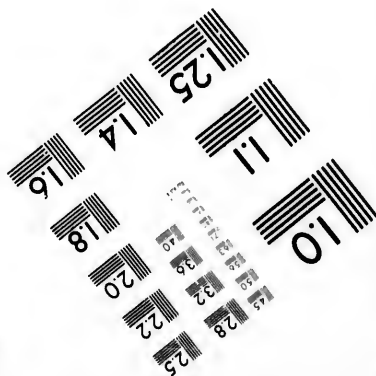
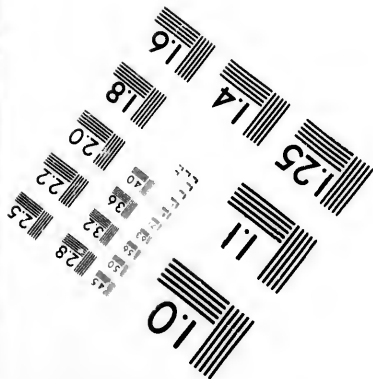
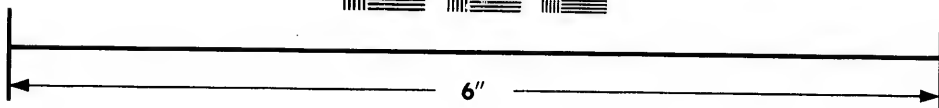
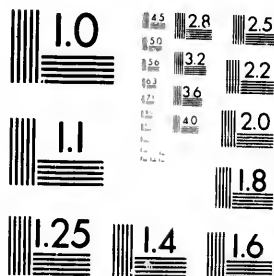


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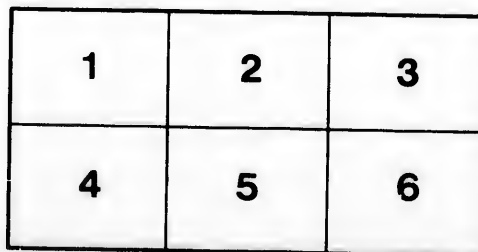
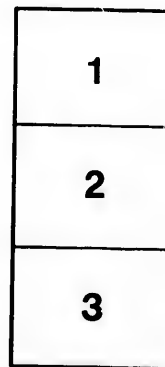
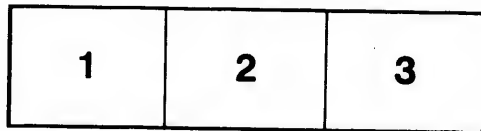
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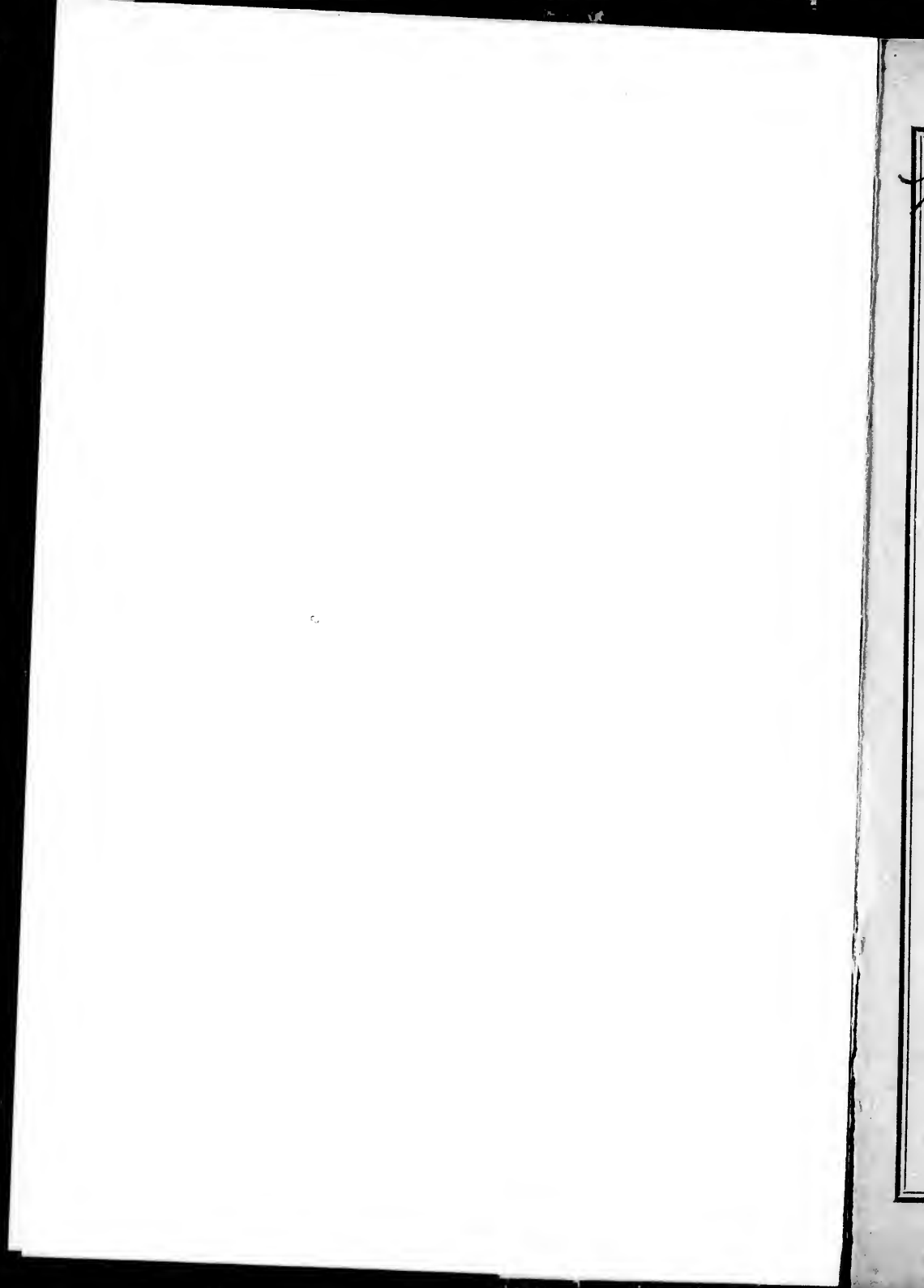
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PETER RYAN'S

LECTURE

ON

**GLADSTONE**

THE STATESMAN  
THE ORATOR  
AND MAN OF LETTERS



A Brief Review of Sixty Years of British  
Parliamentary History.



TORONTO  
1897

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## Lecture on Gladstone.



The hero of my subject—Mr. Gladstone, statesman, orator and man of letters—was born of Scottish parents in the borough of Liverpool on December 29, 1809, and the old house in Rodney street was, in my day, and doubtless is still more at the present time, the Mecca of thousands of hero-worshippers, and a place of historic interest to those who, like myself, love to visit places hallowed by the associations of the mighty men who have labored to bless mankind and leave the world better than they found it.

The grandfather of England's great Premier, Mr. Thomas Gladstone, was of Clydesdale stock; a district that, for its resources, presents greater industrial achievements to the gaze of an appreciative and admiring world than perhaps any part of the globe; there the hand of man, backed by the slender resources of a poor northern nation whose soil is none too rich, and whose climate is none too attractive or pleasant, has dug out the bed of a small river (where my own grandfather was said to have waded across with trousers rolled up in boyish happiness), and from being an unimportant stream, now carries on its bosom ships of the largest tonnage, and on whose banks the ocean greyhounds and England's ironclads are built, and a city founded with a commerce rivaling in volume and value that of ancient Rome when she was mistress of the world.

Such is the City of Glasgow, and if Scotland never did aught else than found this great city and give Robert Burns to mankind her name deserves to be preserved forever; and let me further say that along the banks of the Clyde there has long dwelt, and still dwells, a race of men alike distinguished for their commercial greatness as for

their devotion to the the principles of human freedom and the "rights of man."

Mr. Thomas Gladstone, the grandfather of England's Grand Old Man, was a corn merchant in the Town of Leith, and was, the historian chronicles, the father of sixteen children, one of whom was the great statesman's father, of whom I now desire to speak for a few moments. Sent by his father to Liverpool to sell a cargo of corn, his demeanor and capacity so won the admiration of one of the great merchants of that port that he induced the elder Mr. Gladstone to permit him to settle there, and, from being an assistant, he soon became a partner of the firm.

It was during his partnership with this house that he displayed in a special manner the courage and business enterprise that followed him through life. The grain crop of Europe having failed, the house sent him to the United States to make purchases, but on his arrival (no cables or fast steamers then) he found the markets of the Republic unable to supply his wants, the American crops having failed also.

He was informed by the house that a fleet had been despatched to Boston and New York to carry the grain he had been sent to buy and which was unobtainable. The loss from such a transaction meant ruin to the firm unless averted. He bought with prudence such produce as he thought would suit the British market, loaded his ships with what the house had not arranged for, but in place of disaster to himself and partners, he made a fortunate stroke and the fame of young Gladstone as a man of boldness was established. He became sole proprietor of the house and subsequently the head of one of the largest shipping firms in the world.

