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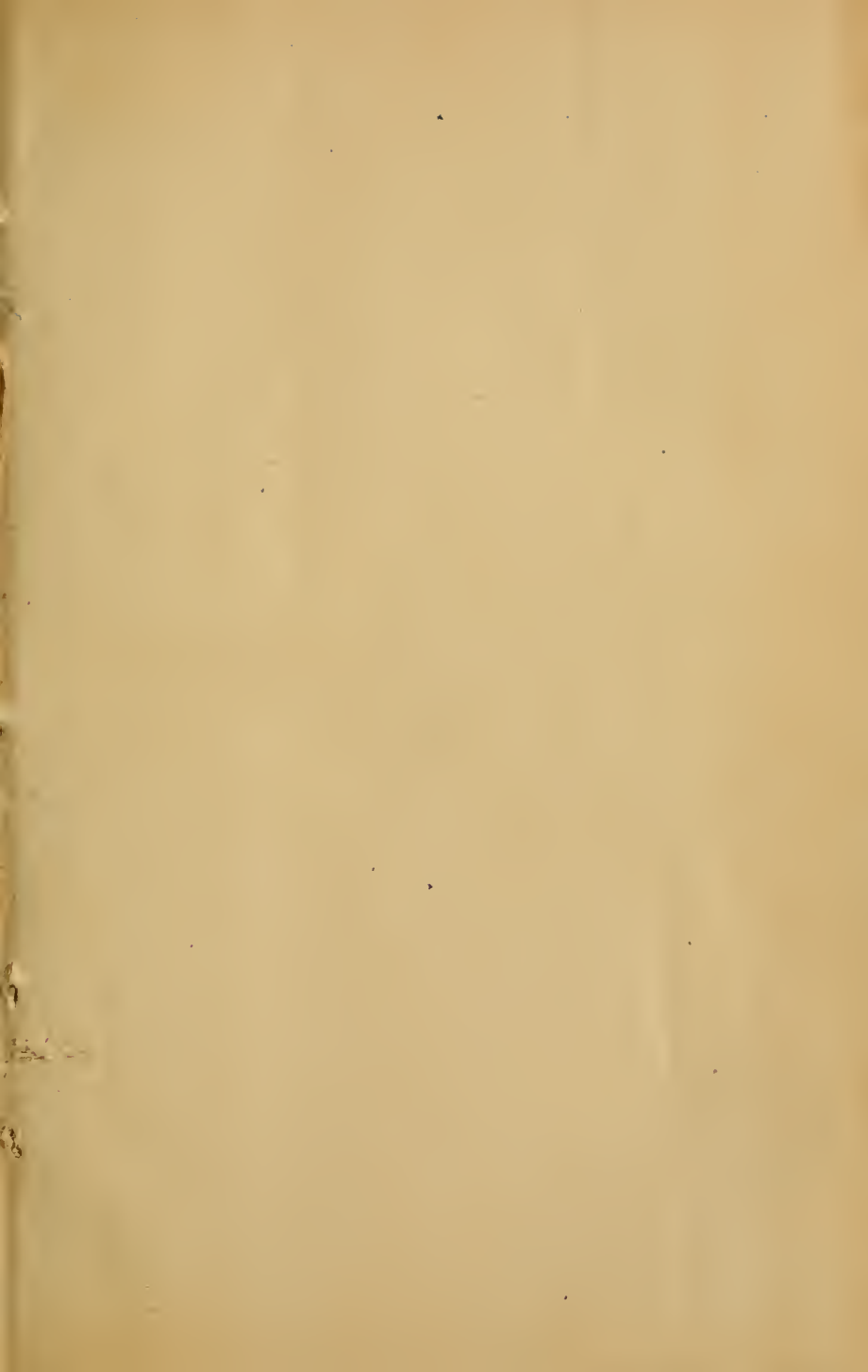
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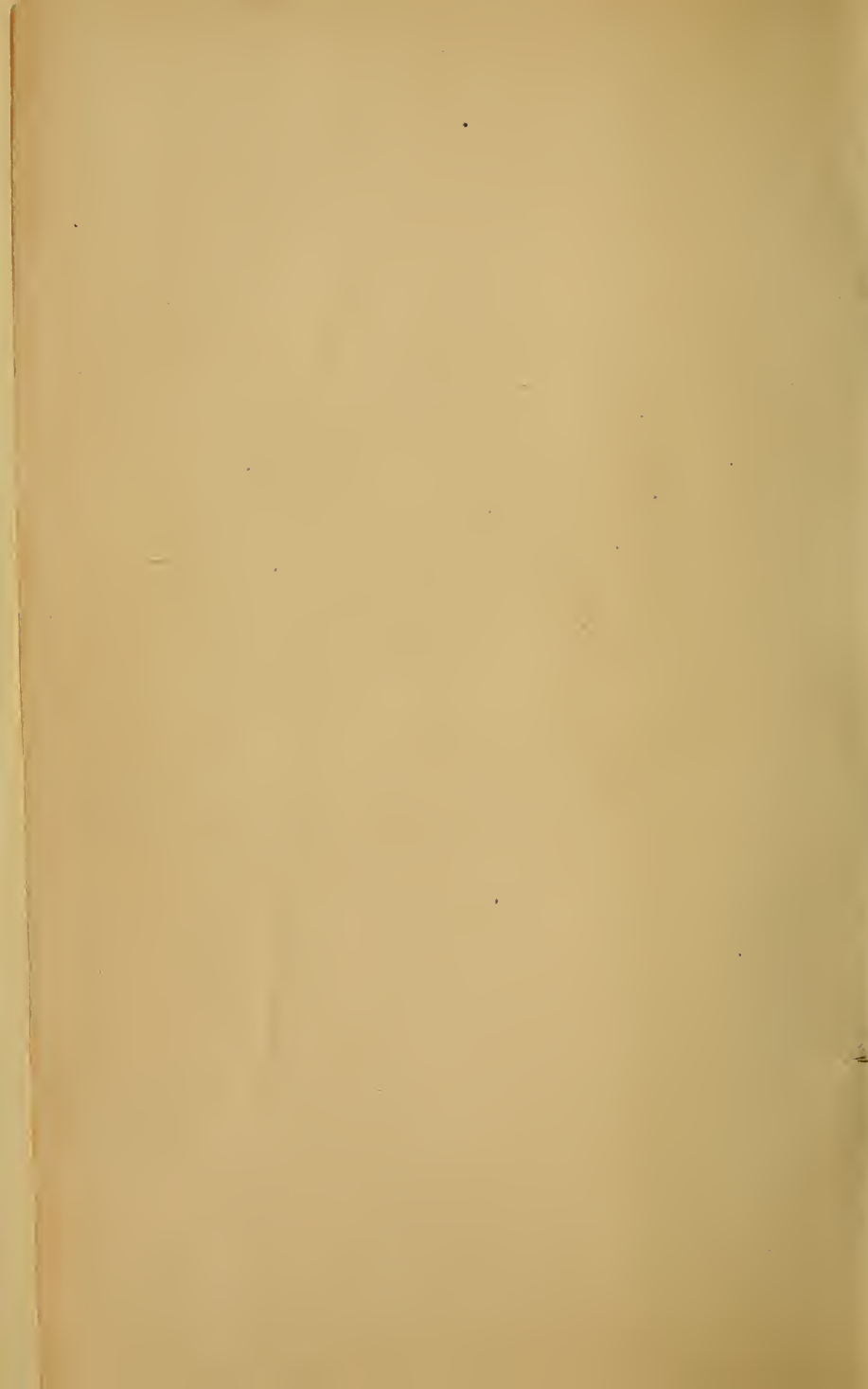
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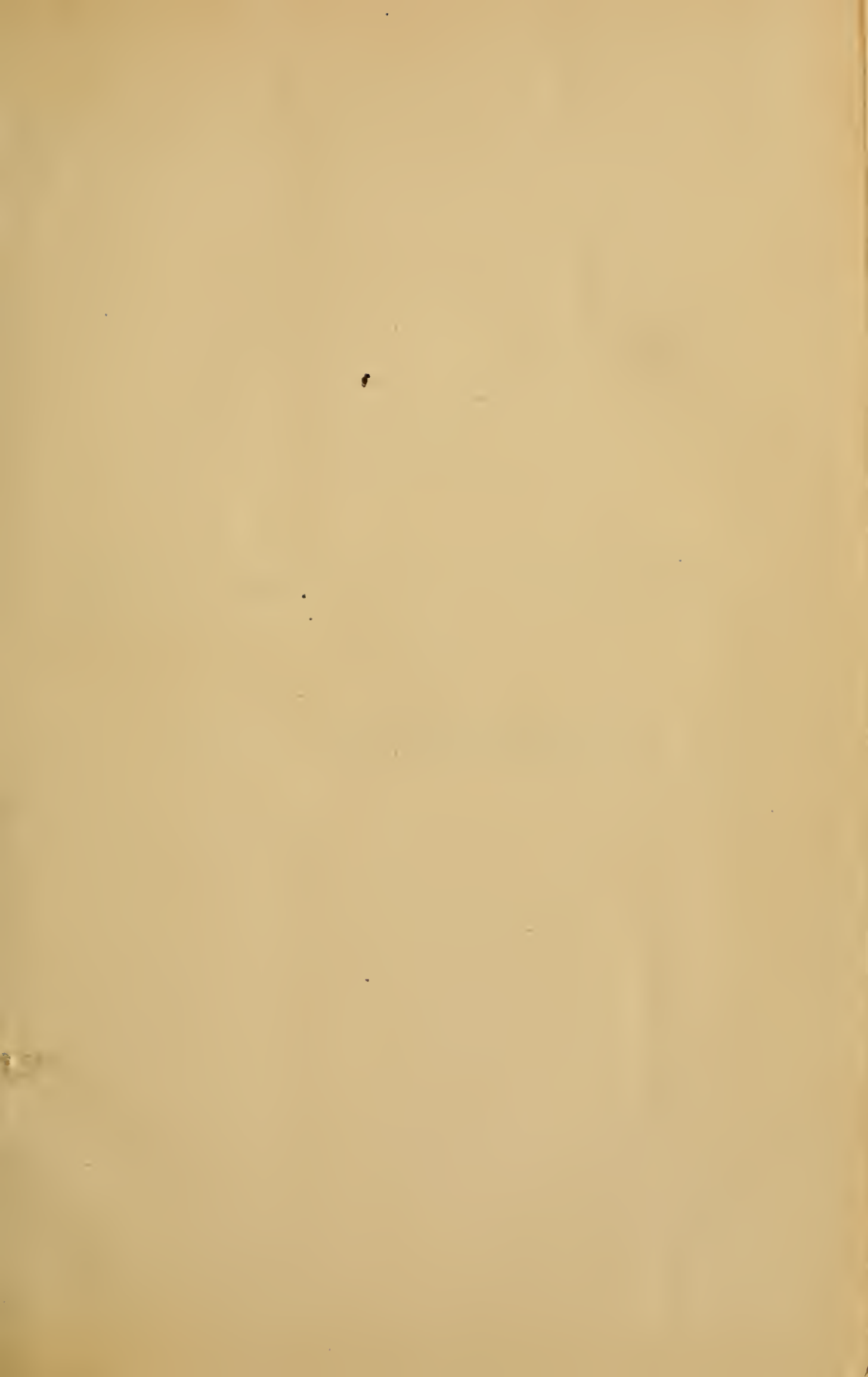


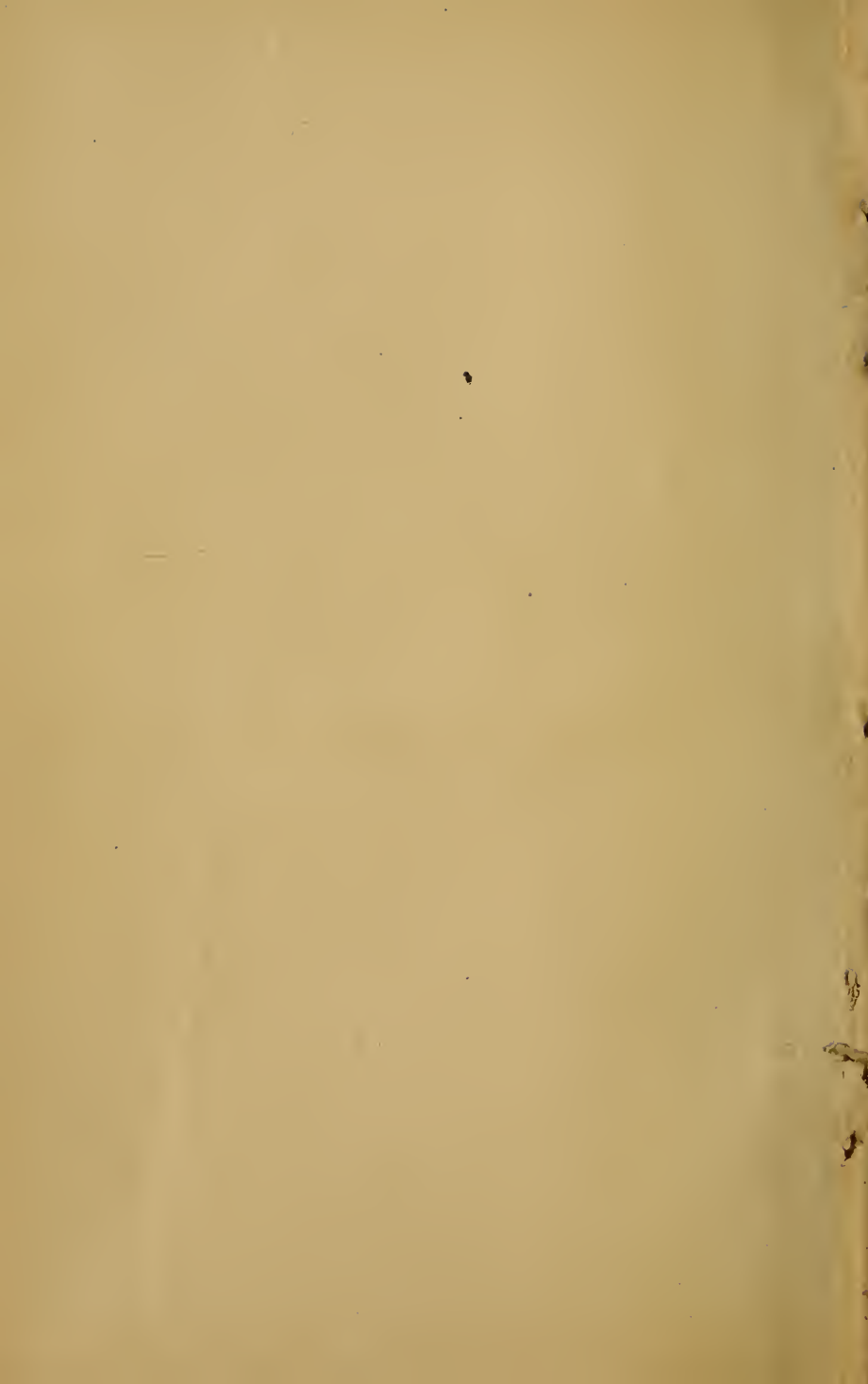










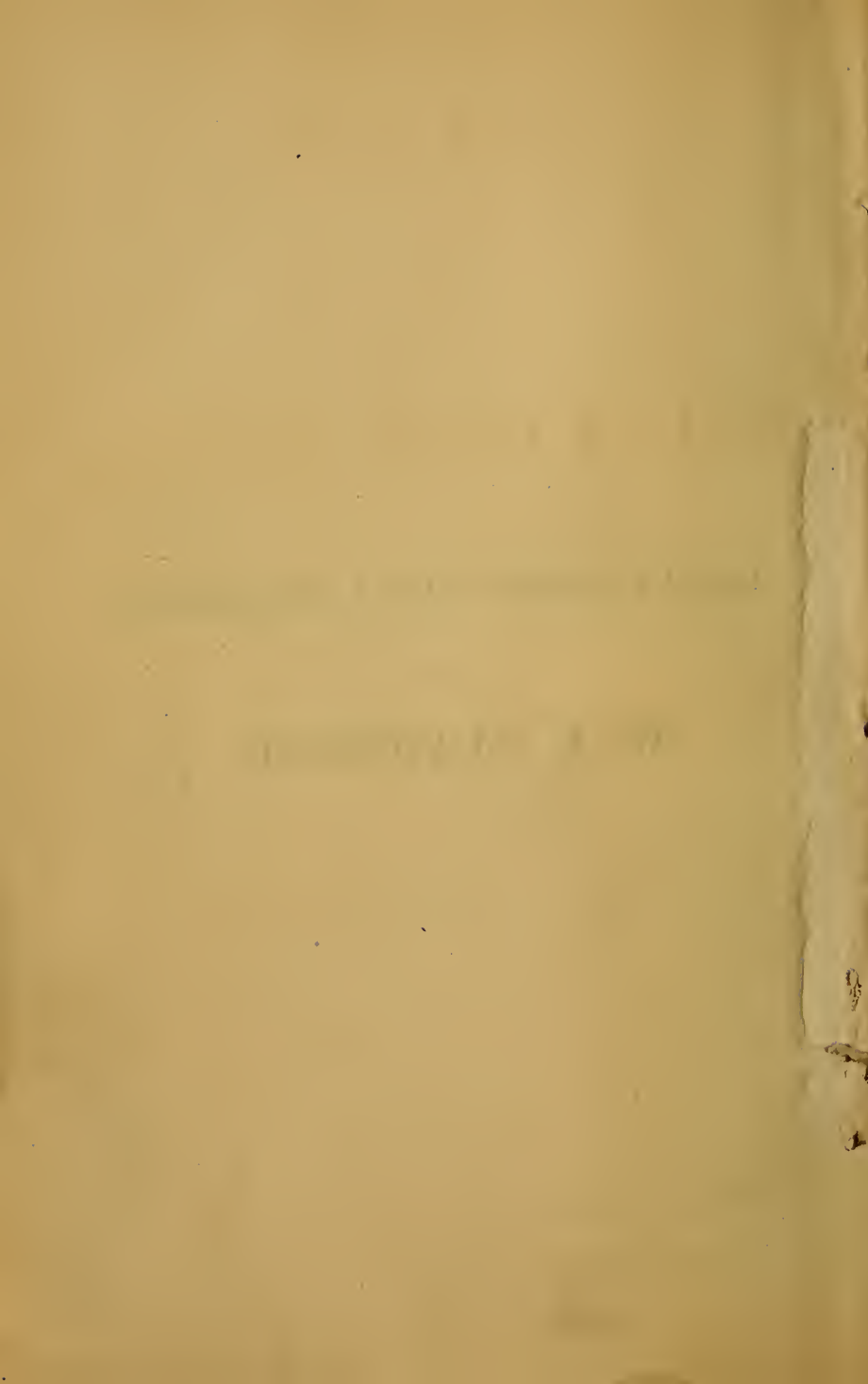




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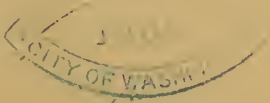
THE LIFE

OF

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

BY

JOHN M<sup>C</sup>GILCHRIST.



