

MR. GLADSTONE DEAD.

Continued From Page One.

view of the still narrow and somewhat prejudiced minds of many of his followers—some of the grievances of which Irish Catholics justly complained as to higher education. On the ground that it did not go far enough, the Irish bishops issued a manifesto calling upon the Irish Catholic members to vote against it. They did so and defeated the Gladstone Government. This event led him to attack what he called "Vaticanism"; but that he afterwards repented of some of the statements made in his pamphlets on that subject, especially those in which he impugned the loyalty of the Catholics to the British Crown, was shown in his usual manly fashion, when, on coming into power once more, he appointed the Marquis of Ripon, a convert to the Church, to be Governor-General of India. From the general election which followed his defeat the Conservatives emerged victorious, and his old time adversary, Mr. Disraeli, was made Premier. It was then that, full of years and honors, he retired from the leadership of the Liberal party. What followed is in the memory of most readers of the daily press: how he persisted for a few sessions in his refusal to act as nominal leader; how every great occasion brought him, almost in spite of himself, to the front as the champion of his party; how the events connected with and growing out of the Russo-Turkish war stirred his spirit; how he set himself in his pamphlet on the Bulgarian atrocities; how the fire of the "old man eloquent" flamed forth anew in the track of his famous Midlothian campaign, heartening up every Liberal in the land; and how, when the Liberal party was returned to power by a strong majority in 1880, he was compelled by the voice of the people, the press and the Queen to resume the leadership of the forces whom he had led to a signal victory.

Four Times Premier.

When he assumed the premiership in the parliament of 1880, he set to himself the task of making more reforms. The extension of the franchise was effected by him. In 1885 Mr. Gladstone resigned on an unfavorable vote, although he still could command a majority in the house. Lord Salisbury formed an administration which lived on tolerance through the final session of that parliament. In 1886 the first parliament elected under the extended franchise assembled, with Lord Salisbury as Premier. His ministry was defeated, however, on an amendment to the address in reply to the speech from the throne, and the great Liberal leader assumed the reins of power. His defeat, on bringing in his first Home Rule Bill, through the detection of the so-called Liberal Unionists, under the leadership of Lord Hartington, then took place. Through the action of these recent Liberals, the general election which ensued resulted in a victory for the Tories. The general election of 1892 resulted in Mr. Gladstone occupying for the fourth time the position of Prime Minister. The sole issue of the struggle was Home Rule for Ireland, and the Liberals received a majority of forty members. The story of Lord Salisbury's reluctance to resign (since until a vote had been taken in the House of Commons, the protracted discussion of the Home Rule Bill, its passage in the Commons and its rejection by the Lords, the Liberal leader's declaration of war upon the hereditary legislators, and his retirement from the Cabinet on account of failing eyesight, owing to a cataract on each eye, are matters of general knowledge.

A Democratic Financier.

Although he had attained his seventieth year before he showed him to be an ardent Democrat in all the legislation which he initiated or advocated, Mr. Gladstone was in his financial policy a friend of the masses as against the unjustly privileged classes from the time he brought in his first budget in 1853. The speech he made in exposition of the proposals in that budget was a plea for the release of industry and commerce from all artificial restraints, and for the simplification of the revenue. To that financial policy he clung throughout his long after career. In 1853 he reduced taxation on 133 articles and abolished it altogether on 123. Among the commodities immediately cheapened by his budget were tea, sugar, butter, cheese, and molasses. This he effected in the way in which he afterwards accomplished similarly beneficial reforms in favor of the people increasing the taxation upon the wealthy classes. The income tax he had regarded as an emergency tax; but his addition to the legacy and succession duties were looked upon as permanent. The Crimean war, which cost the United Kingdom \$500,000,000, interrupted his career as a financial reformer; for, as has already been said, he retired from the cabinet from conscientious motives when the war began. It was not until 1859 that he was able to resume his task. He became Chancellor of the Exchequer again in that year, with a large deficit to face; and he continued to occupy that post for seven years. The series of budgets which he passed through Parliament each of those years were the most brilliant and enlightened which England or any other country has ever seen. He was fitted with a lofty passion for the deliverance of his country from the fetters of oppression, taxation, extravagance and debt. A deficit never turned him aside from his resolve to cheapen the necessities of life. In 1860 he had a large deficit to face; yet in that year he reduced the taxes on butter, eggs, cheese, rice and leather. Next year he abolished the paper duty and set the press free from an exorbitant and vexatious impost. In 1863, having a large surplus in prospect, he took \$8,000,000 off the duty on tea, and \$13,700,000 off the income tax. Between 1863 and 1866, inclusive, he repealed or reduced taxation by the large amount of \$70,000,000, and the revenue was larger by \$15,000,000 at the end of the period than it had been in 1859, when he began his long term of office with a deficit of

