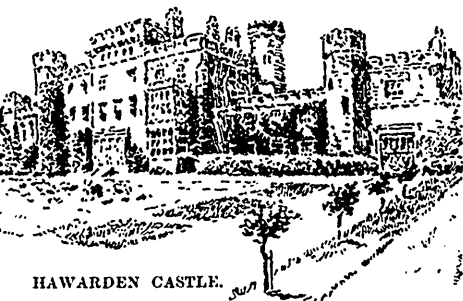


HIS MORAL GREATNESS.

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. The main warp and woof of his life's work has been simply honestly sincere. This is 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.



HAWARDEN CASTLE.

It is ridiculous to pretend, with Mr. Gladstone's career before us, that his course was swayed by calculating self-interest. He was the very madman of politics from the point of view of Mr. Worldly-Wiseman. "No man," said he, "has ever committed suicide so often as I," and that witness is true. Mr. Gladstone all his life was 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. From a merely human standpoint it was inexplicable. But

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

then the mystery was not so in-

soluble. 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.

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 o be bold,
Fortressed in conscience and impregnable.

Mr. Gladstone no doubt was often and marvellously successful. But sometimes, when he was most right, he was most hopelessly beaten. The certainty of failure did not daunt him in his strenuous struggle. When he saw clearly what ought to be done, he did it; and it is this habit of walking according to the light that was given him, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, that has given him his unique hold upon the minds and the imagination of his countrymen.

One point in 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 al-