FELT AND DILLINGHAM,

455, BROOME STREET, NEW YORK.

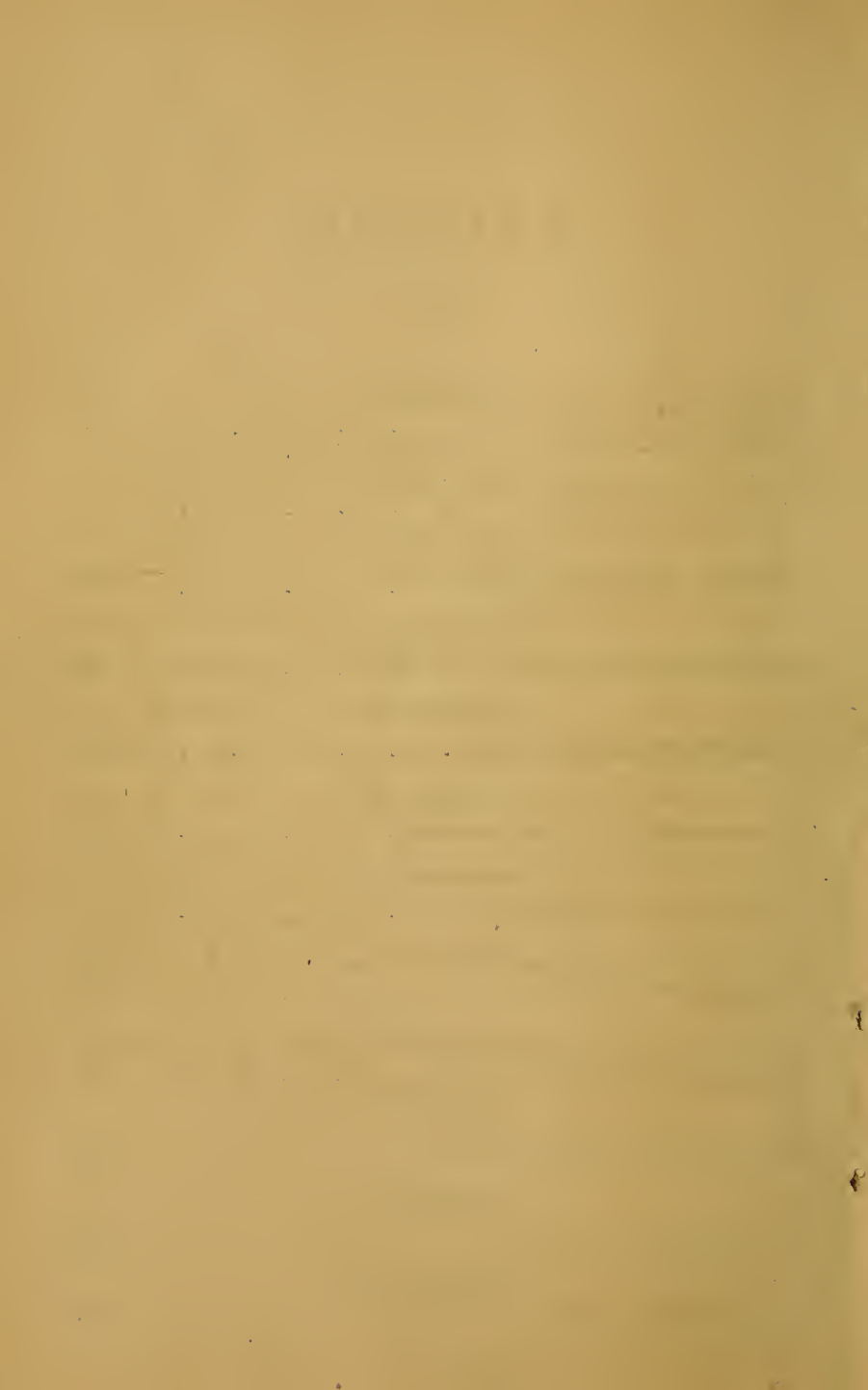
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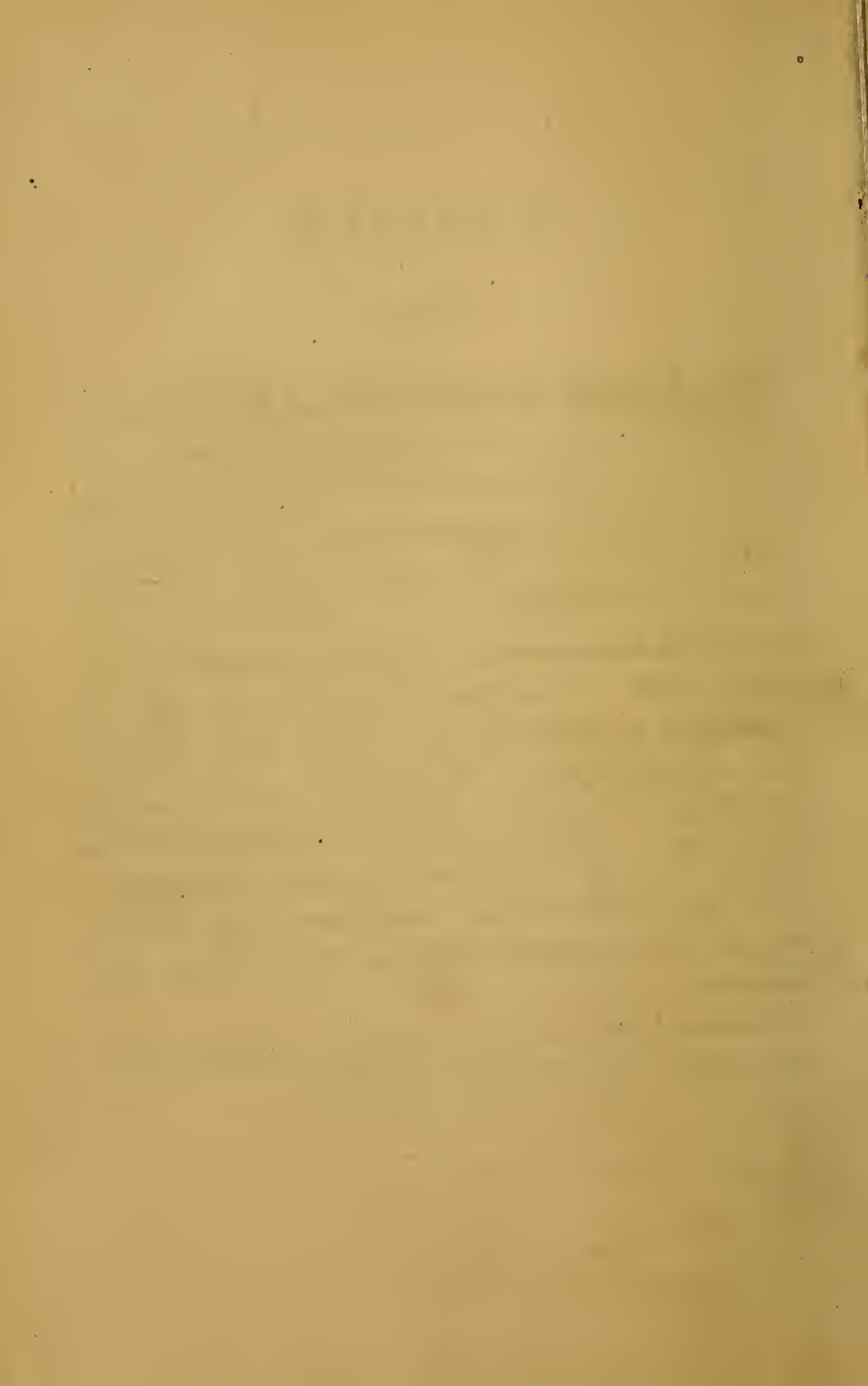


## P R E F A C E.

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IN the following pages the aim of the writer has been to present a view at once summary and impartial of the Parliamentary career, political opinions, and practical enactments of the subject of the biography, from his first return to the Parliament created by the Reform Bill of 1832 down to the last day of the existence of the Whig Parliament of the middle class. The Author has not concealed his admiration of Mr. Gladstone in the fields of fiscal and electoral reform. For obvious reasons he has apportioned a large portion of his canvas to the history of the great statesman's opinions and utterances upon the Church Establishment in Ireland, and upon the general relations of the Church and the State.

Some ancestral and personal details appear in this little work, in print for the first time.





LIFE OF  
WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

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CHAPTER I.

ANCESTRY AND EARLY DAYS.

SHORTLY before the termination of Mr. Gladstone's last tenure of office, he visited Glasgow, where he was presented with the freedom of that thriving and enlightened city. In the course of an address which he delivered during his visit to a large audience of working men, he stated that he had not a particle of any but Scottish blood in his veins. For many generations the Gladstones have been settled in the small Lanarkshire town of Biggar; and although occupying there mediocre social positions, they trace themselves back to an original stock of lairds. The name of Gladstone, or Gladstanes, as it was spelt until a comparatively recent date, is traced in connection with the holding of land by a tenure analogous to the English fee-simple, to a very remote period, in the counties of Lanark, Peebles, Roxburgh, and Dumfries. The original stock from which the various cadets ramified was the Gladstanes of that Ilk, in the parish of Liberton, in the upper ward of Clydesdale. The title-deeds of the

estate of Gladstones, previous to the seventeenth century, have all been lost. It becomes therefore impossible to say when the family either acquired or ceased to possess Gladstones. The estate of Arthurshiel, however, adjacent to Gladstones, and situate in the same parish, became the inheritance of a branch of the family—that branch through which the great English statesman traces his descent. It is probable that Arthurshiel was assigned to a younger Gladstones, of Gladstones, about the middle of the sixteenth century. It is a matter of ascertained fact that it was held by William, who died previous to 1565. In a legal document, dated the 13th of March, 1623, by Robert Chancellor, of Shieldhill, George is described as “the umquhile (late) George Gladstaines, of Arthurshiel.” A William Gladstones (probably the son and heir of George) was witness to a tack (or lease), dated June, 1641. John Gladstones sold the estate of Arthurshiel to James Brown, of Edmonstoun, and died about the year 1680.

William, the son of the last-named laird—the last of the Gladstones who held land to any considerable extent, until the late Sir John purchased Fasque—removed to Biggar, and commenced business as a maltman (or, *Anglice*, maltster). Although at that time the population of the village did not much exceed a thousand, it contained no fewer than fourteen malting establishments in full and active operation. William, the maltster, died in 1728, and his remains lie in the family burying-ground in Liberton churchyard. By his wife, Christian Brown, who was probably a daughter of the Laird of Edmonstoun, he left three sons and one daughter, Grizzel, who married a dyer named Thomas Cosh. One of his sons becoming unsuc-

cessful in business, filled, in his old age, the offices of bellman and grave-digger. He died in 1784.

James, the second son, was, like his father, a maltman. Of his male issue, one became an officer of excise, and died in 1816. Another rented a small farm, and acted as factor, or agent, on the Biggar estate for Admiral Fleming. He died about forty years ago, leaving a son Robert, born in 1821, who studied for the Church.

Reverting to the main line of the ancestry of William Ewart Gladstone, his great-grandfather, John, grandson of the last Laird of Arthurshiel, was born about the year 1693. Like so many of his kin, he was a maltman, and a burgess of Biggar, keeper of the Baron's Girdel, an active Freemason, and an elder of the kirk. His name very frequently occurs in the annals of the town during the former half of the eighteenth century. By his industry he acquired the means to purchase the small farm of Mid Toftcombs. He died on the 1st of June, 1756, aged sixty-three. By his wife, Janet Aitken, he had five sons and six daughters. His eldest son, the great-uncle of the subject of our sketch, was educated for the ministry, but not obtaining a living, he became rector of the High School of Leith. Another son died at Coulter Muir, near Biggar, in 1776. Another, John, accepted the patrimony of Mid Toftcombs, which had been declined by his elder brethren, and further received with his wife, Christian Taverner, a tocher (dowry) of seven thousand merks. He was the leading local spirit in a movement of secession from the Established Church in 1780. His two sons, one a watchmaker in Biggar, who died in 1851, and Alexander, landlord of the Beehive Inn, in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, "were both upright men."

Mr. W. E. Gladstone's grandfather, Thomas, fourth son of John Gladstone, of Mid Toftcombs, was born on the 3rd of June, 1732, and died in 1809. He left home early in life, and settled as a corn merchant in Leith. He married Helen, daughter of Walter Neilson, of Springfield. She bore to him sixteen children, of whom seven sons and five daughters grew to maturity. He was successful in trade, and was enabled to furnish all his sons with a small capital to start them in life. His eldest son, John, afterwards Sir John, was born in Leith in 1763. He lived to reach his eighty-eighth year, and after a most prosperous career, died at his mansion at Fasque, in Kincardineshire, in 1851. When John was just of age, he was sent by his father to Liverpool, to sell a cargo of grain which had arrived at that port. He so attracted the attention of a leading corn merchant there, that the latter earnestly entreated his father to let his son settle at that port. After sundry negotiations, the result was the formation of the firm of Corrie, Gladstone, and Bradshaw, corn merchants; Mr. Corrie taking the two latter young men into partnership. The firm had hardly existed two years, ere its stability was very sorely tried. There came a general failure of the corn crops throughout Europe. Mr. Corrie at once dispatched his junior partner, Mr. Gladstone, to the United States, to buy grain. John Gladstone was then about twenty-four years of age. Having the needful letters of credit, he started upon a mission of which the parties to it entertained the most sanguine hopes. On reaching America, he found that the corn crops had failed there also, and that there was not a single bushel to be procured. To his dismay, by the next advices which he

received from England, he was informed that some twenty-four large vessels had been chartered to bring home the grain which he was supposed to have bought. The situation was most perilous, and it seemed that the prospects of so young a man were fairly shipwrecked. Indeed, when the news became known at Liverpool, it was considered impossible for the house to recover the shock arising from so many vessels returning in ballast instead of bearing the cargoes which they had been chartered to convey. Corrie and Co. were therefore regarded as a doomed house, and the deepest commiseration was felt for the young absent partner, while the senior was blamed for his precipitancy. But young Gladstone, though strongly impressed with the difficulties of the position in which he found himself, maintained unimpaired his courage and presence of mind. He sought every means by which to lighten, if not to avert the blow. By careful examination of price lists, by ascertaining what procurable products would best suit the English market, he succeeded, without waste of time, in filling the holds of all the vessels. And when all was sold and realised, the net loss on the large transaction of the house hardly exceeded £500.

From that time John Gladstone became a marked man on the Liverpool Exchange, and in the English commercial world. He became the leading spirit in his house, and for some fourteen years more the partnership continued, ending naturally by effluxion of time. The corn dearth had continued, and so widely spread, that the Administration determined to hold stores of grain at the different ports. Corrie, Gladstone, and Bradshaw were appointed the Government agents at Liver-

pool, a fact which recognised their holding the leading position in the trade. They were so successful that at the close of the partnership the sum of no less than £75,000 stood to the credit of the guarantee account alone. Corrie retired wealthy, and Bradshaw returned early in life to his native town, Wigan, where he lived for many years.

John Gladstone continued in business, taking his brother Robert into partnership, and engaged largely in the trade with Russia. They also became large West India merchants and sugar importers. As Liverpool offered a more enterprising field than Leith, three other of the brothers soon followed John and Robert, and eventually all the seven were settled there. It was about this time that Mr. Brougham, while going the Northern Circuit, was John Gladstone's guest, and accompanied his host to the Liverpool Theatre. The play was "Macbeth," and Kean played the chief character. When Macduff said, "Stands Scotland where it did?" a Scotchman in the gallery cried out, "Na, na, sirs; there's pairt o' Scotland in England noo—there's John Gladstone and his clan."

The Gladstones were the first to send a private vessel (the *Kingsmill*) to Calcutta, upon the opening of the East India and China trades to other than East India Company's vessels, in 1814. From that time to the present, the family have been extensively engaged in that trade. The house of Robertson Gladstone (John's second son) is one of the first firms in Liverpool, having very large relations with every part of the East.

It was but natural that so energetic a character as

John Gladstone should take a deep interest in the public affairs of the town in which he lived. As he was always opposed to the close and self-elected municipal corporation of the ante-Reform Bill days, it is not to be wondered at that he was never elected to any corporate office, but he was the means of removing very many local abuses and restrictive imposts which bore heavily against the interests of the port. A very valuable service of plate was presented to him in recognition of what he had effected, many of the subscribers being his strongest opponents on corporation matters of dispute. At that period Liverpool was like a young giant, though not containing one-fifth of its present population. Supported at the back by the great products of manufacture from Yorkshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Cheshire, with immediate access to coal and salt, it became the port of shipment to all parts of the world, and by 1832 the declared value of its exports exceeded that of London itself.

In political opinion John Gladstone was what would now be termed a Liberal Conservative, and his desire was to have the best men to represent the town, to some extent independently of their being ardent partisans of either of the two great parties. When the celebrated William Roscoe retired from the representation, Mr. Gladstone was desirous that George Canning and Henry Brougham should be returned. They were then in their early prime, and gradually becoming regarded as the two leading men of the day. But Brougham selected Creevey, a very extreme Radical, and a man of little or no public standing, as his co-candidate, and Gladstone declined to support the two in alliance. He therefore threw his weight on the side of

General Gascoyne, a member of the family of Salesbury, holding large property near the town. A remarkably severe contest, lasting fourteen days, ensued; and the result, mainly through John Gladstone's influence, was the return of Gascoyne and Canning. From this date there existed a very close intimacy between Mr. Canning and Mr. Gladstone, an intimacy which exercised a very important influence upon the mind and career of his distinguished son. Throughout Canning's prematurely shortened life, he consulted Mr. Gladstone on all important mercantile affairs. Ere long, at the suggestion of Canning, Gladstone solicited return to Parliament, being provided by the Marlborough family with a seat for their pocket borough of Woodstock. He remained long enough in Parliament to be witness of the earlier triumphs of his youngest son.

John Gladstone was twice married. He does not appear to have had any issue by his first wife. He married secondly Ann Robertson, of Stornoway, N.B., daughter of Andrew Robertson, who had been Provost of Dingwall. Miss Robertson was a native of Dingwall. One who knew her well testifies that she was "a lady of very great accomplishments, of fascinating manners, of commanding presence and high intellect; one to grace any home and endear any heart." By her he had a family of four sons and two daughters. Of these, three sons—Sir Thomas, Bart., of Fasque, Robertson, the Liverpool merchant, and William Ewart—and one daughter, who is unmarried, survive. John Neilson, a captain in the navy, and M.P. for Portarlington, died a few years ago. John Gladstone was made a baronet by Sir Robert Peel in 1845. He died in 1851. Besides the provision



made for his family by will, he gave to each of his sons £100,000 in his lifetime.

With such parents as John Gladstone and Ann Robertson, it was most natural that the development of the minds of each of their children should be carefully watched, and any germs of excellence which should appear be as sedulously cultivated. William Ewart was born on the 29th of December, 1809, in the same bedroom as that in which, five years later, his friend Mr. Cardwell first saw the light. The Cardwell family purchased the residence of Mr. Gladstone on his removing from one house to another. In the youth there was soon perceived an uncommon perspicacity and comprehensiveness of mind. Its early characteristic was a firm grasp and encompassment of anything set before it. He was fortunate in his early preceptors. They still live to be cheered by the growing fame and usefulness of their pupil. One is the Rev. Mr. Rawson, the other the Venerable Archdeacon Jones. At Oxford, to which he was sent, after passing with credit through Eton, he achieved high academic distinction; and also in the Union Debating Society, he gave similar promise of oratorical celebrity. He passed Double First with comparative ease. At once his father's wishes and his own inclinations determined him to study for no profession, but to devote himself solely to public life.

While his education, in the ordinary sense, was going on, there was a course of instruction being imparted of at least an equally valuable character. His preceptor was his father, who strove to communicate to his son, from the period of his earliest childhood, his own stores of natural and extended knowledge. Much of the high

eminence which Mr. Gladstone, altogether apart from party considerations, has attained as a financier, must be traced to the thorough initiation into the principles of business operations, on the largest scale, which his father imparted. When young Gladstone was but twelve years of age, his father would discuss with him after dinner any leading financial or political question of the day. It was curious for the guests occasionally present, to see experience proposing, and youth weighing, examining, and discussing, questions frequently of a very complicated character ; the interest of both talkers being all the keener that England was at the time passing through one of the most exciting epochs of her history. Mr. Canning was invariably a guest at Mr. Gladstone's house at Seaforth, when he went down to Liverpool to meet his constituents, and frequently predicted that a distinguished career was before the youth.

## CHAPTER II.

### EARLY YEARS IN PARLIAMENT.

SHORTLY after Mr. Gladstone left Oxford, he went for several months on a tour on the Continent, accompanied, we believe, by more than one of his Eton and Christchurch contemporaries and friends. Among the warmest friendships which he had contracted at school and college, were those with Mr. Sidney Herbert and Lord Lincoln, afterwards Lord Herbert of Lea and Duke of Newcastle. It was the father of the latter—the then duke—to whom Mr. Gladstone was indebted for his first seat in Parliament. The borough of Newark was largely under the control of the ducal house of Pelham-Clinton; and although in the momentous and exciting general election of December, 1832, which succeeded the final passage of the Reform Bill, the Liberals hotly contested the borough, Mr. Gladstone, as a true blue Tory and the duke's nominee, came in at the head of the poll, winning, however, only by some sixty votes out of more than eleven hundred which were recorded.

During the first year or two in which he enjoyed his seat, he spoke little, and what little he did say is reported with great brevity in contemporary records. Amongst his early speeches were one against the ballot, and an apologetic address for the mayor, corporation, and freemen of his native town, whom a committee of the House of

Commons had found guilty of the most flagrant bribery at the general election, but in whose behalf, and successfully, Mr. Gladstone deprecated the extreme penal visitations which certain very ardent parliamentary spirits counselled. The line of argument adopted against the ballot—and of his opinion hostile to it Mr. Gladstone has not yet enunciated any recantation—was to this effect:—The ballot could be nothing unless secrecy were observed; but how could it be observed if the public functionaries who were to take the ballot, and who might probably not be always selected for their highly strict and honourable principles, could become acquainted with the votes given by different individuals? If they should become acquainted with the votes, they would acquire a power over the voters, which would make them the petty tyrants of the districts in which they resided. But if strict silence were to be observed, it would put an end to all public discussion. Another objection was, that the ballot would make the constitution of the House still more democratic than it now was. He thought that at present it was democratic enough, and, therefore, he openly opposed it on that ground. Another ground of objection was, that after the experiment of last year, it would be too much to carry on the principle of reform so much farther without any experience of the working of what they had already done.

One of the most sagacious of the many acts of sagacity which distinguished the public life of Sir Robert Peel, was his attracting to himself the more promising of the youthful members of his own party. In this his policy stood out in strong and favourable contrast to the course adopted by the Whigs, who have ever considered office

the close borough and prescriptive appanage of the members of a restricted number of noble and, so to speak, professionally official families. With Peel it was quite otherwise. He wished on the one hand to train a school of well-drilled followers; and on the other, without ignoring the just claims of the veterans who had fought by his side the hard contested combats of the past, to reward youthful promise and endeavour by early promotion. Young Gladstone was soon marked out for this distinction. Peel quickly discovered his worth and usefulness; and the opportunity for recognising it with the laurel wreath of active employment came sooner than either could have anticipated. Meanwhile, the youthful aspirant, while attending diligently to the business and routine of the noble field of exertion into which his good fortune had permitted him to make entrance at such an almost boyish age, showed by his reticence at once his modesty, his patience, and his excellent sense.

Mr. Gladstone had been just two years in Parliament when he became a minister of the Crown. In the winter of 1834, changes of various descriptions—changes by death, by resignation, by the elevation of the most popular member of the Reform Administration, Lord Althorp, to the Upper House by the demise of his father, which rendered it impossible that he should longer hold the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer; but above all, a considerable downfall of the popularity of the Whigs—furnished to the king the opportunity long desired by him, of getting quit of his Whig ministers. He sent for the Duke of Wellington. The duke consented to hold the seals of the Premiership only until a despatch could be sent to Rome to summon Sir Robert

Peel, who, with his wife, had started for a tour in Italy; so little did he imagine the likelihood of any impending transference of political power. The following extracts from the "Journal" of Mr. Raikes will sufficiently indicate the excitement of the occasion:—

"It is announced that Sir Robert Peel has accepted the Ministry. His brother, Colonel [now General] Peel, stated the fact at M. Dupin's *soirée*. . . . Sir R. Peel arrived at the Hôtel Bristol [Mr. Raikes was living in Paris] at eleven o'clock last night. This morning he received the visit of Lord Granville, and at eleven o'clock left Paris for London, 'big with the fate of Cæsar and of Rome.' . . . The arrangements of the Ministry are in full train. . . . The Administration is formed without any coalition, and is of pure Conservative principles."

When the list of Cabinet and minor ministers came out, Mr. W. E. Gladstone's name appeared as a Junior Lord of the Treasury. Sir Robert Peel found it desirable and necessary to dissolve Parliament; and in his letter to the electors of Tamworth issued a manifesto, of which this sentence contained the essential purport:—"With regard to the Reform Bill, I will now repeat the declaration which I made when I entered the House of Commons as a member of the Reformed Parliament, that I consider the Reform Bill a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question, a settlement which no friend to the peace and welfare of the country would attempt to disturb, either by indirect or by insidious means." Starting from this as a stipulation and fixed principle, he proposed to govern the country in a spirit of Conservatism (a political term then used for the first time), but expressed a readiness to carry into effect certain minor reforms in our domestic system. Mr. Gladstone followed suit responsively in his address and

speeches to the electors of Newark, where he was again returned at the head of the poll, but with a Whig, Serjeant Wilde, for a colleague. Mr. Raikes, reflecting the average Tory opinion, thus wrote of the policy of the first Administration of which Mr. Gladstone was a member :—  
“Sir Robert Peel’s address has arrived. It is a manly and sensible document, calculated to inspire confidence in the country ; expressing readiness to reform real abuses and defects, without seeking for a false popularity by adopting every fleeting popular impression of the day, and promising the instant redress of anything which any one may call an abuse.”

There had unquestionably arisen in the country a strong reaction against Whig rule. The Whigs had been far from realising popular expectation, and the disappointment had been especially felt by the Radicals and “O’Connell’s tail ;” nevertheless, the reaction was not so great as to enable Peel’s Ministry to stand its ground. When Parliament met, Ministers were beaten by ten in the election of a Speaker. A few days after, an amendment to the address from the Throne was carried by a majority of seven. The end was evidently impending ; and though Sir Robert Peel remained in office, showing singular patience and tact, until April, he had then no option but to resign, being defeated by a large and decisive majority on certain resolutions affecting the temporalities of the Irish Church, drawn with characteristic skill and astuteness by Lord John Russell. Mr. Gladstone resigned the Under-Secretaryship of the Colonial Office, to which he had been transferred in February, and in which post, by the admission of both sides, he showed remarkable signs not only of administrative ability, but of con-

ciliatoriness of spirit. The latter qualification was much needed, as several of our colonies then evinced great and just irritation at the policy of the home government. Mr. Gladstone's name is not to be found recorded in any of the more than usually acrimonious encounters which characterised the short-lived first Ministry of his great master, Peel. How irritated both parties were, and how much more remarkable was, therefore, his modest and placable reticence, may be gathered from these sentences of Mr. Raikes, which precisely reflect the temper of the times:—"Monday, 16th March. Party spirit rages with great violence throughout society in London. The disappointed Whigs are ready for any measures which may perplex the duke's government, and are publicly coalescing with the Radicals to turn them out. Though the feeling of the country is daily becoming stronger in favour of the Tories, yet the two other parties form a fearful opposition in the House, and every expedient of threat and ridicule is put in force to keep those who have once voted for the Reform Bill still fettered to their dictates. They are betting two to one in their den at Brookes's, that the Government does not last two months."

For the next two years Mr. Gladstone spoke but seldom. We believe that over-exertion had somewhat injuriously affected a constitution which, at that time at least, was by no means robust. When the Canadian troubles, which furnished matter for such prolonged and embittered controversy, arose, he enrolled himself decidedly on the side of the authority of the Crown. From him, at least, Papineau and his rebellious associates received no countenance or sympathy. In 1837 we find him arguing that



the simple question that lay before the Imperial Legislature, was the support of government and public order on one side, and the absolutism of the popular will on the other. Not a single practical grievance had been substantiated by the Canadian Assembly with respect to the undue preference of the English race. It appeared that, during the administration of the last two governments, of eighteen appointments to the Legislative Council, ten had been given to persons of French origin. This might not seem to represent the proportion of the French population to the British; but it should be remembered that the former did not compose so large a proportion of the upper class, from which the members of the Legislative Council were of necessity selected. In this and other speeches delivered on the same and similar themes, during the next few years, discerning men saw a ripening, and possibly an ambition, for the seals of the Colonial Office.

As is well known, slavery in all British colonies and dependencies was abolished in 1834. Negro apprenticeship, as it was called, however, was reserved until 1840, when the last remaining link of enslavement was to be removed. A very strong agitation arose in 1838, to have the period of final emancipation ante-dated by two years. Lord Brougham was the leader of the movement, the pious and humanitarian classes constituted its rank and file, and the most effective of its professional exponents was Mr. George Thompson. The agitation was soon extended to the floors of both Houses of Parliament. Mr. Gladstone took the unpopular side. He had the honour of winding up one of the most animated of the debates of the year (1838). This, in one sense, may be considered the first great speech delivered by Mr. Glad-

stone. It was the first which took a thorough and decisive grip of the public mind. It was the first to which the honour of an elaborate two-column report was given in the *Times*. Lastly, and most important of all, it was the first which Mr. Gladstone himself published in a revised pamphlet form. We therefore reproduce as copious a summary of it as the necessities of our space will allow :—The question, he said, was to the colonists a matter not of property alone, but of character ; and he would prove that they were guiltless of the oppressions imputed to them. The report of the committee of which Mr. Buxton was chairman, and which had continued its sittings to the end of last session, had, with Mr. Buxton's concurrence, negatived the necessity for this change. Perhaps there was no compact in a legal sense, but in a moral one there was. The apprenticeship was a part of the compensation, and the labour due under it had a marketable value, of which it was unjust to deprive the master or his assigns. He deprecated an appeal to mere individual instances. There were cases of abuse, no doubt ; but the question was, were the abuses general ? To prove that they were not, he would take, point by point, the public reports of magistrates, and even governors. He then, by a variety of citations, proceeded to prove, that on every one of the heads of complaint the satisfactory cases exceeded, four or five times over, the unsatisfactory ones, and showed an improvement under the system of apprenticeship, of which this may serve as an example, that in British Guiana, where, in the last year of slavery, the number of lashes inflicted had been 280,000, the number inflicted, on the average of the years elapsed since the apprenticeship, had

been only 684. The flogging of females, under any circumstances, was odious and indefensible; but this motion could not affect that practice; because, when females are flogged, it is not as apprentices, but as disorderly persons—the same punishment being inflicted on free women. He did not shrink from inquiry; but with facts such as those he had proved, he could not help thinking that the state of the apprentices had but little to require the attention of humane persons, while such grievances remained unredressed as the condition of the factory children, and the system of the foreign slave-trade.

The *Times*, of the day succeeding the delivery of the elaborate address thus summarised, remarked:—"This speech, which was both candid and accurate, produced considerable effect, and brought the debate to a satisfactory close." And in a leading article of the day following, the speaker was at once commended, and certain of his conclusions questioned. "Mr. Gladstone's eloquent and able speech was calculated to weaken, not remove, many persuasions, amounting to prejudices, with regard to the extent of those misdeeds and criminal abuses of the Abolition Act which have constituted the chief materials of the agitation raised by Lord Brougham and his accomplices of Exeter Hall. Still there is much matter of obloquy, from which neither Sir George nor Mr. Gladstone has succeeded in exonerating the West Indian proprietors. There have been complaints of oppression and exaction brought home against planters in Jamaica and other colonies, and although it may be taken for granted that the conduct thus represented forms the exception, not the rule, it cannot be denied that the House of Assembly of Jamaica has not merely omitted,

but obstinately refused, to pass certain laws and regulations which were indispensable to the fulfilment of their portion of the compact framed in 1834, and to the equivalent required of that Assembly for the benefits secured to the proprietors by the grant of £20,000,000, and the allowance of six years' apprenticeship."

Our readers will now be able to appreciate our motive in withholding at its proper place Mr. Gladstone's maiden speech. We present it now, as a gloss upon what has just preceded, and as distinctly showing that Mr. Gladstone, from the first day of his appearance in Parliament, although his father and other near kinsmen held slaves, had no love for slavery. He voted for the abolition of slavery; and the first words he ever uttered in St. Stephen's Hall, were uttered on the occasion of his presenting a petition from inhabitants of the borough of Portarlington in favour of the abolition of slavery. A few days before, Lord Howick (now Earl Grey) had accused Mr. Gladstone, senior, of shortening by hard usage the lives of his field hands in the colony of Demerara. We quote verbatim from the *Times* of May 18, 1833:—"Mr. Gladstone presented a similar petition from Portarlington. The hon. member then alluded to certain observations by a noble lord in his speech to the House on Tuesday night. The noble lord had made selection of an estate in Demerara, belonging to some of his (Mr. Gladstone's) nearest relatives, for the purpose of showing what a destruction of human life had taken place in the West Indies, from the manner in which the slaves were worked. The mortality which had taken place in that colony was to be attributed to a totally different cause. In consequence of the falling off which

had taken place in the coffee trade, and also in the trade in cotton, it was found expedient to apply the slaves to the cultivation of sugar, which was a much more unhealthy employment. The population upon the estate of his father was, however, in a state of increase."

The repute of Mr. Gladstone was now fairly established, and he had become a man marked out for high office. True, about the years 1839 and 1840 he to some extent risked his repute with the masses by the strong position which he took against the claims of the Jews to political enfranchisement, and against those of the Dissenters for State aid for the education of their children. Take, as a fair specimen, the following summary of a speech against Jewish Emancipation:—Lord Morpeth had declared, as long as the State continued to finger Unitarian gold, it could not refuse to extend to those by whom it so profits the blessing of education, and assist those sects which must otherwise remain in intellectual darkness. Now, if the State were to be regarded as having no other function than that of representing the mere will of the people as to religious tenets, he admitted the truth of this principle, but not if they were to hold that the State was capable of duties, and that the State could have a conscience. He did not wish to say anything offensive; it was not his habit to revile religion, under whatever form it was presented to him; but what ground was there for confining the noble lord's reasoning to Christianity? Mr. Gladstone then read to the House a passage from a petition lately presented from the Protestant Dissenters: "That your petitioners feel the deepest gratitude for the expression of Her Majesty's most gracious wish that the youth of this country should be religiously brought up,

and the rights of conscience respected, while they earnestly hope that the education of the people, Jewish and Christian, will be sedulously connected with a due regard to the Holy Scriptures." How was the education of the Jewish people, who considered the New Testament an imposture, to be sedulously connected with a due regard to the Holy Scriptures, which consisted of the Old and New Testaments? To force the Jewish children to read the latter would be directly contrary to the principles of honourable gentlemen opposite. He wished to see no child forced to do so, but he protested against paying from the money of the State a set of men whose business would be to inculcate erroneous doctrines. The proposition he held to be very different from that upon which the claims of the Roman Catholics and Dissenters were founded. With them we had the same common bonds of belief in the same redemption. There were also considerations which broadly distinguished their case from that of the Jews. The one adhered as strongly as ourselves to the text of Christianity, the other did not. The one constituted a large majority in one portion of the United Kingdom—the others were scarcely perceptible on the face of English society. So much as to numbers; how as to grievances? He was not aware that the Jews had any special ones to complain of. No allegation of this kind had ever been made. It was to be borne in mind that there were still some offices to which the religious test was strictly applied:—to the holder of the Crown, to the Lord Chancellor, and to certain great offices in Ireland. . . . In introducing these men to Parliament and other high offices, there existed an absolute tendency to disqualify Par-

liament for the performance of any duties connected with religion, and, by easy transitions, to overturn the very principles on which the constitution of this nation is based.

On the 25th of July, 1839, ere he had completed his twenty-ninth year, Mr. Gladstone entered into the holy bonds of matrimony. All political London knows Mrs. Gladstone's talents; all fashionable London knows her graces. It is but few of our English readers who need to be informed of her large-hearted benevolence and readiness to engage in all good works. It seems not to us any transgression of good taste to remark that God has blessed the premier Liberal statesman of our times with a partner who has proved herself to be a helpmeet in every sense, in the real, as well as in the conventional sense of the term. Mrs. Gladstone was a daughter of Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, of Hawarden Castle, Flintshire. At the same time that Miss Catherine Glynne became Mrs. Gladstone, her sister Mary became the wife of Mr. Gladstone's life-long friend, Lord Lyttelton. Providence has blessed Mrs. Gladstone with seven children, one of whom she has had the satisfaction of seeing sitting behind her husband in the House of Commons. Miss Catherine Glynne may well have been proud of the handsome bridegroom of whom Macaulay had written a few weeks before the celebration of their nuptials, in his well-known review of Gladstone's "State in its Relations with the Church:"—

"The author is a young man of unblemished character and of distinguished Parliamentary talent. His ability and his demeanour have gained for him the respect and good-will of all parties. It is his first appear-

ance as an author. His mind is of a large grasp, nor is he deficient in dialectical skill. . . . We dissent from his opinion; we admire his talents; we respect his integrity and his benevolence; and we hope he will not let political avocations so entirely engross him as to leave him no leisure for literature and philosophy."



## CHAPTER III.

### THE GREAT ADMINISTRATION OF PEEL.

“OUT of the Cabinet, the most notable man was, perhaps, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, who was Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and Master of the Mint. The character of his mind was not very clearly understood; and the prevalent doubt was whether he understood it himself; but enough was known of his seriousness, his thoughtfulness, and his conscientiousness, to cause him to be regarded with emphatic respect and hope, at a time when earnest men were to be prized above all others.” So wrote Miss Martineau in 1850; and her words exactly reflected the esteem in which such earnest thinkers as herself regarded Mr. Gladstone at that period of his life at which we have now arrived.

In 1841, the people were thoroughly sick of the Whigs. Their disappointment was all the greater that their expectations, but a few years previously, had been so rapturous. No aspect of their policy was popular. Even so staunch a Whig as Sydney Smith jeered at them, and expressed an ironical desire that one of the chief members of the Ministry, Mr. Spring Rice, would go into holy orders. They had alienated the rabble by their Poor Law. With their Irish allies they had had a thorough split. The Radicals and the Dissenters, their

former loyal henchmen, had disclaimed all allegiance with them. And, lastly, they had so mismanaged the finances of the country, as to have gone on increasing the annual deficit in the revenue, until, in 1841, it amounted to the enormous sum of two millions and a half. The great cry in the country was for able financiers and business men. The opportunity for Peel and his followers had fairly arrived. He gained, in the summer of 1841, a large majority against Melbourne, upon which Parliament was immediately dissolved. The election was a most stirring and exciting one; bribery was more than usually rife; each side, as is usual, being about equally culpable. The result was an enormous majority for the Conservatives. In the English constituencies they had a clear preponderance of 104. Against that, the Whigs could show only majorities of nine in Scotland, and nineteen in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone again stood for Newark; the colleague of his candidature was his future political antagonist, Lord John Manners; and they were opposed by a Whig, one of the Hobhouses. Mr. Hobhouse got but 380 votes, while Lord John and Mr. Gladstone polled respectively 633 and 630.

Shortly after the opening of Parliament, Peel, by a majority of seventy, carried a vote of no confidence. Three days after, on the 30th of August, he was Prime Minister, and in a few days after, Mr. Gladstone was created a Privy Councillor, and made Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and Master of the Mint. The former office was most congenial, and, as we shall see, he discharged its duties so admirably, that he fairly earned his promotion to the Presidency of the Board, on the retirement of Lord Ripon in 1843.

Peel came in without explicit declaration of his policy. When somewhat peevishly pressed by the Whigs to declare himself, he proudly stated that he could not concoct instantaneously the details of his political programme, and that he claimed the period of the recess in which to mature it. The country thoroughly acquiesced in the justice of this demand. All that he enunciated was his continued preference for a "sliding" over a "fixed duty" on corn, and certain general avowals of minor amendments.

All through the winter the direst distress prevailed. Starvation left her traces on every side. Murders and lesser crimes were terribly prevalent. There were Chartist murders (at least murders attributed to Chartists), trades' union murders, incendiary murders. Even her Majesty was hooted in London theatres; and some of the lower Radical papers printed in parallel columns the accounts of the festivities at Buckingham Palace and the accounts of the inquests held on wretches starved to death.

Meanwhile, as the event proved, Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone were working hard preparing the fiscal measures which all were so anxiously waiting for. Sir Robert, in the course of his statement, said that he believed the maximum of indirect taxation had been reached, and that the overburdened land could bear no more; he had no hopes, therefore, of getting quit of the deficit which his predecessors had left them, by legislation in this direction. Direct taxation was the only means of retreat. He therefore bravely proposed to impose an income tax of sevenpence in the pound, for three years, on all incomes of £150 a year and upwards. This

would enable him to make certain important reductions of indirect taxation. By his income tax he would temporarily tax wealth and competence; but that only seemingly, for the contributors of income tax would be fully reimbursed by the cheapening of their commodities. The following significant sentence was greeted with rapturous cheers from the Liberal benches:—"I believe that in the general principle of free trade there is now no great difference of opinion, and that all agree in the general rule that we should purchase in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest." The Duke of Buckingham had meanwhile retired from so teachable a cabinet, and from this day the power of Peel waned with the Tories of the old school. In the future triumphs of his great Administration, he was sustained by Gladstone and his other loyal and well-drilled lieutenants, and by the opposition benches.

Ere making his comprehensive statement, Peel had, with (doubtless) intentional significance, taken the document from which he quoted his figures and details, from the hands of Gladstone, who sat close beside him. And it was but fitting that he should do so; for the great revised Customs Tariff of 1842 was, under the general direction of Peel, the sole and unaided handiwork of Mr. Gladstone. It was as admirably executed in details as it was complete in its mastery of principles. At one bold stroke, 750 of the 1,200 duty-paying articles were either entirely relieved of all taxation, or the duty was reduced in the following proportions:—A maximum of five per cent., *ad valorem*, on raw materials; of twelve per cent. on partially, and twenty per cent. on wholly manufactured articles. And this gigantic change, so pregnant

with immediate and ultimate future good, was effected at an immediate cost to the revenue of but £270,000. It devolved on Mr. Gladstone to fight the measure through, clause by clause, in committee. And most assiduously did he discharge his task ; talking now of cassava, to-morrow of onions ; on one night of salted meat, the next of dried herrings. We thus summarise the gist of scores of such speeches.

The income tax was intended to tax wealth ; the new tariff to relieve manufacturing industry. Thus, take the case of foreign woods. Owing to the high duties, we had not previously been able to keep them, and make them into furniture at home ; but they had been re-imported out of bond into France and Germany, whence they returned to us manufactured into furniture. Now there was hope that we should not only make our own furniture, but become exporters of it. The same prospects applied to the woods used for dyeing. Copper had been sent away on account of the duties, while we had actually to import it back again after it had been smelted with our own coal. As to colonial timber, for building purposes, it would be admitted duty free, and the impost on Baltic timber reduced to the lowest point consistent with our engagements with our colonists. The greatest authority on free-trade subjects, Mr. Deacon Hume, had said, that if we had untaxed timber, as we had untaxed coal and iron, we should be provided with the three great primary materials of employment and consumption. This we were henceforth to have. Our ship-building would increase and improve, and a great impetus would be given to our fisheries.

But perhaps the most interesting of the proposed

changes were those relating to food. Farmers would benefit by the free introduction of clover and other seed, hitherto highly taxed; and the community at large would derive the greatest advantages from the freer ingress of cattle, salted meat, and fish. The agricultural and other interests hotly contested the relaxation of these duties; but large majorities in every case sustained the propositions of the Premier and his truly efficient lieutenant. Difficulties innumerable had to be overcome. "Men might differ, and did differ, whether this tariff was valuable only as a move in the right direction, or whether it would also achieve what its authors hoped, in the extension of trade, and the improvement of comfort: but none—unless it were a few bigots in and out of Parliament—doubted the Customs Act Reform to be a good thing. One gentleman would have free trade in everything but herrings; another in everything but straw plait; and Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell in everything but corn; but these separate opinions merged in general satisfaction that, out of 1,200 articles that paid customs duties, 750 were to be reduced; and a large majority of these to a merely nominal amount."

The bill passed the Commons, amid loud cheering, on the 28th of June.

The working out of this measure occupied Mr. Gladstone nearly the whole of the session, a session thus characterised by Miss Martineau, a most competent authority:—"There was something really refreshing to the country, in the midst of its distresses, in the character and action of this session of Parliament. At the beginning, the Opposition was hostile, saucy, active, and united; and it was curious to see how it changed under

the eye of a Minister who could frame measures first, and then carry them. Some of his measures were as unacceptable to classes and parties as any that had been brought forward for some years ; yet their progress, from their first conception to their becoming the law of the land, was never delayed. The nation saw and felt that its business was understood and accomplished, and the House of Commons was no longer like a sleeper under nightmare. The long session was a busy one. The Queen wore a cheerful air when she thanked her Parliament for their effectual labours. The Opposition was such as could no longer impede the operations of the next session. The condition of the country was fearful enough ; but something was done for its future improvement, and the way was now shown to be open for further beneficent legislation."

In 1843, "The Condition of England Question" monopolised public attention. "Young England" preached its specific, Owen and the Socialists theirs ; the Chartists maintained that a complete political revolution would cure all. Cobden and the League called for free trade in corn, while Lord Ashley prayed for a Commission of Inquiry into the religious and moral state of the lower orders. Mr. Gladstone took a middle course. In justification of his vote against Lord Howick's motion for an inquiry into the condition of the people, with especial reference to the effect of the Corn Laws, he argued that one great object of the measure of the preceding year was to give a stimulus to trade, symptoms of which already appeared, and which he cited with satisfactory variety and copiousness. But suppose Lord Howick were to gain his Committee, and the Corn Law were to be

repealed, by what measure would it be followed, with the variety of opinions among Opposition Members? Lord John Russell's fixed duty had met with sorry treatment from members behind him; Lord Palmerston advocated a mere revenue duty; Mr. Cobden argued against such a duty, that an equivalent impost must be laid on home corn. If asked why deal with corn on a different principle from that of dealing with other commodities, Mr. Gladstone said that he had a very good *temporary* answer; he replied, because it had been so dealt with for centuries, and enormous investments had been made under the faith of such a principle. He still adhered to the opinion which Lord Howick had quoted, respecting the importation of 50,000 oxen, that exports would be increased in a corresponding degree on the relaxation of restrictions on imports; but the application of such a proposition must be carefully watched. It was a principle which might be very safe with reference to the importation of 50,000 head of cattle (for that would not produce the displacement of British labour); in such a case it might be well to trust to the operation of the natural laws of exchange between man and man; but it did not follow that the law on which the masses of the labour of the country were dependent should be abandoned. Let them honestly ask themselves this question—whether or no they were in a condition to repeal the Corn Law without the displacement of a vast mass of labour?

He stood up against the West Indian interest in behalf of admitting Brazilian sugar (under the "favoured nation" maxim) on the same relatively beneficial terms as colonial sugar; but, with Joseph Sturge and many other good men, he objected to the complete equalisation



of the duties, on the plea that such a course would practically involve the payment of a premium to slavery and the slave trade.

Gradually the fruits of the wise policy of Peel and Gladstone appeared and multiplied. They were admitted by all, save by the irrepressible band of croakers never to be extirpated this side of the millennium. The results of the new policy were thus felicitously summarised by a young member, now the Right Honourable Edward Cardwell, in his speech when seconding the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne, in 1844 :—

“It would be found in all, or nearly all, the great branches of British manufacture ; symptoms of returning health presented themselves, the same in character, different in degree, but fortunately often found in the highest degree, when from the importance of the article as a staple manufacture of the kingdom, their presence was the most satisfactory and the most encouraging. In regard to cotton, we should say that the stimulus which commenced with the low prices of last year had steadily maintained itself ; that, notwithstanding some increase in the price of the raw material, and some (he believed) groundless alarm with regard to the prospects of the future crop, and a partial improvement in the rate of wages, the courage of the producer had been sustained ; demand was brisk ; stocks were low ; and all the indications of a healthy trade presented themselves.”

Some idea of the change produced by the new policy may be gleaned from the simple fact that the deficit of the last year of the Melbourne Administration was £2,570,000. The surplus in 1844 was £2,700,000.

Mr. Gladstone was the author of the great Railway Bill of 1844, of which we have heard so much within the last two or three years, and of which we shall hear a great deal more in the years to come. We must content ourselves with summarily saying that its chief

provisions comprised the legality of Parliament compelling companies to reduce their fares when their clear profits exceeded 10 per cent. ; the compulsory running of trains containing seated and covered carriages at least once daily at a maximum fare of a penny a mile ; and, last and most important of all, the assumption by the nation of the right to buy all railways constructed subsequently to the passing of the Act, at a rate amounting to twenty-one times the annual revenue, calculated on the average of a term of years.

At the commencement of 1845, to the surprise of all and the consternation of many, it was made public that Mr. Gladstone had resigned his seat in the Cabinet. Some rumoured that the Cabinet was torn by internal dissensions, and that Mr. Gladstone's sudden retirement was only the prelude to other secessions. The mystery was soon explained. On the first night of the session, it was solved. Mr. Gladstone had resigned, simply because Ministers had resolved to bring in measures for the increase of the endowment to Maynooth College, and for the establishment of non-sectarian colleges in Ireland, in which young men of various creeds might obtain the advantages of an academic training. Such proposals were in direct contravention of the abstract theories of the mutual relations of Church and State as propounded in Mr. Gladstone's well-known work—a book from whose principles and very cardinal dogma it is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Gladstone's opinions have since completely departed.

He felt accordingly that it would *seem* that he was clinging to office for the sake of the various advantages attendant upon its retention, if he, whose published views

were so well known, remained in the Ministry. But here it is desirable to quote his own words. We cite a passage which compresses the pith of his speech on the night of the opening of the session :—

“ I held it to be my duty, whenever such a measure came before the House, to apply my mind to its consideration, free from all biassed or selfish considerations, and with the sole and single view of arriving at such a conclusion as, upon the whole, the interests of the country and the circumstances of the case might seem to demand. . . . It was absolutely due to the public, and due to myself, that I should, so far as in me lay, place myself in a position to form an opinion upon a matter of so great importance, that should not only be actually free from all bias or leaning with respect to any considerations whatsoever, but an opinion that should be unsuspected. On that account, I have taken a course most painful to myself in respect to personal feelings, and have separated myself from men with whom, and under whom, I have long acted in public life, and of whom I am bound to say, although I have now no longer the honour of serving my most gracious Sovereign, that I continue to regard them with unaltered sentiments, both of public regard and private attachment. I do feel it to be my duty also, at the same moment, distinctly to say, that I am not prepared to take part in any religious warfare against the measures of my right honourable friend.”

Peel at once rose to his feet, and, while confirming every word uttered by his disciple, with the grace which he knew so well how to display, spoke in the most regretful terms of the secession, and avowed for his friend, on public grounds, “ an admiration only equalled by regard for his private character.” Everybody regretted the rigidly and austere conscientious line taken by Mr. Gladstone. Nine out of ten said that he was too scrupulous. But recent experience of Whig tenacity of office had disposed men to value even an undue delicacy. Meanwhile, Mr. Gladstone’s personal views were thoroughly with the Ministers, and, as a private member, he warmly

supported both their proposals. Thus, on the Maynooth question, while supporting the measure, he thought it incomplete and unjust in certain of its reservations. He thought it advisable that the Roman Catholic bishops of Ireland should be consulted on the subject. He thought that considerable weight ought to be attached to the judgment of the Roman Catholic bishops on the adjustment of the principles and details of the measure. He further urged the restoration of direct diplomatic correspondence with the court of Rome. While defending the system of religious education enforced at Oxford from the attacks and sneers which had been made upon it, he proceeded to contend that the system of mixed education adopted in University College, London, was much fitter for Ireland than it was for England; for the dangers of it were more likely to be experienced in England, where religious discipline was lax, than in Ireland, where, from the influence of the Roman Catholic religion, the religious discipline exercised over each individual of that persuasion was personally strict.

He then justified the principles and details of the measure; and, in so doing, entered his emphatic protest against the declaration of Sir Robert Inglis, that it was "a gigantic scheme of godless education." The bill contained a provision for religious education, so far as it was safe to do so; for it provided rooms in each of these colleges for theological lectures, which was an explicit admission of the efficacy of religious education. Nay, more, it provided facilities for the voluntary payment of professors to deliver such lectures. He concluded by counselling both parties to lay aside their prejudices, and give to the subject a careful, and even a tender consideration.

On a subsequent occasion he supported the measures on the ground that, whatever gave ease and comfort to the Professors of the College of Maynooth, would tend to soothe and soften the tone of the College itself. He found arguments in favour of the endowment in the great numbers and poverty of the Roman Catholic people of Ireland, in the difficulty they experienced in providing for themselves the necessaries of life, and in the still greater difficulty which they found in providing for themselves preachers of their own faith, and in procuring means of education for them. He found additional arguments in the inclination to support it exhibited by all the great statesmen on both sides of the House, and in the fact that those who paid the taxes of a country had a right to share in the benefits of its institutions. Nothing convinced him so much of the validity of the arguments in support of this measure as the paucity and weakness of those urged against it by its opponents. They said that this experiment of Maynooth was an experiment of Mr. Pitt, and that it had been fairly tried, and had signally failed. But they forgot that the original view of Mr. Pitt was, that the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland should not only be trained in the College of Maynooth, but that they should also have a subsequent provision made for their support. No such provision had been made ; and it was most unjust to say that Mr. Pitt's experiment had failed, when, in point of fact, it had only been partially tried.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ADMINISTRATION OF LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

THE great year of the enactment of the Repeal of the Corn Laws is a blank as far as Mr. Gladstone is concerned. That is to say, it is so in one sense. He took his full share in the responsibility of the measure. As has been seen, he resigned his position as President of the Board of Trade early in 1845, and he remained out of office during the major portion of that year; giving the while a loyal independent support to his former colleagues. It was in the last days of the year that Sir Robert Peel, who appears by his own published and authorised Memoirs to have meditated the step for some time, announced to his colleagues in the Cabinet that he had finally made up his mind that the Corn Laws must be given up. The result was that he submitted his own and his fellow-Ministers' resignations to Her Majesty. He recommended to the Crown that Lord John Russell, the leader of the Opposition, whose famous "Edinburgh Letter," advocating repeal, had appeared in the previous month of November, should be sent for. Lord John failed to form a Ministry, owing to the determined refusal of Earl Grey to take office in the same Cabinet with Lord Palmerston, whose views on foreign policy he disapproved. Peel was again sent for, and in

a few days his Cabinet was reconstituted, the same peers and gentlemen who had served under him before returning to their former posts, with only two exceptions. The place of Lord Wharncliffe, who had been removed during the crisis by death, was supplied by the Duke of Buccleugh; and a vacancy was created at the head of the Colonial Office by the refusal of Lord Stanley, who had occupied that office, to identify himself with Sir Robert's new policy. The Secretaryship for the Colonies was offered to Mr. Gladstone, and he accepted it, thereby definitely identifying his convictions and his future with the policy of Corn Law Repeal. Yet he did not utter one word in support of the measure. During the whole of 1846 he suffered from ill health, and was absent from his place in the House. At least, if he were present, he never spoke, and his name does not once occur in any page of any volume of *Hansard* for the whole year 1846. He resigned office with his colleagues when Peel finally retired from power in the summer of 1846, and Lord John Russell, for the first time, was elevated to the position of Premier; and he remained on the benches of the Opposition until, six years later, he became Chancellor of the Exchequer under the Earl of Aberdeen in 1852.

His throwing in his lot with the Free-traders cost Mr. Gladstone his seat for Newark. He received an intimation from the virtual proprietor of that seat, the Duke of Newcastle, that his support was withdrawn from him. He was at once started, however, as a candidate, by a large and influential body of members of his university, for that Parliamentary blue ribbon, the representation of the University of Oxford. The contest was a

remarkably keen one. The crucial point of controversy in very many of the constituencies in the election of 1847 was the Maynooth question. Many distinguished men, the most conspicuous being Mr. Macaulay, who was thrown out for Edinburgh, lost their seats in consequence of their votes two years previously for an increase in the grant to Maynooth, and its transference from the annual votes to the Consolidated Fund. Candidates were labelled, not only Conservative and Liberal, but "Protestant." The issue at Oxford depended entirely upon this. There were three candidates, Sir Robert Harry Inglis, whose seat was not disputed; Mr. Gladstone, and a Mr. Round, an obscurity who had already, like Mr. Gladstone, sat in Parliament for an urban constituency; and whose only claim on the consideration of his fellow-members of Convocation was the fact of his strong anti-Maynooth convictions and votes. Excepting, perhaps, the City of London, no contest was watched with such intense interest as that for Oxford. It was made a matter of general national speculation. Immense efforts were made on both sides. In his address to the electors, Mr. Gladstone thus defined and justified the line he had adopted:—

“However willing I had been upon, and for many years after, my introduction to Parliament, to struggle for the exclusive support of the national religion by the State, and to resist all arguments drawn from certain inherited arrangements in favour of a more relaxed system, I found that scarcely a year passed without the fresh adoption of some measure involving the national recognition, and the national support, of various forms of religion, and in particular that a recent and fresh provision had been made for the propagation from a public chair of Arian or Socinian doctrines. The question remaining for me was, whether, aware of the opposition of the English people, I should set down as equal to nothing, in a matter primarily connected not with



our but with their priesthood, the wishes of the people of Ireland ; and whether I should avail myself of the popular feeling in regard to the Roman Catholics for the purpose of enforcing against them a system which we had ceased by common consent to enforce against Arians—a system, above all, of which I must say that it never can be conformable to policy, to justice, or even to decency, when it has become avowedly partial and one-sided in its application.”

As specimens of the comments which were elicited by the contest, the following may be taken. The *Times* wrote :—“It (Exeter Hall) chooses a candidate with the stature of a pigmy, and then brings all opponents down to his level ;” and, at greater length, it recommended the claims of Mr. Gladstone :—“Mr. Gladstone promises at least better things. His earnest attachment to the Church is undoubted. He has the advantage of being a man of distinguished talent and industry, who can work, think, and make himself listened to. And he has obviously asked himself not merely, ‘What shall I say for the Church?’ but the more important questions, ‘What can be done for her?—what can she safely stand? Looking at the actual state of England, and the probable course of national convictions, what are the political relations which she can occupy with the greatest and most lasting advantage to herself?’ The consequence has been that Mr. Gladstone has relaxed in the exclusiveness of his politico-ecclesiastical principles. He has admitted to himself—not certainly before it was necessary—the fact that the nation is not the Church, nor Parliament an assembly of Churchmen. He no longer calls on the Legislature to ignore all forms of religion but those established by law, or exactly coincident with his own belief ; and thus, creating no exceptional proscription for Roman Catholics, he has voted for an increased grant to

Maynooth. Meanwhile, he seems to be wisely endeavouring to retrieve these apparent losses by urging, with increasing anxiety, the internal development of the Church, and the removal of such obstacles to that development as the habits or principles of other days may have left behind them. We think him so far right. His admissions are due to the nation whose affairs he has been already called to administer—his exertions to the Church, of which he is a member. His election, unlike that of Mr. Round, while it sends an important member to the House of Commons, will certainly be creditable, and may be valuable to the University; and we heartily hope that no negligence or hesitation among his supporters may impede his success.”

The Reverend F. D. Maurice published a pamphlet on the subject, in which, pleading for toleration, he pungently wrote:—“Protestantism will be regarded as the same thing with Protestant ascendancy; a belief in the Nicene Creed, with an opinion about a certain way of treating the property of Unitarians.” Mr. Gladstone was proposed in a speech of admirable Latinity by Dr. Richards, Rector of Exeter, the only Head of a House who voted for him. Sir Robert Peel came and plumped for him, immediately after he had secured his own election for Tamworth. The result was, that while Sir Robert Inglis came in at the head of the poll with a very large majority, Mr. Gladstone came in second, with 997, and Mr. Round was defeated, with 824 votes.

The cause of Free Trade was largely advanced in the two or three years immediately succeeding Mr. Gladstone's return for Oxford. He took a leading part in supporting all the measures of fiscal relaxation with

which the name of Mr. Labouchere, the Whig President of the Board of Trade, remains chiefly identified. He gave also an independent support to Government on those details of Irish policy which the dire distress and discontent across St. George's Channel rendered necessary—the loan of £16,000,000 for railways, the large advances to landlords for improvements, the establishment of the Encumbered Estates Court, and the furnishing to the Lord-Lieutenant powers of a dictatorial character for the suppression of all rebellious movements. In 1848, he thus concluded a very effective reply to a diatribe of Lord George Bentinck against the policy which he had done so much to establish :—

“When the noble lord alluded to the importation of foreign goods into this country, he was accustomed to compute the number of individuals to whom the manufacture of such goods would give employment in this country. The noble lord laid great stress and emphasis on this announcement, and would have a portion of the House believe that, if foreign goods were not imported, some additional thousands of British persons would be employed in the manufacture of such articles. For instance, to adopt an illustration of the noble lord, he said, if the half-million in value of foreign silk goods which had been imported into this country since the commencement of the year had not been received, upwards of 64,000 persons would have been employed, but he did not say for how long. [Lord George Bentinck: For a year.] He thought it was rather dangerous to adopt such an estimate. It was rather hard to say that half a million sterling would support with wages 64,000 persons for the year. He could not doubt for one moment but that he could expose the fallacy as to the advantage of all goods being produced at home; for what had been said with respect to silk goods would apply to all kinds of goods. He would take, for instance, the wines of France; no one could doubt that they could be obtained from grapes produced in a multiplicity of hothouses. So again, sugar, which we now obtain from the tropics, might be produced by means of stores and furnaces; and how many millions of persons would be employed by resorting to

such a course? The fallacy was so gross that it was hardly possible to deal with it in a serious manner. Why, they could not go along the river or the streets without the absurdity of such a notion being forcibly imposed upon their minds. He did not know whether the noble lord in the course of his commercial peregrinations ever passed up or down the river, for if he had he must have seen the number of steamers which were constantly conveying large numbers of the labouring classes at the lowest fares from the City to Lambeth. One of these steamers probably afforded employment to five or six persons, and it might convey a thousand passengers in the course of an afternoon. The noble lord would, according to his own statement, have good ground for considering how many watermen it would require to convey this number of passengers, and who might thus be employed. He might say that each such boat might give employment to a hundred watermen, and might add, this was the way in which they robbed Englishmen of the produce of their labour. He hoped the noble lord, for the future, would be cautious as to adopting this mode of argument. He did not anticipate any great mischief would result from what had fallen from the noble lord. He thought that there was a bit in the mouth of the noble lord—if he might use such an expression without offence—and of course he only applied the expression to the noble lord's opinions on commercial subjects. He did not think that the opinions of the noble lord would make way; but if unhappily they should make way, and the Houses of Parliament should be induced to listen to the plans of the noble Lord, he feared their proceedings would not receive a check until they had brought disgrace and ruin on the country."

In continuance of the clear line which he had already taken on the Maynooth question, he advocated in this Parliament the establishment of direct diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome. It was all very well, he urged, that they should be suspended for a period of a century after the Reformation, for which period the Papal See was absolutely and formally in a state of war with England. Now that the danger and affront were removed, why continue the prohibition? He maintained, further, that the indirect and underhand mode which we

adopted of communicating with the Papacy was "not altogether compatible with the frankness and ingenuousness of the English character." With rare, and, as some thought, indiscreet frankness, he dwelt upon the convenience of having direct and respectful communication with the Pope about the affairs of Ireland, in which the educational and other interests of our Catholic fellow-subjects were concerned. It would have been much better if we could have had direct communication with Rome in the case of the establishment of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland. He held it to be wrong to establish educational institutions of any character for the behoof of Catholics, without consulting the head of their faith. For to take counsel, as had been done, with the Irish Catholic prelates, was as if the commander of one force in time of war were to enter into negotiations with the sergeants and corporals of the opposing host.

No subject was made so completely his own by Mr. Gladstone, during the first half of the Administration of Lord John Russell, as the Navigation Laws. He supported the successive proposals for their repeal, although on grounds differing somewhat from those taken by the Ministry. Thus, in 1848, when the measure was first introduced, he made an able and comprehensive speech on the whole subject, taking a view not exactly in accordance with the sentiments of either party in the debate. The broad question of repeal, as a matter of expediency and reasonableness, he decided in the affirmative; but on the specific Government scheme he expressed a qualified opinion. He should have preferred a more gradual measure. He wished that the Government had adhered to the usual traditional course of

precedents, and made large concessions conditional upon reciprocal concessions by other Powers. He objected to the discretionary power proposed to be lodged in the Queen in Council, with a view of extorting reciprocity, which was a discretion too large and too delicate ; and he thought the Government would have acted more safely and wisely by undoing fiscal restrictions piecemeal, rather than by introducing a measure of so sweeping a character. He censured the policy of excluding the coasting trade from this measure : we should have offered to admit the Americans to our coasting trade if they would admit us to theirs.

The Whigs, who had introduced their bill late in the session of 1848, were compelled to withdraw it, but re-introduced it in the year following, and carried it, after peculiarly protracted struggles, to a successful issue. In an elaborate speech, the last delivered by Mr. Gladstone on the subject, he finally expounded and justified his scheme of conditional relaxation, which, nevertheless, for reasons given below, he said he would not, as he had intended, press to a division. Had he been prepared, he said, to trouble the House with an amendment, he would have proposed a clause for conditional legislation, and several clauses involving legislative provisions of a direct character. His plan would have been to divide the whole maritime trade of the country into two classifications—first, that which related to our trade with foreign countries ; and secondly, that which related to our domestic trade, including the coastwise and the colonial. He would then have proposed, that when any country was disposed to give a perfect freedom to British ships in regard to its foreign trade, it should

receive in return a perfect freedom in regard to our foreign trade ; and that, when it was disposed to give us a perfect freedom in regard to all its maritime trade, it should enjoy the same, so far as our maritime trade was concerned, foreign and domestic, including in the latter the colonial and coasting trade. He would then have asked the House to deal with the colonial trade, irrespective of what foreign nations might be inclined to do in the matter. He would also have proposed a clause respecting the importation of tropical produce, after which he would have submitted a provision absolutely repealing every restraint, in the nature of a tax, on the British shipowner. Such, he continued, had been the outline of a plan which at one time it had been his intention to propose ; and he then proceeded to explain to the House why it was that he had abandoned that intention.

It was his wish to see the Navigation Laws repealed, but repealed in a manner which would have prevented any serious shock to the great interests involved. But it was evidently the resolution of the shipowners to stand at all hazards by the present law, or to permit but few and inconsiderable alterations in it. He could not, therefore, look for any support from them, if he submitted his proposition to the House. Nor had he, until that moment, entirely abandoned the hope that the Government might have introduced some modifications into their measure, which would to some extent have met the views which he had ventured to submit on the second reading of the bill. But this, it was now evident, they were not disposed to do. Both the Government and the party representing the views of the shipowners seemed to prefer a decisive course upon the whole question ; and,

as his intention had never been to propose any plan for the mere purpose of obstruction, he thought that it would not now conduce to the public advantage if, by submitting his plan, he wasted the time of the House in fruitless discussions. As the issue, then, to which the matter had been brought was between the continuance of the present law and its unconditional repeal, he would not be responsible for any course which might result in retarding the repeal of the law, preferring, as he did, the plan of the Government, with all its defects, to the continuance of the present system.

A somewhat noteworthy feature of the discussion which followed was a very caustic speech of Mr. Disraeli, in which he adequately represented the chagrin of the Protectionists at the disappointment of their expectation to have used Mr. Gladstone as a means of defeating the bill *in toto*. He declared his entire inability to comprehend his rival's conduct. Mr. Gladstone, in terms at once spirited and temperate, vindicated his consistency. He knew, he said, that if he had pressed his amendment, he should have been supported *at first*, in the early stages of the contest, by the Protectionist body, but not with a *bonâ fide* acceptance of his proposition. He knew very well that the wish was merely to make a tool of him against a plan, of the general objects of which he approved, and then to abandon him on the third reading of the bill. He added a few sentences of comment on certain observations made by Mr. Disraeli as to the evil effects of Free Trade, maintaining that it was to Free Trade, under the mercy of God, it was mainly owing that the distress which the country had lately suffered had not been much greater.



After very fierce and oft-renewed struggles in both Houses, this important bill received the final sanction of Parliament, its operation being fixed to commence on the 1st of January, 1850. Mr. Gladstone's position was very considerably advanced by the independent and prominent line which he had taken at all stages of its discussion. The progress of the debates on this measure had brought Gladstone and Disraeli into closer and closer relations of rivalry, and some people began to speculate as to which should be the future leader of the Tory party; although already others, of clearer vision, predicted Mr. Gladstone's absorption in the Liberal ranks.

Yet there remained not a few points of importance in which a certain identity of view with Toryism of the truest type continued to characterise Mr. Gladstone. Thus, he made the most elaborate speeches on more than one occasion in justification of the votes which he, session after session, recorded against the admission of Jews into Parliament; and he continued to advocate a favourable line of policy towards the West India planters, which was in its very essence Protectionist. When the movement arose for granting the rights of constitutional self-government to the colonies, Sir William Molesworth and others, whose names are chiefly associated with that movement, found in Mr. Gladstone a most ready and willing supporter. In his own words, he summarised the whole case in the phrase, "Emancipation of the Colonies from home control, as far as is consistent with imperial interests." He expressed especial abhorrence of the system of making the heads of departments in the Colonial Office the practical administrators and rulers of

our dependencies, and emphatically urged our getting rid of the machinery of an administrative department which "had of necessity worked in a way to cause painful disputes." He supported all the measures of the Whigs for establishing local legislative assemblies in our Antipodean and American colonies, and endeavoured, with the assistance of Mr. Walpole, Sir William Page Wood, and Sir Roundell Palmer, but without success, to legalise independent synodal action by the bishops, clergy, and laity of the Anglican communion in the colonies.

When Mr. Disraeli brought forward his great motion for an inquiry into agricultural distress, in 1850, Mr. Gladstone ranged himself amongst his supporters. Mr. Disraeli moved for a committee of the whole House, to consider such a remission of the rural poor-rates, and the imposition of a portion of them on the Consolidated Fund, as would mitigate the prevailing distress. Mr. Gladstone expressed himself ready to go into the consideration of the question raised by Mr. Disraeli's motion. So far from believing, as some members of the Government had held, that the motion menaced a return to Protection, he thought it had a tendency to weaken the arguments in favour of a retrograde policy, and to draw off the moderate Protectionists. He voted for the motion on the same ground that Sir James Graham voted against it—the ground of justice. It was impossible to look at the poor-rate without being struck by the inequality of its incidence. The rate was levied locally—first, for the purposes of policy connected with the poor; and, secondly, for the discharge of a sacred obligation imposed by religion; but this was an old

obligation which applied to the community at large. As an abstract proposition, the rate should fall upon all descriptions of property : this might be impracticable, but the objection of impracticability did not apply to the proposition before the House. It had been said that landed property came by inheritance charged with this burden ; but the burden was accompanied by a system of protection which gave produce an artificial value, contrary, indeed, to abstract justice, but not more so than the inequality of the rate. He was thoroughly convinced that it was the farmers and the independent yeomen, rather than the landlords, who would benefit by the change. Even if the whole benefit, after a time, should be reaped by the landlords, that fact in itself would not be a fatal objection.

The motion was negatived, by a majority of twenty-one, in a House of 525 Members. Mr. Gladstone was one of the minority.

The famous and now historical debate of 1850, in which the whole foreign policy of Lord Palmerston and the Whigs was so fiercely assailed, gave to Mr. Gladstone an opportunity of making by far the most considerable speech, at once in respect of magnitude and power, to which he had yet given utterance. With all the other followers of Peel, he was ranged against the Foreign Secretary. He spoke for several hours on the third night of the debate, and thus concluded a speech worthy to rank with those of Palmerston, Graham, Cobden, and Cockburn in the same debate—than which higher praise cannot be given :—

“There is a further appeal from this House of Parliament to the people of England ; but, lastly, there is also an appeal from the

people of England to the general sentiment of the civilised world ; and I, for my part, am of opinion that England will stand shorn of a chief part of her glory and her pride if she shall be found to have separated herself, through the policy she pursues abroad, from the moral supports which the general and fixed convictions of mankind afford—if the day shall come in which she may continue to excite the wonder and the fear of other nations, but in which she shall have no part in their affection and their regard.

“No, sir, let it not be so : let us recognise, and recognise with frankness, the equality of the weak with the strong ; the principles of brotherhood among nations, and of their sacred independence. When we are asking for the maintenance of the rights which belong to our fellow-subjects resident in Greece, let us do as we would be done by, and let us pay all the respect to a feeble State, and to the infancy of free institutions, which we should desire and exact from others towards their maturity and their strength. Let us refrain from all gratuitous and arbitrary meddling in the internal concerns of other States, even as we should resent the same interference if it were attempted to be practised towards ourselves. If the noble lord has indeed acted on these principles, let the Government to which he belongs have your verdict in its favour ; but if he has departed from them, as I contend, then the House of Commons must not shrink from the performance of its duty, under whatever expectations of momentary obloquy or reproach, because we shall have done what is right ; we shall enjoy the peace of our own conscience ; and receive, whether sooner or a little later, the approval of the public voice, for having entered our solemn protest against a system of policy which we believe—nay, which we know—whatever may be its first aspect, must of necessity in its final result be unfavourable even to the security of British subjects resident abroad, which it professes so much to study—unfavourable to the dignity of the country, which the members of the House of Lords may assert that it preserves—and equally unfavourable to that other great and sacred object which also it suggests to our recollection, the maintenance of peace with the nations of the world.”

## CHAPTER V.

### FINAL ABANDONMENT OF TORYISM.

Two months after the close of the session of 1850, the nation was startled as if by the news of a foreign invasion. Pope Pio Nono, who had so recently excited and disappointed the hopes of European liberalism, issued a brief, or rescript, in which he established in England a Roman Catholic episcopal hierarchy, parcelling out the whole land into territorial dioceses, presided over by twelve bishops, and a Cardinal-Archbishop of Westminster. At this unprecedented act of what the great majority of the nation deemed wanton, unjustifiable "aggression," the popular passion was at once most tumultuously excited. When Parliament met in 1851, the "Papal Aggression" filled most men's mouths and breasts, superseding even the excited expectation of the opening of the Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, and the general talk about the tottering weakness of the Whig Administration. And the immediate form into which the general angry fervour crystallised itself was the query, "What steps will the Government and the Parliament take, in defiance and repulsion of the 'aggression?'" To the satisfaction of most, the Queen's Speech contained this paragraph:—"The recent assumption of certain ecclesiastical titles conferred by a foreign power has excited

strong feelings in this country ; and large bodies of my subjects have presented addresses to me, expressing attachment to the Throne, and praying that such assumptions should be resisted. I have assured them of my resolution to maintain the rights of my crown and the independence of the nation against all encroachment, from whatever quarter it may proceed. I have, at the same time, expressed my earnest desire and firm determination, under God's blessing, to maintain unimpaired the religious liberty which is so justly prized by the people of this country. It will be for you to consider the measure which will be laid before you on this subject."

A few days afterwards Lord John Russell moved for leave to introduce a bill for preventing the "assumption of any title, not only from any diocese now existing, but from any territory or place in any part of the United Kingdom, and to restrain parties from obtaining by virtue of such titles any control over trust property." Mr. Gladstone took no part in the preliminary debate on the motion for leave to introduce the bill.

Meanwhile, ere the final discussion of the measure on its merits, a temporary excitement of a minor character was interposed by the occurrence of a ministerial crisis. The Cabinet daily grew more pitifully feeble. Sir Charles Wood introduced, in March, a Budget which was condemned on all sides, especially by reason of its proposal to renew the unpopular income tax. Lord John tendered his resignation. On his recommendation, Lord Stanley was sent for. His Lordship failed—first, in an attempt to fuse together a Cabinet of Protectionists and Peelites; the latter—Sir James Graham being their spokesman—refusing to repair the breach which dated from the

early months of 1846 : he more conspicuously failed in his subsequent endeavour to construct a Ministry from the ranks of his immediate followers. Then overtures were made to effect a coalition between the Whigs and the Peelites. Negotiations were entered into between Lord John Russell on the one hand, and Lord Aberdeen on the other. They failed—failed only on the Papal Aggression question. Sir James Graham, speaking for himself and his political associates, stated in the House of Commons that they were quite prepared to effect a coalition with the Whigs on two out of the three grounds proposed to them. One was a thorough adhesion to the principles of Free Trade, and the second, their readiness to entertain the question of further Parliamentary Reform. But the negotiation fairly broke down on the Ecclesiastical Titles Assumption question, on which all the Peelites differed *toto cælo* from Ministers. So the Whigs resumed their places, and the crisis was at an end.

Immediately afterwards the all important question came on for discussion. Mr. Gladstone delivered a speech brimful of ecclesiastical lore, and in which he, with much ingenuity, justified the unpopular position which he and a small and heterogeneous minority of the House of Commons assumed. He said that his vote would be governed by regard to principles of imperial policy, and to the welfare of the entire community, with reference to the interests of the Church of England. He believed that our constitution was strong enough to resist any aggression whatever by any Power in the world. The Church of England was not in such a position ; but the power of the Church could not be defended by temporal legislation, which had been tried before and utterly failed.

If it could be shown that the Papal authorities had interfered with our temporal affairs, which was not permitted to any other religious body, legislation was not only just, but called for. Until, however, that line was passed, we had no right to interfere. He admitted that the language of the Papal documents was not only unfortunate, but of a vaunting and boastful character, of which complaint might justly be made; but was it just to pass a proscribing Act affecting our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, on account of language for which they were not responsible? We must look to the substance of the Act, and by that stand or fall. If the law of nations had been broken, nothing was more disparaging to the country than to proceed only by Act of Parliament, imposing a penalty. There was nothing to prevent our representing the wrong to the party who had done it, and demanding redress. The bill, however, was before the House, and the question was what to do with a measure which no one had said was adequate for the purpose.

He then went on to point out various deficiencies and anomalies in the bill, which, he said, did not defend the territorial rights of the Crown; and with respect to Romish aggression, there was a preliminary question—whether the rescript of the Pope had a temporal character. That the Roman Catholics recognised the Pope as their spiritual head, did not justify the withholding one jot of religious freedom. It was not enough that bishops were appointed by a foreign authority; it must be shown that they were not spiritual officers, but appointed for temporal purposes. If the appointment of bishops *per se* was a spiritual, not a temporal act, why exempt the Scottish bishops? There was no proof, as to any of the details



of ecclesiastical machinery, that there was any temporal character in the rescript distinct from that incidental to the disciplinary arrangements of every religious body, and without such proof there was not a shadow of ground for the bill. In the forgotten corners of the law might be found doctrines of royal supremacy which might make this act of the Pope an aggression; but if we fell back upon these doctrines, he protested against their application to one religious body alone.

He meant to introduce a new and important point, to which no previous reference had been made in the course of the prolonged debate—namely, the effect which the measure would exert upon the two parties into which the Romish community was divided. For three hundred years the Roman Catholic laity and secular clergy—the moderate party—had been struggling, with the sanction of the British Government, for this very measure, the appointment of diocesan bishops, which the extreme party—the regulars and cardinals at the court of Rome—had been all along struggling to resist. The present legislation would drive the Roman Catholics back upon the Pope, and, teasing them with a miniature penal law, would alienate and estrange them.

The general public opinion as to the line taken by Mr. Gladstone and his associates—some of them regular, and others occasional, allies—on this question, was, as is usual, accurately represented by the comments of the *Times* in the speech which we have thus condensed:—

“We cannot imagine that the party of Sir Robert Peel has improved its position by the part it has adopted in the recent debate; nor, whatever may be thought of Mr. Gladstone’s talents as a debater, do we think ~~that~~ his speech will add much to his reputation as a practical and

far-sighted statesman. The elaborate argument by which he seeks to prove that the aggression of the Pope should have been met by negotiation is, with reference to the position of the Roman Pontiff, simply puerile. The Pope, as a temporal prince, has nothing to lose, and, strong in his weakness, can afford to defy our power. As an ecclesiastical potentate, he set all on the cast when he issued his rescript. Negotiation, though it might have prevented it, could never recall it. Besides, Mr. Gladstone was at great pains to show that the Pope is in the hands of the ultra party in the Roman Church, the party bitterly hostile to this country, and determined in their arrogance and bigotry to push matters to every extremity against us. To be sure, Mr. Gladstone has, with great ingenuity, in flat contradiction to his former statement, sought to prove that this was the measure, not of the ultra, but moderate party at Rome; but as both these statements cannot be true, and as the former is confirmed by the unexceptionable authority of Lord Shrewsbury, we take the liberty of adopting it in preference to its contradiction, which Mr. Gladstone asserts with equal confidence. Mr. Gladstone admits that we have a right to see that the aggression is not of a temporal nature, and in the same breath denies our right to inquire into the necessity of the new hierarchy; but is not the fact that the new hierarchy is not wanted for spiritual purposes pregnant proof that it is intended to serve some temporal object? If we are to leave to the Roman Catholics unfettered judgment as to what ecclesiastical changes they require, and, under the advice of Mr. Gladstone, to renounce the use of our reason on the subject, what safeguard does he leave us against the encroachments of a religion which has ever refused to distinguish between temporal and spiritual authority, and always employed the second as a means of obtaining the first? Mr. Gladstone admits the arrogance of the brief and the pastoral, but he does not admit what is quite as evident as their arrogance—the claim of dominion which they put forth in behalf of a Power which has never renounced its claim to the feudal sovereignty of England. We ought, he says, to meet this arrogance with fresh conciliation, for, if not, we shall unite the Roman Catholics against us, and strengthen the hands of the ultra party at Rome. Surely, after we have seen the Roman Catholic members putting up their votes to auction for the purpose of revenge, and felt in the recent aggression the utmost rancour of the ultra party at Rome, but little is left for us to fear. Whatever be Mr. Gladstone's merits as an apologist of the Pope, they are not appreciated either by the House or the country, neither of which evince the least inclination

to place themselves under the guidance of statesmen who, regardless of the just susceptibilities of the nation, conceal their own lukewarm attachment to Protestantism behind the loosely-worn mask of a spurious liberality."

Rather as a specimen of Mr. Gladstone's style at this epoch of his public career, than because we deem it necessary to the further elucidation of the position which he took on this exciting question, we present verbatim the concluding passage of the oration, in which he thus ingeniously and pungently made rejoinder to a somewhat clap-trap appeal by Lord John Russell:—

"The character of England is in our hands. Let us feel the responsibility that belongs to us, and let us rely on it, if we make this step backwards, it is one we shall have to retrace with pain. We cannot turn back the tendencies of the age towards religious liberty. It is our business to forward them. To endeavour to turn them back is childish, and every effort you may make in that direction will recoil upon you with disaster and disgrace. The noble lord at the head of the Government appealed to the gentlemen who sit behind me, in the names of Hampden and Pym. I have great reverence for the names of Hampden and Pym, in one portion at least of their political career; because they were persons energetically engaged in resisting oppression. But I would rather have heard Hampden and Pym quoted on any other subject than one which relates to the mode of legislation, or the policy to be adopted in dealing with our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, because, if there was one blot on their escutcheon, if there was one painful—I would almost say odious—feature in the character of the party of whom they were the most distinguished chiefs, it was the bitter and ferocious intolerance which in them became the more powerful because it was directed against the Roman Catholics alone. I would appeal in their names to gentlemen who sit on this side of the House. If Hampden and Pym were friends of freedom, so were Clarendon and Newcastle; so were the gentlemen who sustained the principle of loyalty, while the principle of freedom was sustained by those whose names were quoted by the noble lord. If he appeals to you in the name of Hampden and Pym, I appeal to you in the name of the great men to whom Hallam says, 'we owe the preservation of the throne of

this ancient monarchy,' in favour of the Roman Catholics. They were not always seeking to tighten the chain and deepen the brand. Their disposition was to relax the severity of the law, and attract the affections of their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects to the constitution, by treating them as brethren. I hope my appeal in their name will be equally appropriate to the appeal made by the noble lord in the name of Hampden and Pym.

“We are here strong in the consciousness of a strong cause. . . . We, the opponents of the bill, are a minority, insignificant in point of numbers. We are more insignificant, because we have no ordinary bond of union. What is it that binds us together against you but the conviction that we have on our side the principle of justice—the conviction that we shall soon have on our side the course of public opinion. Minority as we are, we are sustained in our path by the consciousness that we serve both a generous Queen and a generous people, and that the generous people will recognise the truth of the facts we present to them. But, above all, we are sustained by the sense of justice which we feel belongs to the cause we are advocating, and because we are determined to follow that bright star of justice beaming from the heavens, whithersoever it may lead.”

Without going into the merits of the essential dispute involved in the great controversy which gave to the year 1851 its peculiar character, so far as the Parliamentary arena was concerned, we cannot help remarking the strong and noble passion—for it amounted to a passion—for freedom, which was displayed all through this memorable address. People began to say that Toryism was fast losing its hold on the sentiments of the Member for the elder University, and that some day or other he must openly range himself on the Liberal side.

Mr. Gladstone had spent the winter of 1850–51 in Naples. While there, he was induced to make personal examination into the condition of the political prisoners—victims of the part they had played in the Revolution two years before, and victims of the perfidy of their

sovereign, who crowded his prisons with the very best of his subjects. When he had possessed himself of the facts, he issued a pamphlet, which was followed by a second supplementary one, in which he revealed what he had discovered to sympathetic and indignant Christendom. The known character of the writer, as well as the fact that he had not as yet displayed any but Conservative sympathies, gave to his *brochures* a very high weight and authority. His word was taken—a more obscure man's might have passed unheeded—when he stated, as the result of what he had seen with his own eyes, or what at least he personally vouched for and was prepared to stand by—that the law had been violated by sending men to prison without even the formality of a sham trial; that a former Prime Minister and the majority of a recent Parliament were in prison; that there were in all twenty thousand prisoners for political offences; and that they were chained together two and two. (Late in the session of 1851, Sir De Lacy Evans, in his place in Parliament, asked of Lord Palmerston a question, the gist of which was an inquiry into the accuracy of Mr. Gladstone's statements—whether the victims “are suffering refinements of barbarity and cruelty unknown in any other civilised country?” In his reply, Lord Palmerston used these words:—“It has not been deemed a part of the duty of the British Government to make any formal representation to the Government of Naples in a matter that relates entirely to the internal affairs of that country. At the same time I thought it right, seeing that Mr. Gladstone—whom I may freely name, though not in his capacity of a Member of Parliament—has done himself, as I think, very great honour by the course he

pursued at Naples, and by the course he has followed since ; for I think, when you see an English gentleman who goes to pass a winter at Naples, instead of confining himself to those amusements that abound in that city ; instead of diving into volcanoes and exploring excavated cities—when we see him going to courts of justice, visiting prisons, descending into dungeons, and examining great numbers of the cases of unfortunate victims of illegality and injustice, with a view afterwards to enlist public opinion in the endeavour to remedy these abuses—I think that is a course that does honour to the person who pursues it.”

Lord Palmerston went on to say that he had sent copies of Mr. Gladstone’s pamphlet to every English ambassador, with an injunction that, in the interests of humanity, they should bring them under the notice of the Courts to which they were severally accredited. This statement was most enthusiastically cheered. The importance of these productions of Mr. Gladstone’s heart and pen can hardly be exaggerated. They did very much to arouse and intensify the sympathy of all classes of English society for long-suffering Italy. They did not a little to pave the way for what Cavour, Garibaldi, Napoleon, and Bismark afterwards effected or were the means of effecting. As regarded their author personally, they did much to restore the popularity which he had largely diminished by the unpopular line he had taken on the Papal aggression dispute.

The year 1852 was, in one or two respects, a memorable year—memorable, if for nothing else than this, that within its compass of twelve months it saw three distinct statesmen—Lords John Russell, Derby, and Aberdeen—occupying in succession the post of Premier.

Late in 1851, Lord Palmerston was expelled by Lord John Russell from the Foreign Office. Early in 1852, he revenged himself by concocting with the Tories a defeat of Ministers. Lord John Russell resigned, and Lord Derby became Premier. Mr. Gladstone was offered (so, at least, the most competent authorities allege) a seat in the new Administration; but definitely declined it, thus decisively abjuring his connection with the Tories as a party, and indicating that by some other ladder than theirs he chose to rise to higher altitudes than he had yet attained. Lord Derby's Administration was short-lived, and Mr. Gladstone did more than any other man to bring about its destruction. The antagonism and rivalry between Gladstone and Disraeli, which had been growing ever since the death of Peel, became in this year most conspicuous, and Gladstone sought out every occasion of daring an encounter. Early in the session, Mr. Gladstone divided the House on the proposal of the Government to bestow the seats vacated by the disfranchisement of Sudbury and St. Albans for bribery, upon the West Riding and South Lancashire. The question raised by the division really was, whether Ministers should content themselves with the discharge merely of necessary and routine business, and hasten a dissolution, that the country might extort from them either a recantation or a re-affirmation of Protectionist principles; and he beat them by a majority of 234 to 148.

In the course of this session he renewed—with able support from like-minded High Churchmen of character, such as the great lawyers, Roundell Palmer and Page Wood, but without success—his attempt to bestow powers of self-government upon the branches of the Church of

England in the colonies, which have never yet been enjoyed by their mother at home. In the course of the discussion on Mr. Spooner's annual anti-Maynooth motion, he used these remarkable words—remarkable when viewed in the light of the events of 1868 :—“the (Maynooth) endowment were withdrawn, the Parliament which withdrew it must be prepared to enter upon the whole subject of the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical arrangements in Ireland.” It is noteworthy that this significant utterance was received with loud cheers. For his part at least, Sir Robert Inglis said he interpreted the cheers as meaning that their utterers understood Mr. Gladstone's expression, “re-construction,” to signify “further confiscation of the property of the Irish Church.”

On the assembling of the new Parliament, Mr. Villiers at once put on the notice paper a resolution, the practical effect of which was to compel Ministers to accept, *ex animo*, the Free Trade shibboleth; and the dose was offered to their lips in a very bitter and unpalatable form. Lord Palmerston came to the rescue, with a resolution couched in more mild and acceptable terms. Mr. Gladstone gave his support to the peacemaker. Ministers accepted Lord Palmerston's amended resolution, which was carried.

In 1852, the Duke of Wellington passed away, full of honours as of years. Of all the Parliamentary eulogiums passed upon his memory, we doubt if any, save Lord Derby's, equalled—we know of none that excelled—Mr. Gladstone's.