\$25,000,000. Yet during the whole of that period he never lost sight of his purpose to keep down the nation's debt. His surpluses were not, like those of Mr. Goschen, for example, manufactured out of borrowed money.

As an Orator.

While yet a student at Oxford Mr. Gladstone won fame as an orator. His most important speech was that delivered in the Union Debating Society of the University, against the Reform Bill, which was shortly afterwards passed, in 1832. Disraeli got hold of a printed copy of the speech some years after its delivery, and on many occasions quoted passages from it against the orator himself, when he had discarded the crude political opinions which he held at the time. In April, 1831, Arthur Hallam writes: "I have had a long letter from Gladstone. He is very bitter against the Reform Bill." Young Gladstone denounced the bill as destined to change England's form of government, and to break up the foundations of social order. One who heard the impassioned discourse says that it "converted Alston, the son of the member for Hartford, who, immediately on the conclusion of Gladstone's speech, walked across from the Whig to the Tory side of the House, amidst loud acclamations. Another who listened to it says: "Most of the speakers rose, more or less, above the usual level; but when Mr. Gladstone sat down we all of us felt that an epoch in our lives had occurred. It certainly was the finest speech of his that I ever heard." Bishop Charles Wordsworth says: "My experience of Mr. Gladstone at this time made me (and, I doubt not, others also) feel no less sure than of my own existence that Mr. Gladstone, our then Christ Church undergraduate, would one day rise to be Prime Minister of England." Every speech which he subsequently made in the House of Commons increased his reputation. Of his first speech as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1853, it has been said that "it was one of the most memorable utterances ever heard in the House. Through five hours long it held the members spellbound. It demonstrated his absolute mastery over figures, the persuasive force of his expository gift, his strange power of clothing the dry bones of customs and tariffs with the flesh and blood of human interest, and even something of the warm glow of poetic color."

Other great orators have been witty; Gladstone had but a quiet and lambent humor. He could be slightly but not cruelly sarcastic. He indulged in invective often; in vituperation never. Habitually urbane, even to his bitter political adversaries, he entertained no unkind personal feelings towards anyone. Disraeli never hesitated to employ against him language of a rudely abusive character, and yet Mr. Gladstone gave to the bust of the deceased Beaconsfield the honor of occupying, in his library at Hawarden, the pedestal over the desk on which he wrote most of his political and literary utterances. It would be difficult to dissociate his style of oratory from his political conceptions and policy. He was a forcible advocate of unparalleled power. Belonging neither to the class of Demosthenes, nor of O'Connell, nor of Wendell Phillips, ever academic in the cast of his thought, he was invariably charmed by the beauty of the embellishments with which he adorned his theme, by his intellectual agility, and by the copiousness and validity of his diction. His grouping of arrays in mental divisions was one of his most extraordinary gifts.

