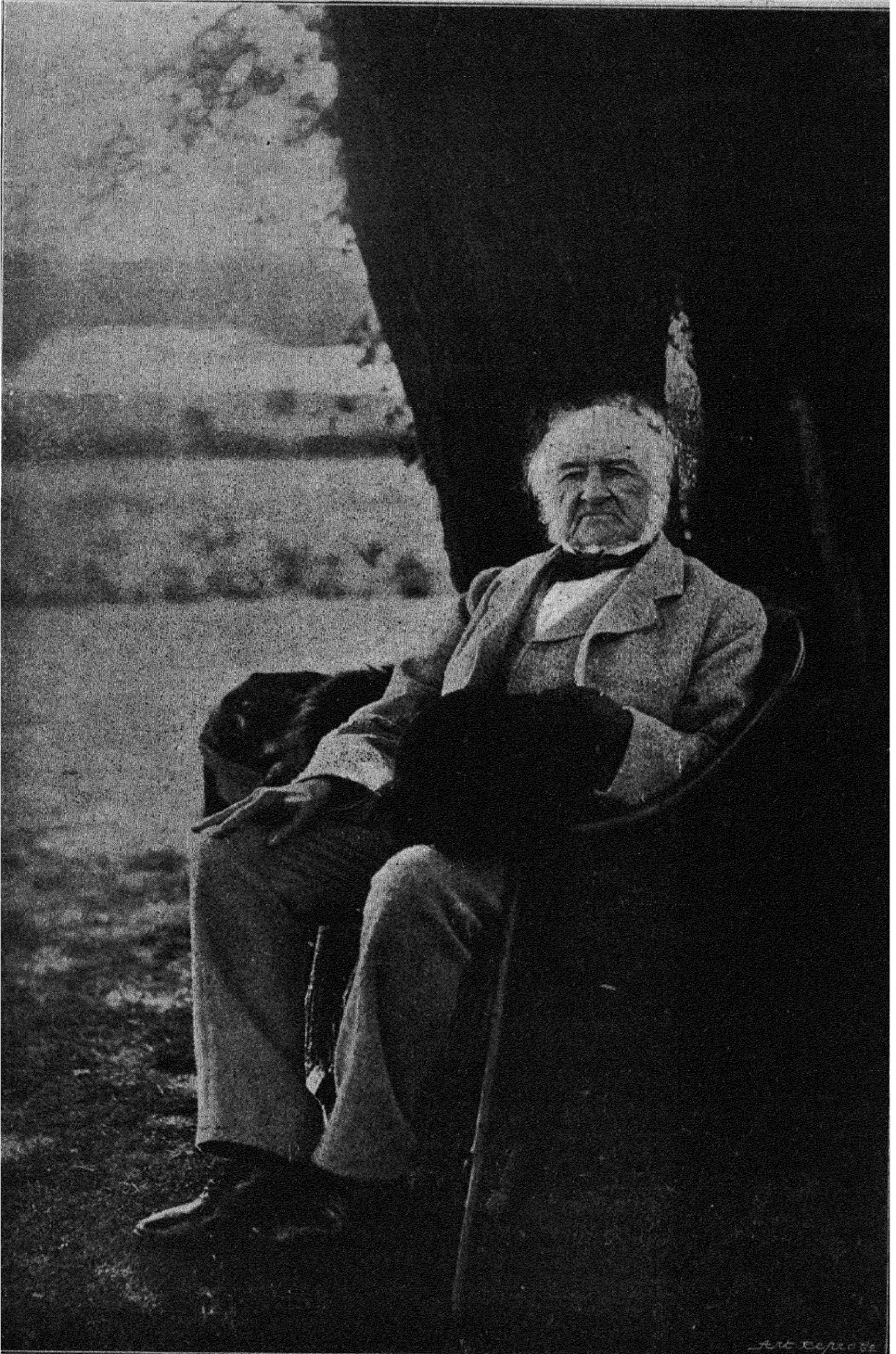
Drawbacks
and com-
pensations.

Mr. Gladstone undoubtedly dwarfed his contemporaries and sometimes stunted his colleagues. But the mischief which this all-canopying personality might have done was minimised by the sturdy vigour of the individuality of our race and the enormous expanse of the British Empire. Mr Gladstone, for instance, has done nothing to cripple, dwarf, or overshadow Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who is, in many respects, the ablest and the most powerful Englishman in the Empire. That is because the Empire is broad enough to afford elbow-room for Colonial Cæsars. Neither has he, to all appearance, done Mr. Chamberlain much damage by way of impairing his self-confidence or diminishing his ambitions. It is possible that in his own Cabinet he has to some extent dwarfed the faculties of some of his colleagues, who were compelled for years to let him decide many questions which if he had been absent they would have decided for themselves; but even this disadvantage was perhaps more than compensated for by the stimulus which his example afforded them, and the immense educational influence which mere contact with an administrator so superbly equipped must have exercised upon minds of less culture and less experience.

Mr. Gladstone's influence upon his fellow-countrymen was more that of a great churchman than that of a statesman. He reminds me much more of a Becket than of the ordinary secular politician. He was a politician, no doubt, and a wary and a wily one at that. But this astuteness, which made it as easy to catch a weasel asleep as to catch Mr. Gladstone napping, is a quality much more highly developed in ecclesiastics than among Members of Parliament. It is the product of the conclave much more than of the caucus. Mr. Gladstone was a man of affairs—four times Prime Minister of England, five times leader of the House of Commons. But with all his immersion in this world's business he was a man who dwelt in the other world as much at least as any of the great Cardinals who figure in history. There was about him a certain detachment of mind more natural to the member of a cosmopolitan organisation than to the insular statesman of John Bull. He never altogether seemed to identify himself with England. He represented something else. He was the churchman all over—the man who sees the nation as something outside of himself, which he must move and discipline, rather than as an entity of which he is part and parcel.

Contrasted
with Mr.
Morley.

This, it may be said, is true of all men who hold strong views on the moral question. Mr. Morley, it may be said, is as much swayed by a sense of this moral pedagogy as Mr. Gladstone; but no one would call Mr. Morley a churchman. Mr. Morley himself used to say that he ought by rights to have been a Puritan preacher, and the echoes of the thunders of Sinai are seldom long absent from his



Photograph by Robinson and Thompson, Liverpool.] 1

MR. GLADSTONE IN 1894.

speeches. But he is not a churchman as Mr. Gladstone was. Mr. Gladstone's churchmanship was to Mr. Morley's what the full choral service of a cathedral is to the hearty singing of a Salvation Army meeting. In other words, the ecclesiastical mould was much more manifest in Mr. Gladstone's case than in Mr. Morley's. Both agreed in being preachers of righteousness and justice before they were politicians. Both were constantly, in public and in private, appealing to the higher law, and both of them never forgot that man is *au pied* a moral being, instead of being, as is too often assumed, a mere patent digester on two legs. But Mr. Morley has very few of the notes of the churchman. Mr. Gladstone had them all. There have been few greater casuists, even in the Roman Church, than Mr. Gladstone. The subtlety of his intellect, as shown in splitting the finest hairs with the keen edge of almost fantastic distinctions, was the marvel and sometimes the mock of the mundane politician. Mr. Morley is a plain moralist who does no hair splitting, and presents his conclusions rough hewn from the mine.

Mr. Gladstone, like all churchmen, was great in the observance of church festivals, or public worship of fasts, and of the minutie of ecclesiastical drill and discipline. Whether or not he used his breviary and said his offices as regularly as a Catholic priest, no one knew; but no one would have been astonished if he had done so. Every one is familiar with his reading of the lessons at Hawarden, and with the fact that he went to church there one Sunday when he was in the very midst of Cabinet making. I remember well recalling that incident as I stood in the galleries of the Vatican waiting for the return of the Under Secretary of State. I had an appointment with him about the presentation of my memorandum to the Pope. Mgr. Mocenni was not "on time." The apology for his non-punctuality was that it was the day of some particular saint, and office business had to be suspended until prayers had been attended. Mr. Gladstone was quite capable of doing that. Mr. Morley is not. Mr. Morley, thanks to his Oxford training, is able sometimes to date his letters Maundy Thursday or Shrove Tuesday, but beyond that his acquaintance with ecclesiasticism does not go.

Mr. Gladstone as Pope.

Without carrying the parallel and comparison any further, what an interesting theme for imaginative contemplation is afforded us in the suggestion of what Mr. Gladstone might have been had he been called to Holy Orders, as his father at one time proposed. In the English Church he would have been cribbed, cabined, and confined. To realise what might have been, we must suppose that the great cataclysm of the sixteenth century had never severed England from the Church of Rome, and that Mr. Gladstone, instead of being Prime Minister of England, had been called Pope. He would have made a very good Pope, although, possibly, a little too nimble in his career for the cumbrous and gigantic machinery of Catholicism. But how

he would have enjoyed it! How he would have revelled in the hoarded treasures of the Vatican library, and delighted in the endless services of the Roman churches! Where in all the world would he have found so wide a field for the exercise of his wonderfully subtle gift of making distinctions? Where could he have been able to find such opportunities for explaining away awkward facts and demonstrating triumphantly the absolute truth of two diametrically opposite propositions? And then his Encyclicals! We have had them as it is—the letter on the Neapolitan prisons, the pamphlet on the Bulgarian atrocities, the article on Vaticanism, were all utterances of the genuine pontifical kind, which had at least as much power and influence as any Bulls which Rome ever forged. But if only Mr. Gladstone had sat in Pope Leo's chair and worn the three-crowned hat!

All of which brings me to the observation that the position which Mr. Gladstone so long held amongst us was much more that of an English Pope than merely that of an English Prime Minister. He was the head of the Church for practical purposes, much more than the late Archbishop of Canterbury, whom he made, or than the Queen, whose ecclesiastical position is strictly ornamental. Mr. Gladstone's temporal power was nothing to his spiritual power. His temporal power, indeed, may be said to resemble spiritual power. He could divest himself of the former. The latter clung to him while life lasted. He was the only man whose opinions on questions of righteousness weighed much with the masses of our people. He was, therefore, in a very real way the keeper of their consciences. That function he retained in his retreat at Hawarden, and this spiritual power came very nearly being used in 1896, as it was in 1876, for the confounding of those to whom he handed over the responsibilities of temporal administration.

His spiritual
and temporal
power.

III.—THE SECRET OF HIS GREATNESS.

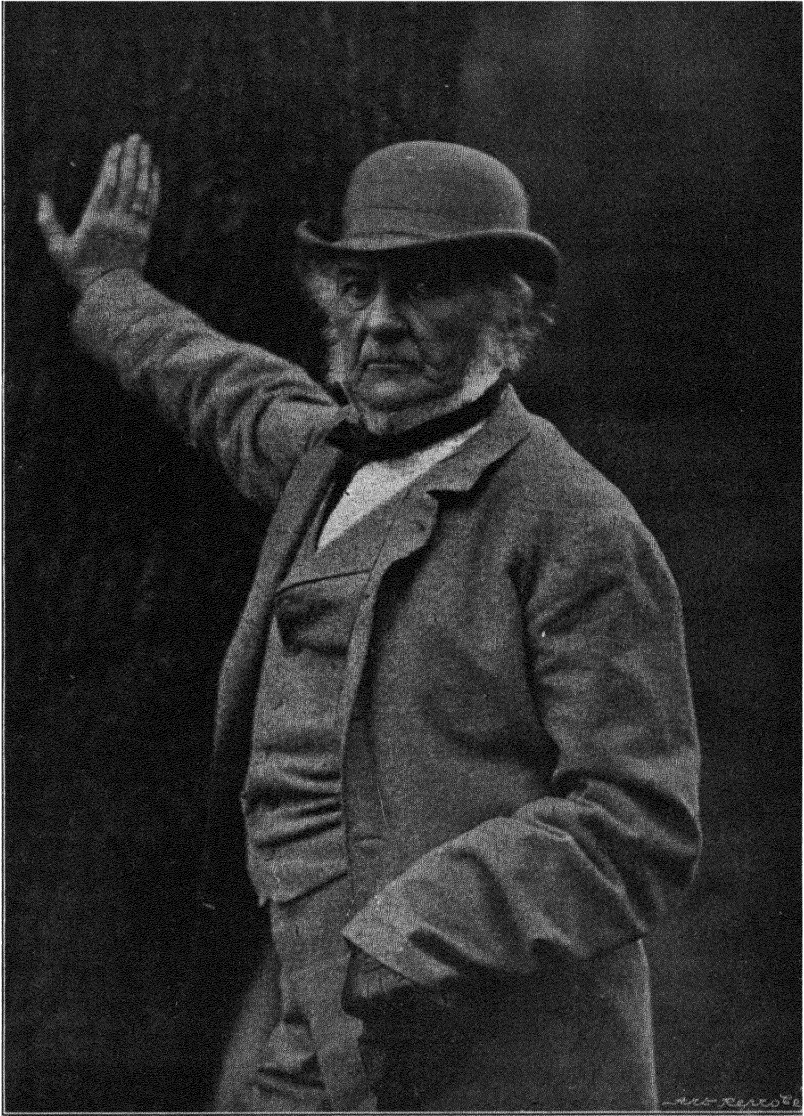
THERE is something imposing and even sublime in the long procession of Mr. Gladstone's years, which bridge as with eighty-eight arches the abyss of past time, and carry us back to the days of Canning and of Castlereagh, of Napoleon and of Wellington. His parliamentary career extended over sixty years—the lifetime of two generations. He was the custodian of all the traditions, the hero of the experience of successive administrations, from a time dating back longer than most of his colleagues could remember. For nearly forty years he had a leading part in making or in unmaking Cabinets, he served his Queen and his country in almost every capacity in office and in opposition, and yet down to the very end, despite his prolonged sojourn in the malaria of political wirepulling, his heart seemed to be as the heart of a little child. If some who remember "the old Parliamentary hand" should whisper that the innocence of the dove was sometimes compatible with the wisdom of the serpent, I make no dissent. It is easy to be a dove, and to be as silly as a dove. It is easy to be as wise as a serpent, and as wicked, let us say, as Lord Beaconsfield. But it is the combination that is difficult, and in Mr. Gladstone the combination was almost ideally complete.

His perennial youth.

Mr. Gladstone at the last was old enough to be the grandfather of the younger race of politicians; but his courage, his faith, and his versatility put the youngest of them to shame. It was this ebullience of youthful energy, this inexhaustible vitality, which was the admiration and despair of his contemporaries. Surely when a schoolboy at Eton he must somewhere have discovered the elixir of life or have been bathed by some beneficent fairy in the waters of perpetual youth. Gladly would many a man of fifty have exchanged physique with the hale and hearty Gladstone. He was the great political evergreen, who seemed even in his political life to have borrowed something of immortality from the fame which he had won.

Admirable Crichton redivivus.

Of him, as of Cleopatra, it might have been said that age could not wither nor custom stale his infinite variety. He was, no doubt, absorbed in Home Rule. He was always, in one sense, a man of one idea. But while he was seemingly absorbed in the pursuit of one set object, he was all the while making a diligent understudy of other questions, with which he would ere long astonish the world with his familiarity. Even when apparently consumed by his preoccupation about Ireland or Bulgaria, he snatched time to review "Ecce Homo," to discourse on the Olympian gods, or to write essays about Marie Bashkirtseff. He was a wonderfully all-round man. No one could stand up to him in a fair fight and not be bowled over in the first or second round. He was the veritable Launcelot of the Parliamentary arena, and before his unerring lance every crest went



Photograph by Elliott and Fry.]

[MR. GLADSTONE OUT FOR A WALK.

down. He might not have done everything he put his hand to better than any other man who made that special thing the sole study of a lifetime, but he did more things better than any other living man. And some things he did supremely well, as well as if he had spent his whole life in acquiring mastery of the art. As a financier and as a popular orator he stood unrivalled.

His pluck
and staying
power.

Another great secret of his popularity was his marvellous courage, resource, and indomitable resolution. The British public likes pluck in public men, and Mr. Gladstone had pluck enough to supply a couple of Cabinets. "There is no man living," remarked a naval officer some time ago, "who would have made so splendid an admiral of the old type as Mr. Gladstone if he had only been in the navy. Once let him be convinced of the righteousness of his cause, and he would fight against any odds, nail his colours to the mast, and blow up the powder magazine rather than surrender." Sir Henry Maine has remarked with much truth that much of the interest which Englishmen take in politics is the sporting interest. Politics are to them a great game, and they have their favourites for place and power, as they have favourites for the Derby or the St. Leger. They look upon the debates in St. Stephen's very much as their ancestors used to look upon a cock-fight; and there is no doubt that much of the enthusiasm with which Mr. Gladstone was regarded by combative Englishmen of the lower orders was due to the fact that in the great Imperial Cockpit there was no gamer bird than he. The "Old 'un" always came up to time, and displayed more vigour and spirit than any combatant in the lists. The more difficulties there were to be overcome the more pleased he seemed to be. His spirits rose with each obstacle, and he literally revelled in the sudden discovery of a host of unexpected barriers which must be cleared before he reached the goal. All this, displayed time after time, under the most diverse circumstances, made the public confident that Mr. Gladstone was never so sure to excel himself as when he was confronted with difficulties that would have utterly crushed a weaker man.

The ideal
Gladstone.

But it was not as an Admirable Crichton of the Nineteenth Century that Mr. Gladstone commanded the homage of his countrymen. The English and Scotch seldom are enthusiastic about mere intellectual versatility in the smartest mental gymnast. We are at bottom a profoundly religious race, and those who would arouse the enthusiasm of our people must touch the heart rather than the head of the nation. Mr. Gladstone was great in Parliamentary cut and thrust and parry. He was wonderful in a great debate, and beyond all rivalry as a platform orator; but the great secret of his hold upon the popular heart was the prevailing conviction that he was at bottom not a mere "old Parliamentary hand" or cunning lecturer, but a knight and a hero who could always be relied upon to act like a knight and a hero whenever there was any knightly and heroic task to be done.

"It is all humbug," says the enemy; "he was a self-seeker like the rest of us." But that was just what the mass of men will not believe. To them Mr. Gladstone was the one man left in politics, after John Bright was dead, who was capable of self-sacrifice. He represented the element of the ideal in our political strife. He was the statesman of aspiration and of enthusiasm; he was the man of faith, the leader of the forlorn hope, the heaven-sent champion of the desolate and the oppressed. Many of us for years needed no other watchword than "Gladstone" to nerve us for the fray.

Press where you see my white plume shine amid the ranks of war,
And be your oriflamme to-day, the helmet of Navarre,

always recurs to my mind when thinking over the most famous of those dashing, headlong charges which Mr. Gladstone led against the serried ranks of the supporters of the oppressor.



HAWARDEN PARISH CHURCH.

The great secret of Mr. Gladstone's hold upon the nation's heart was the belief which had become a fixed conviction with the masses of the voters that he was animated by a supreme regard for the welfare of the common people, and an all-constraining conviction of his obligation to God. Mr. Gladstone was far and away the most conspicuous Christian in the popular estimation among his contemporaries. Formerly he divided the honours with Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Bright, and Cardinal Manning. But at the last he stood alone; nor was there a bishop or an archbishop among them all who could so much as touch the hem of his garment so far as the popular feeling went. Mr. Gladstone was far and away the greatest pillar and prop of English orthodoxy. To the ordinary voter here and beyond the seas it was more important that Mr. Gladstone was unshaken in his assent to what he regarded as the eternal verities than that all the bishops in all the Churches should

The secret of
his power.

unhesitatingly affirm their faith in the creed of Athanasius. He was a man whose intellect they respected, even if they did not understand. "He is a capable man, a practical man, a ripe scholar, and an experienced statesman; if it is good enough for him, it is good enough for us." So reasoned many men more or less logically, and so the services in Hawarden Parish Church, where Mr. Gladstone read the lessons, much more than any cathedral service came to have a religious importance that was felt throughout the Empire.

