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## MR. GLADSTONE AND DR. INGRAM ON THE UNION.

MR. GLADSTONE'S article in the *Nineteenth Century* on Dr. Ingram's history of the Union has now come to hand, and betrays, by its discourteous violence of language, Mr. Gladstone's consciousness that the Disunionist cause has received a heavy blow.

It now clearly appears that the infamous charge brought by Mr. Gladstone against Pitt and the British statesmen of that period, of having systematically destroyed or suppressed documents relating to the Union, for the purpose of covering their own criminal acts, is founded on a passage in Mr. Ross's preface to the Cornwallis Papers, a series of documents the preservation of which is itself sufficient to rebut the charge. Mr. Gladstone speaks of the Cornwallis Papers as containing "astounding revelations." Obviously then they would have been the first things to be destroyed. Mr. Ross's words are:

"Among the valuable sources of information thus freely opened to me I must mention the Spencer, Hardwicke, Sydney, and Melville Papers. Many other collections have been as cordially submitted to my inspection, but upon investigation it appeared that such documents as might have thrown additional light on the history of those times, and especially of the Union, had been purposely destroyed. For instance, after a search, instituted at Welbeck by the kindness of the Duke of Portland, it was ascertained that the late Duke had burnt all his father's political papers from 1780 to his death. In like manner, the Chancellor, Lord Clare, Mr. Wickham, Mr. King, Sir Herbert Taylor, Sir Edward Littlehales, Mr. Marsden, the Knight of Kerry, and indeed almost all the persons officially concerned in carrying the Union, appear to have destroyed the whole of their papers. Mr. Marsden, by whom many of the arrangements were concluded, left a MS. book containing invaluable details, which was burnt only a few years ago by its then possessor. The destruction of so many valuable documents respecting important transactions cannot but be regarded as a serious loss to the political history of those times. Lord Normanton, Lord Donoughmore, and a few others who had fortunately retained some original letters, etc., have kindly allowed me to make use of them. Lord Teignmouth, Sir Alexander Malet, and Mr. F. H. Robinson have most obligingly sent me the papers of their respective fathers, relating of course to the Indian portion of this work."

This paragraph is somewhat ambiguously worded; but a careful perusal will show that it does not sustain Mr. Gladstone's indictment, even with regard to the limited number of documents to which it relates. Mr. Ross says that the papers which might have thrown light upon the history of those times, and especially of the Union, had been purposely destroyed. But he does not say that they had been destroyed for the special purpose of suppressing the history of the Union, though it is the loss of those relating to the Union that he has particular reason to regret. He tells us that all the Duke of Portland's papers, from 1780 to his death, (October, 1809), were burnt; nor does he intimate that in the other cases any distinction had been made between papers relating to the Union and those

relating to other subjects. All the persons enumerated are stated to have destroyed the whole of their papers. It was not so much the fashion in those days to keep confidential or private papers for publication as it is now. To break the force of the fact that all the Duke of Portland's papers were alike destroyed, Mr. Gladstone suggests that the object was to destroy those relating to the Union, and that the rest, being confused with these, were committed indiscriminately to the flames—a purely gratuitous hypothesis, and one eminently characteristic of the mental habits of Mr. Gladstone.

It will be observed that the Duke's papers were burnt not by the Duke himself, who had been concerned in the transactions to which they related, but by his son. In the same way Mr. Marsden's manuscript book was left by him intact, and so remained for half a century, when it was destroyed by the person into whose possession it had come, and who is not stated to have had any connection with the Government. In summing up his article Mr. Gladstone avers "that the accusations of foul play, in its worst as well as in its less revolting forms, against the methods and agencies which brought about the Union are painfully sustained by the evidence before us of extensive destruction of documents and papers by the persons principally concerned." Does he extend this accusation to Pitt?

Had Mr. Ross discovered, or found reason to suspect, a concerted suppression of documents relating to the Union, there was nothing to hinder him from telling us so in plain terms. He has evidently felt under no restraint in his publication of passages injurious to the Union in the Cornwallis Papers. That those papers should be left intact is in itself, I repeat, a confutation of Mr. Gladstone's charge.

Among the documents of which he has made use Mr. Ross specially mentions those in the State Paper Office relating to the Union, and to papers preserved in Dublin Castle. To the papers in Dublin Castle, he says, he obtained unrestricted access through the kindness of the Lord Lieutenant, adding that his researches among them were materially aided by Colonel Larcom, the Under-Secretary.

In a note Mr. Ross refers to the letter which appeared in the *Athenaeum*, of February, 1859, stating that within the last few years many confidential and secret papers deposited in Dublin Castle had been destroyed by order of the Irish Government; but he positively contradicts the statement. "It is true," he says, "that from the neglected state in which for a length of time these papers had been left many were lost or were inadvertently destroyed, but no intentional destruction ever took place." Neglect, it would seem, was the very opposite of studious suppression.

"Did the necessary limits of this article permit [coolly remarks Mr. Gladstone] it would not be difficult to show that the British Government took an active part in the work of suppression. I will only cite one anecdote from the younger Grattan, as he gives it on the high authority of Mr. Foster. The Opposition had their speeches on the Union, with other documents, carefully prepared for publication, and entrusted them to one Moore, a Dublin publisher, though Mr. Foster warned them that he would betray them. Moore sold them, accordingly, to Lord Castlereagh, and they were burned in Dublin Castle."

This gossiping anecdote which is given as the sole proof of so heinous a charge against some of the highest names in English history is repeated at second hand, and seems to bear untrustworthiness on its face. Is it likely that the Opposition would have allowed themselves to be debarred from giving their speeches to the world by the trickery of a single printer, that they would have kept silence about the matter, and that we should have been left to hear of it through Mr. Foster and young Grattan? It might have been supposed that the accuser would have felt bound, at whatever cost of space in the pages of the magazine, most carefully to substantiate his accusation against the memories of British statesmen and against the country, so far as its honour is bound up with theirs. But it appears that he can admit the existence of nothing good or great before him any more than of anything good or great beside him. It is not enough for him to make a pedestal for himself by tearing down all the existing institutions, and the present good name of the country: his self-esteem must be fed with a holocaust of all that is illustrious in national history.

That the politics of those days were in a pecuniary sense far less pure than ours; that Grattan's Parliament especially was a sink of corruption; and that any dealings with its members were sure to be more or less dirty, so far as those members themselves were concerned, may be readily admitted;