In an article upon Mr. Gladstone which appeared in The Contemporary Review after his retirement in the spring of 1894, Mr. K. H. Huston, the accomplished editor of The Spectator, London—formerly a Liberal but now a sort of mugwump organ—said of his oratory: "In 1868 Mr. Gladstone was still, though a great parliamentary orator, the orator of a highly educated House of Commons, to whom the platform was as yet almost unknown, and whose modern drill halls or circuses in which great mass meetings are now addressed, quite unknown. Nor would anyone, even in 1868, easily have believed that Mr. Gladstone could ever become the idol of such meetings as those which he has since addressed on Blackheath and in Haggerly's circus. His own natural style was almost scholastic, the style of a thinker who engrates one distinction on another till the reader is somewhat bewildered in trying to grasp the full effect of the complete qualifications thus composed. No one could have anticipated that Mr. Gladstone was destined to eclipse Mr. Bright, not indeed as an orator, but as an effective democratic force. Yet that is assuredly what Mr. Gladstone has become, and become, moreover since he had passed by many years the age of seventy."

Would Have Been a Great Tragedian. Sir Richard Temple, in his "Life in Parliament," writing of the memorable session of 1885 at a point just before the introduction of the first Home Rule Bill, says:

"The salient feature was the impressive personality of Mr. Gladstone himself, who was quite the figure head in this parliament. Naturally he was no longer the handsome man, with a beautiful voice, who had been wont to charm a listening Senate. But still his aspect was nobly picturesque, and when under excitement he was grandly lionine. Advanced age had left its traces on him outwardly, and had impaired his matchless powers of elocution. The once resonant voice often would become husky, and at times almost inaudible, so that his oratory sank and fell with a cadence like the wind. But his persuasiveness for many minds remained in its highest degree. His impassioned gesture seemed to be quite unimpaired; it could not conceivably have ever been finer than it was in these days. When excited in speech he would swing his arm round like the sweep of a scimitar, and yet with a movement both graceful and appropriate. His hands, too, were most expressive, and by their motion or action helped him to enforce arguments. Above all, there was the play of features in the careworn countenance. Evidently he was in the highest sense of the term, one of nature's actors. It would be no disparagement of him to say that had he by accident of birth or fortune been taken himself to the stage, he would

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have been one of the greatest tragedians of modern times."

Home Rule for Ireland.

When Mr. Gladstone had disestablished the Irish Church he thought that Ireland would be contented. He soon realized that a far greater evil had long been sapping away the vitality of the nation. It became necessary to declare that compacts entered into between landlords and tenants in Ireland were not covered by the principle of the sanctity of contract, since the essential element of freedom between the parties had not existed. With his fine sense of justice he began in 1870 a series of beneficial reforms of the Irish land system. But as reform succeeded reform it became more and more evident to those who took an intelligent and sympathetic interest in the condition of Ireland that nothing short of the restoration to her people of her Local Legislature for the transactions of her local affairs could reach the root of the wrong from which they suffered. He did not rush headlong into the advocacy of Home Rule, as all the Tories and many of the so-called Liberal-Unionists, with more or less severity, maintain. His conversion to that principle, like his conversion to other right principles, was of slow growth. At last, having studied the question himself, he declared that whenever a large majority of the Irish people demanded, through their representatives in Parliament, a native legislature, it should be granted to them, with such restraints as would insure the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. The election by Ireland of 86 Home Rulers out of her representation of 103 induced him to espouse the cause of the Irish Nationalists. The defection of Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, followed by a number of other inkswarm and unreliable Liberals, the fate of the first Home Rule Bill, the return of the Tories to power, the general election of 1882—thought upon the single issue of Home Rule—the passage by the House of Lords, Mr. Gladstone's great speech in the House against the hereditary legislators, and his retirement immediately after its delivery, through failing eyesight, are events which are fresh in the public memory. The heroism with which the veteran Liberal statesman persisted in keeping his faith with the Irish people, even when warned by friends that his course would split his party; his eloquent appeals to the conscience of the British democracy in favor of that "union of hearts" which he desired to substitute for a union maintained only by bayonets—a union which Lord Byron described as that which existed between a tiger and its prey—and his confidence in the response that would be made to those appeals, will be for the future historian amongst the most notable events in a phenomenal career.

