

GREAT GLADSTONE.

Life and Character of the Ulysses of the Liberals.

THE GRAND OLD MAN.

The Greatest Political Figure of This Century.

The Leader of Liberalism—His Political and Literary Labors—How He Appears in the House—His Simple Habits and Strong Will—His Mannerisms as an Orator—The Bravest Act of His Wonderful Career.

The greatest Englishman of the Nineteenth century is William Ewart Gladstone. The long list of English statesmen may be read without finding a single name that shines with greater splendor than his.



WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

He is a product of the middle class—the rugged upright Scotch middle class. His father, John Gladstone, was born at Leith, and became a merchant at Liverpool, and a member of parliament for nine years, representing different boroughs, but he never offered himself for Liverpool. His warm interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of his town made him a conspicuous and highly honored citizen. In 1834 the citizens of Liverpool presented him with a magnificent service of plate to mark their high sense of his successful exertions for the promotion of trade and commerce, and in acknowledgment of his most important services rendered to the town of Liverpool.

At first he embraced Whig principles, but later in life became what we call a Liberal Conservative. He was in the house at the same time with his now distinguished son, and heard some of his earlier efforts in parliamentary oratory. He was himself an effective speaker. Sir Robert Peel created him a baronet in 1845, and he died in 1861 at the age of 88.

William Ewart Gladstone had a Scotch mother as well as father. She has been described as "a lady of very great accomplishments, of fascinating manners, of commanding presence and high intellect; one to grace any home and enliven any heart." She became the mother of six children, only two of whom survive—Sir Thomas Gladstone, Bart., of House of Commons, an ordinary mental caliber—and the premier of England. In a brief speech in the Glasgow Trade Hall in 1855 Mr. Gladstone said: "If Scotland is not ashamed of her sons, her sons are not ashamed of Scotland. The memory of the parents to whom I owe my being combines with various other considerations to make me glad and thankful to remember that the blood which runs in my veins is exclusively Scottish." Burke traces the lineage of Gladstone's mother back to Henry III, of England, and Robert Bruce, king of Scotland, a matter of no consequence whatever, whether true or imagined. Of very great consequence, however, was the important fact that the enormous wealth of Sir John Gladstone enabled him to make handsome provision for each of his children during his lifetime. This gave the future great statesman what the blood of kings could not—an opportunity to devote his energies to the public service.



Mr. Gladstone began life as a Tory, a fact which his biographers attribute to the teachings of his father, who had been strongly imbued with the principles of Canning. Like Victor Hugo, the great premier has always been honest in what he has said; but he has grown. Year by year he has developed; every year he has become more liberal, until now he stands with "time on his side," opposing the whole Tory force of England. His mind was bent in the direction of public affairs quite early. When only 12 years old his father discussed political matters of the day with him, and taught him to think for himself.

It is said that the Gladstones, as a family, had a supernatural abundance of energy, which carried their action beyond the limits of their private concerns. The premier has been favored with this vital energy to an extraordinary degree. Born at Liverpool on Dec. 29, 1809, he is now in his 77th year. Instead of tottering, bent and imbecile, toward the grave, as many do long before they are so old as he, he is standing erect at the head of the English nation, his hand on the throat of the incubus of Toryism, his speech ringing down the halls of the future, freighted with prophecy and glittering with the fire of liberty. At the height of his power at 70, he is a conspicuous refutation of the hoary superstition that three score and ten years is the limit of man's usefulness. There need be no old age when the spirit keeps young. Interest in life, activity of brain and sympathy with humanity will defy old age and keep it forever at bay.

Mr. Gladstone had not passed his 12th birthday when he was entered at Eton, where he spent six years, learning all there was to be learned there then. He turned his surplus energies and spare hours to literature—started a college journal, writing the most of it himself, and launching into a ponderous poem eulogistic of Richard Coeur de Lion, full of "spens," "avilins" and "langued walk." After leaving Eton he studied two years at Balliol, then went to Christ Church, Oxford. At examination in 1828 he gained the highest honors of the university, graduating double first class. The debates of the Oxford union naturally attracted him, and he attained the proud position of president.

