

fails to altogether hide the firm lines of the mouth, and the chin is squareness itself. No milk-and-water character this, evidently, and those deep-set, large, clear-blue, German eyes never looked into other eyes that did not droop before their steady gaze. "A big man with an eye like a tiger," as Moncure Conway described his appearance. Each great wrinkle of parchment-like skin on that countenance seems to have a history, and yet the main impression we carry away is not of age but of strength—grim, earnest purpose. His uniform is buttoned up tightly to the throat, though the sun is warm, and to the respectful salutations of chance peasants he returns a correct military salute, whilst the hard lines on his strong face relax somewhat. We notice the few passers-by look back at the gigantic figure, and well they may, for that stout frame is Otto Edward Leopold, Prince von Bismarck, the re-founder of a great Empire, the man of blood and iron, the one master-spirit of our times, if doughty deeds are tests of real greatness, as indeed what other can there be.

Now, turn to another scene on, say, the same sunny afternoon, but in a different land—the land of Old England. A broad, well-kept lawn, with a sod such as is only attained by years of clipping and cultivation, stretches away in front of a mansion with the delightfully cosy look of an English home. In front of this comfortable home is a little group seated on the grass around an easy chair, the occupant of which is an old man also. His eyes are shaded so that we cannot tell what manner of man he is by those ever-truthful indicators of the inner soul, but, as he turns from one to the other of the little group, and addresses them with the easy, natural gestures of a born orator, instinctively we turn and seem to hear that wonderful voice. No elocutionist can imitate it, no art can improve it, for it is William Ewart Gladstone who is talking, and these are his children and grandchildren grouped around him, and this is his ancestral home, Hawarden Castle. Very tenderly, almost adoringly, they tuck his wraps about him, for the autumn wind is bleak, though the day is sunny, and this is not a life to be snuffed out before its time, for this man has played great parts in the world, many of them marvellously, most of them creditably, but alas! some of them—and those the very ones where real genius was sadly needed—very indifferently, if not badly. This man has led for years—and led successfully—a composite party through the intricate mazes of British politics—none more intricate—and compelled obedience through the sheer force of his own individuality. More difficult still, this man persuaded—nay, forced—an aggressive wing of eighty members to turn on their own great leader and rend him, on that leader who had first taught them how to be formidable. There is scarcely a great event, which has changed the map of Europe during the last half hundred years, that this old man in the easy chair has not been an actor in—and a prominent one at that. Yet it is measurably certain that the future Macaulay will not assign to him one of the highest niches in history. He will scarcely be bracketed with Cæsar, and Pitt, and Bonaparte, and Bismarck. And why? Because he has been a magnificently brilliant apostle of the creed of talk—palaver, the native African calls it—as opposed to action. No man has surpassed him in word pyrotechnics, no leader has been lamer in action at critical times. If all governmen-

tal difficulties could be explained away by smooth, easy speech, then William Ewart Gladstone would indeed be the very apotheosis of a heaven-born statesman. But unfortunately it is not so. As Bismarck said in the phrase, which has stuck to him ever since, "many of the all-important questions of the day are not to be settled by speeches and votes, but by blood and iron."