Meanwhile the seven Gladstone brothers had left Leith and settled in Liverpool, for their judgment told them that the great Lancashire port on the west coast with the American, China and West India trades, was destined to far outstrip Leith or any of the British ports on the east coast, for then, as now, the star of the empire was "westward,"

and it is recorded as an additional evidence of the enterprise of this famous house that when the East India and China trades were thrown open and the East India Company's monopoly was abolished, the firm of John Gladstone & Co. was the first to send a private ship to Calcutta.

But the times were not favorable for shipowners, and the early years of the century entailed heavy losses on Liverpool merchants. The Napoleonic wars and blockades paralyzed her commerce, and the port is said to have lost in one year three-fourths of its trade, for trouble with the young giant Republic in the United States—and which ended in the war of 1812—ruined many firms whose chief business was either with the States or dependent on being permitted to sail their ships free from hostile men-of-war or privateers.

In commerce John Gladstone ranked high for integrity, but it must be said that in politics his ideas of propriety and his methods of carrying elections were not of that character that "exalteth a nation." In 1812 he induced Canning, who was a guest at his house, to stand for Liverpool, for which place he was elected after a contest where it was said of it: "The town had been very quiet during the election and only two or three men had been killed."

It was from the balcony of Mr. Gladstone's house in Rodney street that Canning addressed his supporters at the close of the poll, where the child three years old, that was to become England's great lawgiver and ruler, was held up by his nurse to view the exultant mob, and it is further related that about this very time, and in his father's house, Miss Hannah More, the poetess, and friend of Reynolds, Garrick and Dr. Johnson, whose birth occurred more than one hundred and fifty years ago, presented him with a book because, as she feelingly said, "he was just entering into the world and she was about to leave it." In considering this simple incident we are forcibly reminded of the extraordinary space of time Mr. Gladstone and those

he personally met cover in British history, when we find that Hannah More was alive when "Bonnie Prince Charlie" fought the battles of Preston Pans and Culloden, and was nearing her fiftieth year before the name of Napoleon was known beyond the confines of his native island, and that she had attained the years of mature womanhood when the fathers of the American Republic signed the Declaration of Independence.

Looking across the gulf of time bridged by the lives of these two famous characters, it is somewhat difficult to comprehend the immensity of change that has been wrought in the British nation. This gifted woman with whom Mr. Gladstone talked was in the world before Clive established the British Empire in India by his famous victory at Plassey, when Fontenoy was lost and won, and before Nelson or the younger Pitt had seen the light. She lived when the unsupported oaths of Roman Catholics were refused in courts of justice, when penalties were still collectible by law from Catholics and Dissenters for non-attendance at the parish church services, and when the former possessed no civil rights. She lived when priest-hunting was a governmental industry, and when the sincere and religious Covenanters of Scotland were tracked by the bloodhounds of the law to their glens, and scorched in the furnace of persecution. She, whose smile helped to light the pathway of the boy who was to become Britain's Liberal leader, lived when even in England rewards for the recovery of escaped slaves were openly advertised, and when the punishment of the aged mothers of the land for witchcraft was indulged in under the sanction of religion and law. In her days of womanhood the death penalty for trivial offences was enacted and the press gang was an institution of the State.

How can we therefore cease to marvel at the great change that has been wrought in England during the days of Hannah More and the child she patronized, and who was to become in God's good time the instrument by which he would enthrone righteousness and liberty, and whose

blows on the fortress of injustice were to become like strokes of an avenging fate.

As Gladstone grew up to boyhood Canning exercised a wonderful fascination for him, and being a frequent visitor at his father's house he was thrown much in his way, and his political ideas were largely moulded by the man who not alone gave a lustre to British eloquence, but did much to tone down the bitterness of public life.

The love he bore Canning was well exemplified in a speech which he delivered when member for the division of Lancashire in which I lived, and which speech I had the happiness to listen to. He said, in speaking about his advancing Liberalism and his change or development from Toryism : " I sat at the feet of Canning and grew up under his guidance. I recollect how he urged me—should I ever enter into public life—to labor for the enactment of laws founded on justice, and to support their fearless administration ; and though I have faltered much in my steps towards the goal of my just ambition, I have been sustained in the painful journey by his admonition, and though I have left many of my old and cherished friends to dwell in another political tent, it is because I followed his injunction to be just, as far as in me lay, rather than consistent in the attachment to institutions and principles which the spirit of the generation has outgrown."

Though busy, as the head of a colossal mercantile house, and guarding with exceeding jealousy the interest of the great port, the elder Gladstone offered himself for Parliament, and was elected for Lancaster in 1812. He represented that notoriously corrupt borough and Woodstock and Berwick for nine years in all, and during that period and up till the day of his death, in 1851, was an ardent defender of the State church, and a firm contender that England had no moral right to emancipate the slaves. He looked on Wilberforce, Hume, O'Connell and Brougham as members of a very dangerous element, and viewed with alarm the demand of the laboring and half-famished masses of Britain for the free admission of breadstuffs,

and for which his great son did so much when he was a member of the Peel administration, and still more to unfetter commerce at a later day when his power over his country became so great that his wish conveyed to millions the force of law.

While the father of our hero was no friend of the Liberal party—but very much the reverse—he was one of that class of England's worthies whose basic principle was thoroughness, and which has done so much to earn for her people, in the main, the confidence of all nations. He left behind him a character for unchallenged integrity as a merchant, and a son whose fame in after years was to become so great that the name of Gladstone "shall not perish forever."

William Ewart Gladstone was one of a family of six children, two daughters and four sons, Sir Thomas Gladstone, Captain M. Gladstone, M.P., Robertson Gladstone, and the subject of my address. Sir Thomas and Captain Gladstone were firm Tories of the old school, while Robertson and his brother left the fold of class privilege and restricted commerce for the bracing atmosphere of Liberalism and broadened out as will be seen, to be full and hearty sympathizers with the demands of the British people for free trade, free ships and a free nation; and though he never sat for Parliament, nor yet, so far as I have been able to learn, ever offered for the House of Commons, Robertson Gladstone was an active and enthusiastic worker in election contests, and took a very advanced position on all questions affecting popular rights, and I have a distinct personal recollection of him—tall of stature, and intense earnestness—addressing the people of Liverpool and the neighborhood on the public questions of the hour, and in his political speeches there was not unfrequently presented his undisguised admiration for his distinguished brother, whom he esteemed not alone as the best, but the greatest man in English public life.

It may be said of the great statesman that he came honestly by his splendid gifts, for authorities claim for him,

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through his mother, descent from Henry III. of England and Robert Bruce; but though the genealogy be traced clear to the satisfaction of those who are concerned in claiming the royal blood, I, as a man who care not for Imperial crowns nor titles, glory more in the honorable career of the Gladstones, who carved out for their house a fortune based on commercial integrity, and an imperishable renown through a son whose name will endure while the story of England and England's people is preserved.

Moulded in a school that viewed with misgivings the demands of the people to participate in the making of the laws to which they were subjected, and under the influence of Canning and his father, he could not view the advancing democracy other than with alarm. They all shared in the intense dislike of the great Corsican, whose disturbing influence on the peace and commerce of Europe never had, and perhaps never will have, a parallel; and it must not be forgotten that the horrors of the French revolution caused many like Mr. Gladstone, seniors, to blame those who asked in due season for reforms rather than the royal tyrants who only viewed the people as a useful element but regarded not their rights to participate more fully in the fruits of their toil and sacrifices.

Be the cause what it may Mr. Gladstone's earliest political leanings were decidedly Tory, with a strong reverence for the existing order of things, but nature and his environments were favorable to the production and development of his genius, and never has England presented in any of her sons so rare a combination of those qualities that adorned the man and blessed the people.

It has been said of him by one of his reviewers, that Liverpool gave him financial talent and business aptitude, Eaton his classical attainments, and Oxford his moral fervor and religious spirit. These gifts enabled him to throw around the science of finance a charm and interest for even the busy multitude it never previously possessed.

He diffused a light on every subject to which he called public attention, and brought all things and subjects on



which he spoke within the pale of public interest and intelligence. He was all earnestness and enthusiasm, and to these qualities, called by his opponents fanaticism, was due a large share of the admiration of his country; neither the world of commerce, the world of politics, nor the world of letters held him entirely for its own, yet he has trodden every stage with success, and to him has been given a career accompanied by blessings to his race and a meteoric splendor unequalled in the political history of his country.

Another very able writer, Mr. Hutton, in his "Sketches in Parliament," said of him: "He cares even more than trades unions for the welfare of the workingmen, more than the manufacturers for the interest of capital, more for retrenchment than the most rigid economist. He unites the business of Manchester with classic Oxford, the deep joy over Greek and Italian resurrection with an intimate knowledge of the duties on Mediterranean fruits and rags; railway boards, bank corporations, Bishops and labor organizations are all interested in him and brought within the charmed circle of his wondrous influence. The acts and speeches of such a man are his best history, and through these my effort shall be to trace his footsteps and weigh with honest balance the product of his labors in the public vineyard.