The epic strain in politics.

Men see what they bring. They find what they seek. Mr. Gladstone was to many a mirror in which they saw but the reflection of their own faces. The wirepuller saw in him but a glorified image of himself—a Brocken spectral magnification of the electioneer. The wily, wary diplomat discovered that Mr. Gladstone was as wily and as wary as himself, masking behind apparent open-hearted guilelessness the *rusé* acuteness of the cleverest fox that ever baffled hounds. But those who worshipped him did not see those elements in his character. They saw in him the realisation of their highest ideal of chivalry and self-sacrifice. What Lowell said of Lamartine represents what most of those who believed in Mr. Gladstone thought of him :—

No fitting mete wand hath To-day
 For measuring spirits of thy stature—
 Only the Future can reach up to lay
 The laurel on that lofty nature—
 Bard who with some diviner art
 Has touched the bard's true lyre, a nation's heart.

The higher note.

The great moments in our more recent history, when Englishmen felt that it was worth while to live, were most of them associated with his name. The epic strain is not frequent in our politics, but wherever it occurred in recent years we owed it to Mr. Gladstone. He touched, and he alone, with the exception of Mr. Bright, the higher nature of man. His appeal, as Emerson would say, was always to the over-soul. Said one of his colleagues recently, "If I were asked what was the distinguishing characteristic of Mr. Gladstone's power, I should say that he never for a moment forgot, or allowed his hearers to forget, that he regarded man as a moral being. He did not forget that they are soldiers, voters, toilers, merchants, but over and above all there was constantly present to his mind the fact that they are moral beings." It was this higher note, distinctly audible above all the dust and din of the party fight, which constituted the secret of his charm.

The Knight Errant of Liberty

To those who knew him best and to those who knew him least he was ever the Knight Errant of the World, ever ready to ride off on some feat of high emprise at the summons of distressful innocence or outraged justice. The man whose voice, clear as a silver trumpet, rang through Europe in denunciation of the horrors of Neapolitan dungeons and the atrocities of the Turks in Bulgaria, needed no other

title to enduring fame. His two pamphlets paved the way for the liberation of two peninsulas. Italy free and indivisible rose from the grave of ages at his kindling summons; and Bulgaria free, but not yet undivided, is the living monument of the vivifying might of his spoken word. He was in both the Italian and the Balkan Peninsula Heaven's Herald of the Dawn. Like Prometheus he became—

A name to fright all tyrants with, a light
Unsetting as the Pole star; a great voice
Heard in the breathless pauses of the fight
By truth and freedom ever waged with wrong.

Nor can it be ignored even by the most fanatical Unionist that his devotion to the cause of Ireland was marked by the same passionate enthusiasm which, if it had been displayed in relation to other lands, would have excited their highest admiration. As the Knight of Liberty sworn to the cause of the oppressed, Mr. Gladstone did inestimable service to the men of this generation.

In the midst of the banalities and pettinesses which often degrade politics to the low level of a butler's pantry, he towered aloft, majestic even when mistaken, serving the good cause, even when he opposed it, better than many of those who tendered it their support from sordid motives or the mean calculations of the political huckster. He towered before us like one of his own Olympian deities, and if like these ancients he occasionally descended to the haunts of mortal men, and condescended like Jove to very human frailties, he was still of Olympus, Olympian. If Mr. Gladstone had been decreed by the fates to do the meanest of actions, he could not have accomplished his destiny until he had surrounded the hateful deed with a very nimbus of supernatural splendour. Until he had convinced himself that a thing was noble and righteous, and altogether excellent either in itself or because it was the destined means to a supremely righteous end, he would not hear of it. Hence although there might be somewhat unreal about this, it was real enough to him. If it was theatrical, he had been so long on the stage that he felt naked and forlorn without his moral buskins.

His moral
greatness.

But it was not theatrical—save in its mere fringes and corners. The main warp and woof of his life's work was simply, honestly sincere. This was obscured from many by Gordon and Home Rule. But there was no insincerity in his dealings with Gordon. Mistakes there were no doubt, many and grievous, but they were mistakes of honest conviction based on imperfect acquaintance with facts. As to Home Rule, the suddenness of his declaration in favour of an Irish Parliament, when Mr. Parnell acquired the balance-weight in the House of Commons, was no more proof of his insincerity than the porting of the helm when the wind suddenly shifts proves that the helmsman is a dishonest rogue. Mr. Gladstone was a rare combination of an idealist and a man of affairs. He was a dreamer of dreams,

The political
engineer.

no doubt, but he dreamed them only as a civil engineer draws up his plans and specifications with a view to having them carried out. They are on paper to-day, only in order that they may be in brick and concrete and stone to-morrow. He may have his preferences for brick or concrete or stone in constructing a bridge, but that is a detail. His supreme object is to make a bridge. He may advertise for brick, believing that to be the best, and if brick is to be had he will build with it. But if, after doing his best, there is not a brick nor half a brick to be bought in the whole of the market, then promptly without much lamentation over the missing bricks he will take the stone or rubble that lies ready to hand and make his bridge of that. The great thing is to get the bridge built, and the moment it is absolutely certain that no brick is to be had, is the moment when it is time to decide in favour of the next best material which can be obtained. Every one recognises this in the building of bridges. But in politics it is considered needful that a certain period of lamentation over the dearth of bricks should intervene before the order is given for the stone. Mr. Gladstone acted in politics as an engineer acts in the building of bridges. He did not waste time in vain conventionalities, and when it was quite clear that the Irish had made up their minds never to be content without Home Rule, and had shown it by the practical and constitutional method of returning an overwhelming majority of Home Rulers to Westminster, Mr. Gladstone bowed to the inevitable, and cut his coat according to his cloth.

The Quixote
of Conscience.

It is ridiculous to pretend, with Mr. Gladstone's career before us, that his course was swayed by calculating self-interest. He has been the very madman of politics from the point of view of Mr. Worldly-Wiseman. "No man," said he in 1892, "has ever committed suicide so often as I," and that witness is true. The first and perhaps most typical of all his many suicides was the resignation of his seat in Sir Robert Peel's Cabinet, not because he disapproved of the Maynooth Grant, but because, as he had at one time written against it, he was determined that his advocacy of it should be purged of the least taint of self-interest. As Mr. George Russell rightly remarks, "This was an act of Parliamentary Quixotism too eccentric to be intelligible. It argued a fastidious sensitiveness of conscience, and a nice sense of political propriety so opposed to the sordid selfishness and unblushing tergiversation of the ordinary place-hunter as to be almost offensive." But as Mr. Gladstone was then, so he was all his life—the very Quixote of Conscience. Judged by every standard of human probability, he ruined himself over and over and over again. He was always ruining himself, and always rising, like the phoenix, in renewed youth from the ashes of his funeral pyre. As was said in homely phrase some years ago, he always kept bobbing up again.

What was the secret of this wonderful capacity for revival? How was it that Mr. Gladstone seemed to find even his blunders help him,

and the affirmation of principles that seemed to be destructive of all chance of the success of his policy absolutely helped him to its realisation ?

From a merely human standpoint it may be inexplicable. But

If right or wrong on this God's world of ours
Be leagued with higher Powers,

then the mystery is not so insoluble. He believed in the higher Powers. He never shrank from putting his faith to the test, and on the whole who can deny that for his country and for himself he had reason to rejoice in the verification of his working hypothesis ?

“We walk by faith and not by sight,” he said once ; “and by no one so much as by those who are in politics is this necessary.” It is the evidence of things not seen, the eternal principles, the great invisible moral sanctions that men are wont to call the laws of God, which alone supply a safe guide through this mortal wilderness.

Walking by
faith, not by
sight.

Men of a thousand shifts and wiles, look here !
See one straightforward conscience put in pawn
To win a world : see the obedient sphere
By bravery's simple gravitation drawn !

Shall we not heed the lesson taught of old,
And by the Present's lips repeated still ?
In our own single manhood to be bold,
To tread in conscience and impregnable.

Mr. Gladstone never hesitated to counter at sharp right angle the passion and the fury of the day. Those who represent him as ever strong upon the stronger side wilfully shut their eyes to half his history. He challenged Lord Palmerston over the Don Pacifico question, when the doctrine of *Civis Romanus sum* was in the first freshness of its glory, and was believed to have wrecked himself almost as completely as when in 1876 he countered even more resolutely the fantastic Jingoism of Lord Beaconsfield. It is easy for those who come after, and enjoy the spoils gained by sacrifices of which they themselves were incapable, to describe the Bulgarian agitation as an astute party move. The party did not think so. Its leaders did not think so. Some of those who have since halloo'd loud enough behind Mr. Gladstone were then bitter enough in their complaint that he had wrecked his party. One at least, who was constrained to say the other thing in public, made up for it by bitter and contemptuous cavillings in private. Now, it is easy to see that Lord Beaconsfield was mistaken, and that Mr. Gladstone held the winning card all along. But no one knew it at the time when the card had to be played, certainly not Mr. Gladstone himself. He simply “saw his duty a dead sure thing,” and, like Jim Bludso on the burning boat, “he went for it there and then.” It turned up trumps, but no one knew how heavy were the odds against it save those who went through the stress and the strain of that testing and trying time by his side.

Mr. Gladstone has no doubt been often and marvellously successful.

Athanasius
contra
mundum.

But sometimes, when he has been most right, he has been most hopelessly beaten. He was, by universal consent, right in opposing the absurd Ecclesiastical Titles Bill; he was also right in opposing the puerile Bill to put down Ritualism; but on both occasions he was powerless against the popular frenzy. It might have been the same in his warfare against Jingoism. The certainty of failure did not daunt him in his strenuous struggle—carried at times to the length of positive obstruction—against the Divorce Bill.

In these matters Mr. Gladstone did not calculate. When he saw clearly what ought to be done, he did it; and it was this habit of walking according to the light that was given him, turning neither to the right hand nor the left, that gave him his unique hold upon the minds and the imagination of his countrymen.

The might of
his convic-
tions.

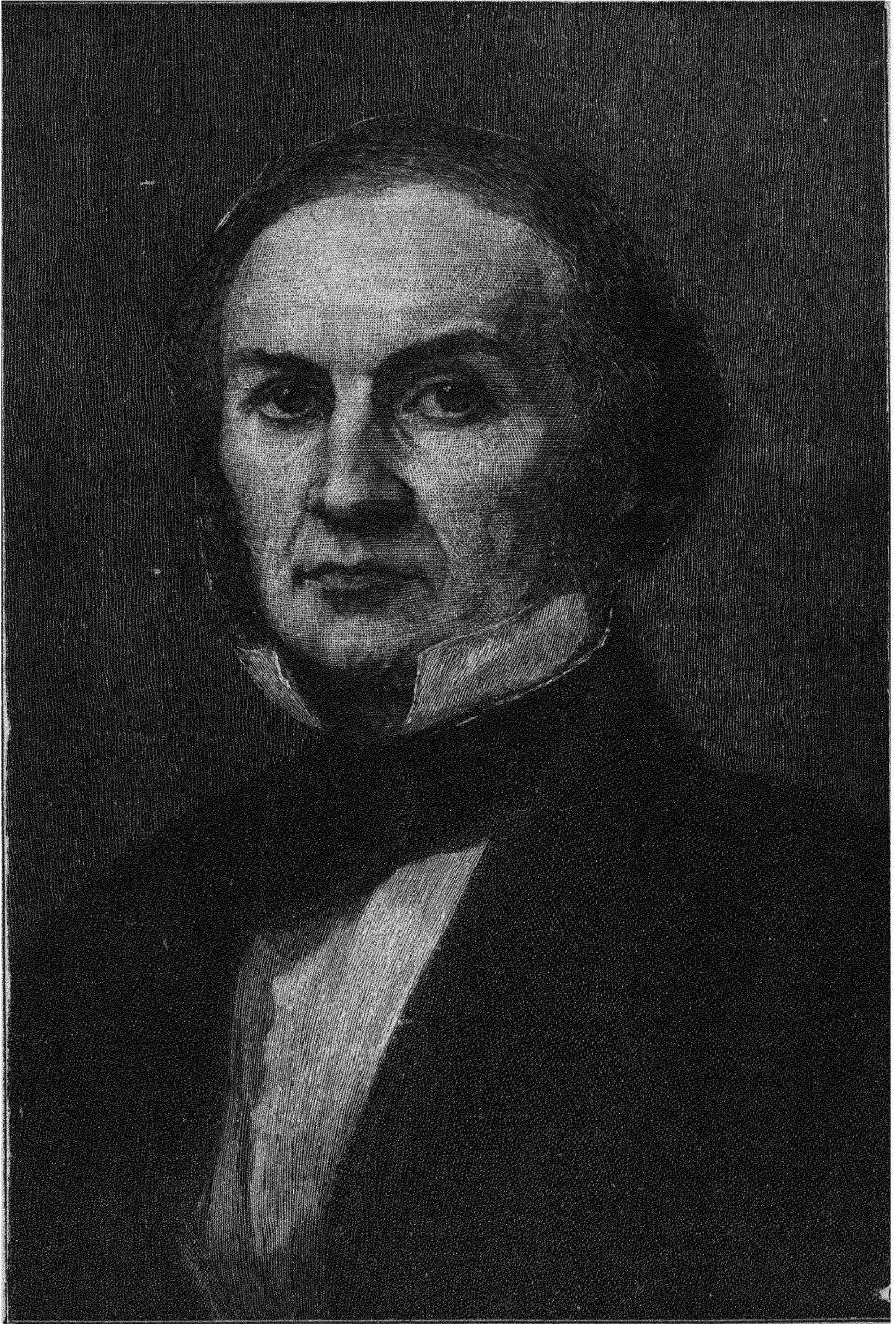
Mr. Gladstone spoke with all the authority of a Pope who fully believed in his own infallibility. He possessed the first of all qualifications for inspiring faith in others—an implicit faith in his own cause. The intense consciousness of the absolute rectitude of his motives had its drawbacks, no doubt; it occasionally led, for instance, to the implied assumption that all men who differed from him must without doubt perish everlastingly, not because of any wrath or indignation on his part, but merely because to oppose the will of one so supremely right approximated to the nature of the unpardonable sin, and revealed an innate depravity which merited the everlasting burnings. When newspapers and politicians opposed him he was not vexed; he was only grieved that such good men should go so far astray, and sincerely hoped for the day when the light would dawn upon their souls and they would understand how great a mistake they made in opposing the schemes which he devised for the alleviation of the sufferings of his race.

In the August of 1855, Lord Aberdeen said:—"Gladstone intends to be Prime Minister. He has great qualifications, but some serious defects: the chief, that when he has convinced himself perhaps by abstract reasoning, of some view, he thinks that every one else ought to see it at once as he does, and can make no allowance for differences of opinion."

This, however, was not peculiar to Mr. Gladstone, as the following story shows:—

A character-
istic story.

Mr. Frank Holl, who painted Mr. Gladstone, also painted a portrait of Mr. Bright. "When Mr. Bright was sitting for his portrait, so Mr. Holl told the story, he hazarded the remark:—'It must be a very painful thing for you, Mr. Bright, that after all these years you should have found cause to sever your connection?' 'Indeed it is,' responded Mr. Bright, with a sigh; 'to think that after we have trodden the same path together, shoulder to shoulder and hand in hand, we should be forced apart in the evening of our lives! And by what? By a bogey that has risen up within him,



From the painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.]

MR. GLADSTONE IN 1854.

and is beckoning him away from duty and sense, by his own Frankenstein's monster. Do you know, Mr. Holl, I seriously fear that my dear old friend's mind has really become radically undermined.' When I was painting Mr. Gladstone, the subject of Mr. Bright's portrait cropped up. 'Ah!' said Mr. Gladstone, with much interest, 'and how did you find him?' 'Fairly well; and he spoke very affectionately of you, Mr. Gladstone.' 'Did he indeed?' replied he, sorrowfully, 'did he indeed? Ah! that was a cruel blow. That after a lifetime of mutual esteem and of good work carried through together we should be divided on so clear a question! Tell me, Mr. Holl'—and here his mouth twitched and his voice shook with great emotion—'tell me, did you observe anything in the manner of my old friend which would lead you to believe that his reason was becoming in any way unhinged?' "

One point in relation to which Mr. Gladstone was subject to much misapprehension was the result of his exceeding conscientiousness. He was so over-accurate that he often seemed not to be accurate at all. He was so careful to make the finest distinctions, to convey to a hair's breadth his exact meaning, that sometimes he seemed to be refining and quibbling, and creating loopholes for escape at some future time. In reality, he always told the truth exactly as he saw it; but he saw it so clearly and with such mathematical accuracy that to the ordinary man who never sees anything as it is, but only as it appears, the difference between what Mr. Gladstone saw and what Mr. Gladstone said he saw was often quite inexplicable.

His greatness.

Not, indeed, for naught or in vain was this great life lived openly before all men, an object lesson unequalled in our time, of loftiness of aim, of integrity of purpose, and of unflinching faith in God and trust in man. He taught us that it is the high-souled man who has the greatest power, even over the poorest and most ignorant of the toilers of the world; that supreme capacity in Parliament is compatible with the most simple-hearted devotion; and that the most adroit and capable of statesmen could be at the same time as chivalrous and heroic as any of the knights of Arthur's Table Round. Amid the crowd of contemporary statesmen he towered like a giant above all his compeers.

In mind, in heart, in soul, in everything, excepting physique, he was a giant. Beside him there was not any who could even be considered as a rival, and after him there cometh, as yet, no one with shoulders broad enough to bear his mantle. As Canon Liddon said to me as we drove one summer morning round the slopes of Benvoirlich, whose distant summit was hidden from our eyes by our nearness to its base, "That mountain reminds me of Mr Gladstone. We shall never know how great he is while we are with him. After he is gone we shall begin to discover how vastly he towers over all the men of his generation."

IV.—HIS CAREER.

MR. GLADSTONE is a product of British family life, and his own family life was one of the most beautiful domesticities of our time. Mr. Gladstone was a compound, in equal proportions, of his parents—he had the imperious spirit, the unbending will, and inexhaustible energy of his father, and the deep religious spirit of his pious mother.

On his father's side he was a Lowland Scotsman with all the canniness of the long-headed race. On his mother's side he was a Highlander of the Donachie clan, whose habitat was far away in the extreme north beside Stornoway. It was from his mother's side that he had the imagination and the poetry of his nature, and from her also he had that leaning towards the occult, which, however, he had sedulously kept in check. When I asked him some time after the publication of "Real Ghost Stories" whether he had paid any attention to spiritualism and its related subjects, he said generally that he had not studied it as closely as had Mr. Balfour, with whose general conclusions on the subject he was inclined to agree. Speaking broadly of dreams, second sight and ghosts, etc., he was prepared generally to believe in them all, but, said he with a roguish twinkle in his eye, "If you ask me whether there is any particular instance of any one of them in which I can place implicit credence, I would be at some difficulty to reply."

His Highland
mother.

