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Right HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

William Ewart Gladstone, the fourth son of Sir John Gladstone, of Fasque, Kincardineshire, was born in Liverpool, (Eng.) December 29th, 1809. From a very tender age young Gladstone exhibited a wonderful aptitude for learning, and an almost superhuman industry, which age, instead of abating, seemingly increases. His course at Eton and at Oxford was marked by the highest distinction. A student of Christ Church, he graduated "double first," in his twenty-second year, a superlative master of the language and literature of Greece and Rome. He has published Latin sacred verses not appreciably inferior in grace to those of Buchanan and Milton, and, as a Homeric student, his "Studies of Homer and the Homeric Age" entitle him to a place among scholarly critics. In 1832 he was returned for Newark in the Conservative interest, and in 1834 Sir Robert Peel made him a Junior Lord of the Treasury. In 1835 he found himself Under-Secretary for the Colonies. Shortly after Sir Robert Peel's Administration fell, and Mr. Gladstone, in the cool shade of Opposition, found leisure to write his oft-quoted works, "The State in its Relations with the Church," and "Church Principles Considered in their Results." In 1841 Sir Robert Peel came back to office, and Mr. Gladstone was made Vice-President of the Board of Trade. In 1843 he became President of the Board, and for the first time his wonderful genius for finance had full scope. In 1845 he resigned office rather than be a party to adding to the endowments of Maynooth, which he had condemned in his work on "Church and State." In the Budget of 1845 he defended a proposal to put slave-grown sugar on a less favourable footing than free, and when the Corn Law question became a "burning" one he resigned his seat for Newark because of the anti-repeal views of the Duke of Newcastle. His powerful pen was, however, at the service of the repealers, and when the battle was fought and won he was returned in 1847 for the University of Oxford. About this time his strong Tory proclivities, which had hitherto led him to oppose all measures of reform, began to moderate.

In 1851, Gladstone, who had voted for Disraeli's motion of inquiry into the agricultural distress, was solicited by Lord Derby to join the protectionist administration; but he not only refused to do so, but in the following year signalized his opposition to his old Conservative friends by making a scathing attack on Disraeli's maiden budget. The formation of the coalition ministry under Lord Aberdeen, in 1852, again brought Gladstone into office. He was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, a position for which he was peculiarly qualified by his intimate acquaintance with the



theory and practice of finance. In introducing his celebrated Budget, in 1853, he delivered a series of addresses, which were highly praised by Cobden, and pronounced by Lord John Russell to "contain the ablest expositions of the true principles of finance ever delivered by any English statesman." When the Aberdeen Ministry was broken up by the retirement of its chief, in 1853, Gladstone was retained as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the reconstructed Cabinet of Lord Palmerston. On learning, however, a few weeks afterwards, that the Premier had determined not to oppose Mr. Roebuck's motion of inquiry into the conduct of the Crimean War, which was construed as a censure on his colleagues, the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Sidney Herbert, Gladstone sent in his resignation, but, though out of office, continued for some time from his seat among the back benches to give Lord Palmerston's Ministry an independent support.

On Lord Derby's second accession to power, in 1859, though declining a seat in the Cabinet, Gladstone accepted a special diplomatic mission to the Ionian Islands, with the title Lord High Commissioner, to arrange the difficulties between the dependencies and the mother country.

On the return of Lord Palmerston to office, in 1859, Gladstone resumed the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and signalized his administration by the repeal of the paper duty, and the negotiation, through Mr. Cobden, of the commercial treaty with France. In 1861 the Liberal electors of his native County of South Lancashire solicited him to become their candidate, but this gratifying offer was declined, from unwillingness to sever his connection with his academic constituents. It was not, however, till 1856 that he was rejected by his beloved university, whose antiquated conservatism could not brook his liberal views. He was, however, again offered the nomination from South Lancashire, which he accepted, and continued to represent that county till the election of 1865, when he was again defeated. This was almost as great a blow to his sensitive temperament as his rejection by Oxford, and he was the more unfortunate as it left the Gladstone party in the House of Commons without their leader. Luckily, however, the metropolitan constituency of Greenwich at once put him in nomination. This action, followed as it was by the triumph of his cause throughout the country, was particularly gratifying, coming after two almost simultaneous defeats, the second being his rejection as a candidate for the Lord Rectorship of the University of Edinburgh, which he had held for six preceding years.

On the resignation of Mr. Disraeli's Ministry in December, 1868, Mr. Gladstone succeeded that statesman as First Lord of the Treasury.

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THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE,
PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND.