

# The Owl.



VOL. II.

COLLEGE OF OTTAWA, FEBRUARY, 1889.

No. 6.

## GLADSTONE AND INGERSOLL.

**T**HE things which captivate the attention of thoughtful men are many and varied, but few of them are of such profound and weighty interest, as those which are connected in any way with the lives and achievements of the great minds of their own times. There is a force in the social world whose action upon our sympathies is equivalent to that which the law of gravitation exercises in the world of nature, with this difference, however, that the motive of our sympathies, unlike that of falling bodies, is doubly accelerated when they run parallel to the power which influences them.

To one who views the thickly set firmament of fame from the nineteenth century observatory, there are no such lustrous stars, naturally, as those which are nearest his point of observation. With tradition's long telescope, strengthened and improved by history, he may easily trace the outlines of the luminous bodies of antiquity still clearly though faintly visible, through the gloom of intervening years, but he takes a more vivid interest with a partiality which is not hard to understand and forgive, in those other stars, whose brilliancy and splendor, he can contemplate with his naked eye. Towards which of these do the men of our day turn their watchful, eager gaze most often? To one whose mortal course, alas the pity of it! is now nearly run.

For more than half a century, the name of William E. Gladstone has been upon the lips of men and nations; the cares of a mighty empire have weighed upon him, and while thousands of his sovereign's subjects laughed and sang and slept away the weeks, and months, and years, making merry over a loyalty, which it cost them little to sustain, *he* worked, assiduously and unwearingly, that the time of his administration might be peaceful and prosperous and beneficial to the world at large, which in many ways he ruled, at least indirectly. Let us try to imagine for one moment, we, who by contrast to such men are the very residue of intellectual and useful humanity, what it is to lie down at night with the great map of England's vast dominion in our minds, and the countless human souls which they represent looking steadily at us; to dream of her army and her navy, her government, her commerce and industries, her fiscal and social and foreign policies, her dangers at home and abroad, her present and prospective conditions, her literature, her science and her morals, and then to awake and find that we are each and all of these for the time being, and that we must get up and put on these innumerable responsibilities and personalities as though they were so many ordinary articles of apparel, with the miserably cruel conviction that so long as all goes well with us we shall be let alone, unthanked, unheeded even by the millions of motley souls whose interests we have sworn to serve! When we have