Mr. Gladstone had the great advantage of having been accustomed from his infancy to discuss everything with his parents. The children and their parents argued upon everything; they would debate as to whether the trout should be boiled or fried; whether it was likely to be wet or fine next day; whether a window should be opened or shut. It is probable that in this early training Mr. Gladstone acquired that faculty of his of being equally absorbed in the most trivial and the most important of subjects.

A debater
from the
nursery.

When Mr. Gladstone was twelve he went to school, and was declared by Sir Roderick Murchison to be "the prettiest little boy that ever went to Eton." As a scholar he was by common consent, says Mr. George Russell, acknowledged to be God-fearing and conscientious, pure-minded and courageous, but humane. He was never seen to run, but was fond of sculling, and even then given to that fast walking which he has practised all his life. At school he distinguished himself by turning his glass upside down and refusing to drink a coarse toast at an election dinner, and for having protested against the torture of certain wretched pigs, which were then regarded

At Eton.

as fair game on Ash Wednesday. Some of his schoolfellows failing to appreciate this early foretaste of his chivalrous disposition, Mr. Gladstone offered to write his reply in good round hand upon their faces. It is curious to note that at the Salt Hill Club, which he and a few congenial spirits founded for the purpose of going to Salt Hill to bully the fat waiter, eat toasted cheese and drink egg wine, Mr. Gladstone was familiarly known by the name of Mr. Tipple. In the School Debating Society he naturally took a high place. In one of his earliest recorded speeches, he declares that his "prejudices and his predilections have long been enlisted on the side of Toryism." So Tory was he that, seeing a colt of the name of Hampden entered for the Derby between two horses named Zeal and Lunacy, he declared he was in his proper place, for Hampden in those days was to him only an illustrious rebel.

The school-boy editor and poet

When eighteen Mr. Gladstone contributed under the *nom de plume* of Bartholemey Bouverie to the *Eton Miscellany*. To this magazine he contributed not only leading articles, classical translations, and historical essays, but even ventured into the domain of humorous poetry. Of his humorous verse the only specimen which is quoted was his mock heroic ode to the shade of Wat Tyler, of which the following is the concluding stanza:—

Shades, that soft Sedition woo,
Around the haunts of Peterloo!
That hover o'er the meeting-hall,
Where many a voice stentorian bawls!
Still fit the sacred choir around,
With "Freedom" let the garrets ring,
And vengeance soon in thunder sound
On Church, and constable, and king.

A model undergraduate.

At nineteen he went up to Oxford and became a model undergraduate of Christ Church. Ten years after he left college it was said that undergraduates drank less wine in the forties because Gladstone had been so abstemious in the thirties. He was, therefore, naturally ridiculed, especially on account of all his friends having been industrious and steady men, and he was, moreover, declared by the roysterers as only fit to live with maiden aunts and keep tame rabbits. In 1831 he made his first great speech at the Oxford Union, of which he was first secretary and then president. It is notable that it was in denunciation of the Reform Bill, which he declared was destined to break up the foundations of social order. Notwithstanding his subject, it was so remarkable a performance that Bishop Wordsworth declared that one day Gladstone would rise to be Prime Minister of England. The prediction was not fulfilled until thirty-seven years later.

An obedient son.

Another incident, which is not generally known, is that it was his filial obedience which first brought to light that extraordinary aptitude for figures which enabled Mr. Gladstone to be far and away

the greatest Chancellor of the Exchequer whom England has ever had. When he was at Oxford he wrote home, saying that he didn't care for mathematics, and intended to concentrate his attention upon classics. His father wrote back that he heard with much grief his son's decision. He did not think a man was a man unless he knew mathematics. Mr. Gladstone, on receiving this intimation of his father's wishes, abandoned his own plan, and applied himself with his usual concentration to the study of mathematics. Much to his surprise, he came out double first. He often said in after life that he had done it to please his father, and that he would never have been Chancellor of the Exchequer had it not been for the bent given to his mind by his compliance with his father's wish that he should pursue mathematical studies.

After taking a double first Mr. Gladstone quitted Oxford, leaving behind him a great reputation for industry, brilliance, and piety. No man of his standing more habitually read his Bible or knew it better. He was then an evangelical with a strong predisposition to a clerical career. Instead of going to the Church he went to Italy, a land which has always excited a peculiar fascination over Mr. Gladstone. After Homer, Dante was his favourite poet. He always found solace and refreshment in the study of his verse. "Dante," he once wrote, "has been a solemn master for me. The reading of Dante is a vigorous discipline for the heart, the intellect and the whole man. In the school of Dante I have learned a great part of that mental provision, which has served me to make the journey of human life. He who lives for Dante lives to serve Italy, Christianity, and the World."

His devotion
to Dante.

Mr. Gladstone's wedded life was idyllic and ideal. Seldom, indeed, has a marriage taken place of which it might so truly have been said, in the hackneyed phrase of the story-book, "They lived happily ever after." Mr. Gladstone's simplicity of character and "matter-of-factness" gave his family great facility for what is called "managing" him. He was as easily managed as a child, and had no idea of employing the mode by which he was "managed" on anybody else. He therefore never suspected that he was being manipulated.

His married
life.

In the household Mr. Gladstone was simply idolised. His servants would have laid down their lives for him; and his absolute justice, kindness, and orderliness made him a perfect master of the household. But for all that he was not in any way overbearing or domineering. He was very freely criticised in his own family, and, although his children agreed with him in the main, there was abundant scope for divergence of views on details.

Mr. Gladstone's manners, especially when addressing ladies, were very courtly. There was a fine stateliness, and at the same time an exquisite courtesy, in his address. In his manners, as well as in much else, Mr. Gladstone belonged distinctly to the older school

which flourished before the Queen came to the throne, when society still preserved a certain distinctive style which has suffered much in the rush and tumble of our new democracy.

His love of home.

A great delusion which prevailed about Mr. Gladstone was that he was always supposed to be fidgeting for the leadership, and that he was consumed by a passionate desire to be Prime Minister. Those who lived with him knew that the very reverse was the fact. Instead of restraining him and holding him back, as they were supposed to do, they had actually to egg him on and force him to quit his sylvan retreat for the turmoil of political life. This was partly because of the extraordinary intensity with which he threw himself into everything he did. Again and again he strove to rid himself of political embarrassments, and he was never so happy as when he was romping with his grandchild. Twenty years ago he argued himself into a belief that he ought to retire.

He was "strong against going on in politics to the end." On May 6th, 1873, Bishop Wilberforce wrote: "Gladstone, much talking—how little real good work any Premier had done after sixty; Peel, Palmerston—his work already done before; the Duke of Wellington added nothing to his reputation after. I told him Dr. Clark thought it would be physically worse for him to retire." "Dr. Clark does not know how completely I should employ myself," etc. May 10: "Gladstone again talking of sixty as full age of Premier." In 1875 he formally retired, as he thought, to end his days in retirement. When I saw him at Downing Street in 1883 he hinted that he did not intend to remain in office till the dissolution; and in 1884 he talked in Cabinets of having one foot in the grave, and as if anything relating to the next Parliament was to him entirely devoid of any practical interest. His wife and children knew that he was sincerely in earnest when he declared that he preferred a life of learned and scholarly activity among his books to the gratification of any Parliamentary ambitions.

Enters Parliament 1833.

This is not a biography, but it would be unpardonable not to glance, however briefly, at some of the more salient features of Mr. Gladstone's political career. He entered Parliament for the first time in 1833, when he was elected to represent Newark by the then Duke of Newcastle. Few men have entered public life with greater advantages. He was not only healthy and wealthy, but the ripest flower of the University culture of his time. His personal appearance is said to have been striking, but his strongly-marked features were pale, and their pallor was set off by the abundance of his dark hair, nor did the piercing lustre of his eyes diminish the impression that the young member was somewhat too delicate for the stress and strain of Parliamentary life. Of those who entered Parliament with him at that time there is not one left in the House of Commons to-day. Mr. Gladstone was then the rising hope of the stern and unbending

Tories. His first address to the electors declared that the duties of Governments were strictly and peculiarly religious. He urged that the claims and the condition of the poor should receive special attention, labour should receive adequate remuneration, and he thought favourably of the allotment of cottage grounds. That was just sixty-one years before Mr. Chaplin brought in his Allotment Bill.

In those days Mr. Gladstone used to ride a grey Arabian mare in Hyde Park, where his narrow-brimmed hat high up in the centre of his head, sustained by a crop of thick curly hair, attracted considerable attention. In the first ten years of his Parliamentary life Mr. Gladstone was in all things a thoroughgoing Tory. His first speech was in defence of slavery as it was practised on his father's plantation in Demerara, and the first session did not pass until he had delivered a speech in defence of the Irish Church, which he was subsequently to disestablish. So sanguine was he that he was sure that the Church had awakened to new life and fresh energy, which would soon afford fresh occupation for all the bishops of the existing establishment. In the next session he supported the compulsory subjection of every student of the universities to the teaching of the Church of England. When Parliament was dissolved Mr. Gladstone warned the electors of Newark against the danger of hurrying onwards through the ballot, Short Parliaments, and other questions called popular, into Republicanism.

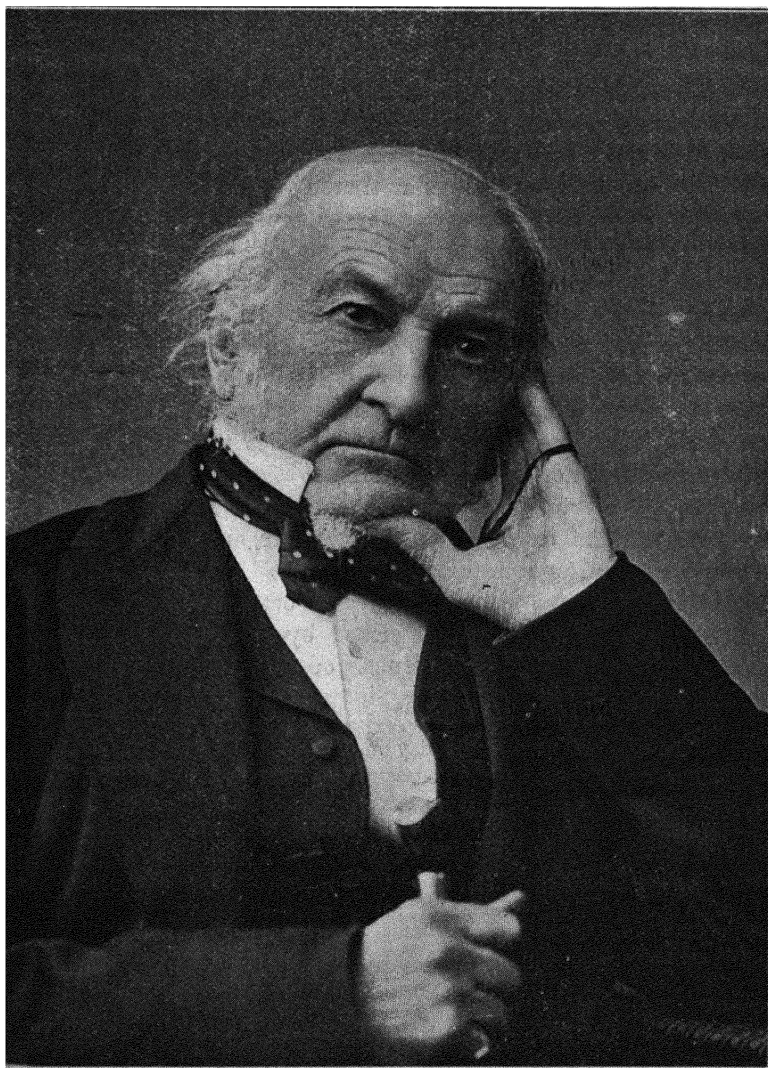
When Mr. Gladstone was on the eve of emerging from his high and dry Toryism, he was thus described by one who subsequently succeeded him as leader of the House of Commons. Sir Stafford Northcote wrote:—

There is but one statesman of the day in whom I feel entire confidence, and with whom I cordially agree, and that statesman is Mr. Gladstone. I look upon him as the representative of the party—scarcely developed as yet, though secretly forming and strengthening—which will stand by all that is dear and sacred in my estimation in the struggle which I believe will come ere very long between good and evil, order and disorder, the Church and the world, and I see a very little band collecting round him, and ready to fight manfully under his lead ng.

In 1845 Mr. Gladstone first had his attention seriously drawn to Ireland, and in that year he entertained the idea of devoting the month of September to a tour in the distressful land:—

Ireland is likely to find this country and Parliament so much employed for years to come that I feel rather oppressively an obligation to try and see it with my own eyes, instead of using those of other people, according to the limited measure of my means.

One passage in Mr. Gladstone's career is often forgotten, namely, that when Secretary of State for the Colonies in Sir Robert Peel's administration in 1846, he did not offer himself for re-election, the Duke of Newcastle, his former patron, being a stout Protectionist,



Photograph by Barraud.]

MR. GLADSTONE LISTENING.

and he remained outside the House of Commons during the great Free Trade struggle which resulted in the repeal of the Corn Laws.

When he was elected for Oxford, Bishop Moberly declared that he was the deepest, truest, most attached, and most effective advocate for the Church and the universities; the man who had the most ability and the most willingness to serve his Church and country most effectively. After his election for Oxford University, and while he was in the process of transition from Toryism to Liberalism, a good deal of the old Adam lingered about him. He pronounced marriage with the deceased wife's sister as contrary to the law of God for three thousand years and upwards, and he opposed the appointment of a Universities Commission, and defended Church rates. In other respects, however, he was a Liberal, being a staunch Free Trader, and in favour of admitting the Jews into Parliament.

M.P. for
Oxford.

It was not till 1850 that Mr. Gladstone first took a distinct stand on the ground which he afterwards made so peculiarly his own—that of the opponent of the policy of bluster, which had its apotheosis in Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern antics. The occasion was in the debate on the alleged abuse of English authority to secure the redress of Don Pacifico from the Government of Greece. Lord Palmerston made his famous speech laying down the doctrine of *Civis Romanus Sum*, and Mr. Gladstone replied by denouncing the doctrine that England or any other nation could arrogate to herself in the face of mankind a position of peculiar privilege.

Anti-Jingo.

Sir, I say the policy of the noble Lord tends to encourage and confirm in us that which is our besetting fault and weakness, both as a nation and as individuals. Foreigners are too often sensible of something that galls them in the presence of an Englishman, and I apprehend it is because he has too great a tendency to self-esteem, too little disposition to regard the feelings, the habits, and the ideas of others.

It was in this speech also that Mr. Gladstone first made his appeal to the conscience of the civilised world which he so often made in connection with the Home Rule question:—

The conscience of the
civilised
world.

There is a further appeal from the House of Commons to the people of England; but, lastly, there is also an appeal from the people of England to the general sentiment of the civilised world, and I, for my part, am of opinion that England will stand shorn of a chief part of her glory and pride if she shall be found to have separated herself, through the policy she pursues abroad, from the moral support which the general and fixed convictions of mankind afford. No, sir, let it not be so; let us recognise, and recognise with frankness, the equality of the weak with the strong, the principle of brotherhood among nations, and of their sacred independence.

It seemed part of the irony of fate that Mr. Gladstone had always to denounce the course which he was about to take, or to defend a policy which he was just about to reverse. Of this there were many instances in his career, but one of the oddest was that in which,

His Neapolitan
pamphlet.

immediately after he had declared in the House of Commons that it was a vain conception that we, forsooth, had a mission to be the censors of vice and folly and abuse and imperfections of other nations, he rushed off to Naples and made himself the censor of the vice and folly, the abuse and imperfections of the Neapolitan Government. It was, however, no vain conception, for the letters which he wrote denouncing the negation of God wrought into a system were one of the most powerful of the moral causes which shook down the throne of the Bourbons.

In 1851 Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter to the Bishop of Aberdeen on "The Position and Function of the Laity," which Bishop Wordsworth declared contained the germ of Liberationism and the political equality of all religions. Mr. Gladstone had obviously been travelling somewhat since he published his book on "Church and State" but thirteen years before.

A teachable
mind.

Mr. Gladstone began as the defender of the Irish Church; he ended by demolishing it. No one ever opposed more vehemently the extension of British influence in Egypt, but it was under his Government we bombarded the Alexandrian forts, fought the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, and reduced Egypt to the condition of a British satrapy. He was the most conspicuous advocate of peace with Russia when Lord Beaconsfield was in office, until Constantinople was in danger. Five years later he left office, after having brought us to the very verge of war with Russia for the sake of Penjdeb. One year he consigned Mr. Parnell to prison, the next he proposed to make over to him the government of Ireland, and then again he deposed him from the leadership. Yet he was always consistent and anxious for his consistency. Circumstances alter cases, and Mr. Gladstone was not above being taught by events.

His achieve-
ments abroad.

Mr. Gladstone as a statesman did several notable things at home and abroad. He contributed, more than any single man with a pen and a voice has done, to create Italy and to destroy the dominion of the Turk in Europe. As Prime Minister or Plenipotentiary, he enlarged Greece, transferred Corfu, and established British influence in Egypt. He familiarised the public with the idea of the European concert, not merely for debate but for action, and maintained in times of the greatest storm and stress that Russia was not outside the pale of human civilisation or of Liberal sympathy. In Imperial politics he constantly condemned the strong creed of the swash-buckler. He annexed New Guinea, North Borneo, and Bechuanaland, but he sedulously condemned every extension of the empire that was not forced upon us by inexorable necessity. He cleared out of Afghanistan and retreated from the Transvaal. He established the great precedent of the Alabama arbitration, and was the first British statesman to recognise that in the future the United States will supersede Great Britain as the most powerful of the English-speaking

communities. If he did not exactly belittle the Colonies, he never cracked them up, and he always and everywhere preached the doctrine of allowing them to go their own way. He was a home-keeping Scot, whose sympathies have never really strayed far beyond these islands except in the case of those nations struggling, and rightly struggling, to be free.

At home his chief exploits were the reform of the tariff, the establishment of Free Trade, and the repeal of the paper duty, which made the modern newspaper possible. He was the real author of the extension of the franchise to the workmen of the towns, and the actual author of the enfranchisement of the rural householder. He established secret voting, and agreed to give effect to the Tory demand for single-member constituencies. It was in his administration that the first Education Act was passed, and that purchase in the Army was abolished. He had his share in the liberation of labour from the Combination Laws, in the emancipation of the Jews, and in the repeal of University Tests. He first taught the democracy, by the great object lesson of his Irish Land Act, that the so-called cast-iron laws of political economy could be banished to Saturn, and that the whole power and resources of the Imperial State could be employed to set poor men up in business on their own account. He was the first to disestablish and disendow a National Church, and to compel the British public to consider the feasibility of establishing subordinate and statutory parliaments within the British Isles. Over and above all else, he, the scholar, the statesman, and the Nestor of Parliamentary tradition, was the first to bring the most difficult and delicate questions of foreign policy to the rude but decisive test of the mass meeting, and transferred the motive force of the British State from Parliament to the platform.

That is a brief enumeration of some of the measures with which his name will ever be associated.

V.—HIS PLACE IN HISTORY.

A NOBLEMAN, a scholar, and a great personal friend of Mr. Gladstone wrote in 1887 the following comparative study of his place in history:—

Among the great English statesmen whose figures will loom large through the dusk of departed centuries William Ewart Gladstone will occupy a leading place. Chatham could inspire a nation with his energy, but compared with Gladstone he was poorly furnished both with knowledge and ideas. Fox, who probably most resembles him as a debater, had never an opportunity of proving in office whether he possessed any talents for administration. Pitt, as the strongest Minister who probably ever directed the destinies of his country, has left no monument of legislation by which he can be remembered. Canning was a Foreign Minister and nothing else. Sir Robert Peel, whom Mr. Gladstone recognises as his master, although an estimable administrator, a useful debater, and a competent tactician, never showed any trace of the divine spark of genius which reveals itself at every turn in Mr. Gladstone's character. It would, perhaps, be too much to say that posterity will regard him as uniting the highest merits of all his predecessors without their drawbacks. But he alone combines the eloquence of Fox, the experience of Chatham, the courage of Pitt, with the financial and administrative capacity of Sir Robert Peel, and combines all those qualities with a many-sided catholicity of mind to which none of the others could lay claim.

HIS FOREIGN CONTEMPORARIES.

If we extend the comparison to Mr. Gladstone's foreign contemporaries, his great position is hardly less conspicuous. Among the statesmen of our century it would be unfair to compare him with Bismarck, who belongs to a different order of ideas, and whose life has been passed outside the atmosphere of Constitutions and Parliaments. Cavour, Thiers, and Guizot are men with whom Mr. Gladstone can be compared either for the work which they accomplished, the speeches which they made, or for width and subtlety of mind, but none of them, not even excepting Cavour, will figure so prominently in the history of our times. More than any single Englishman Mr. Gladstone's influence has been operative in Europe. It was he whose fateful word brought down the avalanche of the revolution upon the decrepit Bourbons of Italy. It was the lightning of his speech which dealt the deathblow to Turkish dominion in the Balkan Peninsula, and it was his action which, equally in matters of arbitration, of the European Concert, and of foreign policy generally, first familiarised the mind of mankind with the conception of statesmanship based on moral principle as opposed to the mere expediencies of self-interest.

A LINK BETWEEN TWO ERAS.

Commanding as is Mr. Gladstone's position among English and foreign statesmen for the quality of his work, it is no less remarkable for the length of his public life and the wide range of his public action. Full of energy as an octogenarian, he was already in the thick of the fight when most of those who read these lines were in their cradles. His career bridges the gulf which would otherwise yawn between the Oxford of Manning and Newman and Liddon, and the democracy which Mr. Chamberlain himself now finds too advanced. He is the link between the old order and the new, standing, as it were, between the living and the dead—the living democracy of the future, and the dying castes and hierarchies of the past. A buoyant confidence in the progressive development of the destinies of mankind is so rarely combined with a reverent and grateful appreciation of the traditions and institutions of the past that this alone will suffice to distinguish Mr. Gladstone in the great muster-roll of English statesmen.

Some years ago the Rev. Canon MacColl, in the course of conversation with a distinguished public man of moderate Conservative opinions, remarked that if he had to write a history of British statesmen he would put Burke first and Gladstone second. "Would you?" said his friend; "I would put Gladstone first and Burke second. You are right in bracketing them. They have more in common than any other two statesmen that can be named. They are alike in their hold of first principles, in the philosophic and theological vein which runs through their politics, in the passion and fervour of their advocacy, in the range and variety of their knowledge, in the genuine consistency which underlies all superficial inconsistencies. But Gladstone is superior to Burke as an orator and debater. He is equally at home and equally effective in addressing the House of Commons, an academic assembly, a religious meeting, or an ignorant multitude. Burke's speeches are splendid to read, but the finest of them all—that on American taxation—emptied the House of Commons. And who can imagine Gladstone breaking down in addressing a crowd of undergraduates, as Burke did in his rectorial address to the students of Glasgow University? Gladstone is also superior to Burke in his large grasp of principles, combined with extraordinary skill in the management of details. Burke could not have kept up the attention and interest of the House of Commons for hours as he led them through a wilderness of financial figures."

No British Minister since Canning, said the Rev. Canon MacColl, has left such wide and lasting influence on foreign affairs as Mr. Gladstone has done. There is not an Italian who does not regard him, next to Cavour, as the most potent factor in the unification of Italy. It happened to a British traveller in Rome in the spring of 1874 to breakfast with a Roman Cardinal and dine with some Italian statesmen (Minghetti was then Premier) on the same day. "We rejoice," said the Cardinal, "at Mr. Gladstone's downfall. Next to Cavour, if next, he is the founder of the Italian kingdom. His pamphlet, more than any other cause, destroyed the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and opened the floodgates of the revolution which has robbed the Pope of his patrimony and temporal power." "We grieve," said an Italian Minister in the evening, "over Mr. Gladstone's expulsion from office; for next to Cavour we are indebted to him for the liberation of Italy." In Greece, too, and in Roumania, Bulgaria, and the European provinces of Turkey, it is Mr. Gladstone's policy that has prevailed. And, curiously enough, it was as a supporter of Mr. Gladstone that Lord Salisbury made his first important speech on foreign policy. The occasion was Mr. Gladstone's motion (in 1858) in favour of the union of the Roumanian Principalities. Lord Palmerston and Mr. Disraeli joined their forces against him, arguing that a united Roumania would inevitably become a Russian province. "If you want a bulwark against

Gladstone,
and Burke.

His good
work in Italy
and the East.

despotism," said Mr. Gladstone in reply, "there is no rampart like the breasts of free men." The sentiment was ridiculed at the time by the Palmerstonian school of foreign policy. Who ridicules it now?

A curious
Judgment.

We have all grown so accustomed to regard Mr. Gladstone as the "Past Master" in the art of rousing the populace and awakening the enthusiasm of the masses, that it requires an effort of memory to recall the fact that five-and-twenty years ago shrewd observers were inclined to doubt Mr. Gladstone's ability to take a first place in English politics, owing to his alleged lack of the very qualities which afterwards pre-eminently distinguished him. It is said of Sir James Stephen that he one day remarked to Lord Blatchford, at a time when Mr. Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Palmerston's Government, that "Gladstone would never be able to fill the place of his chief, inasmuch as he was deficient in that pugnacity which is necessary to rouse popular enthusiasm." This, however, is but characteristic of much else. The Dictator Gladstone of our time was an altogether different person from the financial Gladstone who made marvellous budgets twenty or thirty years ago. It was not until 1866, after his famous declaration about the franchise and our own flesh and blood, that he began to develop those gifts which subsequently made him supreme ruler of the empire.

Mr. Glad-
stone's mag-
nanimity.

It has always been the rule among our public men—long may it last!—to exclude political antagonism from the sphere of private life. Nobody was more ready than Mr. Gladstone to defend in private a political opponent with whom he might have been a few hours before in hot conflict. He always maintained, for example, that Lord Beaconsfield was a man devoid of personal animosities, and he often in private expressed his admiration for Beaconsfield's devotion to his wife, his loyalty to his race, and "his splendid parliamentary pluck." The moment he heard of his great rival's death he telegraphed to Lord Rowton an offer of a public funeral. Once when Lord Salisbury was somewhat violently attacked in his presence, Mr. Gladstone said, "I do not believe that Salisbury is at all governed by political ambition. I believe him to be perfectly honest, and I can never think very unkindly of him since the day I first saw him, a bright boy in red petticoats, playing with his mother."

His Church
patronage.

There was probably never so laboriously conscientious a distributor of ecclesiastical Crown patronage as Mr. Gladstone. In his ecclesiastical appointments he never took politics into consideration. A conspicuous instance of this may be mentioned. When it was rumoured that he intended to recommend the late Dr. Benson for the vacant See of Canterbury, a political supporter called to remonstrate with him. Mr. Gladstone begged to know the ground of his objection. "The Bishop of Truro is a strong Tory,"

was the answer; "but that is not all. He has joined Mr. Raikes' election committee at Cambridge; and it was only last week that Raikes made a violent personal attack upon yourself." "Do you know," replied Mr. Gladstone, "that you have just supplied me with a strong argument in Dr. Benson's favour? for if he had been a worldly man or a self-seeker, he would not have done anything so imprudent."

Although he sympathised more or less with the Nonconformists, who were struggling against the application of university tests and other disabilities, it was not until 1876 that he really discovered the true civic value of the English Nonconformists. The way in which the Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, and Unitarians rallied to the standard raised in the cause of the Bulgarian nationality effected a great change in the attitude of his mind in relation to his Dissenting fellow-countrymen. He entertained the leading Nonconformist ministers at breakfast, and the fidelity and devotion of Nonconformists generally to the Bulgarian cause left on his mind an impression which was only deepened with the lapse of time. The extent to which this influenced him may be gathered from the reply which he made to Dr. Dollinger whilst that learned divine was discussing with him the question of Church and State. Dr. Dollinger was expressing his surprise that Mr. Gladstone could possibly coquet in any way with the party that demanded the severance of Church and State in either Wales or Scotland. It was to him quite incomprehensible that a statesman who held so profoundly the idea of the importance of religion could make his own a cause whose avowed object was to cut asunder the Church from the State. Mr. Gladstone listened attentively to Dr. Dollinger's remarks, and then, in an absent kind of way, said, "But you forget how nobly the Nonconformists supported me at the time of the Eastern Question." The blank look of amazement on Dr. Dollinger's face showed the wide difference between the standpoint of the politician and the ecclesiastic.

Mr. Gladstone never displayed more respect for the Nonconformists than when in deference to their earnest representation he risked the great split in the Home Rule ranks that followed his repudiation of Mr. Parnell. Mr. Gladstone's action in that affair is too recent to need recapitulation here. Mr. Gladstone never made the slightest pretence about the matter. If the Nonconformists had been as passive as were the Churchmen, the famous letter about the Irish leadership would never have been written. He merely acted, as he himself stated, as the registrar of the moral temperature which made Mr. Parnell impossible. He knew the men who are the Ironsides of his party too well not to understand that if he had remained silent the English Home Rulers would have practically ceased to exist. He saw the need, and rose to the occasion. Mr. Gladstone was a practical statesman, and with sure instinct divined the inevitable.

A Nonconformist idol.

His respect for the Nonconformist conscience.



Photograph by Valentine and Sons.]

MRS. GLADSTONE.

VI.—SOME GLADSTONIANA.

MR. GLADSTONE was one of the most unwearying of workers. Whether at work or at play he was always on the go. The coil of that tremendous energy never seemed to run down. He was always doing something or other, and even when he was talking he was acting, using every muscle of the body to express and emphasise his ideas. His faculty of order.

Mr. Gladstone was singularly free from one great defect of his qualities. Most men who possess the keenness of intellect and the activity of mind which distinguished him would have so many irons in the fire that they would be perpetually in confusion. The instinct of order is easily crushed beneath the enormous multiplicity of ever-increasing interests. To the man who has only one or two things to think about there is no difficulty in being orderly and methodical, but when a person is thinking about everything, and hardly an hour passes that does not supply fresh food for reflection, or utter a clamorous demand for activity, then, indeed, the instinct of order needs to be very strongly developed if everything is not to fall into inextricable confusion. With Mr. Gladstone the principle of order was sufficiently strong to hold its own against the inrush of all the teeming ideas and unending duties which crowded upon him from every quarter. No person was more neat and methodical, and throughout the whole of his ministerial career he always left his papers and his Department in apple-pie order. It was the same thing in his private affairs. He undertook the management of the Glynne estate, which had fallen into considerable confusion—his father-in-law not having been in any sense a man of business—and soon reduced that chaos to order. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in every department of State in which he had anything to do, he left behind him a tradition for order, simplicity, and regularity.

Mrs. Gladstone, although in many respects an ideal wife, was never able to approach her husband in the methodical and business-like arrangement of her affairs. Shortly after their wedding the story runs that Mr. Gladstone seriously took in hand the tuition of his handsome young wife in bookkeeping, and Mrs. Gladstone applied herself with diligence to the unwelcome task. Some time after she came down in triumph to her husband to display her domestic accounts and her correspondence, all docketed in a fashion which she supposed would excite the admiration of her husband. Mr. Gladstone cast his eye over the results of his wife's labour, and exclaimed in despair, "You have done them all wrong from beginning to end!" His wife, however, has been so invaluable a helpmeet in other ways that it seems somewhat invidious to recall that little incident. She had other work to do, and she wisely left the accounts to her husband and his private secretaries. Not shared by his wife.

Mr. Gladstone reduced to perfection the science of getting a His private secretaries.

maximum of work out of his private secretaries. When Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone kept three private secretaries constantly going, and the whole business of the office went with the precision and regularity of a machine. The two chief features of Mr. Gladstone's system were—first, that everything passed through Downing Street, and that all papers were kept there; and, secondly, that his chief secretary was informed of everything that was going. The first essential of a private secretary is to have plenty of pigeon-holes, and Mr. Gladstone used to keep six nests of pigeon-holes constantly in use. One, for instance, was set apart for all letters relating to the Church and to questions of preferment, a matter which gave Mr. Gladstone an infinitely greater amount of trouble than any one outside the inner circle could conceive. Four of the other nests were appropriated to special subjects, while the sixth was set aside as a kind of general rubbish-heap into which all letters of a paltry description were summarily consigned.

Mr. Gladstone's letters.

All Mr. Gladstone's own letters were copied. If Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter from the House of Commons to Lord Granville in the House of Lords, it would be sent round to Downing Street before it was delivered, and where it would be copied, so that Mr. Gladstone's biographers will find several volumes of his correspondence carefully copied out in a legible hand in strict chronological order, and the whole carefully indexed. His secretaries' letters were seldom copied, the only record kept of such letters being Mr. Gladstone's memorandum of instructions on the docket. Rubbishy letters were taken to him once a week by the secretary with an endorsement showing how they had been answered. By this means Mr. Gladstone was able to go through hundreds of letters in a quarter of an hour. In addition to the six nests of pigeon-holes which were kept going from day to day there were series of historical pigeon-holes which were fed from the others by a system of periodical weedings, but so carefully was the system elaborated that Mr. Gladstone could at any moment lay his hand on any paper that had come before him at any time since first he entered office. Therein Mr. Gladstone differed very much from Mr. W. E. Forster, whose papers were often in confusion, and who would have been hopelessly involved in a maze of difficulties if he had ever attempted to get through one half the work which Mr. Gladstone performed with hardly an effort.

A terrible memory.

All the elaborate apparatus of pigeon-holes would have been useless had it not been combined with a phenomenally retentive memory. Mr. Gladstone not only remembered everything, but also knew where every fact could be verified. The whole of his facts were carefully tabulated and drawn up ready for instant mobilization, and although he had forgotten probably more than all his colleagues had ever learned, he still possessed a store of accurate and detailed information concerning almost every conceivable subject to which

none of them could lay claim. It was this terrible memory of his, and not any overbearing imperiousness of manner, which made him so absolute in his own Cabinet. Woe be to the luckless Minister who in Cabinet ventured to suggest to Mr. Gladstone that Sir Robert Peel or any one else had laid down a precedent which did not fit with the course which Mr. Gladstone was bent upon adopting. In his blindest tones Mr. Gladstone would remark that he thought his colleague was slightly mistaken, inasmuch as he remembered discussing the very matter with Sir Robert Peel; then he would illustrate the discussion by some little incident which showed the precedent invoked to have had an altogether different meaning to that attached to it. If his colleague still persisted, Mr. Gladstone would pencil a note to his private secretary, asking him to produce at once a written memorandum of the conversation in question which he would find in such and such a pigeon-hole of such and such a year, and in five minutes the memorandum would be to hand, completely bearing out in every particular Mr. Gladstone's version of the case, and utterly discomfiting the Minister who had ventured to contend with "the man with the terrible memory." One such experience was sufficient to fill his colleagues with an awe which they were unable to shake off. Mr. Chamberlain was not a timid man, and he stood to his guns fairly well in his first Cabinet; but he could never shake off the dread with which Mr. Gladstone's eagle eye and superhuman memory inspired all those who ventured to cross swords with him in debate.

No one believed more than Mr. Gladstone in taking care of the odds and ends and fringes of time. The amount of correspondence that he got through in the odd fragments of leisure which would otherwise have passed unutilised exceeded the total correspondence of most of his contemporaries. Lord Granville's correspondence, for instance, used to be comfortably got through by his private secretary in a single hour. Mr. Gladstone did a great deal of his own correspondence, and his autograph is probably more familiar than is that of any English statesman. He did a great deal to popularise the post-card, for no one could appreciate more than he the advantage of that economiser of time and abbreviator of formality. The little pad on which he could be seen writing on his knee during his term of office in the House of Commons, enabled him to work off a mass of correspondence, which most men in his position would have regarded as wholly impossible.

An economiser
of moments.

Another enormous advantage which Mr. Gladstone possessed for the despatch of business was that he was capable of entirely changing the current of thought. Nothing preoccupied him longer than he chose to allow it to preoccupy him. His head seemed to be built in water-tight compartments, and after tiring the lobe of the brain which dealt with Ireland, he would turn off the switch for Irish affairs and plunge headlong into ecclesiasticism or ceramics or archæology

Mental
shunting.

or any other subject in which he might at the moment be interested. "There are always so many interesting things," he said long ago, "with which to occupy your mind; the difficulty is only in making a choice." But whatever the subject was on which he was engaged, he devoted himself to it thoroughly, nor did any spectre of the preceding subject divert his attention from that in which he was actually engaged. Whatever he did he did with his might, and did it with such concentration as to leave no room for thinking about anything else.

Why he
felled trees.

But think about something he must, for a mind so active would never doze off into lethargy excepting when he was asleep, and it



Photograph by Poulton and Son, of Lee.]

MR. GLADSTONE AS A FELLER OF TREES.

was this necessity for finding some means of gaining complete mental rest which led him to cultivate the felling of timber. In all other modes of exercise there was room for thinking; cricket, football, riding, driving—in almost all of these there are spells during which the mind can forget the immediate object and revert to the subject from which it is necessary to have a complete change. In chopping down a tree you have not time to think of anything excepting where your next stroke will fall. The whole attention is centred

upon the blows of the axe ; and as the chips were flying this way and that Mr. Gladstone was as profoundly absorbed in laying the axe at the proper angle at the right cleft of the trunk as ever he was in replying to the leader of the Opposition in the course of a critical debate.

Finally, Mr. Gladstone possessed the enormous gift of being able to sleep. All his life long he has been a sound sleeper. It used to be said that he had a faculty which was possessed by Napoleon Buonaparte of commanding sleep at will, and, what was still rarer, of waking up instantly in full possession of every faculty. Some people can go to sleep soon, but they take some time to awake. Mr. Gladstone, it used to be said, was capable of sitting down in a chair, covering his face with a handkerchief, and going to sleep in thirty seconds ; and after sleeping for thirty minutes or an hour, as the case might be, waking up as bright as ever, all drowsiness disappearing the moment he opened his eyes. During all Mr. Gladstone's career he never lost his sleep, excepting once, and that was during the troubles that arose about Egypt and General Gordon. Then he slept badly, and for the first time it was feared that he would not be able to maintain the burden of office. He never suffered himself to be cheated of sleep. "In the most exciting political crisis," he once told a visitor, "I dismiss current matters entirely from my mind when I go to bed, and will not think of them till I get up in the morning. I told Bright this, and he said, 'That's all very well for you, but my way is exactly the reverse. I think over all my speeches in bed.'" Seven hours' sleep was Mr. Gladstone's fixed allowance, "and," he added with a smile, "I should like to have eight. I hate getting up in the morning, and I hate it the same every morning. But one can do everything by habit, and when I have had my seven hours' sleep my habit is to get up."

His capacity
for sleep.

The late Sir Andrew Clark, who was his physician for years, said that he had no more docile patient than Mr. Gladstone. The moment he was really laid up he went to bed, and remained there until he recovered. He was a great believer in the virtue of lying in bed when you are ill. You keep yourself at an equable temperature and avoid the worries and drudgery of everyday life, and being in bed is a perfectly good pretext for avoiding the visits of the multitude of people whose room is better than their company. Mr. Gladstone enjoyed singularly good health from his youth upwards. Like Mrs. Gladstone, he hardly had a day's illness since he married. He lost less time from ill-health than almost any prominent politician. Mr. Gladstone was, in fact, a kind of steam-engine on two legs, with heart of fire and lungs of steel, pursuing his unhasting and unresting way at a pace which left all other men far behind.

In health.

Mr. Gladstone usually had three books in reading at the same time, and changed from one to the other when his mind reached the limit of absorption. This was a necessary corrective to the tendency

Method of
reading.

to think only of one thing at one time, which sometimes in politics led him to neglect that all-round survey of the situation indispensable to a Prime Minister. He complained in later years sometimes that his memory was no longer quite so good as it used to be, but, although that was true, it was still twice as good as anybody else's, for Mr. Gladstone had an extraordinary faculty of not only remembering those things he ought to remember, but of forgetting those things it was useless for him to remember. His mind was thus unencumbered with any unnecessary top-hammer, and he could always, so to speak, lay his hand upon anything the moment he wanted it. This retentive memory was no doubt born with him, but it was largely developed by the constant habit of taking pains. When he read a book he did so pencil in hand, marking off on the margin those passages which he wished to remember, querying those about which he was in doubt, and putting a cross opposite those which he disputed. At the end of a volume he constructed a kind of index of his own, which enabled him to refer to those things he wished to remember in the book.

As a talker.

He was probably the best talker of his time. His astonishing vivacity made him one of the most lively and interesting of companions, although sometimes his faculty for being interested in anything disappointed those who met at his table; for his mind was very eager, and centred itself upon the most trivial as upon the gravest object of human interest. At a breakfast at Downing Street some years ago, M. Chevallier, the French economist, with M. de Laveleye, and others, were invited to meet Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. The conversation, by some unlucky twist, happened to turn upon chiropody. Mr. Bright is said to have started it by remarking that the charges of chiropodists were excessive. Mr. Gladstone accordingly joined in, and to the utter bewilderment of the foreign guests the whole of the conversation at that breakfast was devoted to a vehement discussion on the extraction of corns and the prices charged for the operation. M. Chevallier pricked up his ears when he first heard "corns," thinking he was about to hear some reflections as to the effect of the corn laws on agriculture, but the hope vanished as soon as it was raised: chiropody and chiropody alone reigned supreme. The distinguished guests left, greatly marvelling at the kind of conversation to which they had been invited. On another occasion, on the eve of Lord Wolseley's departure for Egypt, Mr. Gladstone mortified his guests, who included Lord Wolseley, by talking obstinately about nothing but the best binding for books.

A singer.

Although Mr. Gladstone was pre-eminently a talker in society, yet he did not disdain the other arts by which people who dine out contrive to spend the time. In his younger days he used to be quite noted for singing either solos or part-songs, and even down to his eightieth year the musical bass of his voice was often heard to great

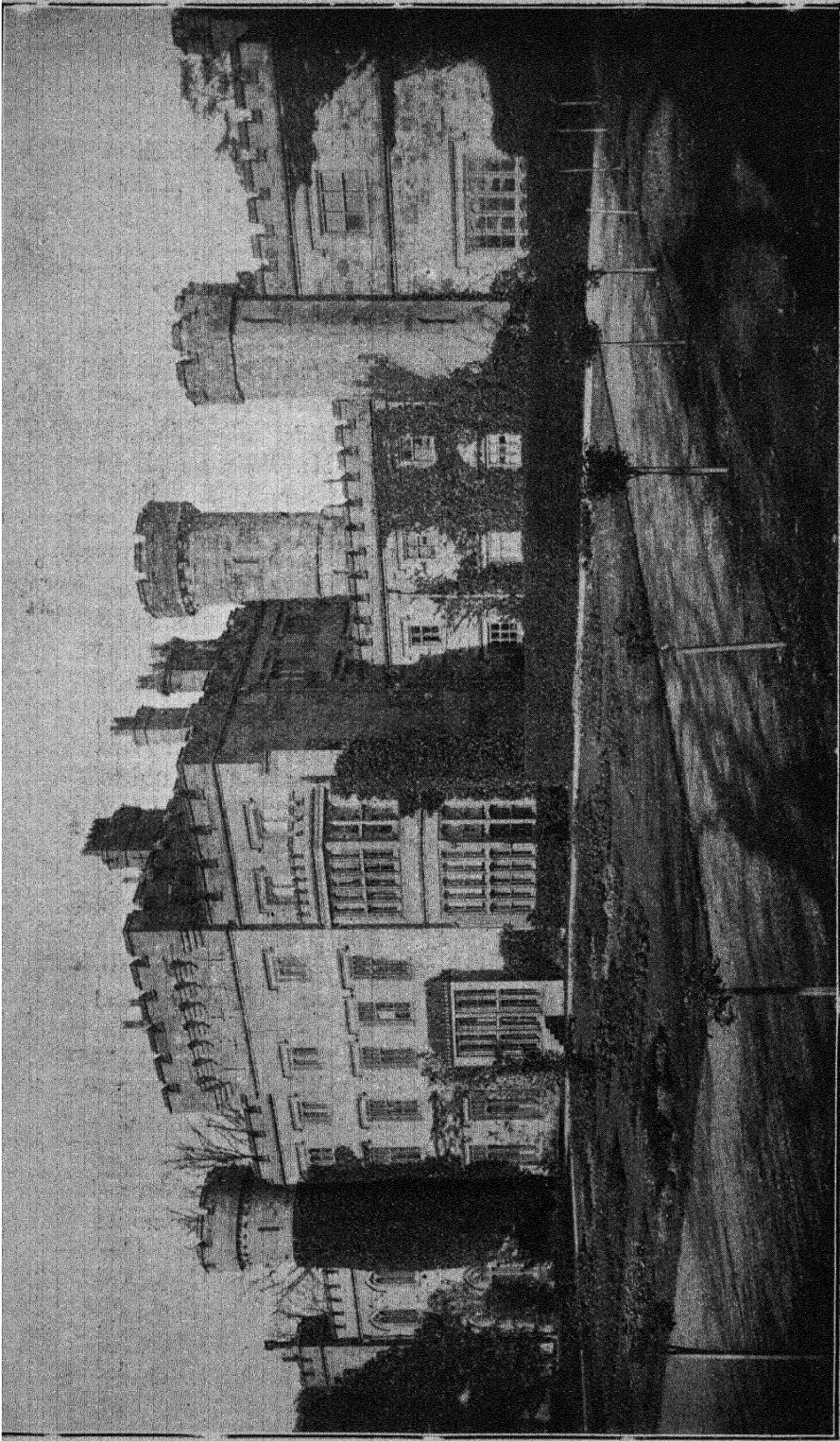
advantage in family worship at Hawarden on Sunday nights. There were legends of the wonderful effect with which he was wont to render a favourite Scottish song, and irreverent gossips have even declared that on one occasion Mr. Gladstone brought down the drawing-room by the vivacity and rollicking spirit with which he rendered the well-known "Camptown Races" with its familiar refrain :—

Gwine to ride all night;
 Gwine to ride all day;
 I bet my money on the bob-tailed nag,
 And somebody bet on the bay.
 O doo-dah-dey.

His high spirits used to break out at every moment, and he would rejoice to play a comedy part on his own or his son's lawn. It would be incorrect to say that on the occasion of popular celebrations, of local fancy fairs, and cottage gardening shows, Mr. Gladstone played down to the level of his audience. On the contrary, he exhibited just sufficient sympathy to raise them to enthusiasm and no more.

Of Mr. Gladstone's colleague, Mr. Morley, it may be said that he has no amusements whatever; he neither boats, nor rides, nor cuts down trees, nor, as one voracious chronicler asserted, does he spend his leisure time in catching butterflies. He indulges in none of the ordinary dissipations by which the statesman and the man of letters can unbend his bow. Mr. Gladstone, as might have been expected, was more catholic in his tastes; but, except for wood-cutting and pedestrianism, he could hardly be said to be much of an athlete. When at Eton he spent more time on the river than any other boy. He played cricket and other games, but he never threw himself into them with that passion which is necessary for success, although one could imagine Mr. Gladstone becoming the champion cricketer of England if he had given his mind to it. But in out-of-door sports he preferred Shanks's pony to any other means—excepting the cutting down of trees—of amusing himself. He was a great pedestrian, and was able to distance almost any ordinary walker, even when in his eighty-third year. Mrs. Gladstone was also a good pedestrian, and in 1892 she and her husband amused themselves one afternoon by ascending a hill some 3,000 feet above the sea-level without appearing to feel the exertion arduous. At indoor games Mr. Gladstone used to enjoy a rubber at whist, but towards the end he was more devoted to backgammon, a game which he played with the same concentration of energy and attention that he devoted to the preparation of a Budget or the course of a parliamentary debate. He occasionally played at draughts, but was a very bad hand at the chequers. Constitutionally full of "dash" and "go," Mr. Gladstone was, like Mr. Bright, somewhat deficient in that sporting instinct supposed to be inherent in the Briton, and, if induced to be present at a fox-hunt, would invariably sympathise with the fox.

His out-of-door amusements.



Photograph by Valentine and Soms.]

HAWARDEN CASTLE.

VII.—MR. GLADSTONE AT EIGHTY-SEVEN.*

As the westering sun sinks to its setting, a white-haired old man comes out from his library and seats himself on the stone steps that lead from the Castle front to the lawn. He carries a book in his hand, in which, as soon as he has seated himself, he is completely absorbed. The old man is Mr. Gladstone; the book which he is studying is one of the innumerable volumes which he is devouring in the prosecution of the study to which he has devoted his closing years; and he seats himself on the steps in order that his impaired eyesight may catch and utilise the last rays of the setting sun. The old statesman—scholar and student to the last—is now eighty-seven years of age, but his intellectual vigour is not abated, nor has he lost the sinewy grip with which he fastens upon the subjects to which he devotes his attention.

Hawarden Castle, the retreat of this political hermit, stands within half-an-hour's railway journey of the city of Liverpool. Mr. Gladstone was born in Liverpool when the century was young, long before the first steamer had crossed the Atlantic, and when not even the most imaginative of men had ventured to predict the wonders of these latter days. Now he is standing, but not tottering, on the edge of the grave; and not even the most relentless of his political opponents fail to recognise the majesty of the spectacle which is presented by the unflinching enthusiasm of the most famous of English statesmen. But, as a recent visitor to Hawarden remarked, "Although Mr. Gladstone is Mr. Gladstone still when the eye flashes as of old in keen debate, or when you listen to the inexhaustible stream of his vivacious conversation, yet you are regretfully compelled to admit that it is but a temporary triumph of mind over matter, when, ten minutes later, you see him again in the corner of the pew in Hawarden Church, dimly visible in the subdued light of the chancel. It is indeed a very old man who sits there, with bent back and pale wrinkled face, holding his book close to his eyes, apparently unable to find or follow the text. A stray sunbeam, white as sunbeams usually are, falls upon him from behind; the ivory white of the bald majestic head gleams in the light, and the few silvery hairs round the base of the head form a striking contrast to the glittering gilt edges of the book he holds. The day is far spent, and you turn sadly from the contemplation of the sad quiet figure." Frail though he is, as indeed he may well be, weighed down as he is with the burden of fourscore years and

* Reprinted from *McClure's Magazine* of New York, 1896.

seven, still Mr. Gladstone is far and away the most potent personality in Great Britain. He has retired from politics, but, until death has closed that eager eye and stilled that eloquent tongue, nothing can diminish or impair his authority ; he must ever remain the first among us all.

In this old world old men reign. Notwithstanding Disraeli's brilliant passage in "Coningsby" as to the achievements of youth, democracy has certainly not diminished the advantages of age. A young sovereign like the Tsar or the Kaiser, or a young aristocrat like Lord Rosebery, starts in life with a pedestal sufficiently high to be seen by the mass of his contemporaries. But in a democracy, where all men start on a dead level, nothing but age, and the growth which years can bring, raises the individual high enough above his fellows to gain the recognition which enables him to exercise any very commanding or widespread influence. Hence the commanding personalities of our time have almost all been old men. Gambetta was an exception, for he was a product of a revolutionary volcano, and he had as his pedestal the great war in which France was submerged. Skobelev, another supreme personality, was practically unknown before the Russo-Turkish war ; he towered aloft like a shell flung heaven-high by a mortar, only to burst and disappear in the blackness of night. If we run over the roll-call of notables, the men who count, we shall find that they are in almost every case over sixty, and many of them are long past the period of threescore years and ten. Russia has a young Tsar, not yet thirty ; but the young Tsar was the puppet of Prince Lobanoff until the veteran diplomatist died. In Germany the young Kaiser is thirty-eight ; and his Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, who is the man at the helm, is seventy-eight. But neither the Kaiser nor his Chancellor counts for anything in the scale of personalities with the Iron ex-Chancellor, Prince Bismarck, who has nearly completed his eighty-second year, and who, although in retirement, still speaks with the most masterful voice of all German-speaking men. In Austria-Hungary the equilibrium of the empire-kingdom depends absolutely upon the life of Francis Joseph, who was sixty-six on his last birthday, and whose personality is the mainstay of the State in Austria and in Hungary. In Rome there is the Pope, who is eighty-seven, surrounded by a college of cardinals, an immense majority of whom are old men. In the Italian kingdom there is only one statesman whose name is known outside the peninsula,—and that is Signor Crispi, who is seventy-seven. In France they have no old men ; the nearest approach to a veteran was Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, who died not long ago at the age of ninety. But the very absence of old men in French politics illustrates the principle. In France there is no commanding personality, for all the politicians are comparatively young ; they have not had time to grow famous.

As it is in France and in Spain, so it is across the Atlantic. It is the old people who alone stand sufficiently conspicuous to be recognised. The same thing is largely true in literature and in science. It is the old men, whose reputations have been slowly built up year after year, who stand conspicuous before the world. In Russia, Count Tolstoi; in Britain, Carlyle, Tennyson, and Browning; in America, Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, and Emerson,—all illustrate the same thing. In England the old Queen upon the throne and the old statesman at Hawarden are far and away the most conspicuous and most influential personalities. In England, it is true, there is a group of young men coming on: Lord Rosebery, Mr. Morley, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Balfour; but they are all in the second flight: they have not yet attained a right to pre-eminent domain which age, and age alone, appears to be able to give.

This being so, the question of how to survive long enough to make a reputation and win a position becomes the most important question for a statesman in these democratic days. How has Mr. Gladstone solved this problem? I think it is possible that more people may be interested in discussing the secret of Mr. Gladstone's long life and unabated vigour than in the description of his political achievements; for politics interest few, whereas life interests all.

I will therefore linger a little to discuss, not his politics, but his science of life. What is Mr. Gladstone's secret? How is it that he has preserved unimpaired for eighty-seven years both his physical and mental powers? That he has done so is admitted, although the body is at last exhibiting somewhat of the infirmities of old age. Mr. Gladstone is still vigorous, alert, resourceful, capable of reading and writing for hours together, and also able on occasion to take long walks, although he is no longer able to play the woodman and fell the trees on his estate. We hear a great deal of the eight-hours day and the eight-hours movement; but Mr. Gladstone, well on to his ninetieth year, does ten hours' hard literary work every day; and when Mr. Gladstone works, he does work and no mistake. How has he contrived to do it? What is his secret? For if so be that we can discover it, it may mean years of life to many men who, although they have no desire to be great statesmen, do not wish to trouble the undertaker before their time.

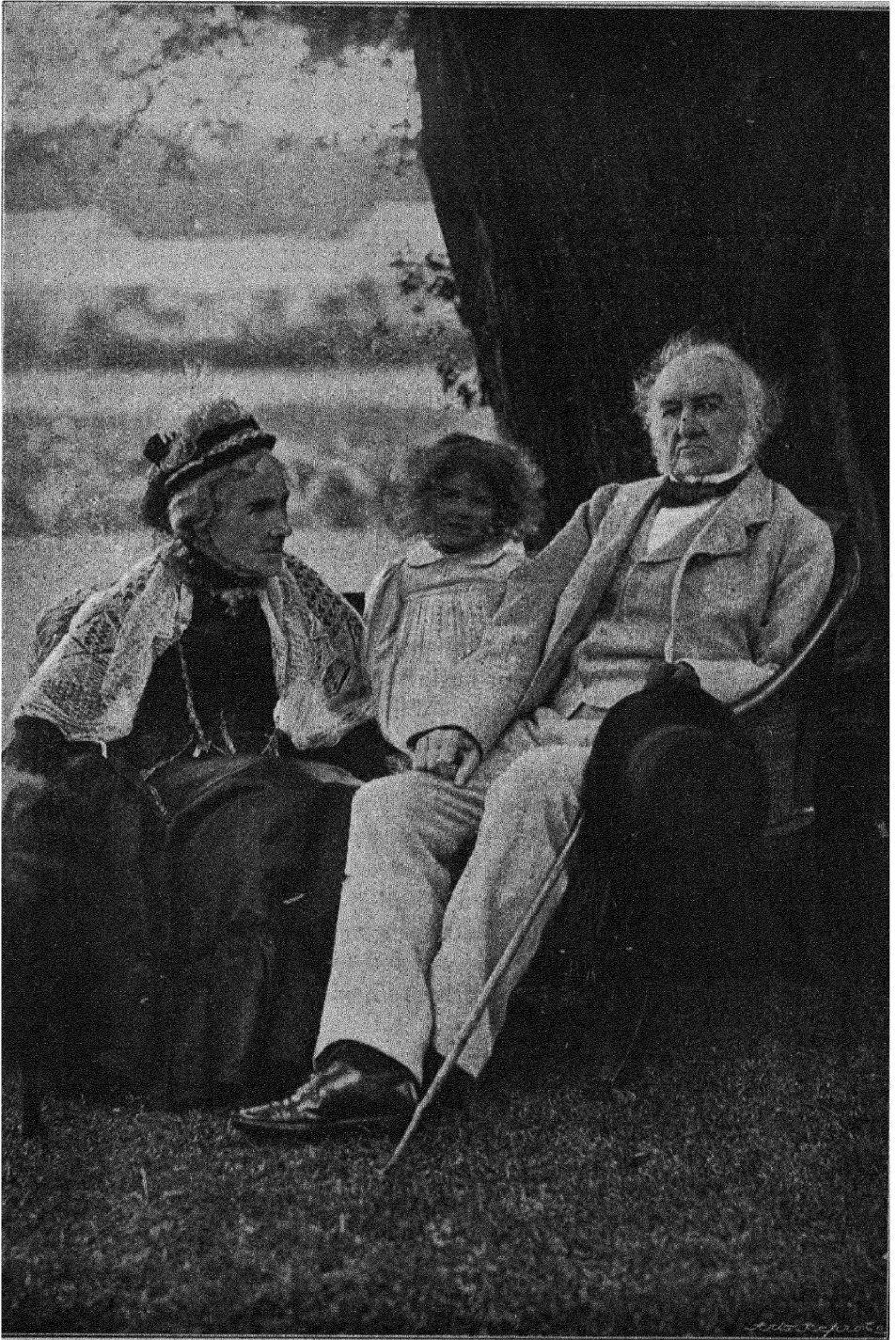
Mr. Gladstone started well. He was born of healthy stock, in comfortable circumstances, with a constitution of iron. He had enormous driving power and physical energy, the evidence of which may still be seen palpable to all men in the massive formation of the back of his head. From his parents he had every advantage of heredity and environment from his youth up. These things cannot be bespoken by any one, and it is well therefore, and it will be more profitable, to devote attention to the methods by which

Mr. Gladstone has been able to preserve and conserve the advantages with which he was early endowed. The first thing that forces itself upon our attention is the fact that Mr. Gladstone from his youth up has contrived, in some way or another, to appropriate for himself all the advantages which come from a sturdy and assured faith in the government of the universe. Looking at it altogether apart from the question of the truth or falsehood of religious belief, there is no doubt that, from a purely hygienic point of view, a man who feels that there is outside of him and above him a moral order, controlled by some being infinitely wiser than himself, has advantages, from the point of view of a life-insurance society, greatly superior to those possessed by a man who has no such consolation.