Hostility to the House of Lords.

It was not only during recent years that Mr. Gladstone insisted that the Peers must submit to the will of the elective branch of the legislature. As far back as 1857 he said in a speech: "Every member of the House of Commons is proudly conscious that he belongs to an assembly which, in its collective capacity, is the paramount power of the State." He never denounced the Peers as directly as Mr. Bright, Mr. Morley or Mr. Chamberlain. His style of oratory precluded that. But his most prominent legislative achievements during the last quarter of a century were accomplished by him in spite of the opposition of the Lords. In every case he succeeded in bringing them to their knees before the popular chamber; and it is not probable that the reason he was not more eager in "maning or ending" the House of Lords was that he was convinced by experience that whenever a majority of the people's representatives showed that they were determined to pass certain measures the Peers ignominiously yielded.

Retirement from Public Life.

Mr. Gladstone's retirement from public life a few years ago caused widespread surprise, owing to the remarkably robust health which he had until then enjoyed. An affection of the eyes was the chief cause of his withdrawal to private life. This trouble was successfully removed by an operation, and it was hoped by his political friends, particularly by the Irish Nationalists, that it would be possible for him to resume his place at the head of the Liberal

party. It soon, however, became apparent that his great constitution was rapidly breaking up, and he slowly but surely grew weaker. Then facial neuralgia set in, followed by a necrosis of the nasal bone, which, his medical advisers stated, could not be cured. The fatal termination of his sufferings came on Thursday morning last at five o'clock, at Hawarden Castle.

Ireland's Friend to the Last.

His last public utterance was in regard to Ireland, whose struggle for legislative freedom he had made his own, and in whose cause he may be said to have used his last dying breath. It was in the shape of a brief but expressive note which he wrote to Mr. John Dillon, M.P., on the occasion of the St. Patrick's Day banquet in London. It was as follows:

"I send a word of sympathy to the banquet in St. Patrick's Day. Your cause is in your own hands. If Ireland be derailed her cause so long remains hopeless. If, on the contrary, she knows her own mind and is one in spirit, that cause is irresistible."

That he remained faithful to the cause of Home Rule for Ireland, to the furtherance of which he had for the closing fifteen years of his life he had devoted his splendid enthusiasm, his magnificent oratorical talents, and his matchless statesmanship, was characteristic of Mr. Gladstone; for he never flinched in his attachment to a cause of the righteousness and justice of which he had been convinced. In his death Ireland has lost a great and sincere friend, and England has been deprived of its greatest statesman.

A Symbol of the Century.

Mr. Gladstone's personality was unique. History tells us of others as remarkable in some respects, but of none approaching to his in his final proximity to completeness. Nowhere, for instance, do we find such a long and continuous individual development. No other character in history reveals the plasticity and the many-sidedness of Mr. Gladstone's mental structure. His career is symbolical of the wonderful century of which he was a wondrous product. He was the subject of forces whose power he foiled for a very long period to discern, whose validity he was slow to acknowledge, and whose demands he never completely satisfied. For, while plastic and sensitive to an extraordinary degree, when his traditions and his moral nature are considered, he was always tempered, to some extent, by a sort of intellectual conservatism from which he could never wholly emancipate himself. Contemplation of his career is contemplation of the century in its receding vision the wider glory of the century that is coming—a glory whose rays seem to shine already upon us.

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Where is the Knave—Sheridan was one day much annoyed by a fellow-member of the House of Commons who kept crying out every few minutes "Hear, hear." During the debate he took occasion to describe a political contemporary that wished to play rogue, but had only sense enough to act fool. "Where," exclaimed he with great emphasis, "where shall we find a more knavish fool than he?" "Hear, hear," was shouted by the troublesome member. Sheridan turned



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round, and thanking him for the information, sat down, amid a hearty roar of laughter.

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