I am not going to view him apologetically for his early errors, or panegyrically for his later services to humanity, but will try to paint him as Cromwell wished the artist to do, "warts, wrinkles and all," that you, my friends, may be able to view him just as he was and not all on points what we would wish him to have been. From the child of five years old, who has even to-day a distinct recollection of having heard the guns of Edinburgh Castle announce the peace of 1814, and the banishment of Napoleon to Elba, to the great lawgiver of 1894 (a period of more than four score years), there have been many startling changes and much revolution of thought. He who commenced life as the rising hope of the Tory party, became in time the most trusted and honored leader of the Liberals, and,

while the changes were startling, they were only adopted as the result of conscientious conviction, and which were more vividly painted by himself than I could possibly do when, on being twitted by the Conservatives for his change of political leanings, I heard him say: "They (referring to the Tories) drove me from them by the slow and measured force of conviction; I took the step in obedience to duty and (turning to the Liberals) I came as any outcast among you in 'forma pauperis,' with nothing to offer you but pure and disinterested services, and though the change was accompanied by much sorrow when I had to make my choice between remaining in the temple where I found obstinacy prevailing and the association of men whose desires were the good of all mankind, I had no hesitation, but, like Mary of old, I chose the 'better part.'"

After receiving his earliest training under the Vicar of Seaforth he was sent at the age of twelve to Eaton—one of England's famous schools—where the foundation for the greatness of so many of her children has been laid, but in Mr. Gladstone's time Eaton was said to have been a place where idleness and sports were cultivated rather than the useful sciences, or the higher walks of learning trod, and as an evidence of this it is related that it was only by conversation with a companion that he learned that John Milton had written prose. With such unfavorable environments and the lack of encouragement by Eaton's crusty master, the advancement and application of young Gladstone stamped him as a boy of extraordinary parts. He founded the Eaton Miscellany, with Hallam, the historian, Selwyn, the great missionary Bishop, Rogers and other celebrities as contributors, and a perusal of the early copies show the genius of his youth.

The Debating Society of Eaton had within its members Castlereagh, Stanley, Morpeth, and others who became famous amongst England's statesmen, and foremost in the list of her Parliamentary debaters. Their positions while young men gave Mr. Gladstone much encouragement, that he, too, might have an opportunity to

serve his country in the halls of State. He left Eaton in 1827, at the age of eighteen, after having established a high reputation amongst his contemporaries for erudition and ability. For two years he was a private pupil of Dr. Turner—afterwards Bishop of Calcutta—and then entered Christ Church College, Oxford University, which had the distinguished honor of having produced no less than eight Prime Ministers of England. At the age of twenty-two he went up for examination and secured a double first, which is the highest possible University distinction, and the position all students desire to attain, but which only one in many thousands ever hope to reach. The University life was not calculated to foster Liberal instincts, for all attached to the institution was Conservative, and it is not unfairly claimed that his college life did very much to retard the growth of Liberalism, which developed at a later day, and attained a strength and character that distinguished him in his generation amongst the most advanced political forces in the British Parliament. Every Oxford influence had a restraining effect on his generous impulses, and kept him moored to the traditions of the party of English gentlemen. The brotherhood of aristocracy were banded together to resist the disturbing tendencies that first took shape in the French revolution, followed by the war of independence and the thundering of the people of Great Britain for Parliamentary reform. In Oxford the reactionary sentiment was exceeding strong, and Mr. Gladstone was amongst those who opposed the first demands of the people for an extension of the franchise and the removal of the rotten and pocket boroughs that enabled their proprietors to elect whom they chose, to speak, to vote, and make laws for the people whose choice they were not.

The rulers of England at this time had no confidence in the people, who were only looked on as the "common herd," or, as Lord Derby called them at a later day in a fit of goutish anger, the "swinish multitude," and the warning voice of Canning against the democracy ever and anon rose to stifle the love that young Gladstone had for the principles of equality:

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He became a prominent member and Secretary of the Oxford Union Debating Society, which included such men as Cardwell, Sydney, Herbert, Duke of Newcastle, Robert Lowe and other distinguished statesmen. As Secretary he opposed a motion for the removal of Jewish disabilities, and, as if still further to mark his opposition to Liberal principles, he supported a motion condemnatory of the Government of Earl Grey for having introduced a very moderate measure of Parliamentary reform.

He closed his career at Oxford by opposing a resolution for the immediate emancipation of the West India slaves, which he thought should be gradual and "accompanied by the blessings of a Christian education under the clergy and teachers of the established church."

The question of West India slavery touched him deeply, for his father was largely interested in West India plantations, and it became his duty in after years to defend him from many aspersions uttered on the floor of Parliament for the harsh administration of his estates and his treatment of his Demerara slaves.

When Mr. Gladstone entered political life he gradually left behind him the fears and prejudices of the people which were the result of his academic training. He studied the people's wants, and devoted his splendid gifts to the uplifting of the masses, and to the prosecution of the great work of law-building, which had for its aim the enlargement of the sphere of human happiness, and threw himself with fervor in favor of the freedom of the British people to purchase and import the products of the world, that they might partake of the best gifts of nature, and which—as Sir Robert Peel said—were "the sweeter because no longer leavened by a sense of injustice."

At the close of his University career in 1881, he spent some time travelling on the continent, thereby contributing to the expansion of his ideas, and which blossomed in after life. He delighted in Italy, and loved to drink the inspiration that the scenes of her past glory gave him; and he returned "like a giant refreshed with new wine"

to take his first step in political warfare, and to develop the wonderful power and genius which in the main he has devoted to the service of mankind.

The year 1832 saw the first triumph of the democracy of England in the passing of the reform bill, which in its day was looked on as the ending of the reign of the landed aristocracy. The bill, while hailed with joy by the populace, was viewed with dread by those who saw in the extension of the suffrage and the disfranchisement of pocket boroughs, the forerunner of England's decay; but it fell very short of the nation's demands, for the franchise of ten pounds rating in boroughs and fifty pounds in counties, practically excluded the working classes from all political power except such as they brought to bear indirectly on a large portion of the middle class of shop-keepers and business men; but were such a measure to be enacted to-day, and the people forced to turn back to the law of 1832, and accept the provisions of the old reform bill, the Crown itself would not be worth a week's purchase. So much for the advancing sentiment of the people.

The reform bill of Earl Gery, however, was a great step in advance. For prior to its passing many cities of immense population were not permitted to send members to Parliament, while places like Gatten and Old Sarum sent two members each, though I stood on the site of the latter place in Wiltshire in 1861—just twenty-nine years after the disfranchisement of the place—and failed to see a house or building or stone upon stone to mark its existence. It was like many other places, only a pocket borough, where the owner could elect his coachman if qualified to sit in Parliament, to make laws for the men who, in Manchester and Birmingham, were paying the taxes and sustaining by their numbers and wealth the very existence of the nation.

Though falling very short of the just demands of the people, the reform bill had only become law after a generation of fierce conflict, and in spite of the hostility of Church and Crown and Lords, and it is only those who,

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like myself, dwelt where Lords of the manor were powerful can understand how great must have been the labors and how stern must have been the resolve of Britain's Liberal hosts in wresting from the entrenchment of privilege the modest portion of popular rights conferred by the reform bill of 1832.

During the agitation for reform, royalty and the church alike opposed the people's demands until resistance became dangerous, and even the royal Duke of Cumberland wrote the King, pointing out the danger of permitting reform organizations to exist, and saying that they boded the destruction of the Crown unless suppressed. Considering the power of the Crown and the influence of the wealth of the governing classes, together with the intimidation of the regular military force and the murderous onslaughts of the yeoman cavalry, it was indeed marvellous how the people triumphed, and had it not been for the indomitable energy of such men as Earl Grey and Henry Brougham, the bill would have been deferred for perhaps another generation, or have awaited a convulsion that would have destroyed the monarchy itself.

The reform bill was vainly expected by the working class to usher in the golden era, and their hopes beat high, while the privileged orders looked on the slight opening of the flood gates of democracy as certain to bring forth the destruction of the State. Both were disappointed, for the trade of England was very bad and continued so for years after the bill became law, and this created a feeling of discontent against the Grey Ministry, which resulted in its early downfall, while the Tories found even in the boroughs a strong sentiment antagonistic to Liberalism, and thus the gentlemen's party found support where they anticipated hostility.

It was in 1832, immediately following the reform bill, that Mr. Gladstone, then only twenty-three years old, was invited by the Duke of Newcastle to contest the borough of Newark on Trent against Mr. Hanley, a gentleman of great local influence, and Sergeant Wilde (afterwards Lord

Truro, and one of England's great law Lords). After a contest of unusual bitterness, the lad of twenty-three was elected over his veteran and more experienced opponent, but he was subjected to much hostile criticism, amongst which was a scathing denouncement by *The Reflector*, a Radical paper owned by Sergeant Wilde, wherein he was reminded that his father's wealth had been amassed at the expense of the groans of the bondsman, the traffic of human kidnapping, the companionship of slave dealers, and that every ounce of his gold had been purchased by the blood of his black slaves.

He was also said to "represent nothing and nobody but the Duke, who had only to command the people to bow down to a wooden-headed Lord, as the people of Egypt did to their crocodiles, their sacred beasts, their reptiles and other objects of superstitious adoration, for did not he own nearly every roof that sheltered nearly every man, woman and child in Newark, and who but the brave could stand up before him."

But young Gladstone earned for himself a high character for ability as a speaker, even at this early date, and greatly impressed his friends with the maturity of his ideas on the great problem of government. He had reached a seat in the nation's Parliament, where eloquence of the highest order alone commanded special attention, and it was not without misgivings on his part that he entered its walls, within which he was destined to earn imperishable fame. He entered Parliament with a profound reverence and veneration for England's existing institutions. The Chapel of St. Stephen's, which had been given by King Edward to the Commons as a place of assemblage, preserved its original features, and its decorations only served to hide the once sacred character of the edifice, which had seen the long line of the Plantagenets, the Tudors and the Stuarts disappear.

