

MR. GLADSTONE.

THE greatest English statesman of the time is by descent a Scotchman, his father having removed from Scotland to Liverpool, in England, where he became a wealthy merchant, and where in 1809 his second son, William, was born.

At his first school the young Gladstones (as the name then was) was considered very stupid at arithmetic; but he must soon have overcome this failing, for at the University of Oxford he took the highest honours in mathematics as well as in classical studies, and as a statesman he has handled the enormous revenues of the British Empire with wonderful skill.

At twenty-three years of age Mr. Gladstone became a member of Parliament, and during the half century that has elapsed since that time he has only been without a seat in the House of Commons for a few months. At thirty-four he became a member of the cabinet, and in every succeeding cabinet, when the Liberal party has been in power, he has had a seat.

He has twice been prime minister—an office which can be held only so long as the minister is supported by a majority of the members of the House. This office he still holds; and though he is said to be anxious to retire from public life, he is so far superior to any other statesman in the Liberal party that he must remain at its head as long as health and strength will permit.

Although he is now seventy-two years of age, Mr. Gladstone is still a young man so far as work is concerned. It is said that he does the work of two men, and as if to prove the fact, he holds two offices in the government of which he is the head.

He is a powerful speaker, and has frequently spoken in Parliament, and once in the open air, four hours without a break. The fact that he held the attention of his listeners for so long a time, is the highest tribute to his powers as an orator.

When Mr. Gladstone wants rest, he reads Homer in the original Greek or writes a book, and for recreation he cuts down trees in his beautiful park at Hawarden, in Wales. Abraham Lincoln, in his youth, was a rail-splitter; Mr. Gladstone, in the fullness of his years, is an expert lumberer.

DEATH OF SOCRATES.

THE last day of his life was employed in a much higher discussion—in a discourse with his faithful disciples on the immortality of the soul. This was the subject that had always deeply interested Socrates, and, during the hours which immediately preceded his decease, he followed through all its intricate windings that sublime argument on which he based the hopes of a hereafter. There are few nobler or more touching pictures of a grand human spirit preserving its self-possession, its calmness, its dignity, and its cheerfulness, in the face of approaching doom, than that which is contained in the dialogue of "Phædo," wherein Plato, though not from personal knowledge, preserves the last teaching of Socrates. Towards evening he went to bath; after which he sat down, and spoke but little. The chief ex-

ecutioner on entering, said he was well convinced that Socrates, unlike many others, would not curse him when he required that he should drink the poison. He then bade him farewell, and besought him that he would bear as easily as might be, what was inevitable. He had greater need himself, however of such kindly exhortations, for, having spoken, he broke into tears, and withdrew. The man who was to administer the poison presently came in with the hemlock in a cup, and told Socrates that when he had swallowed the draught he was to walk about until he felt a heaviness in his legs; he was then to lie down and the drug would do its work. Socrates took the fatal infusion with the same composure that he had manifested throughout; but his friends were overcome with emotion, and broke into passionate weeping. The dying sage gently reproved his disciples, and lying down on his back, awaited the end. It came gradually, and in the form of a creeping numbness ascending from the lower to the higher parts, "Consider whether you have anything else to say," whispered Crito, when the gathering cold had nearly reached the heart. "To this question," writes Plato, "he made no reply, but shortly after gave a convulsive movement, and the man covered him, and his eyes were fixed; and Crito, perceiving it, closed his mouth and eyes." Thus passed away, at the age of seventy, the noblest product of ancient wisdom—a light in the midst of much surrounding darkness, and a splendid example for the encouragement of men.—*Cassell's Illustrated Universal History.*

THE LABOUR OF AUTHORSHIP.

DAVID Livingstone said, "Those who I have never carried a book through the press can form no idea of the amount of toil it involves. The process has increased my respect for authors and authoresses a thousand-fold. . . . I think I would rather cross the African Continent again than undertake to write another book."

"For the statistics of the negro population of South America alone," says Robert Dale Owen, "I examined more than a hundred and fifty volumes." Another author tells us that he wrote paragraphs and whole pages of his book as many as forty and fifty times.

It is said of one of Longfellow's poems that it was written in four weeks, but that he spent six months in correcting and cutting it down.

Bulwer declared that he had re-written some of his briefer productions as many as eight or nine times before their publication. One of Tennyson's pieces was re-written fifty times.

John Owen was twenty years on his "Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews;" Gibson, on his "Decline and Fall," twenty years; Adam Clarke, on his "Commentary," twenty-six years.

Carlyle spent fifteen years on "Frederick the Great."

A great deal of time is consumed in reading before some books are prepared. George Eliot read one thousand books before she wrote "Daniel Deronda." Allison read two thousand books before he completed his history.

It is said of another that he read twenty thousand books, and wrote two books.