In the year 1833 he took the first step upward in the political ladder. He was in Italy when summoned to be the assistant for the

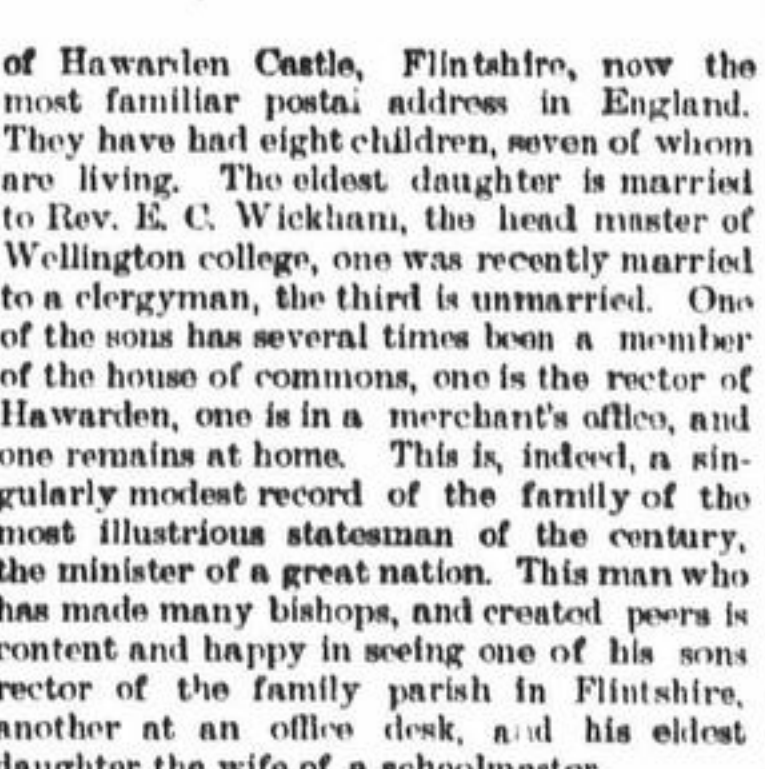
house of commons for the borough of Newark. The reform bill had just been passed, and the kingdom waited anxiously to see what would follow on the summoning of the first reformed parliament. At that time he was 23 years old, somewhat robust and considered handsome. The author of the history of Newark speaks of his bright, thoughtful look and graceful bearing. An oil painting made a few years later, which has been much engraved, represents him with a full face, large dark eyes and eyebrows. Compared with the face he wears to-day, there is still a strong likeness. The same broad intellectual forehead is in both—the same prominent nose, anxious eyes and earnest expression.

After the election he attended a meeting of the Constitutional club at Nottingham and delivered a lengthy address. Speaking of this a Conservative journalist made the first public prediction of future greatness for the young member in these words: "He is a gentleman of amiable manners and the most extraordinary talent, and we venture to predict, without the slightest exaggeration, that he will one day be classed amongst the most able statesmen in the British senate." Frequently predictions whose subjects are phenomenally bright youths come to naught. This one was more than fulfilled.

To realize how much Mr. Gladstone has changed since the beginning of his public career, we have only to remember that his maiden speech in parliament was made in defense of the domestic institution of slavery. Africans were imported into Demerara and Trinidad later than into any other colony, and the elder Gladstone owned many slaves in Demerara. To denounce "the peculiar institution" was to impugn the humanity of a father. The session of 1833, however, was memorable for the extinction of slavery in the British colonies at a cost of £20,000,000, concluding the humanitarian work begun by Wilberforce.

At the age of 25 Mr. Gladstone was junior lord of the treasury, under Sir Robert Peel. This was remarkable headway for so young a man to make, but was only the beginning of more rapid advancement. Peel and Gladstone had scarcely met for the session of 1833 when he was installed in the office of under secretary for the colonies, and brought in his first bill, which was designed to improve the condition of passengers in merchant vessels. The ministry did not live long enough to adorn the statute books with this humble reforming effort.

His first staggering blow, however, came from contact with the question of the Irish church, which was destined to exercise an important influence on later stages of his career. The ministry of which he formed a member was defeated and forced to resign on a nucleus of the Irish church bill of 1833. In 1836 Mr. Gladstone married Miss Catherine Glynn, daughter of Sir Richard Glynn,



MRS. GLADSTONE.

so interested in its barbarities that he succeeded, by means of letters to Lord Aberdeen, in causing the resignation of all European envoys to the king. The practical result of this work and wrath did not appear until Garibaldi and a free people marched into Naples, and King Bomba, his priests, women and court ran out.

It has been said that "if Mr. Gladstone had died before 1853 he would have been accounted a brilliant politician cut off before the ripeness of years had brought him fullness of opportunity. He had done great things, but his character was critical rather than constructive. He had spoken brilliantly, but had not achieved anything likely to secure him permanent fame." In 1853, however, he rose to a height that gave him permanent place in history. A year before he had shown his mastery over the science of national finance. Lord Derby was then premier, and Disraeli chancellor of the exchequer. Disraeli and Gladstone had answered each other sharply in debate, but had not become openly hostile. England "had not yet come to look with keen interest for what might follow upon a conflict between these two men, who had no possession in common except genius." Gladstone could never forgive Disraeli's bitter attacks on his old friend, Sir Robert Peel. When Disraeli undertook to deal with finance Gladstone pounced upon him, made an end of him and his budget and the ministry of which he was the prop. Lord Derby resigned.

Lord Aberdeen formed a ministry, placing Mr. Gladstone in the office out of which Gladstone had driven Disraeli, and this cut him loose from the narrow harbor of Toryism and launched him fairly upon the open sea of Liberalism. As we understand Liberalism now, Lord Aberdeen could not be called a Liberal; but he was not a Tory—in truth had succeeded the Tories. Gladstone's conversion to Liberalism was slow, but certain. He began to see light during Peel's lifetime; but long stood aloof from both parties but did not realize that Toryism was a thing neither to be desired nor encouraged until Disraeli became his high priest.

The first of what proved to be a long series of budget speeches, unsurpassed in parliamentary history, was delivered on the 18th of April, 1853. Then, on the occasion of his speech on home rule on the 8th of April of the present year, expectation was at its zenith, the house was crowded and jammed, the vast crowd remaining tireless during five hours of astonishingly eloquent oratory, which made even avouchers of statistics attractive. As chancellor of the exchequer he had a revenue of over £750,000. Instead of dribbling this away, and leaving matters where they stood, he launched out "with the confident daring of genius," increased taxation, chiefly by manipulation of the income tax, and thereby in a wholesale manner, scarcely less than mangled, reduced or abolished the duties on the "elasticity of revenue" of daily use. The "elasticity of revenue," the entirely novel, though now well established, was the principle upon which he reckoned. The remarkable thing about his first budget was the confidence with which his predictions were accepted. His resolutions were approved and the reign of sound finance began.

a debater, and even as an orator and statesman. Since 1848 Mr. Gladstone has done so much for the people that his minor achievements have been lost sight of. Not every one remembers, however, that he was the author of the parliamentary train which travels the full length of all lines twice a day at a fare of one penny a mile.

In 1845 he resigned because the government brought in a bill dealing with Maynooth college in a way that offended his sound church principles. Next year he returned to the ministry as secretary of state for the colonies, and pledged himself to endorse Sir Robert Peel's free trade policy, which went to the length of abolishing the corn laws. This swept him far in advance of the Duke of Newcastle, his political father, and necessitated the resignation of his seat for Newark. Throughout the remainder of that session, and during the greater part of the next, he was without a seat. When he returned as member for Oxford the corn law repeal act was passed. Sir Robert Peel retreated to the opposition benches, and the Whigs in power.

In 1850 Sir Robert Peel died. In the winter of that year Mr. Gladstone went to Naples for a holiday, and there investigated prison life under Ferdinand II, and became

so interested in its barbarities that he succeeded, by means of letters to Lord Aberdeen, in causing the resignation of all European envoys to the king. The practical result of this work and wrath did not appear until Garibaldi and a free people marched into Naples, and King Bomba, his priests, women and court ran out.

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He was the main strength of the Aberdeen ministry, and as chancellor of the exchequer he financed the Crimean war. In 1855, when the coalition fell to pieces and Lord Palmerston undertook to construct a new government out of the fragments, Mr. Gladstone resigned. He remained out of office several years, accomplishing as much work as many men would take a lifetime to do and think they had done well. It was then that he completed and published his "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age." In 1859 the brief administration of Lord Derby, in which Disraeli had twice held the office of chancellor of the exchequer, came to an end, and Gladstone again joined the ministry formed by Lord Palmerston, which lasted as long as Palmerston lived. There was peace and prosperity throughout this reign, and Gladstone carried out his great schemes of finance, interrupted by the Crimean war five years before. The year 1860 completed the commercial treaty with France, abolished the paper duty, and in his first budget Mr. Gladstone ended the stamp duty. This parliament came to an end in July, 1863. Mr. Gladstone offered himself for re-election at Oxford and was rejected. This event created a profound sensation.

The Lancashire offered to secure him a seat, and thence he went to Manchester to force his sturdy manufacturers "unmuzzled" as he expressed it. This unmuzzled, "muzzled" had a deep significance for the country. It was destined to come, sooner or later, as the man grew in Liberalism, and Oxford hastened it. As long as he was politically associated with Oxford, his alma mater, there was a possibility that he might resist

the influence that was steadily leading him into uncompromising Liberalism. That chain broken, there was nothing to retard his growth. Every year since has seen him move further away from the grim old tracks of the Toryism he once embraced, and out on the broad path that led to his present altitude.