When Mr. Gladstone first took his seat in St. Stephen's Cobden was an obscure calico printer in the hills of Lancashire, Bright was attending to his father's cotton

spinning at Rochdale, and Salisbury was a child in arms. At this time Palmerston was only looked on as a "man about town," or, may I add, as one who had "neither fortune to preserve or much character to lose"; Disraeli was viewed as an eccentric novelist of quixotic ambition, and many of the great men, who in later days became either his adherents or opponents in the halls of the State, had not been born.

The building in which the Parliament assembled had been made famous by the association of some of the greatest captains and lawgivers England ever produced. Its walls had reverberated to the sound of the voices of Bacon and Raleigh, of Pym and Hampden, of Cromwell and Harry Vane, and other immortal sons of Albion.

It has been eloquently said that Mr. Gladstone sat in the House with men who had witnessed the Gordon riots, and who remembered the entrance of the younger Pitt within its walls for the first time. He was the Parliamentary companion of men who were members before the birth of Peel, and to whom the great Burke was more than a memory. Some of his fellow-members had witnessed the French revolution and saw Napoleon's sun of destiny rise and set, and the founders of the American Republic in arms against King George.

He sat side by side with men who took part in the suppression of the Irish rebellion of 1798, and in the impeachment of Warren Hastings, and with those who had been thanked by Parliament for their services in suppressing the mutiny of the Nore a hundred years ago. But he also found younger and no less able men whose intellectual gifts and powers of eloquence have never been excelled. There was O'Connell, the great liberator and master of defiant oratory, leading the band of the Irish Nationalists with much power and brilliancy. There was also Russell, Palmerston, Honest Jack Althorp, Stanley, Peel, Graham, and others alike distinguished for their eloquence and their services to the State.



It was an assemblage of statesmen and patriots of the highest type that no generation in any age has excelled, and the emulation of these giants of British oratory contributed much to shed a lustre not alone upon themselves but on the Parliament and the nation which they served so well.

To fully comprehend the great strides in national and scientific development in Mr. Gladstone's day, and to have any just conception of his progress in political thought, we must try to compare the manners and customs of the nation in 1831 with 1897.

When Mr. Gladstone first took his seat in Parliament men were hanged in chains and slavery existed in the colonies; soldiers were flogged for trivial offences and the duel was the usual mode of settling disputes between Christian gentlemen; the light of the sun and the bread of the people were taxed, and the postage on a letter cost a workingman a full half day's sweat and toil.

In that day the flint and steel were used, after the manner of the savages rubbing two sticks of wood, to produce fire; the control and uses of electricity were unknown; railways were just struggling into existence, and "they that went down to the sea in ships" possessed not the friendly agency of steam, the merciful discovery of chloroform was yet in the womb of time, and the masses of the people sunk in pauperism had no effective means of dispelling their inherited ignorance.

Then it was that the rulers of the land spoke much of the constitution, but gave no thought to the common weal; it was of the church and not of religion that they talked. This was the day when there was a landed interest, a shipping interest, a manufacturing and moneyed interest, but no one dreamed that labor had any interest except to fret out its wretched day and contribute by its very misery towards the profligacy and luxury of the "sacred" orders of society.

In that day the names of Carlyle, Tennyson, Macaulay and others, since rendered immortal, had not been estab-

lished, while Dickens, Elliot and Thackeray were yet to come, and Newman, Manning, Pusey and Wilberforce were obscure characters in the nation. Then it was that Edward Irving—the luminous pulpit orator—in the very street in which Gladstone was born was mystifying the multitude with his “gift of tongues,” and Victoria—the living Sovereign of a free people for a space of 60 years—was but a girl of thirteen.

How can we, therefore, look back to that day and not give a grateful thought to the man who was in Parliament at that very time, and who still lives in the full possession of his splendid intellect, without being impressed with the eventful life of “England’s Grand Old Man” and the rapidity with which the world has moved.

On January 29th, 1833, the new Reform Parliament was summoned, and on February 5th the King opened it in person, and delivered the customary speech from the throne in which royalty was compelled to say then, as now, just what the government of the day wished it to say. Many abuses existed and awaited redress, for even then England’s name was blackened by the maintenance of slavery in her West India possessions, and the trade of Hindostan, with its enormous population and fabulous wealth, was monopolized by the East India Company. The Reform Parliament during the first session emancipated the slaves at a cost of £20,000,000, and the same session saw the East India monopoly destroyed and the ports of Hindostan thrown open to the enterprise of Britain’s mariners and merchants.

But to turn to our young hero, it is remarkable that his maiden speech in Parliament was delivered in refutation of a charge made by Lord Howick that on the plantations of Mr. Gladstone’s father great destruction of human life and much cruelty had resulted from overworking his slaves.

Later on in the session he again spoke on the subject of West India Slavery, deprecating immediate emancipation, and pointed out that such would not alone be an

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injustice to the owners of the slaves, but injurious to the slaves themselves. He saw that so great a shame as the bondage of human beings would no longer be admitted under England's red cross banner, yet he fought for what he conceived to be the rights of the planters to their private property and against Radical Parliamentary interference with the institution of slavery.

But its doom was sealed and Wilberforce, Thomson, O'Connell and other friends of humanity triumphed by the law of England enacting that, henceforth and forever, no slave could exist in her empire, and that all who found shelter beneath her ensign should be free.

Next in importance to his speech on the emancipation of the slaves bill and more important in his later day onslaught on the State Church of Ireland was his opposition to Lord Althrop's bill to reduce the number of Irish Bishoprics, where he claimed that it was the duty of the State to maintain Protestantism as one of the bulwarks of the Crown, and advanced arguments so diametrically opposed to what he used when he made his grand and successful efforts of disestablishing the Law Church of Ireland that it is hard to conceive so great a change could have been wrought in a mind so highly cultivated, and in the case of one in whose moral and religious fibre there was so marked a strain of veneration for church authority and so deep a reverence for the religion of the State. This championship of the State Church he further manifested during the same session by speaking against Mr. Hume's University bill to abolish the test of belief in the 39 articles by all students on entering the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. He said that the fabric of religion would surely be destroyed unless the students would make oath of their belief in all the doctrines and dogmas of the State Church, and that the admission of dissenters would destroy the religious character of the national temples of learning and render them godless and productive of a race of heretics and unbelievers. During this time he

stamped himself as a man of ability and became quite a force with his party. It excited no wonder, therefore, that Sir Robert Peel, on the formation of his first Ministry in 1834, should select young Gladstone to become one of the Lords of the Treasury, and at the early age of 25 he entered the Government of his great master and tutor, who, like himself, was of Lancashire birth and had sprung from the mercantile community. He was, along with his Radical colleague, Sergeant Wilde, returned unopposed for Newark, where he had become very popular with all classes for his graceful bearing and the very marked ability he so early displayed. In 1835, just three years after entering Parliament, he was promoted to the position of Under-Secretary of the Colonies, but the Peel Ministry was doomed to an early death on Lord John Russell's motion to enquire into the temporalities of the Church of Ireland. On this motion Mr. Gladstone spoke with unusual force and pointed out that it would surely end in the destruction of the church itself; and he further said he hoped that he would never see the day when such an impious measure would become law and which would hasten, and not impede, the disestablishment of all State churches, the maintenance of which he viewed as inseparable from the best interest of both church and State.

Lord John Russell's motion was carried and the Peel Ministry made way for the second Melbourne Government, and Mr. Gladstone became a private member of the House. At this time much party bitterness existed, but he held aloof from mere fighting exhibitions and became respected by all classes for his courteous bearing and urbanity of manners. Though in opposition he took a prominent part in the debates and proceedings of Parliament, amongst which was notably his support of the Government, to which he was otherwise opposed, on the resolutions of Lord John Russell, having for their end the pacification of Canada, the settlement of the trouble between the Upper and Lower Provinces in 1837, and the extension of the popular rights of the colonists. But he contended for the main-

tenance of authority and gave no aid or sympathy to Papineau, Mackenzie or their co-patriots.

He also spoke on "Spring Rice's" church rates bill, and which speech—though almost lost sight of by his biographers—is one that possesses many gems of eloquence and is distinguished for its power and beauty. He drew a comparison between ancient Rome and England, and insisted on religion being the foundation and greatness of the State. It was an impassioned specimen of oratory and worthy of preservation. "It was not," he said, "by the active strength and restless prowess of her legions, the bold independence of her citizens, the well-maintained equilibrium of the constitution, but by the judicious adaptation of various measures to the various circumstances of her subject States that the Roman power was upheld. Its foundation lay in the prevailing feeling of and reverence for religion. This was the superior power that curbed the license of individual rule, and engendered in the people a lofty disinterestedness and disregard of personal motives and devotion to the glory of the republic."