Some write out of a full soul, and it seems to be only a small effort for them to produce a great deal. This was true of Emerson and Harriet Martineau. They both wrote with wonderful facility. These "moved on winged utterances; they throw the whole force of their being into their creations."

Others wait for moods, and then accomplish much. Lowell said:

"Now, I've a notion, if a poet
Beat up for themes, his voice will show it;
I wait for subjects that hunt me,
By day by night won't let me be,
And hang about me like a curse,
Till they have made me into verse."

INTERNATIONAL SYMPATHY.

THE following friendly words of the fraternal delegate from the M. E. Church of the United States, to the General Conference of the M. E. Church of Canada, will touch a responsive chord in Canadian hearts. He said: "Across the line there was a sincere affection, and there never was a time when the feelings in the United States were warmer toward England and all pertaining to her than at the present. There had been times when some in the United States wanted to love Canada a little more than she cared for and manifest that love by absorbing her, but now the States loved Canada too well to wish for any change. The prayers of thousands of American hearts were now daily going up for England and that mighty old man who held the helm of the British ship of State, that he might be enabled to guide her through the storms and turmoil in which she now was. He was now steadying the staunch old ship in storms perhaps greater than any through which she had passed. There were a great many things binding the two countries together, but none had made a stronger bond or drawn their hearts so closely together as one little telegram that had come across the Atlantic from a woman in England. The words were almost too sacred in their tenderness for public repetition, and yet he wanted them to know how they thrilled his heart in common with the great heart of America. 'I cannot express my deep sympathy with you at this terrible moment. May God support and comfort you.' These were the words, tender and solemn as they came from the heart of the Queen, and surely never telegram so thrilled the hearts of fifty millions of people since the world began. It was written in words of fire in the bosoms of the American people, and though they had not the honour of being subjects of Queen Victoria, they were her ardent lovers, and if the two peoples had not drifted apart in the reign of George the Third it would not have been possible to have done so under Victoria."

PEOPLE are never satisfied with things as they are. Give them one, and they ask for two; give them two, and they wonder why you didn't give them three. They are like the boy who thought he could improve the Lord's Prayer by making it read: "Give us this day our daily bread—and butter, with a little cake, and some apples for desert."

ARTIE'S "AMEN."

BY PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

THEY were Methodists twain, of the ancient school,
Who always followed the wholesome rule
That whenever the preacher in meeting
said

Aught that was good for the heart or
head,
His hearers should pour their feelings out
In a loud "Amen" or a godly shout.

Three children had they, all honest boys,
Whose youthful sorrows and youthful joys
They shared, as your loving parents will,
While tending them ever through good
and ill.

One day—'twas a bleak, cold Sabbath
morn,
When the sky was dark and the earth for-
lorn—

These boys, with a caution not to roam,
Were left by the elder folk at home.

But scarce had they gone when the wooded
frame
Was seen by the tall stove-pipe aflame,
And out of their reach, high, high, and
higher
Rose the red coils of the serpent fire.

With startled sight for a while they gazed,
As the pipe grew hot and the wood-work
blazed;

Then up, though his heart beat wild with
dread,
The eldest climbed to a shelf o'erhead,
And soon with a sputter and hiss of steam,
The flame died out like an angry dream.

When the father and mother came back
that day—

They had gone to a neighbouring church
to pray—
Each looked with a half-averted eye,
On the sudden doom which had just
passed by.

And then the father began to praise
His boys with a tender and sweet amaze.
"Why how did you manage, Tom, to
climb

And quench the threatening flames in
time

To save your brothers, and save yourself?"
"Well, father, I mounted the strong oak
shelf

By help of the table standing nigh."
"And what," quoth the father, suddenly,
Turning to Jemmy the next in age,
"Did you to quiet the fiery rage?"
"I brought the pail and the dipper too,
And so it was that the water flew
All over the flames and quenched them
quite."

A mist came over the father's sight,
A mist of pride and of righteous joy,
As he turned at last to his youngest boy—
A gleeful urchin scarce three years old,
With his dimpling cheeks and his hair of
gold.

"Come Artie, I'm sure you were'n't afraid,
Now tell me in what way you tried to
aid

This fight with the fire." "To small am
I."

Artie replied, with a half-drawn sigh,
"To fetch like Jemmy, and work like
Tom;

So I stood just here for a minute dumb,
Because, papa, I was frightened some;
But I prayed, 'Our Father'; and then—
and then

I shouted as loud as I could, 'Amen!'
—*Harper's Young People.*

The full term of three years had
nearly expired, and they were discuss-
ing at the breakfast-table the certainty
that they must move, and the un-
certainty as to where, when the young
miss of the parsonage drew a heavy
sigh. "Oh, I was thinking what a
mistake mother and I made when we
married a Methodist minister."