When Lord Palmerston died Earl Russell succeeded as premier, and Mr. Gladstone was leader of the house of commons, and still held the ministerial office of chancellor of the exchequer. The pent up flood of Liberal life rushed downward like a cataract. A reform bill to be introduced by Earl Russell, but to Gladstone, as leader of the house, fell the task of introducing it and bearing the brunt of the battle which raged around it. The debate on the second reading of the bill lasted several days. It fell to Mr. Gladstone's lot to wind up the debate, which he did in these true and prophetic words: "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 our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb, those great social forces are against you. They are marshaled 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 soon again will float in the eye of heaven, and will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not in an easy, but to a certain and a not far distant victory."

The measure was defeated, the ministry resigned and the Earl of Derby again called to form a ministry from a party in a hopeless minority. As soon as parliament met the following year Lord Derby resigned on the plea of ill health, and Disraeli became leader of the Conservative party and prime minister of England. During that session Mr. Gladstone made up his mind that the Irish church should no longer be endured. Early the session he laid upon the table of the house a series of resolutions, the first of which roundly declared that "in the opinion of the house of commons it is necessary that the established church of Ireland should cease to exist as an establishment." Disraeli finding fighting impossible with the parliament assembled brought about its dissolution and appealed to the country. Gladstone was defeated in Lancashire, but elsewhere the Liberals triumphed, and Gladstone, returned for Greenwich, found himself at the head of an overwhelming majority—"a prime minister personally more powerful than any who had held the reins of state since the palmist days of Sir Robert Peel."

He immediately introduced the university bill and the next year saw the Irish land bill added to the statute books, and the elementary education act passed. The year after saw the army regulation bill passed, embodying the abolition of purchase, which latter Gladstone finally accomplished, in opposition to the house of lords, by invoking the royal warrant. A year later the Tallot bill was passed. In the trouble which the university bill Gladstone resigned, and the queen invited Disraeli to form a ministry, which he declined. Mr. Gladstone returned to office, and the session pursued its course.

The country was that so prosperous and comfortable that it began to get restless and think of mischief, and the house of commons became discontented and clamorous. Gladstone was never popular in manner. His gaze was fixed far above the heads of mortal men. He thought not of gracious little ways for little ends. As he said in one of his speeches, he had in view "no meager or narrow object than the welfare of the empire at large." He was no match for his great rival, Disraeli, in the art of oratory, which with little music, and so his star declined. In the session of 1872, the lastitude of parliament was so great that the Irish university bill completed its destruction. The session wrangled on to the end. Assailed from within and without, dispirited, but hopeful of the verdict of a nation whose hearts he had splendidly fulfilled, Mr. Gladstone, on the 18th of April, 1874, introduced a budget, in January, 1874, cut the Corn Law knot. The country woke up one morning to find that parliament was dissolved. The Liberals were everywhere defeated, and Disraeli, meeting parliament, found himself in almost exactly the same position Gladstone had been when meeting parliament in 1868.

Mr. Gladstone crossed the frontier in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which brought on the war between Russia and Turkey. Mr. Gladstone had announced his retirement from politics, and surrendered the leadership of the Liberal party, to which the Marquis of Hartington succeeded. Inspired by the wonderful letters of MacGahan, the famous war correspondent of the London Daily News, he raised Europe on "The Bulgarian Atrocities" in a campaign through Miltobian. He thrust himself into the cause of the oppressed Bulgarians with an energy that astonished even those who knew him best. He wrote pamphlets, made speeches and again caught the ear of the majority by arguing that England was grossly neglecting her duty, and "ought to put a stop to the annual massacre, the murdering which still desolated Bulgaria."

But the actual outbreak of the war between Russia and Turkey alarmed England. Disraeli saw his chance and took it. When the Russian army finally defeated the Turks and drew near to Constantinople, Disraeli sent the English fleet to protect the city and landed an Indian contingent in Malta. This movement was regarded as a sign of battle, and to preserve the peace of Europe, the treaty of San Stefano, which was arranged between Gen. Ignatieff and the hated Turkey, was laid on the table to be discussed before the assembled powers in the congress of Berlin. The treaty was signed on July 13, 1878, and Disraeli then Lord Beaconsfield, returned to his seat as premier, the Marquis of Salisbury, leaving back with him what he characterized as "Peace with honor."

