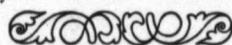


## Author's Note to Memorial Edition



LORD ROSEBERY has somewhere observed that the Life of Mr. Gladstone when it came to be written would have to be undertaken by a limited liability company. No one can study the history of the present century without feeling the full force of this remark; certainly no one can appreciate it more fully than I have done. In venturing upon the attempt at all, I have been actuated by a profound belief in the value to us all of British institutions; the interest attaching to British political development during this century; the importance of comprehending, even in a general and sweeping way, the springs of British Parliamentary action during the past sixty or seventy years; the desire to extend a knowledge of British public life in the high phases which Mr. Gladstone's career has embodied.

Distance in space from the scene of his struggles and achievements may help in giving this biography something, at least, of the impartiality which distance in time is usually expected to give. Whatever our political sympathies, any study of the prolonged period here dealt with must inspire impartial men with a strong belief in Mr. Gladstone's sincerity of mind and powers of deep conviction. After all, the two streams of thought and practice perceptible in British politics are reconcilable with the most absolute sincerity and personal honour, and even statesmanship, amongst the leaders of the two great parties. There will always be the tendency to preserve present institutions and rule by precedent, and the opposing tendency to reform, and change, and restless effort. Both are good in their action and reaction within the constitution of the realm or the bounds of the Empire, and the combination of the two in one person tends to enhance the remarkable nature and interest of Mr. Gladstone's career. Hence the value of the beautiful tribute uttered by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the House of Commons of Canada, and which he has partly embodied in the chapter which closes this volume.

If, in conclusion, this Memorial Edition of a work which has been kindly received by the public and the press, as dealing especially with Mr. Gladstone's myriad-sided career from a broad Imperial point of view, should help a little in further promoting knowledge and appreciation of British institutions and British political ideals, I shall be more than grateful.

J. CASTELL HOPKINS.