Mr. Gladstone has probably had his doubts, like most men, but they have been as waves to a strong swimmer which carry him onward to his goal. Mr. Gladstone is one of those men who are never so convinced of the truth of anything as when they are set to work to defend it against the arguments of its opponents, and Mr. Gladstone's faith has waxed all the stronger because, like the oak planted on a wind-swept hill, it has been compelled to drive its roots deeper in the soil because of the tempest which hurtles through its branches. Over the mantelpiece in Mr. Gladstone's bedroom there is emblazoned a text which explains a good deal of the tranquillity that has saved Mr. Gladstone from the nervous exhaustion which has carried off many other men. The text runs, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is set on Thee"

If Mr. Gladstone's simple but fervent religious faith is the first element in the secret of his continued and continuing vigour, the second place must be awarded to the happy influence of a fortunate marriage. If Mrs. Gladstone had been a cleverer woman she might have been less helpful, for some natures have such an overpowering individuality of their own, that what they seek in a companion is not a positive so much as a negative capacity. As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend; but Mr. Gladstone was not particularly in need of being sharpened,—he was in need of being rested. Therefore Mrs. Gladstone was not so much another sword-blade clashing with his as the scabbard of his own sword.

Sir Francis Doyle, who was best-man at Mr. Gladstone's wedding, wrote a poem addressed to Mrs. Gladstone, who before her marriage was known as the beautiful Miss Glynne, and in this poem he set before her the task which, to the best of her ability, she has performed. It was her duty, he said, "to soothe, in many a toil-worn hour, the noble heart which thou hast won." This she has performed admirably. But the poet went on to say, "Thou hast an office to perform, to be his answering spirit-bribe"; and herein it can hardly be said that realisation has been so complete, for



Photograph by Robinson and Thompson, Liverpool.

MR. AND MRS. GLADSTONE AND COROTHY DREW.

Mr. Gladstone has found no mate to his intellect among his women-kind. Mrs. Gladstone was not his equal in intellect, nor ever aspired to be more than a sympathetic listener to his political discourses. She was a capital house-mother, faithful and attentive ; an admirable nurse, who studied her husband as a doctor studies his patient ; for all his physical and social needs she was all that could be desired ; but it ended there.

Be thou a balmy breeze to him,
A fountain singing at his side ;
His star whose light is never dim,
A pole star through the waste to guide,

was the exhortation of her husband's best-man. "Balmy breeze" she was, no doubt, and "singing fountain" too ; but it was not her rôle to be a pole star to a great career, nor did she ever aspire to be a pillar of cloud by day or a pillar of fire by night to guide the footsteps of her wandering lord across the wilderness of sin. It was one of the chief qualities of Mrs. Gladstone that she recognised her limitations, and never attempted to interfere with matters that were beyond her capacity. She worshipped her husband with an adoration which has increased with years ; this devotion has stood all the rough and cruel tests that have been imposed upon it by the preoccupation of public business and the other incidents in the life of a Prime Minister. When even so domestic a man as Mr. Gladstone is entrusted with the management of the affairs of a great empire, it is not to be wondered at that the convenience and wishes of the household take a back seat. A story is told of Mrs. Gladstone which, though surely an exaggeration, conveys a truth. It is that during the season when Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister, she used to regard it as a treat to be invited to a friend's house to meet her husband. She always then tried to get seated near him, because, she said, "it is thus at least possible for me to have some conversation with my husband ; otherwise I see nothing of him."

This absolute subservience to her husband would have been very detrimental to the character of many men, and there are some who believe that Mr. Gladstone has been somewhat spoiled by his women-folk. Mrs. Gladstone, however, rightly or wrongly, held the view that it was the wife's duty to make life as "cushiony" as possible for her husband. She would display a world of patience and cunning diplomacy to keep any disagreeable thing out of his way, even to the extent of sitting down upon the *Times* for a whole evening if it should contain an article that was calculated to ruffle his equanimity. There are a multitude of little stories current concerning the way in which she eased off the pressure of the outside world, using no end of innocent domestic strategy in order to save him wear and tear and nervous strain. Neither has she ever been

known to have given him the slightest trouble on the score of jealousy. The Prime Minister—especially a Prime Minister like Mr. Gladstone, who is gallant and courteous to all women, and who has constantly found great stimulus to his vitality from the friendly intercourse of women of high and low degree and of all manner of moral status—might have found in the jealousy or resentment of his wife a formidable addition to the burdens of State; but Mrs. Gladstone always showed a smiling face. She has always had very good health and a self-satisfied temperament; she is also a good motherly woman, full of charity and philanthropy, with plenty of little interests of her own, with which she has solaced herself when the absorbing cares of State swept her husband temporarily out of her orbit.

Mr. Gladstone, although not a teetotaler, never emulates the exploits of some of his more bibulous predecessors. If he is not a teetotaler, he is at least a total abstainer from tobacco; he neither snuffs, chews, nor smokes either pipe, cigar, or cigarette. Nothing has induced him to yield to the seductions of the fragrant weed.

Another quality of his is the rare gift of concentration. The bump of concentration must, if there is anything in phrenology, be enormously developed. "Whatever the work may be he has in hand," said a recent visitor at Hawarden, "it takes hold of him so entirely that he has to be roused from it as most are roused from sleep." This enables him to be almost totally indifferent to his surroundings—a faculty simply invaluable to him when, as leader of the House of Commons, he had to sit for hours together listening to the monotonous drone of irrelevant debate. Whilst able to concentrate himself so absolutely upon the subject in hand as to be oblivious of all the world, he is capable with the utmost ease of varying his subjects. It has long been his habit to have three books in reading at the same time; and with all his strenuousness, Mr. Gladstone is well aware of the advantage of occasionally unstringing the bow. He reads novels with hearty gusto; and Miss Friederichs, in her charming little volume, "Mr. Gladstone in the Evening of His Days," mentions that when he was worn out with several hours steady continuous work at indexing Bishop Butler, he recovered the tone of his mind by regaling himself in the evening with "Robinson Crusoe" and "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments."

Another thing, which might perhaps be classified as merely another phase of the same faculty, but one which nevertheless has helped to prolong his vigour, is that he has sedulously eschewed the practice of promiscuous newspaper reading. Mr. Arthur Balfour has always made a point of never reading a newspaper at all unless he is compelled to do so—a rule which has certainly its advantages, but which could hardly be adopted by any one less audacious or less happily constituted than Mr. Balfour. He told me once that not



Photograph by Valenzinc and Smar.]

A GLADSTONIAN PICNIC.

only did it save a great deal of time to let your newspaper reading be done by other people, but it was so much more interesting to hear things at first-hand for yourself instead of taking them second-hand from newspaper reporters. Mr. Gladstone in the matter of newspaper reading stood midway between Mr. Balfour and Mr. Bright. Mr. Balfour read nothing; Mr. Bright read every word in a morning newspaper, devoting regularly two hours a day to its perusal. Mr. Gladstone usually reads one newspaper regularly. It used to be the *Pull Mall Gazette* before it changed hands, and latterly it has been the *Westminster Gazette*. The *Times* Mr. Gladstone has never read regularly. I remember his telling me in 1877 that he never looked at the *Times* for any other reason except to read the telegrams which Mr. W. J. Stillman, the *Times* correspondent in Montenegro, despatched as to the progress of the campaign against the Turk.

Another item that must be taken into account is the immense diversity of interests which Mr. Gladstone enjoys in life. He touches life at every side, with the exception of racing or gambling: and whenever he touches it, he thrills responsive to its touch: Merely to be Prime Minister—and Mr. Gladstone has three times been Prime Minister of the Queen—is of itself sufficient to provide topics of interest for any ordinary person for the rest of his life. But Mr. Gladstone was never able to devote more than a section of his time to politics; he has probably spent more time over Homer than he ever did over the question of parliamentary reform, and at all times his interest in theology outbalanced his interest in mundane affairs.

It is thoroughly characteristic that his favourite hobby at the present moment should be the institution of a theological library which he has founded in the immediate proximity of Hawarden, providing it with a hostel where students who desire to study the theological books may be boarded and lodged at a very moderate rate. St. Deiniol's Library contains on its shelves twenty thousand volumes, chiefly theological, which have been weeded from Mr. Gladstone's own library. It is the hobby of his old age, and no theme of conversation ever arouses the veteran so surely as an allusion to St. Deiniol's, which has the Rev. Harry Drew, his son-in-law, as its warden and librarian.

It is almost impossible to start any subject of conversation in which Mr. Gladstone cannot more than hold his own. Admirals in the navy have told me how amazed they have been when, seated next him at dinner, they have ventured to raise some question relating to the service. Mr. Gladstone, they said, always seemed to know more about it than they did—at least, whenever it was a question of statistics, even although the statistics related to the number of stokers in the fleet or the average height and weight of sailors in the navy.

Wide as are the interests of this life, Mr. Gladstone is not content therewith, and he is devoting his declining years to a restatement of his theory of the next life. The last postcard I had from him—and Mr. Gladstone always uses postcards—was to express the great interest he felt in reading some articles dealing with the results of psychical research published in *Borderland*, and promising to refer to the subject of spiritism when he came to revise his article on immortality.

Mr. Gladstone has always lived a country life when he could get the opportunity. Down at Hawarden, in the midst of the stately park which his wife inherited from her father, he has ever shown the keenest enjoyment of the pleasures of rural life. Not that he has devoted himself to practical agriculture. He is interested in the subject, no doubt, and has done what he could to raise the standard of farming in his own neighbourhood ; but his interest in agriculture was more that of the observer than of the expert. His exploits as a woodcutter have attained a world-wide notoriety ; and although it may be a mistake to imagine that he was always chopping down trees, nevertheless the fact that he could find an immense fascination in the joys of felling timber shows in what trim he must have kept his muscles, and how carefully he had nursed and developed his strength. He was always a very rapid walker, but now he seldom walks more than three or four miles a day.

Putting all these things together, they explain how it is that Mr. Gladstone, in the midst of the turmoil of party politics, has ever been able to preserve an equable and tranquil soul ; while his observance of the laws of health, regular exercise, and the continual variety of his interests have enabled him to keep his mind brightly furbished to the last.

The newspapers have often published particulars as to the way in which Mr. Gladstone spends his day. They are all more or less founded on fact, but Mr. Gladstone's days have varied so much with the years and with the events in which he was taking part, that no general rule can be laid down. The beginning and end of each day, however, he has always endeavoured to spend in the same way. At Hawarden, every morning, wet or dry, he attended early-morning service at eight o'clock, sometimes reading the lessons, if they were in need of assistance, but always being in his place, taking part in the devotions which precede the work of the day ; Miss Friederichs mentions a significant fact that no visitor to the Castle has ever been allowed to speak to Mr. Gladstone on his walk to church. He pounds along by himself, silent, thinking over many things. Not until the service is over and he is wending his way home does he open his lips. As the day begins with the public worship of God, so it closes with prayers in his own household. On Sunday no one is more punctual in attendance at evening service. It was noted at one time that when

he was in the thick of a Cabinet crisis he went to church no fewer than three times in one day, although he was Cabinet-making, and all the aspirants were on the tenterhooks of anxiety as to his decision. His reading of the service in the parish church at Hawarden was long one of the favourite attractions which led to the crowding of the church Sunday after Sunday. This was not done from any spirit of ostentation, but simply because the clergy needed assistance, and he was ready as usual to step in to fill a place where he might do good.

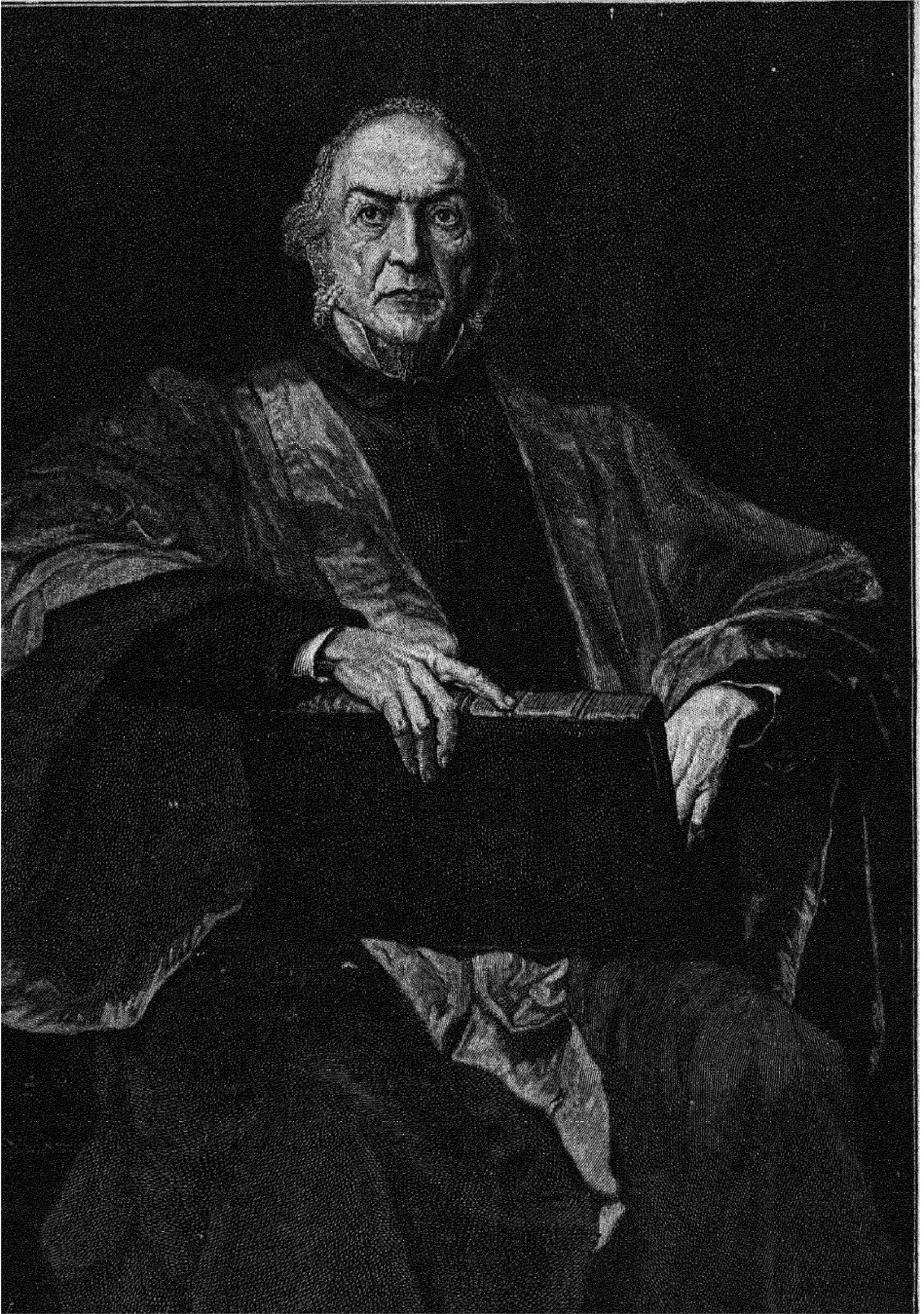
Nowadays, after spending two hours in bed reading and in preparation of the work of the day, he rises at ten, and proceeds to work in his library, where he attends either to his correspondence or literary work. His daughters save him as much as possible with his letters, which often pour in in floods; but a great deal of his correspondence he despatches with his own hand. Excepting when in office he never employs a secretary, answering his many letters by postcards if possible.

After a busy morning's work he lunches with his family, and then returns once more to his books. Mr. Gladstone is fond of tea, but in his speeches he has found the most useful pick-me-up a small mixture of sherry and egg, prepared by Mrs. Gladstone, who never relegates that duty to another. In the evening he dines, and after dinner usually reads light literature, unless guests are present with whom he wishes to talk, and when in the country retires early to bed.

Of course when in Parliament he could not order his life on the same regular tranquil lines, but, so far as he could, he did, by the adoption of the rule by which no opposed business was taken up after twelve o'clock.

Mr. Gladstone is punctual at meals, and is said to be able to dress for dinner in three minutes when in a hurry, and in five minutes when he is not pushed. No one knows better than he the importance of utilising every spare moment. If he is left alone for five minutes at a railway station or in a friend's house, he is sure to be able to produce pen, ink, and paper, or a postcard, and proceeds there and then to despatch his correspondence.

The immediate occasion which led Mr. Gladstone to leave office was, it is understood, not so much the failure of his eyesight, nor was it the gradual encroachment of deafness, which compels him, as it compelled Cardinal Manning in the last years of his life, to use his hand as an improvised ear-trumpet when anyone is speaking whose articulation is not very clear and distinct. The real thing which precipitated his retirement was his unconquerable reluctance to the increased naval expenditure which, in the opinion of his colleagues, was absolutely called for by the circumstances of the times. Mr. Gladstone has never been in sympathy with the expenditure in preparation for war. He is a born economist and a great lover of peace. It was under his



From the painting by W. B. Richmond, R.A.]

MR. GLADSTONE IN 1882.

administration of 1868 that the navy was steadily reduced in strength, until it seemed quite possible that instead of being able to cope successfully with any two naval Powers, which is the normal standard of Britain's requirements, it would be as much as it could do to cope with that of France alone.

Of course England had still more ships than France, but then she had to scatter them much more, owing to the immense area of the empire and the enormous multiplicity of duties devolved on her fleets.

It was with a very ill grace and a very heavy heart that Mr. Gladstone acquiesced in the extra naval vote of 1884, which was forced upon him by the publication of the articles on "The Truth about the Navy," which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. That was the turning-point in the reconstruction of the British navy, and Mr. Gladstone, against his will, may be regarded as the founder of the new navy, by which Britannia at present rules the waves.

Mr. Gladstone, while not a teetotler, is strongly in favour of something being done to cope with the ravages of intemperance. His own judgment is distinctly in favour of the adoption of some modification of the so-called Gothenburg System, by which the Municipality or the State becomes the sole distributor of intoxicants. In this he is in agreement with the Bishop of Chester, in whose diocese he lives, and with the Duke of Westminster, who is his near neighbour at Eaton Hall, and with Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Gladstone's views on temperance, however, have never been pressed with the vehemence and fervour with which he has approached other doctrines in the course of his long and eventful career. Once, and once only, he attempted to deal with the Licensing question. This was in 1870, when Lord Aberdare, then Mr. Bruce, introduced a Licensing Bill which would have had the result of enormously reducing the number of public-houses. Unfortunately, as is usual in such cases, it did not go far enough to please the temperance men, while it went much farther than the publicans would stand. The measure was dropped, and never again introduced.