The death of the King, in 1837, caused another election, when Mr. Gladstone was again elected for Newark. He took a very prominent part in the debate of 1838 on the negro apprenticeship of the West Indies, which was assailed by Brougham in the Lords and Buxton in the Commons; and it chiefly devolved on young Gladstone to defend the compact in 1833, and he rather turned the tables on the cotton lords of Lancashire by showing that while professing philanthropy and hatred of the slavery of the Southern States they preferred to buy the cotton produced by slave labor rather than that produced by the free labor of either Britain's East or West India possessions. His powerful speech on that occasion tended to defeat the motion, and *The Times* referred to it as "a triumph of reason, sentiment and justice over quack philanthropy." But he had around him those who, though they recognized his many graces and profound erudition, looked on his success as a statesman and lawgiver as one not

possible of realization, for they said "all was sacrificed to the beautiful, and common sense cast aside for the effect which one of his finished and eloquent perorations would produce on those who came within the charmed circle of his wondrous gifts of speech." Such was the estimate formed by one whose sketches of Parliamentary celebrities was in the main correct, but who, in Mr. Gladstone's case, did not foresee how prolific his public life was to become of measures for the good of his country and the increased happiness of all "within her gates."

In speaking he possessed nearly all the graces, and in him was more fully manifested than in that of any living orator, "the poetry of motion and the charm of sound." So remarkable were his gifts that the Quarterly Review in 1854 said of him:—"He is the most polished speaker in the House of Commons. His resources of expression are wonderful and it seems as though to him has been given the ability to call to his services the choicest words and the most elegant sentences. His refined and scholarly periods, the creation of the moment, are as finely balanced and as keenly pointed as if they had been written and studied and are always marvels of fluency and often specimens of the purest eloquence."

Another writer, Mr. Cannon of The London Times, said of him, and at a time when that paper was not friendly towards him: "Earnestness to him is almost a disease, and with him great work is happiness and duty to him is an ever-burning if not consuming fire."

But let me not anticipate but turn back to 1839, when Mr. Gladstone again addressed the House of Commons on a topic collateral with that of slavery and opposed the Jamaica bill for the suspension of the constitution introduced by Samuel Lushington. He predicted that it would perpetuate disunion between the different classes of the colonial community and undermine confidence throughout the whole circle of our colonial possessions. On this subject he gave evidence of his strong sympathy with the

planters and at variance with his later day philanthropy and liberalism.

The question of national education was introduced by the Government in the same year. Lord Stanley (afterwards Premier of England) opposing it and Lord Morpeth defending the proposal to provide national funds in aid of Catholic schools and the removal of the objection to Unitarians as teachers and members of school governing bodies. He declared that so long as Britain took advantage of Roman Catholic sinews and Unitarian gold she could not refuse to extend to those by whom she profited the benefits of education. But the debate found Mr. Gladstone defending the narrow position, that to the Church of England belonged alone the right to control the education of the youth so far as the power of Parliament could secure it. He reasserted his early defence of church and State and made reference to a petition presented to the House by the advocates of a national system of education, free from church control, wherein it was especially dwelt by the petitioners (amongst whom were many prominent dissenting clergymen) that the Scriptures were to continue a portion of the school curriculum. The petition referred to expressed "the hope that the youth of the country would be religiously brought up and that the education of the country, Jewish and Christian, would be sedulously connected with a due regard to the Holy Scriptures."

Mr. Gladstone asked how the Jews, who regarded the New Testament as an imposture, could be expected to entertain respect for it, and to compel Jewish children to read the story of Golgotha and profess to respect the Christian version of the Messiah was not in keeping with the party calling itself Liberal. He declared that he would not compel any child to read or be taught that which the conscience of the parents forbade; but he strongly objected to the money of the State being paid to a set of men whose business would be to inculcate erroneous doctrines. Of course this meant all who were not prepared to relegate the whole educational system to the ministers of the estab-

lished church, and who at that time practically read "mandements" from their pulpits and through the church press to their "dear children in the Lord," sounding the alarm and pointing out the spiritual danger of weakening the bond of authority between church and people, and which the parsons of that day claimed as theirs by right divine.

Thus we see that the State church of England at that time was very determined in the assertion of her right to be the sole judge of what should be the educational system of the nation; and to those who timidly believe that destruction must follow change, let me remind them that with every concession by British law to the just demands of the Catholics and Nonconformists there has been given to the Church of England a healthier life, a more vigorous existence and a wider range of usefulness and power as a Christian agency than she ever possessed when her misguided champions shut the door of justice in the face of those who could not conscientiously accept her tenets before being allowed to share in the government of the country.

Getting back to my subject, Mr. Gladstone again in the session of 1839 manifested his attachment to the Tory doctrine of that day by opposing the Jewish emancipation bill. He was answered by Macaulay in a speech of great force, and which was said to have been a model of that pure and vigorous English that has made the name of the great historian immortal in the world of English letters.

The following year, 1840, brought those intellectual giants again in the conflict on Sir James Graham's motion on the China question, when Mr. Gladstone condemned England's course in encouraging the infamous opium trade, and Macaulay—like some in our own land—waved the "old flag" in a manner unworthy of his great character and gifts to save the fate of the Government; but it was doomed to an early defeat, and a general election followed, in which the Tories were successful beyond their greatest expectations, and Mr. Gladstone was again elected for Newark. On the assembling of the House the Ministry



was defeated and Peel was called on to form a Government, Mr. Gladstone being appointed Vice-President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint. He was returned unopposed for Newark, and on the hustings declared that the British farmers might "rely on adequate protection against foreign produce."

In this notable speech he dwelt on the necessity of maintaining the connection between church and State, not from any motive, as he said, of acting unjustly by those who were not of her fold, but from a deep sense of duty to preserve that union which was so necessary to the national life and the happiness of the people. The church fabric, he said, should be repaired whenever needed, but not destroyed, and though he would favor the removal of every just grievance from his dissenting brethren, he would continue to favor the "preservation of the design of the original architect."

In this may be traced the arguments of the most intolerant, for all, however narrow and illiberal, say that they seek not to inflict injustice on any, but it usually happens that justice from one man's standpoint is injustice from his neighbor's standpoint; and thus the term is so often misapplied. This failing Mr. Gladstone shared in at that time, for the spirit of the son of the West India slave-owner was not dead, but lived within him in full force. The accession of the Peel Ministry to power was at a time of great national distress; famished operatives clamoring for cheap bread on the one hand, and ruined farmers demanding still more protection on the other; commerce was stagnant, work scarce and ill-paid, which, with dear food and the murmurings of the populace, were enough to make a bold heart quake in attempting to rule the British people; but still more was the situation trying to one like Sir Robert Peel, whose lack of confidence in himself was the one weak spot in his otherwise grand character.

Speeches from the throne then, as now, were none too frank or truthful, and though the one delivered at the

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opening of the session of 1842 professed gratification that the period of distress had been "attended by calmness and moderation," the facts were that the people were rendered furious by the Radical papers publishing parallel columns showing, on the one hand, the splendor of the court festivities, and, by way of contrast, the inquests held on the poor who had died from starvation, and even the Queen herself was said to have been hooted in the public streets and theatres of London, and revolution was thought by some to be impending.

It fell to the lot of Mr. Gladstone to defend the Government against Lord John Russell's onslaught on the sliding scale on duties on grain, on which the Ministry was sustained by a large majority. At this time Mr. Villiers—one of England's grand champions of freedom—brought forward a motion for the immediate and total abolition of all duties on breadstuffs. It was overwhelmingly defeated by more than 5 to 1, but it was the first ringing of the bell that was ushering in the day when the people of England would demand the freedom of commerce that has done so much for the multitude and built up for England a commercial prosperity and greatness never attained by any empire since the creation.

At this time the limit of taxation had been reached on the necessaries of life, and to make up the deficit of £3,000,000 sterling, Peel—on the advice of Gladstone—introduced the income tax, and as the result of close application to details the young Tory lieutenant removed the duties from more than half the articles subjected to import penalties. Thus early did he manifest the grasp of figures that made him the financial colossus of his generation.

During Mr. Gladstone's speech on the corn duties he let fall sentiments so strange to one elected as a protectionist that Mr. Joseph Hume—the dauntless economist—rose up and expressed his joy at the conversion of the young statesman to the principles of free trade. To this Mr. Gladstone dissented, and protested against the assertion that either himself or the Government were converts to

the policy which they had been elected to oppose. But the lamp had been lit and trimmed, and the flame of reason and common sense and the national necessities were lighting the pathway of Peel and Gladstone towards the fulfilment of the promise to England's starving millions that "law made want," and scarcity and "dearness of of God's gifts" (by acts of Parliament) should disappear and "their places know them no more forever."

The tariff bill of 1842 demanded from Mr. Gladstone constant defence, and Hansard records that he addressed the House more than one hundred times in connection with this measure. The distress in the country was fearful, and the termination of the session gave to the Government great relief, and even the Queen is said to have worn a cheerful air when thanking her Parliament at its close for its effectual labors, but all awaited with the gravest misgivings the outcome of the problem of how times were to be improved by retaining fetters on trade, and how the half-fed people were to be contented with food taxed for the benefit of the landed aristocracy, and to be happy while starving. The dire distress of the country braced the corn law reformers to further efforts, for a plentiful meal of even the coarsest food was a rare thing in the houses of the poor, while such as the preserved meats and fruits of the world, which form part of the daily fare to-day, were not dreamed of by the wretched laborers of Britain. The band of the anti-corn law leaguers made onslaught after onslaught on the Government, all pointing to a stern determination that God's law of freedom to purchase in the cheapest market should prevail, and that His gifts to man should not be rejected.