In 1880 the Beaconsfield cabinet was thrown out, and Gladstone, after much negotiation, was summoned by the queen to form a cabinet. Last year he was himself again thrown out on the renewal of the coronation bill. It is always an Irish issue that divides Mr. Gladstone. The Parishes and the Conservatives combined to defeat Gladstone. The Conservative ministry, with Lord Salisbury as premier, lasted about six months and was defeated by a coalition between the Parishes and Liberals on a bill on allotments for laborers in England. The real cause of the Conservative defeat was the intimation conveyed in the queen's speech that the queen had to be reelected in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone, after much reluctance on the part of the queen, was again called to form a cabinet, and is now awaiting the issue of his bill for home rule for Ireland, a work that will be recognized in history as the bravest act of his career. On the 8th of April he made his famous speech without an assembly of people held together by a warmer

interest. From 6 o'clock in the morning, the usually early hour at which Gladstone had ordered the doors open, the crowd began to file in. The streets adjacent were so packed that it was all the police could do to prevent a passageway.

The main features of Mr. Gladstone's bill are as follows: It establishes a parliament at Dublin with a maximum duration of session of five years. The parliament is to consist of two chambers, one having 40 and the other 20 members. The parliament has no power to establish any religion as a state church, but still has power to deal with law affecting trade, navigation, customs, etc. It is to be a court of appeal, and its decisions are to be final. It is to be a court of appeal, and its decisions are to be final. It is to be a court of appeal, and its decisions are to be final.

It is a little book entitled "The British Senate in 1833," published early fifty years ago, we find this picture of "the young man eloquent," now "the grand old man" and still eloquent.

"Mr. Gladstone's appearance and manner are much in his favor. He is a fine-looking man. He is about the usual height and of good figure. His countenance is mild and pleasant, and has a highly intellectual expression. His eyes are clear and quick; his eyebrows are dark and rather prominent. There is not a dandy in the house but envies what Trenchard would call his fine head of jet black hair. It is always carefully parted from the crown downward to his brow, where it is tastefully shaded. His features are small and regular, and his complexion must be a very healthy one, if he does not possess an abundant stock of blood. His gestures are varied, but not violent. When he rises he generally puts both his hands behind his back, and having then allowed them to embrace each other for a short time, he unclasps them and allows them to drop on either side. They are not permitted to remain long in the locality, but he always sees them clasped together and hanging down before him. Their reunion is not suffered to last for any length of time. Again a separation takes place, and now the right hand is seen moving up and down before him. Having thus exercised it a little, he thrusts it into the pocket of his coat, and then orders the left hand to follow its example. Having granted them a momentary repose there, they again put in motion, and in a few seconds they are seen replying vis-a-vis on his breast. He moves his face and body from one direction to another, not forgetting to bestow a liberal share of attention on his own party. He is listened to with much attention by the house, and appears to be highly respected by men of all parties.

Similar mannerisms mark his orations today. When he rises and begins what is intended to be a great oration, he has a tendency to clasp his hands behind his back. This attitude, however, like the subdued mood of which it is an indication, prevails only during the opening sentences. Age has flung rather than thrust his oratorical energy. He has grown more rapid in gesture, his jet black hair of forty-eight years ago has faded and fallen, leaving only a few thin wisps of gray carefully disposed over the grandly formed head, with which London hatmakers have had such trouble. The rounded cheeks are sunken, and their bloom has given place to pallor, the full brow is wrinkled, the dark eyes, bright and flashing still, are unshaded with immovable wrinkles; the "good figure" is somewhat rounded at the shoulders, and the sprightly step is growing deliberate. But the intellectual fire of fifty years ago is rather quickened than quenched, and the promise of health has been abundantly fulfilled in a maintenance of physical strength and activity that seems phenomenal. He can outstep the youngest member of the house, he can speak for over three hours at a stretch, and he will put into three hours as much mental and physical energy as, judiciously distributed, would suffice for the whole debate. His magnificent voice is as true in tone, and as insensible to fatigue, as when it was first heard within the walls of the house.

Trembling though every nerve with intensity of conviction and the wrath of battle, he almost literally smites his opponent hip and thigh. Taking the brass-bound box upon the table as representative of "the right honorable gentleman" or "the noble lord" opposite, he will beat it violently with his right hand, creating a rattling noise that sometimes makes it difficult to catch the words he desires to emphasize. Or, standing with heels closely pressed together, and feet spread out fan-wise, so that he may turn as a pivot to watch the effect of his speech on either side of the house, he will assume that the palm of his left hand is his adversary of the moment, and straightway

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