And now I must leave these brief and imperfect notes of the most notable of all living Englishmen. The fact that such a man, whose whole life has been a protest against international wrongdoing—who has flouted and scorned the popular delusion that empires are strong in proportion as they are aggressive—has been three times Prime Minister of the Queen, and should now be regarded as a kind of supreme pontiff of Britain, is the best possible refutation of the popular delusion that John Bull is such a man as he is pictured by his foreign caricaturists.

It would be impossible to name any other country in the world in which the popular idol has been habitually and pointedly in opposition to the Jingo instincts of his countrymen; has stumped the country from end to end, denouncing what he considered the

infamies of the foreign policy of his Government; and, even when peace and war trembled in the balance, has not been ashamed to champion the cause of those whom he believed to be his country's enemies—even when the crowd mobbed him in the street, and smashed his windows as a gentle reminder of the unpopularity of his opinions. The fact that this is the case in England with Mr. Gladstone may well give pause to those who point at John Bull as if he were nothing but a buccaneer in topboots. And because it is so, and because England stands for much more than mere Imperial aggression, because there is in the heart of her common people a deep, underlying, instinctive moral sense, England is as great as she is to-day, and Mr. Gladstone is as great as he is in England.

VIII.—MY LAST INTERVIEW.

I HAVE had several conversations with Mr. Gladstone since the day when I first met him face to face in Madame Novikoff's *salon*. But only one of these was permitted expressly for purposes of publication. It was on the eve of the Dissolution of 1892 when I met Mr. Gladstone by appointment in his town house for a talk with a view to a character sketch in the *Review of Reviews*.

The previous evening he had been in the House pounding away with all his ancient vigour about the Mombasa Railway, but there was no trace of fatigue, nor did he seem to have aged much since I last met him on the eve of my departure for Rome. He was alert, vigorous, and full of his old fire and animation, confident as to the future, and not less full of complacency as to the past—with the customary and inevitable reserves and limitations.

I told him that I had been trying to make a diagram of his career in the shape of a gradually rising tide which submerged first one and then another peak, but that I had considerable difficulty in drawing the plan, for the church and finance had so many peaks. In some cases the dividing of the ways had been clearly traced, as, for instance, in the Irish Church and in Home Rule, but how could we mark the watersheds of different phases of thought through which he had passed?

“They are numberless,” he said, “and all differ one from the other according to the subject. It is inevitable that this should be so. But there is one great fact which, as I often say, is the key to all these changes. I was educated to regard Liberty as an evil; I have learned to regard it as a good. That is a formula which sufficiently explains all the changes of my political convictions. Excepting in that particular, I am not conscious of having changed much. I love antiquity, for instance, quite as much as I used to do. I have never been a lover of change, nor do I regard it as a good in itself; Liberty, however, is a good in itself, and the growing recognition of that is the key to all these changes of which you speak.”

The key to
his political
development.

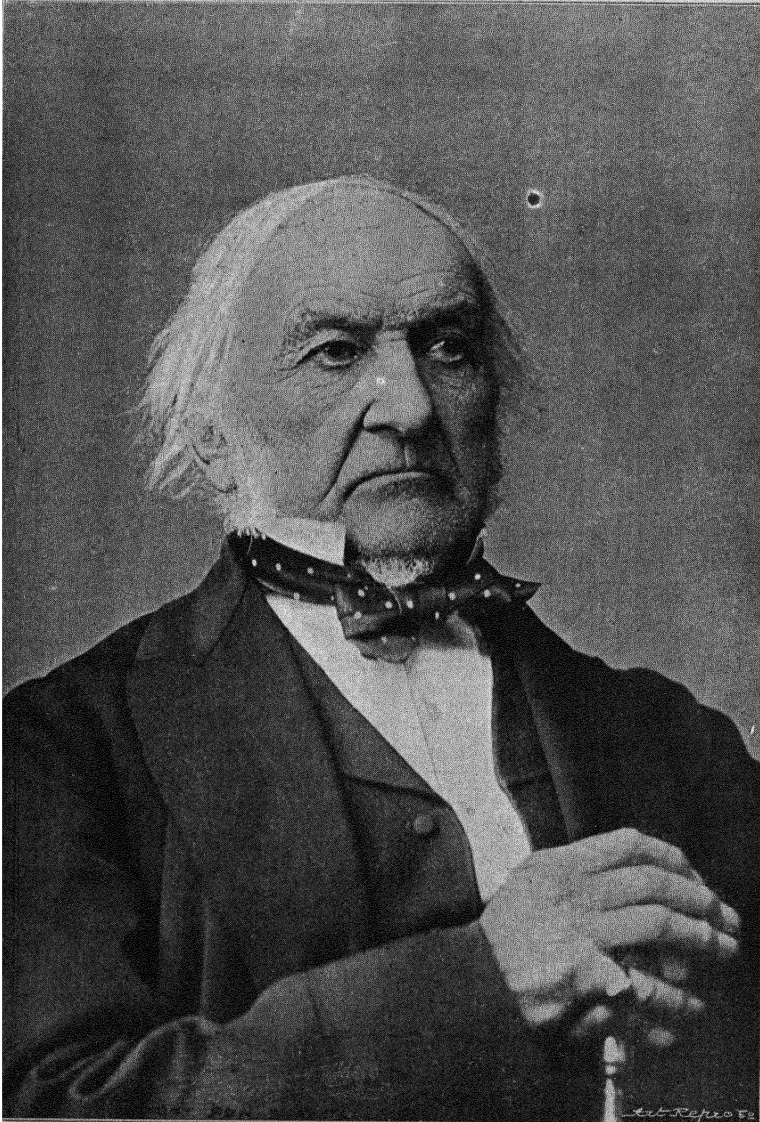
It is always most interesting to know what a veteran thinks of the net results of his life's campaign. As I write I recall conversations with Mr. Carlyle and Cardinal Manning, octogenarians like Mr. Gladstone, who looked at life from very different standpoints. The Cardinal was buoyed up by an inextinguishable faith in progress. "We are like passengers," he said, "upon one of the P. and O. steamers. We meet each other day by day on deck and see very little difference in our position or in the sea or the sky. But every day we are nearer our destined port. So it is with human society. We may not appear to be making much progress, but depend upon it we are ceaselessly forging ahead." Another deep-rooted faith of his was powerfully reinforced in the last years of his life by the work of the Salvation Army and its social scheme. When he finished reading "Darkest England," he told me he felt as if the far-off and distant vision of the Christianising of England upon which he had ever fed his heart in days of adversity and of gloom had come appreciably nearer, and with renewed confidence and more joyful faith he trod the rest of his mortal pilgrimage.

Progress?
the Cardinal.

Mr. Gladstone's views on the progress of the race were written out at length in the *Nineteenth Century*, when Tennyson published his second "Locksley Hall." But it is always most interesting to hear from the lips of the speaker what he thinks, and I asked Mr. Gladstone whether on the whole he was satisfied with the results of the reforming activity of the last sixty years. He replied:—

Progress?
Mr. Carlyle.

"In political affairs I think Progress has been almost wholly good. But I am not an optimist, and I am convinced that the duties of government will always be more or less imperfectly performed. As society becomes more complex the work of the Government will become more and more difficult. Still political progress has been good, and almost wholly good. In Free Trade, for instance, it has been entirely good. I look upon that with the most perfect complacency. They speak sometimes of the greed of competition, but the greed of competition is not to be compared with the greed of the monopolist. The greedy competitor at least shares his gains with the public; but the greed of the monopolist is the greed of the robber. But as I often tell my juniors, we older men had a comparatively easy time these last fifty years—a much easier time than they will have to go through. I am very glad sometimes to think that it will not be for me to face the problems which are coming on for solution. The explanation of this is that all the questions with which we have to deal were capable of being resolved into a very simple principle. If you look at it you will see that, with some exceptions, such as the Factory Act, and one or two other minor matters, the great work of the last half-century has been that of emancipation. We have been Emancipating, Emancipating—that is all. To emancipate is comparatively easy. It is simple to remove restrictions, to allow natural forces free play. Now



Photograph by F. Rowlands, Hawarden.]

MR. GLADSTONE: A CHARACTERISTIC PORTRAIT.

that that work has been almost completed, and we have to face the other problem of constructive legislation, we shall find it much more difficult."

As Mr. Gladstone uttered the words "Emancipating, Emancipating," there rose up before me the image of Mr. Carlyle as he sat in his long, grey, red-trimmed dressing-gown one bright wintry day in his study in Cheyne Row, at Chelsea, discoursing grimly upon the catastrophe towards which all mundane matters seemed fast hastening. He, too, had recognised that simple principle of Emancipation, and had resolved into it all the legislative achievements since the Reform Act of 1832. But I had better quote from Mr. Carlyle's own words, as he wrote them out in "Shooting Niagara: And After?" one of the wisest and most practically suggestive of all his political writings:—

Progress?
Mr. Gladstone.

All the millenniums I ever heard of heretofore were to be preceded by the chaining of the Devil for a thousand years—laying him up, tied neck and heels, and put beyond stirring as the preliminary. You, too, have been taking preliminary steps with more and more ardour, for a thirty years back, but they seem to be all in the opposite direction; a cutting asunder of straps and ties, wherever you might find them, pretty indiscriminate of choice in the matter; a general repeal of old regulations, fetters, and restrictions (restrictions on the Devil originally, I believe, for the most part, but now fallen slack and ineffectual), which had become unpleasant to many of you,—with loud shouting from the multitude as strap after strap was cut, "Glory, glory, another strap is gone!"—this, I think, has mainly been the sublime legislative industry of Parliament, since it became "Reform Parliament"; victoriously successful and thought sublime and beneficent by some. So that now hardly any limb of the Devil has a thrum or tatter of rope or leather left upon it. There needs almost superhuman heroism in you to "whip" a garrotter; no Fenian taken with the reddest hand is to be meddled with under penalties; hardly a murderer, never so detestable and hideous, but you find him "insane," and board him at the public expense—a very peculiar British pytaeum of these days! And in fact *the Devil* (he, verily, if you will consider the sense of the words) is likewise become an emancipated gentleman; lithe of limb, as in Adam and Eve's time, and scarcely a toe or a finger of him tied any more. And you, my astonishing friends, you are certainly getting into a millennium such as never was before—hardly even in the dreams of Bedlam.

I ventured to suggest to Mr. Carlyle that the repeal of archaic, obsolete laws, which nominally chained down a more or less phantasmagorical fiend, but left the real author of evil free course to roam abroad seeking whom he might devour, might be an indispensable preliminary to the chaining up of the Great Red Dragon; but the pessimist philosopher refused to be comforted. He was a true child of the Sagas, was Mr. Carlyle, and his system of the universe was rigidly modelled in some respect upon the mythology of the Eddas. Always before him he saw the terrible Ragnarok, or the twilight of the gods, in which the universe of things would be consumed, after which righteous and well-minded men shall abide in peace in the

golden halls, and another earth pleasant and verdant shall arise.
But between us and that fair future lies

A storm age, a wolf age,

and then the earth shall meet its doom.

Mr. Carlyle
and Mr. Glad-
stone.

Mr. Carlyle had small love for Mr. Gladstone, but his criticisms were apt to be based upon somewhat scanty materials. Of this I had an amusing illustration in 1877. Carlyle and Gladstone were then the two gods of my idolatry, and it grieved me to hear the way in which the Chelsea philosopher went on about the Liberal leader. "There is that Gladstone," growled Mr. Carlyle, "who is running up and down the country talking and talking, filling whole acres of the papers with his speech, and never, so far as I can see, a single wise word in the whole of it." "Really, Mr. Carlyle," I ventured to say, "I should have thought you would have been delighted with one of his recent speeches in which he expressed in his own way the same ideas as those you have been impressing on me. Do you not remember? The speech was made only a week or two since." "Remember," said Mr. Carlyle with disgust, "why, do you think I ever read his speeches? I have never read a word of them!" Mr. Carlyle was not the first, nor has he been the last, to condemn Mr. Gladstone unheard. Mr. Carlyle was more felicitous in his sarcastic comparison between Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone:—

"I have often been amused," said Mr. Carlyle, "at thinking of the contrast between the two men. There is Beaconsfield—he hasn't got a conscience at all, and he knows he hasn't got a conscience, and very well pleased he is that it should be so; but as for that other one—that Gladstone—eh, mon, what a conscience he has! There never was such a conscience as his. He bows down to it, and obeys it as if it were the very voice of God Himself. But, eh, sir, he has the most marvellous faculty in the world for making that conscience say exactly what he wants."

The black
spot on the
sun.

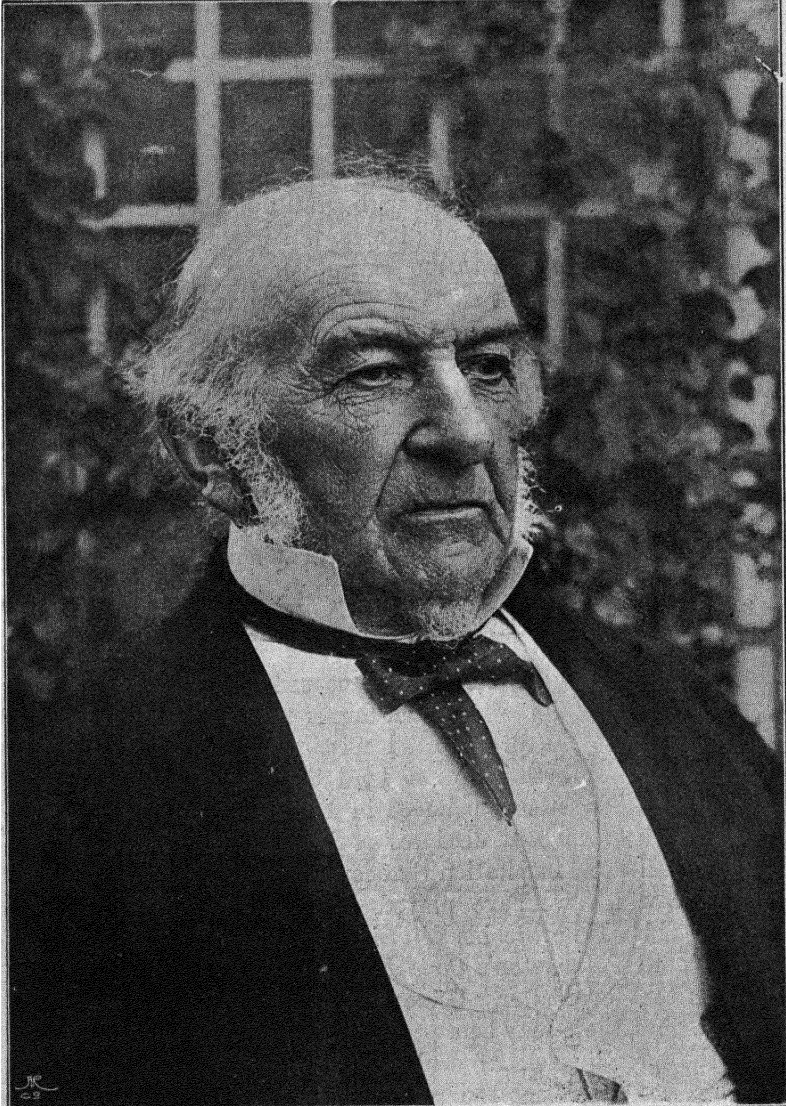
But to return to our subject. Mr. Gladstone, although fairly well satisfied concerning political progress, was troubled and sore at heart about one matter. He entertained in all their ancient rigour his objections to Divorce. It is now over a quarter of a century since the Divorce Bill was carried in the face of his most resolute opposition. Mr. Russell, from whose admirable monograph on Mr. Gladstone I am constantly quoting, thus summarises the story:— "He spoke more than seventy times on the various stages of the Bill, endeavouring first to defeat it on the clear ground of principle, then to postpone it for more mature consideration, and when beaten in these attempts, to purge it of its most glaringly offensive features." I found that after a quarter of a century's experience he was of the same opinion still, only if possible more so. "I hold to my old position," he said; "but," he added, with great emphasis, "although I admit, as we must admit, the enormous difficulties of the question, marriage seems to me a great mystery. It is one of the most wonderful things

in the whole world, and when I think of it I always feel that we must fall back on the old saying, that marriages are made in heaven. Marriage is to me the most wonderful thing in the whole world. But," he went on, becoming very grave, "I must say that of late years in the upper circles of society, so far as I have been able to observe the facts, and so far as I have been able to check them by the opinion of competent and impartial observers, there has been a very widespread change for the worse in this matter. That is to say, the number of marriages which obviously turn out bad is greater now—much greater than it was before. I do not say that this is entirely due to the Divorce Act. I recognise with gratitude that there has not been that great multiplication of divorce which we at one time anticipated, but the fact seems to me indisputable that, taking the higher classes, marriages are not made on such high principles as they used to be. Take from 1832 to 1857, a quarter of a century, compare it with the following quarter of a century, and you will find that the number of conspicuously unhappy marriages has very considerably increased. It is a melancholy fact which I fear cannot be denied. I speak, of course, only of the society with which I am personally acquainted."

This, of course, if Mr. Gladstone were correct would be so serious as to counterbalance the gains in the political sphere, and it would be the more remarkable, inasmuch as this depravation of matrimony had gone on side by side with an unmistakable revival of spiritual religion in the Church.

Mr. Gladstone had all his life long been so sedulous an opponent of swashbucklerism in all its moods and tenses that some of us felt that he underestimated the providential mission of Britain in the affairs of the world. Whether or not Lord Salisbury believes in England as the old Elizabethans believed in England, there are very few even of the most devoted disciples of Mr. Gladstone who felt that he shared the lift and inspiration that come from a contemplation of the great rôle which we have played, and are playing, in the history of the world. He made his *début* in that sphere by his great speech against Lord Palmerston's *Civis Romanus Sum* doctrine, and he stuck to his text ever after. Somewhere, drowned in the great ocean of his speeches, there may be a passage in which Mr. Gladstone indulged in the proud swell of soul which every patriot must experience when contemplating the position accorded to his country in the peopling, in the governing, and in the civilizing of the world, but it does not readily recur to the memory. Mr. Gladstone was usually so bent upon mortifying the Old Adam of national pride, that he had hardly time to devote a sentence to the expression of the awe and gratitude with which he recognised the immense vocation of Britain in the outer world. "Well, you know," he said, good humouredly, "if you have a son who is somewhat forward and is too

The future of
England.



Photo,raph by Elliott and Fry.]

MR. GLADSTONE IN 1887.

self-complacent, and you have frequently to chide him for that, you do not like to increase his complacency by sounding his praises too much. You may allow it as a treat, but it ought not to be his daily bread. It is a mistake to think that this idea is exclusively Conservative. It was quite the reverse. Lord Palmerston was almost alone in asserting it, while the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and Lord Aberdeen were anti-Jingo to an extent almost inconceivable to-day. But I fully recognise that we have a great mission. The work of England has been great in the past, but it will be still greater in the future. This is true, I believe, in its broadest sense of the English-speaking world. I believe it is also true of England herself. I think that the part which England has to play, and the influence of England in the world, will be even vaster in the future than it is to-day. England will be greater than she has ever been."