The burthen of the defence fell largely, if not entirely, on Peel and Gladstone, who pointed out, among other fallacies, that by taking off the corn duties England would only be enriching the United States.

It was during this session that a reduction of the duties on corn imported from Canada was passed, and the following year Mr. Gladstone—then President of the Board

of Trade—abolished the export duty on machinery, which was one of the keystones of protection. This interference with freedom of the manufacturer to sell where he pleased was, like every other impediment on commerce, mischievous, and drove the machinery export trade to Belgium and other countries.

The year 1845 saw England in the midst of the anti-corn law agitation and the league included in its active membership Cobden, Bright, Villiers, O'Connell, Hume and other tribunes of the people, who taught the world the wisdom and the justice of man's right to the fulness of the productions of the earth without let or stint or hindrance, and that the interest of no class could justify the taxing of the food of the children of men.

Now all this time one-half the price of the bread consumed by the people went to the landlords, who, under the pretence that the farmer was being protected, had increased their rents three-fold, while nine shillings per week was the average wages of the agricultural laborer. All these illustrations of injustice, and more than I can find time to even touch upon, were brought before the attention of the nation and Parliament by Cobden and Bright, while the landlords could only charge them with being dangerous agitators. The brunt of opposing Cobden's reasoning fell to Mr. Gladstone, and though he pleaded against so revolutionary a change in the fiscal policy of the nation, the force of Cobden's logic and the pleadings of Bright and O'Connell on behalf of the famished multitude were making heavy inroads into the minds of Peel and Gladstone and preparing the way for the hour when they were to become the foremost men in the great work of emancipating the nation from the heresy of protection and giving to the toiling millions bread freed from the tax that had been imposed and maintained for the sole benefit of the landed aristocracy.

The session of 1845 had scarcely met when it was announced that Mr. Gladstone had resigned his office owing to the policy of the Government on the Maynooth grant,

and his speech on the cause of his retirement was marked by a breadth of thought and sympathy with the Catholics of Ireland in their inability otherwise to furnish proper educational facilities for their students that gave men like Lord John Russell hopes that he (Mr. Gladstone) would be found ere long in the Liberal ranks.

We now approach that heroic period in England's Parliamentary history where an economic change was to be carried out that only the boldest could have conceived. It was announced by *The Times* that Parliament would assemble the first week in January and that the speech from the throne would recommend the consideration of the corn laws with the view to their total repeal. The hour had come, the tax on food was doomed and the world was to witness the splendid spectacle of the two foremost men in the British Government acknowledging that reason, justice and the welfare of the nation had triumphed over prejudice and that the empire of freedom of trade was to be established forever.

In contemplating this historic step by Peel and Gladstone who can deny to them unstinted praise? Brought up in a rigid school of protection their investigations and financial experiments led them to a reversal of their earlier opinions, but complete emancipation from old and cherished principles was not the work of a day. The time came when they were challenged to assert themselves, and in doing so it was with a frankness and candor that carried respect from many of their old associates who regretted their defection.

Dissensions in the Ministry caused Peel to resign, but no one being found able to form a Government the Queen desired him to withdraw his resignation, which he did, and on the list of his Ministry being published it was found that Mr. Gladstone had been assigned the position of Colonial Secretary. His acceptance of office under Peel, who was pledged to repeal the corn laws, led to his retirement from the representation of Newark, which borough, as I previously stated, was nearly all owned by

the Duke of Newcastle, who was an extreme protectionist. Mr. Gladstone issued a retiring address, in which he expressed his belief that the fiscal policy was to usher in a new and better day for the people. It was no secret that his was the most advanced mind in the Government on the necessity for and the justice of the repeal of the corn laws. He was the Ministerial pioneer of the movement that was to destroy, for a time, his party but save the nation.

The visitation of the Irish famine, where the failure of the potato crop brought millions to a state of absolute starvation, accompanied by pestilence, convinced Peel and Gladstone that to hesitate in repealing the duties on bread would be criminal, for was not famine stalking through the land and thousands perishing for the want of the very food that was being taxed beyond the ability of the wretches to purchase and the graveyards being filled with the victims of the fever. The great Minister Peel and his illustrious colleague listened to the voices of the starving multitude and, though recognizing that their change meant the destruction of the Ministry, they hesitated not, but carried out the great work of freeing forever England and her people from the barbarous tax on the food that was so necessary for the sustenance of human life.

Strange and remarkable was the coincidence that the same day that saw the repeal of the corn laws carried in the House of Lords witnessed the defeat of the Peel Ministry in the Commons. But the work was done, and the mission which fame had in store for Peel was ended by the passing of the measure, which, in his own language, would "leave a name behind him to be remembered with gratitude in the abodes of those whose lot it was to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow." Mr. Gladstone lost his seat for Newark, but he was elected for the University of Oxford, though his advocacy of Jewish emancipation at a later day drew from many of his supporters the remark that had his sentiments towards Jewish claims been known he would not have been their

choice. This measure of justice he advocated until he saw the barrier against Jews sitting in Parliament removed, and the oppressed Hebrew race enabled by law to share in the benefits and responsibilities of government.

The repeal of the navigation laws and the battle for free ships and free commerce found Mr. Gladstone on the popular side, and for the first time locked in conflict with his great rival Disraeli, and rarely has Parliamentary history furnished two such distinguished, and in some respects, men of equal calibre, as Gladstone and Disraeli, the former conscientious and all sincerity, with an eloquence begotten by a profound reverence for truth and a deep regard for the public welfare, while the latter with an unequalled epigrammatic ability and a rare and somewhat correct conception of English prejudices and weaknesses conquered the dislike the old school of England's landed gentry had for his race, and harnessed them in time to the chariot of his ambition.

Mr. Gladstone was a valuable accession to the Liberal party, and became in time its "cloud by day and pillar of fire by night." He brought to it intellectual gifts and the services of one whose change of partyism was the outcome of conscientious conviction, and in spite of his moorings to the traditions of the narrow school he had been cradled in. His was a conflict between duty and consistency and he chose the former.

On the other hand, Disraeli, who commenced life as a Radical and an applicant to O'Connell for a seat as a Repealer, by the exercise of a remarkable talent for debate and no mean ability as an administrator, made himself almost indispensable to his party, and when Lord Derby died the mantle of Stanley fell on the child of the literary Jew, who became in time Prime Minister of England, and the presiding genius of the descendants of the companions of the Norman conqueror. It was creditable to his genius to have led a party that had no confidence in him, and which certainly had no admiration for the despised yet gifted race from which he sprung, and though he never

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earned a character for sincerity as a politician all must admire the ability which enabled him to attain the very highest position in the empire on which the sun never sets and the roll of whose morning drum never ceases to beat.

The death of Peel, his friend and leader, left Mr. Gladstone to carry out almost alone those great economic reforms with which his name afterwards became identified, but his character received a marked imprint from his association with Peel, and he carried through his after-life the exalted characteristics that endeared the son of the Lancashire calico printer to his country.

Early in the fifties Mr. Gladstone visited the prisons of Naples, and in the dungeons of Ferdinand, the cruel, he found 20,000 men, many of pure lives, subjected to punishment unfit for human beings. Their offences were political only, and in no sense meriting the cruelties that made the name of the Bourbon King of Naples one of execration. Mr. Gladstone's exposure of the Neapolitan dungeon horrors sent a thrill of loathing for the Government that perpetrated them which reached the uttermost ends of the civilized world, and did much to bring down the royal house of the "Two Sicilies," along with other thrones that were neither blessings nor benefits to the Italian people. Yet it must not be forgotten that men in England, political prisoners also (Chartists and home rulers) have been subjected to tortures and horrors enough to place the mother of free nations on the defensive for her own acts, though well do I know that such never had the sympathy or countenance of her democracy, but was the work of the class that has ever viewed the agitators for public rights as only fit for the gallows or the dungeon.

The year 1851 witnessed one of those periods of religious fanaticism on the part of the people of Britain, the history of which they, in a few short years afterwards, would have given much to erase. Owing to the appointment of Catholic prelates to English sees or Bishoprics the people became much excited by the dread of "Papal aggression," as it was called. English frenzy knew no



bounds ; meetings of convocations, civic bodies, trade boards, and popular assemblies were called all over the country, and much dread of the Pope prevailed. This fear led to the passing of the Papal aggression or ecclesiastical titles bill by Lord John Russell, which received the continued opposition of Mr. Gladstone, notwithstanding the fact of him being one of the members for the University of Oxford, the faculty of which had petitioned Parliament and addressed the Queen in person in favor of the bill. The bill passed, and the British people were pleased, but the Catholic prelates, on the day following the royal assent being given to it, met, defied the law and challenged the penalties which were never attempted to be enforced, and after remaining on the statute book for about fifteen years Mr. Gladstone repealed it without much notice being called to it, and certainly without opposition.

