

interests of the country, he began to lose faith in other principles of his party, so that ere long his scepticism had gone so far that his scruples became a matter of conscience, and he could only range himself hereafter against "Conservatism."

Gladstone's change of policy during his political administration may be better observed by contrasting some of his early and more subsequent measures. At first he was by no means averse to slavery but years after when speaking of these views he says "I did not learn at Oxford what I have learned since, namely, to set a due value on the imperishable and inestimable principles of human liberty," this being an explanation of his conduct in supporting the measure for the emancipation of slaves.—Then again he was for a long time in favor of "Irish Church Establishment," but in 1849 he astonished the English and delighted the Irish by bringing in a bill to disendow and disestablish the "Irish Church." This bill was passed before public opinion in England had been fully excited, but the reaction soon came and the Liberal ministry fell. Unlike the majority of politicians, Gladstone could never see but two sides of a question,—the "right" and the "wrong," and when once convinced of the justice of his cause no other considerations, however plausible, might move him in its disposal. His attitude in regard to the opium traffic strongly exhibits his characteristic conscientiousness. Lord Macaulay in advocating the "Chinese War" had been describing the triumphs of the English flag in beautiful language, when Gladstone arose and with burning earnestness replied: "Under the auspices of the noble Lord that flag is now hoisted to protect an infamous contraband traffic; and if it is never hoisted except as it is now hoisted on the coast of China we should recoil from the sight with horror and should never again feel our hearts thrill, as they now thrill with emotion when it floats proudly and magnificently on the breeze."

As we trace the career of Gladstone through the many vicissitudes of political life, his progress seems to be towards those principles of universal equity and international fair dealing, in the pursuance of which he has been so greatly misunderstood. Such noble self-abnegation *pro bono publico* with such earnestness of purpose and disdain of intrigue are so seldom met in statesmen, that Gladstone's colleagues did not understand him, and accordingly looked on him with suspicion, attributing his "over-righteousness" to sinister motives.

Frequently he has been charged with indifference to the welfare of his country, and a wilful tardiness in taking active measures for the defense of her interests. It cannot be denied that at times in treating with foreign powers he has so far sunk national feelings in his zeal to do the right, as to lay himself open to the charge of inexpediency; and it is easy to see how in following the dictates of a policy so liberal

and embracing, he should seem to lose sight of individual interest in the "universal good." With a benevolence that includes the world in its manifestation, and a charity unrestricted and unconfined, he could never shut his eyes to the miseries of the race, nor suffer the helpless and weak to become the victims of tyrants, when he might wield the power of England in their behalf. A cry goes forth from the dungeons of Naples, where among untold horrors are imprisoned for political principles, a large number of Italy's statesmen. Gladstone hears and uses every means in his power for their release; they are soon set free, but the brilliant protest of Gladstone against Neapolitan atrocities had aroused the slumbering spirit of the nation, and soon Garibaldi at the head of his victorious army sounds forth the trumpet call of Italian liberty.

The policy of Gladstone has been all through his life averse to war, and although he has not carried this principle so far as his colleague, John Bright, yet his measures in regard to war with foreign powers have always been conducted with the greatest caution. He desires to see Britain the arbiter of nations, but not by the sword, the empress of the seas, but not by the terrifying influence of warlike squadrons, the civilizer of the world, and not the conquering tyrant. "England," he said loftily, "will stand shorn of a chief part of her glory and her pride if she shall be found to have separated herself through the policy she pursues abroad from the moral supports which the general and fixed convictions of mankind afford; if the day shall come in which she may continue to excite the wonder and fear of other nations, but in which she shall have no part in their affection and their regard." From these words we can form some idea of the picture he fair would paint of England's future when advancing along the highway of national glory she should come to possess by her conciliatory policy the highest place in the confidence of the world. Yet as strongly as he was influenced by these considerations, he was not blind to the fact that, in the present condition of society, war was sometimes a necessity, and whenever he saw the rights of Englishmen disregarded, their lives endangered by hostile nations, or those sacred principles of justice and freedom violated he would not shrink to touch the spring that launched the thunderbolt of England's vengeance. His later policy has been marked by a still further tendency to drop the traditions of his early education and to rise higher in "Liberalism." Although in carrying out these principles, some of his measures have been characterized by vacillation and indecision, yet on the whole his administration has worked out for the British people, especially the lower classes, a much better condition of affairs than previously existed, and long after he has passed away succeeding generations will breathe on his memory their grateful blessings.