It is not to be desired, however, that were the votes of the English-speaking people taken, at the present time, on the question, "Who is the greatest man living," that Gladstone would get a vast majority. Not alone in the British Isles, but in the whole British Empire and the United States, he counts his admirers not by thousands but by millions. Have we not seen lately, the absolutely unprecedented spectacle of a deputation, representing the better elements of American life, visiting an ex-Premier of Great Britain, and in the name of that nation, which loses no opportunity to manifest their hatred of everything monarchical, inviting the aged statesman to visit America before his death? Not long ago I asked an advanced class in a Canadian school to write down the name of the greatest man in the world, and when their answers were handed in, they all bore the same name, and that name was Gladstone. He has so managed to make his exit from the public stage in a blaze of admiration—an admiration which it is hard to find sufficient grounds for—nor can I bring myself to believe that this false glamour will be enduring. His most ardent admirer, I take it, will not lay claim that his career has added strength to his nation, or increased the respect of foreign nations for England. No true lover of our great Empire can look back, with any feelings but those of humiliation, to the time of the Franco-Prussian war, when Russia taking advantage of that great struggle, announced in a blunt note to Mr. Gladstone's Government, that she would be no longer bound by the Treaty of Paris—that treaty for which England's blood and money had been poured out on the shores of the Crimea. Nor is it pleasant reading even now to scan over the feeble despatches and protests of England at that time, and Russia's calmly contemptuous replies. Speaking of this incident and its handling by the Gladstone administration, Mr. Justin McCarthy—surely a friendly critic—says: "It did not tend to raise the credit or add to the popularity of the English Government. We do not know that there was anything better to do; we only say that the Government deserves commiseration, which at an important European crisis can do nothing better." If this was an exceptional case, one might be inclined to think that Mr. Gladstone was simply unfortunate in being leader at that time, but we find almost invariably that it was during the terms of his premiership that strong foreign nations took occasion to press their demands on England, often in threatening tones. Take the abject apology, which Mr. Gladstone was literally forced, after his accession to power in 1880, to write to the Austrian Minister in London, explaining away his language during the Mid-Lothian campaign, when he had referred to Austria in contemptuous phrases, in order to win popular applause. The archives of Europe will be searched in vain for such another letter, by the leader of a great people addressed to a foreign power.

When Bismarck quitted Berlin at the bidding of his young Emperor, and resign-

ed the Chancellorship of the great Empire he had consolidated, *Punch* had a notable cartoon, which like most of *Punch's* work, exactly fitted the situation. It was entitled "Dropping the Pilot" and represented the German ships of State, stout and staunch, and forging ahead against the winds, and the young Emperor at the helm cocky and confident. Down over the side of the vessel the burly figure of Bismarck was climbing on a ladder to a small boat, preparatory to quitting the ship. The expression on his face was as stoically calm as when he humbled the Austrians at Sadowa, or received the sword of the broken Napoleon III. at Sedan, or entered the conquered Paris at the head of the German legions. The pilot who had made the vessel seaworthy was being dropped, but was he not still Bismarck, and why should he be downcast?

Again, when Mr. Gladstone resigned last year, *Punch* came out with another famous cartoon. It pictured Gladstone as an aged Knight, doffing the armour, dented with many a hard knock, in which he had given battle to all comers. Along the wall thickly hung with the armour of stout knights of old, he was hanging up his equipments for the last time, ere he sought the rest that his many a hard-fought battle entitled him to.

These cartoons correctly pictured the respective careers of the two men. Bismarck was the grim pilot, who shaped the course of Germany; Gladstone, the skillful parliamentary fighter of the English House of Commons; Bismarck, the man of action, with a steady, deliberate, purpose ever in view; Gladstone invincible in debate, but ever ready to shift as party exigencies dictated. Gladstone was constitutional, Bismarck resolute—some say pitilessly so. To sum up their life work, for each in all probability has finished, but the net results of their labours live on for good or ill, and may be seen of all men. When Gladstone first entered his nation's service, he found a great Empire, whose will was respected and feared by all nations, for Waterloo was not yet forgotten. He leaves indeed a great Empire still, but it has been despite him, rather than through his aid, for was not his final battle an effort to virtually separate an important part of the wide inheritance he found ready at hand? In what direction, tell me, has he consolidated and strengthened the British Empire? It would be vastly easier to point out where he has weakened it, by raising the demon of unrest in Great Britain itself.

On the other hand, Bismarck found Prussia only an influence—and not a preponderating influence either—in a loosely-joined nebula of States, "a continent of Brandenburg sand," Carlyle called the then Prussia. He left it not Prussia, but Germany, the greatest military power the world ever saw, able to fling off her enemies from her borders, like a huge mastiff attacked by terriers. To-day Germany is the arbiter of Europe; when Bismarck appeared she was playing second fiddle to Austria. He found a Prussia, who was considered of so little importance in the council of nations, that she was not even invited to the initiatory stages of the Conference of the Great Powers in 1856. He left a Germany that summoned the other Great Powers to meet in Berlin, to settle the Russo-Turkish war, in 1878, and over which Prince Bismarck himself presided. In the face of these done deeds—accomplished results—I have no hesitancy in pronouncing an opinion on which of the two remarkable old men, now fast hurry-