In the session of 1853 Mr Gladstone, who had become Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Aberdeen Government, delivered his first budget speech of five hours' duration, which is said to have been one in which he manifested his phenomenal grasp of figures in a manner both pleasing and instructive. It was felt that on him had fallen the mantle of Pitt and Peel, the two greatest financiers England had known up to that date, but it was left to Mr. Gladstone alone to be able with columns of figures and the dry details of financial questions and propositions to give them a charm and pleasure entirely new to this feature of public speaking. This great gift seems to have centered almost in him, for while budget speeches of great ability have been delivered by Disraeli, Lowe and others, there has never appeared on the stage a man so singularly endowed with the ability to rivet the attention of Parliamentary audiences on financial subjects as Mr. Gladstone. He gave to finance a new delight, and the nation devoured his budget speeches ever after with the pleasure that accompanies the soldier in the barrack room when reading the stories of Wellington and Boney, or the glories of Trafalgar and the Nile. There was a bold originality of con-

ception in his financial messages to the nation, and during the years that he was Chancellor of the Exchequer all classes awaited with pleasurable interest his budget speeches, in nearly all of which financial relief was promised and taxes reduced or wiped out on the comforts and luxuries of life. His wondrous successes and triumphs on the field of finance read like a romance, and his practical illustrations of how taxation could be reduced while filling the national exchequer to overflowing was as marvellous to the financiers of the world as a fairy tale to childhood.

The year 1854 saw England engaged in a European war for the first time in forty years. The aggression of Russia under the pretence of protecting the Christians in Turkey arrayed both England and France on the side of the Mussulman, but without entering into a lengthened account of this bloody and senseless war, it is enough to say that £100,000,000 of British gold was spent and fully 30,000 of the flower of England's youth and manhood perished on the battlefields, died in the hospitals or were wounded so as to incapacitate them for future military service, and all this sacrifice of life and treasure, all the grief and desolation of homes merely that the wretched Turk might have given to him a longer day in which to curse mankind. The British troops fought as British soldiers always fight, with a courage unexcelled, but their sufferings were terrible, and the people as usual demanded a scape-goat as a sin offering, and it was found in the Government, which was practically censured by Mr. Roebuck's historic inquiry motion. Mr. Gladstone and other members of the late Aberdeen Government refused to serve under Lord Palmerston, whose Government was a war Government, but he gave the new Administration a generous support, and then took office only to resign it after two or three weeks' occupancy. He felt the delicacy of his position, and perhaps the embarrassment he was causing the Premier, and retired once more into private membership. The annoyances of official life and the misrepresentation to which the public men of England at this time

were specially subjected were well calculated to discourage a man of Mr. Gladstone's sensitiveness and independence and cause his retirement from public life.

Blessed with an abundance of wealth, endowed with graces and abilities beyond his contemporaries possessing domestic bliss and happiness, with freedom from the bitter waters of worldly adversity, he might have spent his days in ease and sought only enjoyment from the gratification of his senses ; but he had given to him a rugged sense of duty to his country and to the laboring people, whose joys were few and whose possessions were scant. He brought his heaven-sent powers to labor for the uplifting of those who had to toil, that thereby they might live ; he devised ways and means to enable the poor to share in the benefits of science and partake of the comforts and luxuries from the distant world ; he sought not the smiles and approval of the wealthy, but rather the gratitude of the millions, who never faltered in their faith or stopped short in their admiration, for he was their friend. His unequalled grasp of finance enabled him to shower blessings around and give abundance and content where formerly want and hopelessness held sway. Amidst the stormy seas of political conflict he was ever guided by the desire to do good rather than please, and to bless his nation rather than bend to its shortcomings, or offer sacrifice to its vanity. Alike the groans of the political prisoners in the dungeons of Naples and the death shriek of the Armenian victim of Turkish ferocity found in his breast a sympathetic response ; and the deliverances of his burning indignation in his old age at the atrocities of the unspeakable Turk has endeared to the world of humanity this lion of Judah's fold.

From the close of the Russian war till 1859 Mr. Gladstone was engaged chiefly on his Homeric studies, and which resulted in the publication of his great work, "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age," and which is considered amongst the standard writings on the bard who sang the story of the siege of Troy and gave to the world

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the immortal works that are the delight of all lovers of Grecian heroics and readers of the mythological events that are marvels of romantic conception.

But however feeble my ability is to speak of Mr. Gladstone as the statesman and orator (and no one can be more painfully conscious of this fact than myself), I dare not attempt more than to recount the fact of Mr. Gladstone's classical researches and writings, for having had my education confined to rude English alone, I would not do you or myself the injustice of veneration this address with more than this passing reference to him as a Homeric student or worshipper. Therefore, I turn from Gladstone, the classical writer and translator, to Gladstone the law builder, and find him in 1857 selected by Lord Palmerston to become Chancellor of the Exchequer in his new Government, which had succeeded the Derby Administration on the defeat of the reform bill which Disraeli introduced into the House of Commons.

At the general election Mr. Gladstone was returned again for Oxford University, where he was opposed by the Marquis of Chandos on the ground of his abandonment of the Tory party and his acceptance of office under Palmerston (who was erroneously designated a Liberal). During this session there was passed the bill rendering the Roman Catholics eligible for the office of Lord Chancellor of Ireland. It was met by the opposition of Mr. Newdegate, an intense Protestant, and Mr. Whiteside, a very able Irish lawyer and a very prominent Orangeman. Dire calamities were predicted for Crown and church and constitution should so un-Protestant a measure became law. Well, it became law, and in a few years time Thomas O'Hagan, a Belfast Roman Catholic, became—under Mr. Gladstone's first Administration—Lord Chancellor of Ireland; yet the Crown was not weakened by the act, nor was the Protestant Church in Ireland destroyed; and as for the British constitution (this unwritten work) it still exists and bids fair to outlast any constitution written or unwritten under which mankind is governed.

The year 1861 opened out with a deficient bread supply, but the severity following the poor harvest was mitigated by the absence of import duties, while an expanding trade enabled higher wages to be paid, and the nation added to its wealth, as Mr. Gladstone said, "by leaps and bounds."

It was during this session that he established post-office savings banks in order that thrift and habits of saving might be encouraged. He saw that the wealth of France was largely due to the savings of the peasants and was convinced that the national benefit to England would be great from the cultivation of the like habits; and, like all his financial projects, the postoffice savings banks have proved a great success and produced in the British artisans and laborers the habit of saving small sums from their weekly earnings, and which has made the success of English building and co-operative societies so remarkable.

It is said that politics, like misfortunes, make us acquainted with strange bedfellows; and so it was with Mr. Gladstone, who, during this session, was found in strange company for him at that time. Sir John Trelawny having introduced a bill for the abolition of church rates, Mr. Gladstone pleaded for the conditional retention of the odious tribute to the State church in a manner that manifested his almost superstitious reverence for the church privileges (or extortions I would rather say). Whigs, like Palmerston and Russell, voted to take away this arbitrary power from the parish vestries of taxing dissenters for the maintenance of the fabrics in which they worship and which in most cases were richly endowed. But we must not forget that he was then member for the University of Oxford, and this fact and his love for his alma mater and its associations doubtless did much to impede his advancing Liberalism and retard him in his march towards his great work of disestablishing the Law Church of Ireland, which at that time was called, in relation to his long and eminent political career, "the crowning of the edifice."

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We now approach an important period in Mr. Gladstone's career. The University of Oxford had sent him for eighteen years to represent her in Parliament, but a growing dread of his developing Liberalism and an expression of his sympathy with the disestablishment of the Irish Church delivered in Chester when advocating the election of his eldest son, and which I extorted from him myself, roused up the extreme church party to his defeat, and Mr. Gathorne Hardy was elected in his stead. Mr. Gladstone loved the University and prized very highly the honor of representing it. That at the slightest sacrifice of his convictions he could have retained its confidence needs no assurance, but he was not prepared to pay the price, and with the ever-broadening of his Liberalism there was being deepened and widened the gulf that separated the national statesman from the standpoint of the Established Church. The result of the contest for the University was never in doubt. The voting extended over fifteen days and was by proxy, but each day added to the majority that was breaking the link that bound her great son to her.

While the election was in progress, the South Lancashire nomination was held, and the name of William Ewart Gladstone was proposed to represent "Home, Sweet Home." A deputation of electors (of which I formed one) urged on him the acceptance of the nomination, and on the following day he spoke to many thousands of his admiring countrymen, first in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, and in the evening in the Amphitheatre, Liverpool.

It was at the former meeting where he used the historic phrase of being "unmuzzled." This had reference to the restraining influence of Oxford on his freedom, and now that he was in Lancashire, the centre of Britain's manufacturing empire, it was only to be expected that his Liberalism would flourish and strengthen "like a green bay tree."

He was elected after a close contest, and his native county honored him by having found him a seat in Par-

liament, where his wondrous gifts were to be further exercised for the benefit of his country.

The death of Palmerston resulted in Earl Russell forming a Government, with Mr. Gladstone for the first time leader in the Commons. The levity or joviality of Palmerston was so different from the sincerity of Mr. Gladstone, who viewed politics as a science of the gravest moment, that many imagined that his very earnestness would destroy any possibility of success, but it was soon found that the House welcomed the leadership of one whose view of public duty was of the most exalted type, and the nation sustained the man who had never felt weary in exercising his splendid gifts for its increased happiness.

The people's demands for Parliamentary reform were met by a Government measure, which, after escaping the first divisions, was defeated in committee, and the Russell administration resigned.

Lord Derby then formed his Government, with Disraeli leading the Lower House, with the result of a reform bill being carried by its historic opponents, and where Disraeli showed the great influence he possessed over the Conservative party by carrying through both Lords and Commons a bill so revolutionary, from a Tory standpoint, that nothing seemed to be impending but the deluge.

