

intellectual critic he could hardly help being. He had so trained and furnished his mind that it rejected instinctively a sophism or a false pretence.

Antonio Stradivari has an eye
That winces at false work and loves the true.

His intimate friends agreed that he was the raciest and most stimulating of companions, with an instinctive perception for the true significance of a hint, so that they never had to tell him a thing twice, or to explain it once. That letters take their tone from the recipient as well as from the writer is a commonplace, almost a platitude. While therefore only Lord Acton's half of this correspondence is printed, the nature of the other half may be surmised from what he says himself. Such letters as the criticism of *John Inglesant*, or the view of Mr. Gladstone as he will appear to posterity, or the estimate of Ultramontane ethics, stand out as solid documents with a permanent and independent value of their own. The more numerous specimens of his familiar writing will readily suggest why he found this correspondence so congenial, and what was the reason in each case for his choice of topics. The pliability and adaptability of his mind, his easy transitions from grave to gay, his sympathy with all a friend's interests and feelings, are visible in every page.

Lord Acton's personality was a negative of all shams. His spacious forehead, his deep sonorous voice, his piercing eyes, and his air of vigilant repose, were the outward signs of genuine power, in which the latent force behind is greater than anything the surface displays. He might well have sat to Titian for one of those ecclesiastical statesmen whose mingled strength and subtlety have attracted the admiring gaze of three hundred and fifty years. He was a good talker because he was a good listener, always interested in the subject, not seeking to exhaust it, rather putting in from time to time the exactly appropriate word. To draw Lord Acton out, to make him declare himself upon some doubtful or