Mr. Gladstone always seemed to be too much awed by the responsibilities ever to have a thought for the glories of empire. I remember in 1878 he remarked to Mr. Baldwin Brown that one of the reasons that led him to deprecate any inordinate extension of the Empire was because he thought he saw a falling off in the *morale* of the Indian Civil Service, that we did not nowadays breed such men as the Lawrences, and others who had built up the fabric of our Eastern Empire, and had sustained it by their single-souled devotion to the welfare of India. He did not remember this when I recalled it to him, but he said, "Whatever may be the case with the development of *morale*, I do not see the necessary development of brain power to enable us to cope with the vaster problems. I sometimes say," he added, "that I do not see that progress in the development of the brain power which we ought to expect on the principles of orthodox Darwinism. Development, no doubt, is a slow process, but I do not see it at all. I do not think we are stronger but weaker than the men of the Middle Ages. I would take it as low down as the men of the sixteenth century. The men of the sixteenth century were strong men, stronger in brain power than our men. Of course, I except Napoleon. There was a brain the strongest and most marvellous that was ever in a human skull. His intellect was colossal; I know none more powerful or immense."

"The too great orb of our fate."

It was curious to find how persistent Mr. Gladstone's ideas were even in minor matters of detail. In this foreboding about the inadequate brain power of the race, he was exactly where he was fifty years before.

Mr. Gladstone had of course no doubt whatever as to the issue of the general election of 1892. Let it come soon or late, the result would be the same. Nor did he fear that however large his majority may be, it would be too large. "Only once," he remarked, "have we had too large a majority. That was in 1833, immediately after the Reform Act. But even if we had as large a majority now it would

The majority for Home Rule.

not fall to pieces of its own weight. The issue is now so clearly and sharply defined that there would be no danger of disintegration, excepting, of course, from causes which would be equally potent if the majority were smaller." After that—well, that question did not come under the category of facts, but it was evident that Mr. Gladstone was keenly alive to the coming questions.

The reform of
the Death
Duties.

There was, for example, the question which each recurring death of a millionaire forces upon the public attention. Mr. Gladstone was the man who reformed the succession duties—a piece of work which Bishop Wilberforce rightly characterised as most Conservative, but which brought upon his head the hatred and denunciation of the landed interest. The work he did on the succession duties was, from a parliamentary point of view, the heaviest he had had to do. He had to get up and master the whole of the law on the subject. It was therefore natural that he shrank from grappling with the death duties. But Mr. Gladstone laid such stress upon the subject in his Midlothian addresses that it is not surprising Sir W. Harcourt was able to carry this much-needed reform.

A Municipal
Death Duty.

Mr. Gladstone did not give much encouragement to Mr. Sidney Webb's scheme for levying a municipal death duty. He strongly condemned what he regarded as the most objectionable way in which a beginning had been made in handing over this money to the local authorities. He doubted whether death duties should go to the rates. The rates were levied without raising political questions. With the Imperial taxes it was another matter. He of course looked at the subject from the point of view natural to one who was the custodian of the National Exchequer. When I remarked that the ratepayer was poor, he replied—

"But the taxpayer is also poor. The local authorities may be very hungry, but the way in which the money has been given to the local authorities by the Conservatives has been a direct incentive to extravagance. If we had to establish the system of giving grants from the State they ought to have been made for the encouragement of economy and not for the encouragement of extravagance. It has been a direct premium on wastefulness, as for instance the withholding of the grant from communities which would not raise the number of their police to a certain number. If they had doubled the number of the police, they would have received a grant which is almost equivalent to the cost of the extra number of constables. This is almost like holding out a direct bribe by the State to encourage extra expenditure."

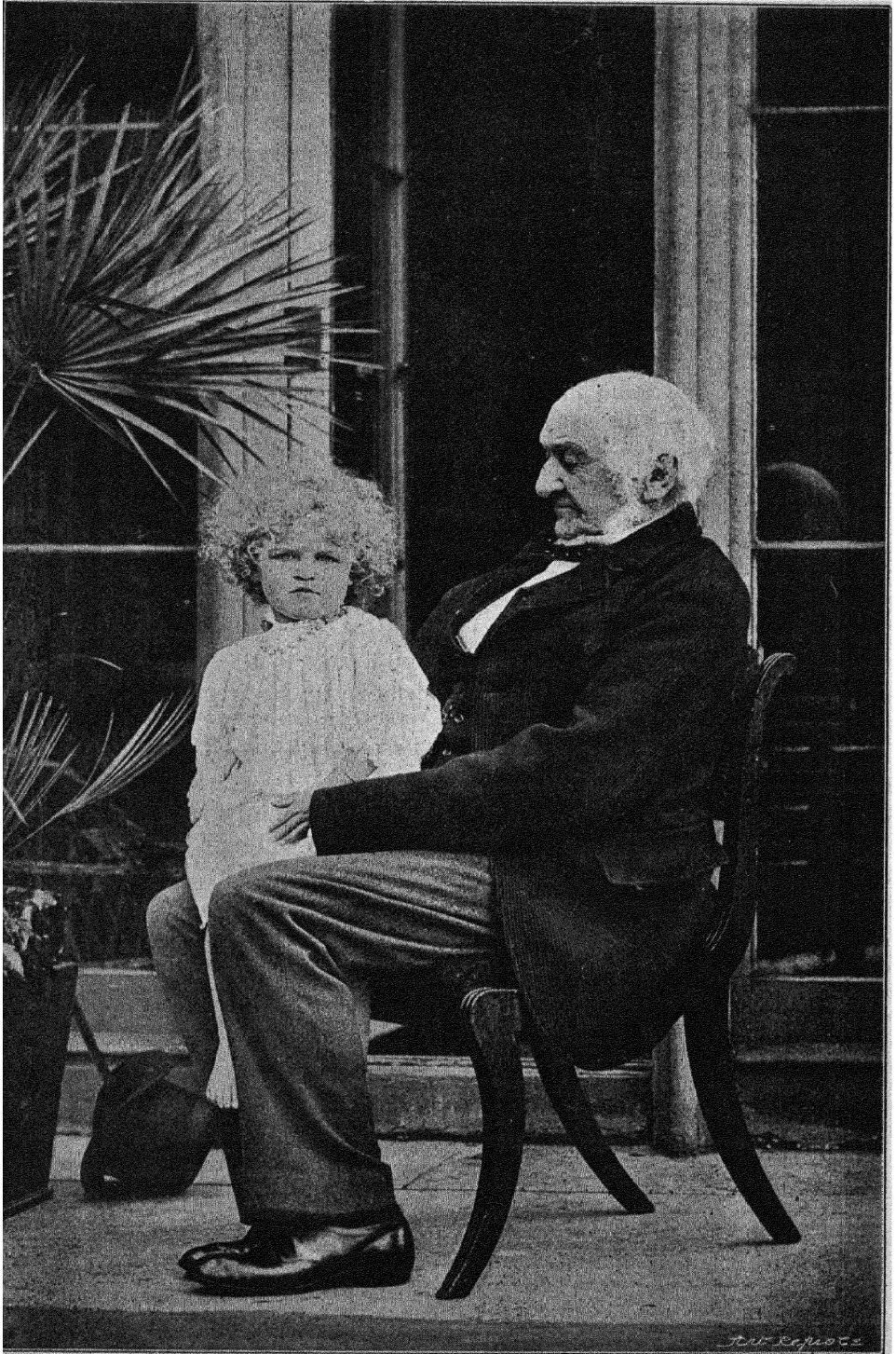
The Church
and the
Clergy.

Shortly before this interview with Mr. Gladstone I had asked a statesman who knew him well what questions upon matter of fact he would ask if he sought for a key to this many-sided character. Instantly he replied, "Two questions would satisfy me. First, how does Mr. Gladstone reconcile it with his conscience to support marriage with a deceased wife's sister after having declared it to be contrary to the law of God for three thousand years and more? and, secondly, how he can vote for Disestablishment in Wales?" I did not put

these questions to Mr. Gladstone. Had I done so, Mr. Gladstone would not have had the least difficulty in explaining and justifying his change of front, for he never changed front until he had first laboriously satisfied himself that it was his bounden duty so to do. The deceased wife's sister did not enter into our conversation. On that subject Mr. Gladstone's views remained unaltered to the last, only he would no longer enforce them upon non-Churchmen. Mr. Gladstone referred repeatedly to the change that had come over the spirit of the Church of England. He said "that the Church had been entirely metamorphosed and its whole spirit transformed, so that it was a newer Church than fifty years ago. It is not merely in details; but the clergy, and the laity who think with the clergy, look at everything from an entirely different standpoint from what they did. As a result the Church was immeasurably stronger and more vigorous than it was in times past." I asked him whether he was not of opinion that this being the case, Disestablishment, even in Wales, might be averted if the rural clergy, like their more rational clerical brethren in the towns, would but doff their silly "side" and consent to be *primus inter pares* with their Nonconformist brethren? Mr. Gladstone would not venture an opinion. His experience of the rural clergy was limited, being in fact confined to the parish of Hawarden, where an idyllic state of things prevailed, and where even Disestablishment seemed to be regarded with indifference, if not with complacency.

"But one thing," he said, suddenly becoming grave, "I have against the clergy both in the country and in the towns. I do not know whether the reproach applies to ministers of other communions; I think they are not severe enough on their congregations. They do not sufficiently lay upon the souls and the consciences of their hearers their moral obligations, and probe their hearts, and bring up their whole lives and actions to the bar of conscience. The class of sermons which I think are most needed are of the class one of which so offended Lord Melbourne long ago. Lord Melbourne was one day seen coming from church in the country in a mighty fume. Finding a friend, he exclaimed, 'It is too bad. I have always been a supporter of the Church, and I have always upheld the clergy. But it is really too bad to have to listen to a sermon like that we have had this morning. Why, the preacher actually insisted upon applying religion to a man's private life!' But that is the kind of preaching which I like best, the kind of preaching which men need most, but it is also the kind of which they get least. The clergy are afraid of dealing faithfully with their hearers. And," he added, "I fear, although I have not the same data for forming an opinion, that this is equally true of the Nonconformist ministers. Mr. Spurgeon, I admit, was not so. He was a good and brave man, and my remark does not apply to

A plea for
searching
preaching.



Photograph by Valentine & Sons.]

MR. GLADSTONE AND DOROTHY DREW.

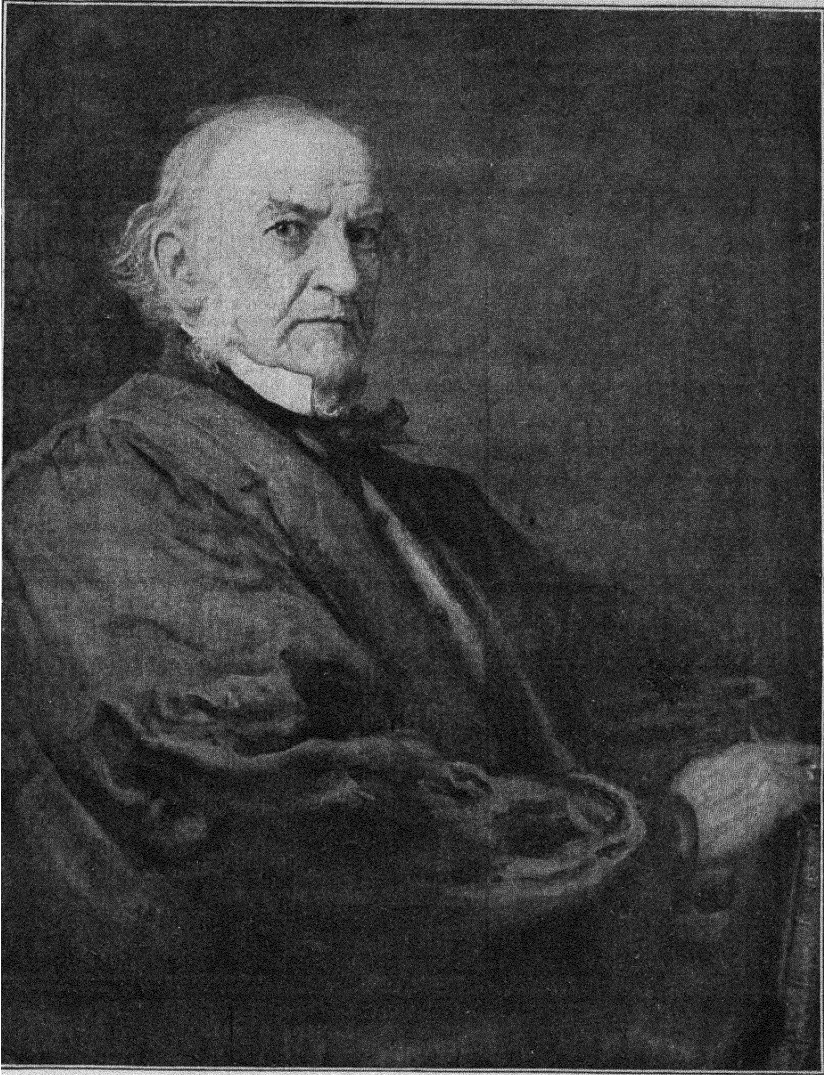
him. But there is not enough of such searching preaching in any of our pulpits."

Before I rose to go I asked Mr. Gladstone what he regarded as the greatest hope for the future. He paused for a time, not rightly understanding the question. Then he said, gravely, "I should say we must look for that to the maintenance of faith in the Invisible. That is the great hope of the future; it is the mainstay of civilisation. And by that I mean a living faith in a personal God. I do not hold with 'streams of tendency.' After sixty years of public life I hold more strongly than ever to this conviction, deepened and strengthened by long experience of the reality, and the nearness, and the personality of God."

**The great
hope for the
future.**

SOME DATES IN MR. GLADSTONE'S LIFE.

- 1809, Dec. 29.—Born at Liverpool.
- 1820-7.—At Eton.
- 1828, Oct.—Entered Christ Church, Oxford.
- 1831, Dec.—Took Double First Class.
- 1832.—First visit to Italy.
- „ Dec. 11.—Elected M.P. for Newark (Tory).
- 1833, Jan. 20.—Took seat in Parliament.
- „ June 3.—Maiden Speech.
- FIRST PEEL MINISTRY.
- 1834, Dec. 24.—Junior Lord of Treasury.
- 1835, Feb.—Under Secretary for Colonies.
- „ April.—Fall of Peel Ministry.
- MELBOURNE MINISTRY.
- 1837, July.—Re-elected at Newark.
- „ „ —Defeated at Manchester.
- 1838, Dec. 13.—Published “The Church in its Relation to the State.”
- 1839, July 25th.—Married Catherine Glynn.
- SECOND PEEL MINISTRY.
- 1841, August.—Vice-President Board of Trade.
- 1843, June 10th.—President of Board of Trade.
- 1845.—Resigns on Maynooth Grant.
- „ Dec.—Shot off first finger of left hand.
- „ Dec.—Colonial Secretary.
- 1846, Jan.—Rejected by Newark on Corn Laws.
- FIRST RUSSELL MINISTRY.
- 1847, July 29.—Elected Peelite M.P. for Oxford University.
- 1850, June 28.—Speech on Don Pacifico.
- „ July 2.—Death of Sir Robert Peel.
- „ Dec.—Winters in Naples.
- 1851, April 2.—Denounces Neapolitan Government.
- „ —Opposes Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.
- 1852, Feb.—FIRST DERBY MINISTRY.
- „ Dec. 17.—Demolishes Disraeli's Budget.
- ABERDEEN MINISTRY.
- Dec.—Chancellor of the Exchequer
- 1853, April 18.—First Budget.
- PALMERSTON MINISTRY.
- 1855.—Resigns office.
- 1857.—Obstructs the Divorce Bill.
- SECOND DERBY MINISTRY.
- 1858, Nov.—High Commissioner in the Ionian Islands.
- SECOND PALMERSTON MINISTRY.
- 1859, June.—Chancellor of Exchequer.
- 1860, April 16.—Installed Rector Edinburgh University.
- 1861.—Repeals Paper Duty.
- 1862, Oct. 7.—Declares that Jeff Davis had made a nation.
- 1864, May 11.—Advocates extension of Suffrage.
- 1865, June 18.—Defeated for Oxford University.
- „ June 20.—Elected for S.W. Lancashire.
- „ Nov. 3.—RUSSELL MINISTRY.
- 1866, Mar. 12.—Introduces Reform Bill.
- „ June 26.—Russell Ministry resigns
- THIRD DERBY MINISTRY.
- 1867, April 18.—Resigns Liberal Leadership; Resumes it.
- „ Aug. 5.—Household Suffrage Act passed.
- 1868, Mar. 30.—Moves Irish Church Resolutions.
- „ Nov. 16.—Elected for Greenwich.
- „ „ 24.—Defeated for S.W. Lancashire.
- „ Dec. 9.—FIRST GLADSTONE MINISTRY.
- 1869, Mar.—July.—Irish Church Act.
- 1870, Feb.—July.—Irish Land Act.



*From the painting by Sir J. E. Millais, Bart., P.R.A.
("Millais and his Works."—Blackwood.)*

MR. GLADSTONE.

- 1870, Feb.—July. — National Education Act.
- 1871, Feb.—Abolition of University Tests.
- „ Feb.—Abolition of Purchase in Army.
- 1872, Aug. 2.—Ballot Act passed.
- 1873, Mar.—Irish University Bill defeated.
- „ Mar.—Resigns and resumes office.
- 1874, Feb.—Dissolves and is defeated.
- „ „ —DISABLING MINISTRY.
- „ „ —Retires from Leadership.
- 1875, July—Publishes Vatican Pamphlets.
- 1876, August. — Publishes Bulgarian Atrocities Pamphlets.
- „ Nov.—St. James's Hall Conference.
- 1877.—Advocates Coercion of Turks.
- „ Lord Rector of Glasgow University.
- 1872-80 —Midlothian Campaign.
- SECOND GLADSTONE MINISTRY
- 1880, April 23 — Prime Minister and Chancellor of Exchequer.
- 1880, Aug.—Coerces the Turk.
- „ Evacuates Afghanistan.
- 1881.—Irish Coercion and Land Acts.
- „ Aug. 3 —Gives back Transvaal.
- „ Oct. 13.—Arrests Mr Parnell.
- 1882, July 6.—Irish Crimes Act.
- 1882, July 31.—Bombards Alexandria.
- „ Sept. 13.—Conquers Egypt.
- 1883.—Abandons the Soudan.
- 1884, Jan. —Gordon sent to Khartoum.
- „ Feb.—Dec.—County Franchise and Redistribution Bill.
- 1885, Jan. 26.—Fall of Khartoum.
- „ April 9.—Penzance incident with Russia.
- „ June 8.—Government defeat.
- BLACONSFIELD MINISTRY.
- THIRD GLADSTONE MINISTRY
- 1886, Feb.—Prime Minister and Lord Privy Seal.
- „ April 8.—Home Rule Bill introduced.
- „ July —Defeated - Dissolution.
- SALISBURY MINISTRY.
- 1887-1891.—Home Rule Agitation.
- FOURTH GLADSTONE MINISTRY.
- 1892, Aug. 15.—Prime Minister and Lord Privy Seal.
- 1893, Feb. 13.—Second Home Rule Bill introduced.
- „ Sept. 8.—Thrown out by the Lords.
- 1894, Mar. 2.—Retires rather than sanction increased Navy Estimates.
- Retires.