During the debates on both the Gladstone and Disraeli reform bills there were delivered perhaps as eloquent speeches as ever were heard in any deliberative assembly in the history of the world.

In addition to the two leaders there was Bright and Lowe and Cecil and Bulwer-Lytton, who poured out a flood of eloquence that will remain to be quoted as examples of the beauty of the English language while it endures.

It was during the debate on the second reading of the Gladstone reform bill, when, seeing the defeat of the measure more than likely to attend its course through Parliament, he spoke with a beauty and prophetic prediction rarely equalled and still more rarely excelled.

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In closing the debate, and with a full knowledge of the defection from his ranks, foreshadowing the defeat of the bill, he eloquently painted the early triumphs of its principles, and said:—"Sir, we are assailed; the bill is in a state of peril, and the Government along with it. We stand with it now; we may fall with it a short time hence. If we do so fall we or others in our places shall rise with it hereafter. At some point of the contest you may succeed. You may drive us from our seats, but you cannot fight against the future. Time is on our side; the great social forces which move onward in their might and majesty and which the tumult of debate does not impede are marshalled on our side, and the banner which we now carry in this fight—though perhaps at some moment it may drop over our sinking heads—yet it will soon float again in the eye of heaven and will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and not distant victory."

So far Disraeli had triumphed, but another trial was at hand when Mr. Gladstone astounded the empire and aroused the enthusiasm of the Liberal party by laying on the table his famous resolution: "That in the opinion of this House it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist." He defeated the Government on every point when his motion came before the House, and though most unusual and, indeed, unprecedented, Disraeli clung to power, and presented the humiliating spectacle of retaining office after having forfeited the confidence of Parliament. Driven at last to appeal to the country on the question of disestablishment, the Tory Government found the Liberal party united as it had never been before.

The condition of Ireland and the national need for an empire of justice rather than of force was advocated by Mr. Gladstone in eloquence only equalled by the broad and kindly spirit that moved him. Speaking on the character of the Irish people, he said:—"Immediately the sharp



sting of want is removed, the Irish people by their immunity from vice excite the admiration of the world. The importance of the numbers leaving the Irish shores, seeking homes across the sea, is not the most portentous feature, but rather the anti-British spirit which goes with them, only to be intensified as time progresses, and the story of our misgovernment is told under other skies. They bear with them to the west a passionate attachment to their homes—'Land of the green valley and the rushing river'—and a burning and a bitter aversion to the laws and Government they leave behind them, and which drives them forth. Our duty to the empire and to humanity is not to shrink from the task, but to 'quit ourselves like men' until we secure the triumphs of the eternal principles of justice."

Mr. Gladstone addressed the electors of the United Kingdom through his meetings in Southwest Lancashire, all of which I attended and shared in the delight of being privileged to hear England's greatest orator at his best and on a subject well calculated to produce his greatest triumphs as a speaker.

It was during this campaign that he likened the State Church of Ireland to the upas tree, which poisoned and blasted all that came beneath its shadow. He further said that if the abuses of the establishment were removed naught would remain but the humiliating memories of its failure and its oppression of the nation that had never accepted its mission; and this wretched failure of British power to plant a church established by law alone was never more clearly proven than when Mr. Gladstone stated that there were 199 parish churches in Ireland belonging to the establishment without one worshipper outside the parsonages.

The British nation gave an overwhelming majority in favor of the Liberal party and disestablishment, and, though Mr. Gladstone was defeated for Southwest Lancashire, the country had given to him its entire confidence. At the close of the poll, in speaking at Liverpool, and within

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a few hundred yards of where he was born, expressing his regrets for the local defeat, he said:—"It is true that I would have prized very highly the honor of representing my native district, and I regret its verdict of to-day; it is true that Lancashire, which has rejected me, is great, but it is also true that England, Ireland and Scotland are greater." After the election Parliament met to face one of the gravest issues ever presented to it. It was one thing to pass general resolutions in favor of disestablishment and consolidate the elements on the principle, but it was entirely different to frame a bill to meet the justice of the case and make it acceptable to the Irish nation and the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Predictions of the hostility of the House of Lords were indulged in, and even the Queen was reported as being opposed to what was said to be a violation of her coronation oath.

But the splendid genius of Mr. Gladstone triumphed, and, though defections from his side were neither few nor unimportant, the bill that removed the shame from the Church of Ireland of being maintained solely by the power of British bayonets became law, and, as predicted by its wisest friends, the church under the "new dispensation" has been of greater service in her mission of Christianity in its broadest sense than she was when existing as a reproach to the very name of Protestantism.

I cannot leave this glorious period in Mr. Gladstone's history without paying my feeble tribute to the man whose religious convictions were so deeply rooted and whose almost superstitious reverence for his church has never been questioned, and yet could summon up the resolution to despoil her of her temporalities. It is only those who have been taught to view the possessions of their church as something sacred who can fully appreciate the struggle that he had in laying what his opponents called "an unholy hand on the tabernacle." In that eventful struggle gallant Wales and Liberal Scotland were at his side, sustaining him in the great work of separating church from State; and their moral influence was great for their Pro-

testantism was of that sturdy character which might be called the antithesis of the hot-house plant that grew up in Ireland under the protection and that lived only as the product of the State. The disestablishment and disendowment of the Law Church of Ireland appears to be the crowning glory of his career and the high flood mark of the Gladstonian Parliamentary influence. But it is not given to this generation to fully appreciate his great character and the lofty eminence he will occupy in the minds of men yet to be born; and just as the stupendous Himalayas have to be viewed from a distance to fully comprehend their height that pierces the skies, so is it impossible for those who have lived in his day and shared in his conflicts to conceive how vast will be the space allotted to his works by the future historians of England, and how deep will be the reverence that future generations will entertain for the memory of the man who may well be called the father of the modern and the better England.

He possessed more than the grasp of Pitt or Peel as a financier, and while free from the lack of high morality that marred the former, and the timidity that afflicted the latter statesman, yet he embraced in his character the truest order of devotion to his country's good and love for her people, whose confidence was given to him so long.

Looking back at his splendid achievements, who can do justice to his name, or paint in fitting words the glory of his life?

The memory of England's great Prime Minister will be cherished by all generations who venerate greatness allied to virtue. His gifts and powers have been devoted to the good of his nation, and the strengthening of the empire, whose destinies he so long directed.

Unlike many brilliant characters in the world's history, his domestic life has been beautiful in our sight and contributed much to adorn British manhood and purify and elevate the moral tone of his generation. Unbappily the pages of history reveal many instances of vast intellectual gifts having been accompanied by degrading vices

and a total disregard for the injunctions of the Almighty. Warlike genius of the highest order has gone hand in hand with cruelty, and the rulers of empires, while receiving the incense of flattery for their very crimes, rarely turned their hearts to the wretched multitude whose existence was only valued because they contributed to the power of States and the pomp of courts.

In striking contrast with the anointed despots stands the character of Gladstone, the Commoner, sublime in its simplicity and goodness. Beneath his roof the altar of family worship has been raised and the fire of Christian observances kindled and kept aglow, and even down to this day, at the age of eighty and eight, the grand old patriarch, England's "Christian Politician," may be seen wending his way to the little parish church in Hawarden on Sunday mornings, where he and his household join the simple villagers in devotional services and sing of Zion and the Lord. Happy the people and blessed is the nation whose footsteps are guided and whose morals are moulded by such as he of whom I speak.

The more recent chapters of the story of Gladstone are known to the youngest of my hearers; how he sought to grant home rule to Ireland and make the land that had been in some respects a weakness and a menace to the empire a bulwark of strength must be within the recollection of you all; therefore, I will not attempt to "paint the lily or gild refined gold," nor need I call to your recollection how he succeeded in enacting land laws for Ireland in which the old worship of the sacred rights of property was challenged and landlords taught that the responsibilities and duties of ownership were paramount.

To even mention for a passing moment the many events in his notable career is impossible in the time I am limited, to for his history is that of the British nation for over sixty years, and I must leave you to fill the many voids I have left. But if I have, by this discourse, contributed to give any of you an additional interest in his works or added to your gratitude for his services, not to

his own country alone, but to humanity, or if I have increased your love for the great principles of British freedom, I feel that I shall not have addressed you in vain.

He neither sought nor desired the triumphs of war, and his great talents were ever enlisted on the side of humanity ; there lay the field of his choice.

The conquests of Cæsar, of Alexander and Napoleon were the fruits of their lust of ambition, and their wars were carried on regardless of the wretched soldiery and still more wretched conquered tribes and nations. Their careers were accompanied by rapine and slaughter till the very gods of war were satisfied to repletion. They gave no thought to the homes made desolate, or to the hearts that yearned for the loved ones whose bones were left to fertilize the fields of conflict.

How different with Gladstone, whose victories were those of blessed peace, and which the poet tells us are "No less renowned than war." Viewing, therefore, impartially his exalted character, the generous use he has made of his sublime gifts, the singular beauty and purity of his life, and the bountiful harvest of usefulness and blessing that has followed his sickle, it is not too much for us to say that when his earthly mission has been wrought out and the lamp of life gives light no longer and "the laborer's task is done," the verdict of the English nations will be, "We shall not look upon his like again."

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