“It may never be given to another subject of the British Crown,” he said, “to perform services so brilliant as he performed; it may never be given to another man to hold the sword which was to gain independence



for Europe; to rally the nations around it, and while England saved herself by her constancy, to save Europe by her example; it may never be given to another man, after having attained such eminence, after an unexampled series of victories, to show equal moderation in peace as he had shown greatness in war, and to devote the remainder of his life to the cause of internal and external peace for that country which he had so served; it may never be given to another man to have equal authority, both with the Sovereign he served and with the Senate of which he was to the end a venerated member; it may never be given to another man, after such a career, to preserve even to the last the full possession of those great faculties with which he was endowed, and to carry on the services of one of the most important departments of the State with unexampled regularity and success, even to the latest day of his life. These are circumstances—these are qualities which may never again occur in the history of this country. But there are qualities which the Duke of Wellington displayed, of which we may all act in humble imitation—that sincere and unceasing devotion to our country, that honest and upright determination to act for the benefit of the country on every occasion; that devoted loyalty which, while it made him ever anxious to serve the Crown, never induced him to conceal from the Sovereign that which he believed to be the truth; that devotedness in the constant performance of his duty; that temperance of his life, which enabled him at all times to give his mind and his faculties to the services which he was called upon to perform; that regular, consistent, and unceasing piety by which he was distinguished at all times in his life—these are qualities that are attainable by others, and these are qualities which should not be lost as an example.”

The final fight between Ministers and their opponents came off on the Financial Statement. Mr. Disraeli proposed to remit one-half of the Malt Tax, to effect a considerable re-adjustment of the Income Tax, to extend its incidence to natives of Ireland receiving salaries or dividends from the Public Funds, but exempting land-owners and tenant farmers; and, lastly, to bring houses rented as low as £10 within the operation of the House Tax, which Sir Charles Wood had substituted (with a

£20 limit) for the odious Window Tax. Mr. Gladstone led the attack upon this most unpopular, and, as the best authorities held, most ill-conceived and vulnerable measure. Much heat was evoked in the discussion, as these sentences, extracted from one of Mr. Gladstone's speeches on the Budget, sufficiently prove:—"We are accustomed to attach to the words of the Ministers of the Crown a great authority; and that authority, as it is required by the public interest, so it is usually justified by the character and conduct of Ministers. But the right hon. gentleman is not entitled to charge with insolence men who—I must tell him that he is not entitled to say to my right hon. friend (Sir J. Graham) that he regards, but does not respect him. I must tell the right hon. gentleman, that whatever he has learned, he has not learned the limits of discretion, of moderation, and forbearance, that ought to restrain the conduct and language of every member of this House—the disregard of which would be an offence in the meanest among us, and which is an offence of tenfold weight in the leader of the House of Commons." And he thus summed up the plain grounds of his objections to the measure on its merits:—"He voted against the Budget, not only because he disapproved, on general grounds, of its principles, but emphatically, because it was his firm conviction that this was the most perverted Budget in its tendency and ultimate effects he had ever seen; and if the House should sanction its delusive scheme, the day would come when it would look back with bitter and late, though ineffectual repentance."

The Tories immediately resigned, and in a few days Mr. Gladstone held Mr. Disraeli's office.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE ADMINISTRATION OF LORD ABERDEEN.

THE prominent—indeed the leading—part which Mr. Gladstone had taken in the overthrow of the Administration of Lord Derby, naturally designated him for high office in that which succeeded it. And the circumstance that it was on most important questions of finance that he had gained his triumph, coupled with his previous experience at the Board of Trade, as appropriately pointed out the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer as that most fitted for his occupancy. Ere the prorogation of Parliament, late in December of 1852, Lord Aberdeen, speaking for himself and his colleagues in the Coalition Ministry of which he was the head, with sufficient clearness indicated the principle on which the fusion of the Peelite section of the Tories and the Whigs had been established. He expressed his conviction that no Government was possible in the existing state of parties except it were Conservative, nor was any Government possible except it were Liberal. These terms had ceased to have any definite meaning, except as party cries, and the country was sick of them. The measures, therefore, of the Government would be Conservative as well as Liberal ; for both were essentially necessary. He looked in vain for any indication of what had been alleged by some—the

spread of democratic principles ; on the contrary, the country at large was never more tranquil or contented ; and though there might be speculative democrats among us, these were not the men who subverted states. The broad features of the programme which the general public expected to be submitted to them by the new Ministers were thus summarised by an intelligent contemporary journalist :—

“ If it prove, as we trust it will, a wise and reforming, but truly Conservative Ministry, it will be supported by the moderate and enlightened public, which forms the vast majority of this nation. Such a Ministry will have many noble tasks before it. To simplify and amend the law, to extend the franchise to unrepresented property, intelligence, and good conduct ; to remove impediments from trade and industry ; to promote the employment of the people ; to untax cleanliness, health, and knowledge ; to extend the blessings of education to every British child ; to amend our whole system of taxation ; to conciliate and satisfy our colonies and dependencies ; to promote our wholesome and beneficial influence over the greater and lesser nations of the world ; to cement and increase a friendly understanding with all civilised countries ; to maintain the national honour and dignity in all circumstances, great or little ; these are the onerous but honourable objects to be attained, and in the prosecution of which an honest Ministry, even though its enemies may call it a Coalition, will find abundance of supporters.”

A few days after taking office, Lord Aberdeen remarked :—“ A crisis in our financial arrangements would speedily occur by a cessation of a large branch of the revenue (the Income Tax), and it would tax the ingenuity of all concerned to readjust our finances according to the principles of justice and equity.” On the 18th of May, 1853, Mr. Gladstone introduced his first Budget in a speech of nearly five hours' duration. And over it he spread the equally agreeable announcements of surplus of revenue, reduction, and remission of taxation. His chief

reduction was a diminution of the duty on tea from 2s. 2½d. a pound to 1s., by successive falls, running over five years ; and the duty on soap, producing £1,100,000, he proposed to abolish altogether and at once. These great financial strokes were most gladly received, as they were at once felt by every household in the kingdom. He confessed himself unequal to the equitable adjustment of the Income Tax, and instead thereof proposed to abolish it altogether after a gradual diminution running over seven years. The Budget further included a reform in the Customs tariff worthy of being ranked with those of Sir Robert Peel. He proposed the reduction of the duties on butter, cheese, eggs, fruit, and on many other articles of minor importance ; and no less than 133 tax-paying articles had their duties entirely remitted. The assessed taxes—"that stronghold of iniquity which has so long stood the attacks of the genteel sufferers who pay them"—were also boldly grappled. He proposed the reduction of the duties on carriages, private as well as hackney, and on horses and dogs, "so that there need be no longer a question as to the pedigree of every pet." In the stamps also a reform was chalked out. He proposed the abolition of the receipt stamp, a Queen's-head to frank a receipt as it did a letter. The stamp duty on life assurance, and also those levied on attorneys and solicitors, also came in for reduction. As for the taxes on knowledge, which then were levied threefold—paper duty, advertisement duty, and the compulsory newspaper stamp—he proposed to reduce the duty on advertisements a hundred per cent., and to fix the duty on each newspaper at a penny a copy, without regard to its size, and without imposing an additional duty on supplements.

To fill up the fiscal vacuum thus created, Mr. Gladstone proposed to raise two millions a year, by extending the legacy duty to all successions, and by abolishing the unjust exemption which real property had hitherto enjoyed. And he increased the duty on Scotch spirits by one shilling, and on Irish by eightpence a gallon.

Mr. Gladstone thus concluded his masterly speech, the salient points of which we have reproduced in the following words :—

“I am almost afraid to look at the clock—shamefully reminding me, as it must, how long I have trespassed on the House. All I can say in apology is, that I have endeavoured to keep closely to the topics which I have had before me—

‘—immensum spatiis confecimus æquor,  
Et jam tempus æquum fumantia solvere colla.’

These are the proposals of the Government. They may be approved or they may be condemned ; but I have this full confidence, that it will be admitted that we have not sought to evade the difficulties of the position ; that we have not concealed those difficulties either from ourselves or from others ; that we have not attempted to counteract them by narrow or flimsy expedients ; that we have prepared plans which, if you will adopt them, will go some way to close up many vexed financial questions, which, if not now settled, may be attended with public inconvenience, and even with public danger in future years, and under less favourable circumstances ; that we have endeavoured, in the plans we have now submitted to you, to make the path of our successors in future years not more arduous but more easy ; and I may be permitted to add, that while we have sought to do justice, by the changes we propose in taxation, to intelligence and skill as compared with property—while we have sought to do justice to the great labour community of England by furthering their relief from indirect taxation, we have not been guided by any desire to put one class against another ; we have felt we should best maintain our own honour, that we should best meet the views of Parliament, and best promote the interests of the country, by declining to draw any invidious distinction between class and class—by adopting it to ourselves as a sacred aim to diffuse and distribute the burdens as we

must, and the benefits if we can, with equal and impartial hand ; and we have the consolation of believing, that by proposals such as these we contribute so far as in us lies, not only to develop the material resources of the country, but to knit the various parts of this great nation yet more closely than ever to that throne and to those institutions under which it is our happiness to live."

By the Tories the resolutions based upon the Financial Statement were encountered with the hottest opposition. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton commenced the onslaught by an amendment condemning the propositions about the Income Tax as "alike impolitic and unjust." He said he hoped that Mr. Gladstone would, as others had done before him (the allusion obviously being to the last Whig Chancellor, Sir Charles Wood), "retain his position and correct his measure." Mr. Newdegate attacked the whole Budget, and excited great laughter by describing the abolition of the soap duty as "another boon to Manchester." He fiercely demanded when these boons to Manchester were to end. Mr. Cobden considered the scheme "a bold and honest proposal," and expressed, at the conclusion of a long speech, his sincere hope that the Budget, which he believed had been generally accepted by the country, would, in its main provisions, pass the House. Mr. Cardwell called upon the House to "give its cordial assent to a measure replete with comfort and happiness to the people." Mr. Lowe held that "whatever errors might be charged against the Budget, it was a financial scheme conceived in no servile spirit." Mr. Disraeli denounced "this obsequious deference to special interests," and concluded a most sarcastic speech by taunting Lord John Russell with having thrown away the Whig party, and "accepted a subordinate office under subordinate officers of Sir Robert Peel," and concluded by

warning the representatives of large towns against splitting up the national character of the country into separate sections, lest they should turn a first-rate kingdom into a second-rate republic. Lord John Russell ended a reply of much dignity by speaking of Mr. Gladstone's name as one "to be envied among the financial ministers of this country. If, in order to do this, it has been his fortune to live before his age, I trust he will find his reward in the approbation and support of this House, and in the gratitude of an admiring people."

Amid much cheering, the amendment of Sir Edward Lytton was negatived by 323 to 252. After many other minor contests, in which much larger majorities recorded their votes with Ministers, the scheme finally passed the ordeal of the House of Commons at Midsummer, and within a few days it was ratified by the Peers.

This great measure, the first of a series of great fiscal reforms introduced by Mr. Gladstone, was thoroughly approved by the majority of the nation, and elevated its author to a popularity which he had not as yet enjoyed. People of calm habit of mind remarked upon the amount of relief which it gave without injuring the national credit. There was hardly a class that was not greatly interested in the success of his propositions. As it was well put at the time:—"With the reduction on soap, tea, foreign butter, cheese, eggs, fruit, and more than 250 other articles, carriages, horses, and stamps, we have no hesitation in saying that the man with £120 a year will be at once better off with the proposed changes, even on a bare computation of losses and gains, without taking into account the stimulus that such remissions must give



to trade. The case of the artisan we will leave to himself, or rather to his wife, for if he will only tell her fairly the contents of the Budget, she can tell him that he will save several pounds a year by it."

"On the whole," said the *Times*, "we cannot but congratulate the British people on the great enterprise, the rare opportunities, and the high favour of Heaven, to which they owe the possibility of these great, we had almost said unexpected, reductions from their now hereditary burdens. We are at last happily doing what it is the first law of nature to do—we are transmitting to our children a richer, a nobler, and a less encumbered inheritance. While we sustain the glory of our forefathers, we are wiping away, by our own toils, the records of their folly and extravagances; and have at last some hope that the day may actually come when England will be as free from the creditor at home as from the conqueror abroad."

Hopeful, stimulating, and encouraging words these! But, under Providence, circumstances, against which not the combined sagacity of all the finance Ministers who ever lived could foresee, caused, ere the end of the year, very different prospects for the land. There was a sadly deficient harvest in 1853, not only in Great Britain, but in every corn-producing country. But that which, at the close of 1853, riveted all men's attention, was the probability of its being the last year of the great peace which followed the wars of the French Revolution. The Czar Nicholas was making his final preparations for his spring at the throat of the Ottoman "Sick Man." Mr. Gladstone went to Manchester in October, to inaugurate a statue of Sir Robert Peel. In the course of one of the speeches which he delivered there, he used these words:—

“The absorption of power by one of the great potentates of Europe threatening to override all the rest, would be dangerous to the peace of the world; the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire would precipitate that dangerous condition of affairs; and against that result it is the duty of England to set herself, at any cost. Not that the Government or the people of this country can desire war—a calamity which stains the face of nature with human gore, gives loose rein to crime, and takes bread from the people. No doubt negotiation is repugnant to the national impatience at the sight of injustice and oppression; it is beset with delay, intrigue, and chicane. But these are not so horrible as war, if negotiation can be made to result in saving this country from a calamity which deprives the nation of subsistence, and arrests the operations of industry. To attain that result, if possible—still to attain it, if still possible—which is even yet their hope—her Majesty’s Ministers have persevered in exercising that self-command and that self-restraint, which impatience may mistake for indifference, feebleness, or cowardice, but which are truly the crowning greatness of a great people, and which do not evince the want of readiness to vindicate, when the time comes, the honour of this country.”

These were ominous and foreboding words—the words of one hoping against hope. And they were all the more sad that they were uttered by a man who was known personally to be a lover as much of peace as of wise national parsimony; and by that Minister who was the official guardian of the purse-strings of the nation.

In January, 1854, the hopes of peace had almost entirely disappeared. The massacre of Sinope produced universal indignation, and destroyed all confidence in the assurances of the Czar Nicholas. And the entrance of the allied fleets into the Black Sea, itself almost an act of hostility, greatly diminished the chances of his returning a favourable answer to the representations of the Western Powers. On the 28th of March, Her Majesty declared war against Russia.

Mr. Gladstone took no part in the early and acri-

monious stages of discussion, in 1854, as to the way in which the Cabinet of which he was a member had "drifted into" the war. In the intervals of these hot and oft-repeated contests—premonitions of the impending resignation of the Premiership by Lord Aberdeen—various domestic bills were introduced—introduced, for the most part, only to be withdrawn. One of these was a measure brought in by Lord John Russell, to make certain alterations in the oaths taken by members of Parliament. Mr. Gladstone supported it in a speech which is worthy of passing notice, as it contained his first Parliamentary avowal of a change of opinion on a subject on which we have already seen that he more than once expressed, by speech and vote, opinions hostile to those entertained by the Liberal party. He plainly stated his belief that the strength of the country and the rights of the Crown consisted not in oaths and declarations, but in the attachment and fidelity of the people. The more we blotted out all those matters of strife, the sooner would be consolidated a firm and sure basis for the interests of the country. To prove that oaths could not bind men who thought the obligation inconsistent with their duty, he showed how Protestants themselves, who ought to be precluded from giving votes that affect the property of the Church, had a few days previously proposed to deal with it by extinction. He concluded by expressing a decided opinion that Lord John Russell had rendered a valuable service in handing over to the axe of the executioner a bundle of useless oaths, which served as pitfalls to tender consciences, while they caused bold men to disregard conscience altogether.

The Budget of 1854 was necessarily one of a very different character from that of the year preceding.

That of 1853 was pre-eminently a Peace Budget. Its successor was more warlike than any the existing generation had known. In some respects even the Financial Statement of 1854 presented favourable features. Thus the receipts of the current year had exceeded the estimates by more than a million ; but no longer was there any possibility of a heap of reductions, great and small, extending with marvellous fairness and breadth over the whole region of finance, elaborately calculated, artistically arranged, and expounded in a speech which far outdid the copious rhetoric of Peel. All the savings, present and prospective, had vanished at the first sound of war ; and the estimated expenditure for the year forthcoming was three millions in excess of that of the financial year about to expire. In a word, three millions had to be found from sources other than those supplied through the existing channels of revenue.

Mr. Gladstone saw that there was only one feasible course to adopt, and he faced it with a boldness worthy of the occasion. He proposed to double the income tax for half a year. And he intimated that if the war continued up till July or August, the doubling process must be repeated for the second half of the year. For instant and pressing needs, he craved powers to issue Exchequer Bills to the amount of a million and three quarters, to be used as the successive claims arose. Should the peace of Europe be restored in the course of the summer, they would be withdrawn. Brief as this summary is, it really leaves out nothing of importance which is necessary to grasp the purport of the Budget of 1854. Two months later, however, it became necessary to make larger monetary provisions for the conduct of the war. This was effected by

the augmentation of the imposts on Irish and Scotch spirits, malt, and sugar; and the duration of the increased income tax and the malt duty was to be "for the term of the war," while the spirit duties were claimed and voted "without limitation." He set himself firmly against the principle of loans, and maintained, so long as the capacity existed, and the patriotic willingness for self-denial and sacrifice could be appealed to, the expenses of the war should be defrayed as they occurred. In this he showed great nobility of character. There was an infinitude of truth in these sentences:—

"I beg the committee will recollect, that if there is any one man in this country who, beyond every other, except perhaps a capitalist, has an interest in recommending recourse to a loan, it is the individual who has the honour of filling the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. That office is an office which any man may be thankful to hold at a time when his occupation is to deal with those timely resources which wise legislation has given to him, and to distribute what may well be called the bounty of the legislature, because it results from the wisdom of Parliament, among the various classes of the community in the remission of charges; but that happy course is wofully changed when there comes on a period of war. It is not only a losing office, but a miserable and wretched office, to be constantly engaged in inventing the means of carrying on war, and of drawing fresh taxes from the pockets of the people. Every good motive and every bad motive, combated only by the desire of the approval of honourable men and by conscientious rectitude; every motive of ease, of comfort, and of certainty, spring forward in his mind to induce a Chancellor of the Exchequer to become the first man to recommend a loan."

Against very animated opposition, led by Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Thomas Baring, the House affirmed the principle of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by a majority of more than a hundred.

Mr. Gladstone introduced, in this the second year of his first Chancellorship, a measure of very considerable

constitutional importance—the Public Revenue and Consolidated Funds Charges Bill. Its object was to alter the machinery of the public accounts by bringing the gross income directly into the Exchequer, including certain deductions which had previously been made in transit, but which, it was provided, should in future be voted in Supply. By bringing these charges under the control of Parliament, an additional security has since been afforded by the Executive for the discharge of its duty.

The Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen had been growing throughout 1854 more unpopular every day. The sole cause of this loss of favour was the manner in which the war was conducted. The financial arrangements of the Ministry were not found fault with, and Mr. Gladstone, therefore, shared the unpopularity only so far as he shared the general responsibility of the administration of departments other than his own. Upon the meeting of Parliament in 1855, hostile notices of motions criticising the management of the war were put upon the table by Lord Ellenborough in one House, and by Mr. Roebuck in the other. Ere the discussion of Mr. Roebuck's motion, which was fixed for the 25th of January, came on, the public were astonished by the formal announcement of the resignation of Lord John Russell. He evidently feared the results of the impending inquisition, and sought personal safety by leaving a tottering house ere its fall. In stating publicly the reasons for his resignation, he said he should look back with pride to his association with many measures of the Administration, and particularly with Mr. Gladstone's scheme of 1853.

In the great and important debate on Mr. Roebuck's motion, Mr. Gladstone, while thanking his late colleague

for the eulogium passed upon himself, gently chid him for having resigned without giving his colleagues a chance of acceding to his demands. He went on to say that it might be thought that, deprived of the support of the noble lord, Ministers ought not to have met the House without at least some reorganisation. But he felt that they had no right to attempt to make terms with the House in that way, or to shrink from facing its judgment on their past conduct. If they had no spirit, what kind of epitaph would be placed over their remains? He would himself have thus written it:—"Here lie the dishonoured ashes of a Ministry which found England at peace and left it at war; which was content to enjoy the emoluments of office and to wield the sceptre of power so long as no man had the courage to question their existence. They saw the storm gathering over the country; they heard the agonising accounts which were almost daily received of the sick and wounded in the East; but had these things moved them? As soon, however, as the member for Sheffield raised his hand to point the thunderbolt, they shrank away conscience-stricken; the sense of grief overwhelmed them; and, to escape from punishment, they ran away from duty." He went on to give his reasons for the belief that Mr. Roebuck's motion would aggravate rather than alleviate the evils which all acknowledged. He indignantly protested against it, as useless to the army, unconstitutional in its nature, and dangerous to the honour and interests of the Commons of England.

The motion was carried by the enormous majority of 157. Two days after, on the 1st of February, Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston announced that Minis-

ters had placed their resignations in the hands of Her Majesty; and that she had been graciously pleased to accept them.

Thus fell the Coalition Cabinet, which in innate power and Parliamentary influence was apparently one of the strongest Governments ever seen in England. But in reality it was weak from the first—"a Ministry of suspended opinions and smothered antipathies." With the single exception of Lord Palmerston, Mr. Gladstone fell from office with less detriment to his reputation than any of his colleagues.

The following pen-and-ink portrait of Mr. Gladstone during his first Chancellorship of the Exchequer, will have all the more weight attached to its laudatory expressions, that it is taken from a quarter which, to say the least, was not likely to err on the side of partiality. The passage is extracted from an able article on the "House of Commons," which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* for June, 1854:—"Mr. Gladstone is the most polished speaker in the House of Commons. His verbal resources are as remarkable as his management of them; and his manner is invariably that of a gentleman. He is charged with 'subtlety' by coarser minds, but we fancy that the English intellect, which is not distinguished for its analytical power, treats the subject in a somewhat jumbling fashion. Mr. Gladstone inclines to the Tractarian party—Tractarians are no better than Jesuits—Jesuits are particularly subtle, and therefore, when Mr. Gladstone is defining, very elaborately, the difference between long annuities and deferred annuities, he is talking Jesuitically. We believe Mr. Gladstone would be a more popular orator if he would be



less explicit ; but while he exhausts the subject, he sometimes exhausts the listener. His refined and scholarly periods, the creation of the moment, but as elegantly balanced and as keenly pointed as if they had been written and studied, are always marvels of fluency, and often specimens of eloquence."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PERIOD OF THE CRIMEAN WAR.

BEFORE many days had passed Mr. Gladstone was re-established in the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer. After in succession Lord John Russell and Lord Derby had failed to form Administrations, the Queen sent for Lord Palmerston, whom already the voice of the nation had almost unanimously called for as the one fit man to be Premier in time of war. His Cabinet was in reality the old one reconstructed, with some partial changes and redistribution of offices, but Mr. Gladstone's position remained unaffected. However, not many days had elapsed from the date of the reconstruction of the Cabinet ere Mr. Gladstone, along with his friends Sir James Graham and Mr. Sidney Herbert, resigned office on learning that Mr. Roebuck intended to persevere with his resolution for the appointment of a committee of inquiry into the condition of the army in the Crimea. In a lengthy speech, in which he explained the grounds of his resignation, he stated his belief that the Cabinet had adopted a "fatal choice" when they agreed to the inquiry. He showed that the proposed committee would not be a committee of punishment, nor a committee of remedy, but a committee of government, taking from the executive the most important and deli-

cate of its functions. He proceeded, after paying a warm tribute to Lord Aberdeen, who, he said, had been dismissed by a blow darkly dealt from an official hand :—

“I may be told that I ought to have thought of this three weeks ago, and ought to have known that the House of Commons would not reverse its judgment. It is a much smaller matter that my right honourable friends and myself should be convicted of levity and inconsiderateness three weeks ago, than now of a great public delinquency. Let it be granted that we have made a great omission, that would not justify us now in concurring in a policy which we say is false and erroneous. But I do not plead guilty to the charge of inconsiderateness. I never doubted that my noble friend at the head of the Government would and must entertain the same opinions with respect to the committee which he did when he first besought the House in earnest language not to grant it; and my noble friend is aware that, before my acceptance of office under his government was announced to the world, I had the satisfaction of conversing with him on the subject of this committee, in which conversation he acquainted me with his continued opinion that the opposition of Government ought to be offered to its appointment. This can be no secret, because the right honourable gentlemen opposite, and indeed, I might say, the whole world, must have observed that this, and this only, was the meaning of a portion of the speech delivered by my noble friend when he addressed the House after the formation of the Government.”

From this date Mr. Gladstone held no public office for more than four years—during the first Administration of Lord Palmerston and the second of Lord Derby. As long as the Crimean war lasted he continued to give a modified support to the Palmerston Ministry, now composed exclusively of Whigs, and without any infusion of the Peelite element, Lord Canning, the Postmaster-General, alone excepted.

In the early spring of 1855, while Lord John Russell was endeavouring to patch up a peace at Vienna, and after his return from his somewhat ludicrous discharge of

unwonted diplomatic duties, the warlike spirit was becoming more intense in the nation, and that spirit was adequately represented in the Parliament. Among other motions hostile to Government, and breathing bellicose fire, was one by Mr. Disraeli, introduced by him on the 24th of May—"That this House cannot adjourn for the recess without expressing its dissatisfaction with the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of Her Majesty's Government in reference to the great question of peace or war; and that, under these circumstances, the House feels it a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war, until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for the country a safe and honourable peace." This was met by Sir William Heathcote, the successor of Sir Robert Harry Inglis as Mr. Gladstone's colleague in the representation of the University, by a conciliatory amendment, in which he proposed to introduce the terms, "still cherishing a desire that the communications in progress may arrive at a successful issue." Mr. Gladstone lent his powerful aid to the proposition of his friend and colleague. His natural love of peace was strongly displayed in his speech. He started with the general position that a war just in its origin would be unjust if prosecuted after its object had been attained. This, in the main, he held, was the case with the war now being waged. Having read the demands of the Allied Powers, and the answer of the Emperor of Russia in the beginning of 1854, and contrasted them with the terms to which Russia had since consented to at Vienna, he asked, could it be justly said that the objects of the war were yet unattained? The "four points" proposed at Vienna

by Lord John Russell had, in August, 1854, been absolutely rejected by Russia, but in December the Czar promised his unreserved acceptance of terms which four months before he had contemptuously rejected. The only one of these articles not now settled was the third; and the difference arose, not upon its principle, but upon the mode of its application, so that the quarrel was merely as to the mode of construing a moiety of the third point. The question of the Black Sea, he observed, was surrounded with difficulties, and the choice was to be made between several plans of limitation, all being open to objections and imperfect arrangements. The more he looked at the question of limitation, the more apparent was its enormous difficulty and the indignity it would offer to Russia. And no policy could be more dangerous than that of inflicting indignity upon her without reducing her power. He went on to discuss the propositions of Russia, observing that her plenipotentiaries insisted, with some reason, that a plan of limitation would better accord with an aggressive policy on her part, than the discretionary power she offered to Turkey. Russia had receded from her pretence; she had gone far to put herself in the right, and in war, as well as in peace, the great object should be to be in the right. All the terms we had demanded had been substantially conceded; and if it was not for terms we fought, but for military success, let the House look at this sentiment with the eye of reason, and it would appear immoral, inhuman, and unchristian. If the war was continued in order to obtain military glory, we should tempt the justice of Him in whose hands was the fate of armies, to launch upon us His wrath.

Neither the Parliament nor the nation was in the humour to listen to such language and such arguments as these. Parliament once more re-affirmed a thorough determination of belligerency, and the war went on with greatly intensified force.

The mismanagement of the war gave rise to the well-known agitation for administrative reform, which resulted in the partial opening up of the appointments in some, and the complete opening in others, of the public departments. Mr. Layard was the first to raise this important matter. Mr. Gladstone "heartily wished him God speed," and said that he saw with unfeigned satisfaction that the state of public feeling was likely to take the direction given to it by Mr. Layard. He believed, in contradistinction to the popular opinion, that the system of patronage was the weakness, not the strength of the Executive. What he wanted was a change in the basis of the whole system of the Civil Service; perfectly free competition for admissions by the test of examination, and subsequent promotion by merit and efficiency alone. The public, he held, had a right to be served by the best men it could get for the price it offered. And he contended, not only that the existing system did not give the best men, but that it created a vast mass of collateral evils connected with the dispensation of patronage, which kept a large class of men in a state of expectancy, wasting their lives in solicitation.

Towards the close of the session, Mr. Gladstone embraced a pertinent opportunity to deliver another remarkable and emphatic speech against the further prolongation of the war. He pointedly repeated his belief that the responsibility for the rejection of the

amicable and intercessory propositions of Austria lay with the British Government. They could never get over the fact that all the plenipotentiaries at Vienna adopted the principle of counterpoise; and that the Government, rejecting the golden opportunity of making peace, continued to make war on account of paltry differences. The best peace was not that which looked best on paper, but that which secured the united support of Europe. Defying the Western Powers to control the future destinies of Russia, except for a moment, he proceeded to paint in unfavourable colours the position of the allies:—Austria gradually separating from us; Turkey an ally, but such an ally as Æneas found Anchises in his flight from Troy; Sardinia, heavily burdened, dragged through the conflict as a mere dependent of England; and France—was it likely that the French people would add £100,000,000 to their public debt for the sake of the difference between limitation and counterpoise, and not for military glory?

And whom were we fighting? The Russian soldier, fired with patriotism and religious zeal, was fighting against the hereditary enemies of his religion, and the invaders of his soil. “I am thankful,” he concluded, “for the indulgence and freedom of speech which have been accorded me; I remain content in the belief that in endeavouring to recall the Government from that course of policy which they are now pursuing, I am discharging my duty as a patriot and a loyal subject of my Queen.”

When the discussion of the Budget of Sir George Cornwall Lewis came on, Mr. Gladstone took the same anti-warlike tone. He admitted the necessity of the proposed loan, though he had still the same objections

to loans as when in office. He had borrowed money, but only in anticipation of taxes. He would, he said, have been better satisfied if the financial statement could have been deferred until the conclusion of the negotiations for peace, since the result might affect the amount of expenditure required.

When peace had returned at the commencement of 1856, Mr. Gladstone said he regarded the peace as an honourable one, because the objects of the war had been attained. But if he thought that the treaty bound this country to maintain the existing institutions of Turkey, he should not be able to express his satisfaction. The guarantee of the independence and integrity of Turkey was not to be regarded as a permanent settlement of the internal state of that country; its sole object was to secure her against foreign aggression. The general object achieved for Europe by the war was far more extended than any stipulation which could be put on paper. The war had been a moral demonstration to almost the whole of Europe, and had impressed upon Russia the great lesson that her attempts at aggression were a matter for the consideration of the whole of Europe, and such as to make it the duty of Europe to unite all its energies for their suppression.

He made a somewhat important remark on the matter of arbitration, to which an unprecedented prominence had been given in the terms of the Peace of Paris. While he looked upon its recognition as a great triumph, he at the same time pointed out a danger. If encouragement, said he, should be given to trumped-up and untenable claims, more quarrels would be made than mended; and he laid down the principle that no country



ought to resort to arbitration until it had reduced its claims to a minimum which it was ready to support by force. Lay down that rule, and a resort to arbitration would be a powerful engine on behalf of civilisation and humanity, which he hoped would lead to a diminution of that scourge of Europe—the enormous cost of its military establishments.

Long ere Mr. Gladstone had reached the period of his variously busy life at which we have now arrived, his name had become conspicuous outside the land as a friend and fellow-worker in many departments of the great movement so characteristic of his time, for the religious, moral, social, and educational elevation of the masses. It is impossible, consistently with according due space to the large political questions with which his name has been chiefly identified, and about which the curiosity of most readers is chiefly concerned, to follow his career in this unobtrusive but important domain. We content ourselves with presenting, as a representative specimen of very many like utterances, a few words from a speech which he delivered at the inauguration, in this year, of the admirable schools founded for the children of artisans by the Rev. William Rogers, in the district adjoining the Charterhouse :—

“ They had sung, during the ceremony of that day, a psalm, in which it was said that ‘ Children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord.’ They knew those words were founded deep in the truths of the Divine Word. But there was no man who walked through the streets of London, and especially the more wretched parts of it, who did not feel that those words were a trial of his faith. When they considered what human nature was and at what cost it had been redeemed ; when they reflected what destinies were open to it ; how many and great were its vicissitudes, and

low severe were its temptations and its trials, it was terrible to think of the amount of labour that remained undischarged. And yet 'Children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord ;' and difficult though it might be, yet it was not impossible to carry home to the hearts and minds of men, and into the houses of every class of the community, the blessed and comforting consciousness of that truth, so that, instead of a trial of faith, it should, on the contrary, become the daily food and support of fathers and mothers, who, though it might be their lot to earn their bread—and perhaps scanty bread—by the labour of their hands and the sweat of their brows, might see their offspring growing up in the faith, fear, and love of God."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FALL OF THE PALMERSTON MINISTRY.

IN criticising the financial policy of the Government in 1857, Mr. Gladstone took a rigidly economical line. With reference, more especially, to the income tax, and an agitation which had arisen in the country against its continuance, he said that he earnestly desired to bring the minds of the people of the country to a consideration of that question which necessarily came first—what was the just and reasonable scale of expenditure. If the 9d. income tax were given up without an equivalent reduction of the estimates, there must either be new taxation or a loan. He would be no party to either; he felt it to be his bounden duty first to lay hold of the expenditure, and to battle with the estimates. He continued:—

“As far as my duty is concerned, it will be my effort and labour to secure a fulfilment of the pledges given in 1853. I understand these pledges as the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) understands them. I have not forgotten them. I never can forget to the latest day of my life, and I shall always remember with gratitude, the conduct of the House of Commons at the period when those measures were adopted, and the generosity of the sentiments which they evinced. I must endeavour to answer that conduct, at least so far as depends on me; and I shall endeavour to answer that conduct by striving to bring the expenditure of the country and its fiscal arrangements into such a shape as will allow the extinction of the income tax in 1860.”

The discussions on finance in this session, in which Mr. Gladstone proved himself at once the most fearless and the most formidable assailant of Ministers, were interrupted by the great contest in which all parties and sections of parties united to condemn Lord Palmerston and his colleagues for their alleged causeless instigation of a war with China. Out of a dispute between Dr. Bowring, the Governor of Hong Kong, and the commissioner of the Chinese Government at Canton, there arose a defeat of the Ministry in the House of Commons, an appeal from that decision to the ultimate tribunal of the nation, the election of a new Parliament, and the unseating of several prominent Members of the former Parliament who had joined in the condemnation of Ministers. When the news of the collision between the Chinese and the British authorities in the Canton River arrived in England, Lord Derby and Mr. Cobden at once gave notices of motions adverse to the Government. In the House of Peers a majority of thirty-six was recorded against Ministers.

In the other House the debate, commenced by Mr. Cobden, was continued for four nights. On the fourth and last night of the debate, Mr. Gladstone spoke, and expressed his entire concurrence with the views of Mr. Cobden. He denied the allegation that we had "festering wrongs" against the Chinese. He reminded the House that no answer had been given to the objection that if a wrong had been committed by the Chinese in the case of the "lorcha," the *Arrow*, the proper remedy was by reprisals. He denied the position which had been taken by the Attorney-General, that the term "British subject" in the treaty meant any Chinaman

resident at Hong Kong. When we talked of treaty obligations by the Chinese, what, he asked, were our treaty obligations towards them? The purpose for which Hong Kong was given to us was, that it should be a port in which British ships might careen and refit. Was not our contraband trade in opium a breach of treaty obligations? Had our Government struggled to put it down, as bound by treaty? Had they not encouraged it by organising a fleet of lorchas under the British flag? They who put the British flag to the uses to which it was put in China, stained that flag. Mr. Gladstone dwelt with much energy upon the calamities that had been inflicted upon the inhabitants of Canton. For what were we at war with the Chinese? The Government had not stated what we were asking from them. Were we afraid of the moral effect upon the Chinese if the acts of the Government were disavowed? But consider, he concluded, the moral impression which must now be produced, and never could be avoided. If the House had the courage to assert its prerogative, and adopted this resolution, it would pursue a course consistent at once with sound policy and the principles of eternal justice.

The result was a majority of sixteen against the Government—263, as against 247, voting with Mr. Cobden. The division took place on the 3rd of March. Two days later, the Premier stated that Ministers had determined to advise Her Majesty to dissolve Parliament. Mr. Gladstone was unopposed at Oxford, and was again returned along with Sir William Heathcote. Lord Palmerston met the new Parliament with a strong and an enthusiastic majority. His supporters formed an influential and compact body; his more formidable opponents

were driven from the field, or weakened by the consciousness that the public voice had declared against them.

A year had not elapsed ere the triumphant majority which had endorsed Lord Palmerston's Chinese policy had dwindled into a minority. After the attempt of Felice Orsini on the life of the French Emperor, Lord Palmerston introduced his well-known Conspiracy to Murder Bill, by which he sought greater powers by which the Executive should restrain and punish conspiracies against the lives of foreign potentates, hatched upon British soil. Instantaneously, the country was up in arms against what was generally deemed an infraction of the ancient privilege of asylum. Meetings were instantaneously convened, and the vast numbers of the audiences, and the hearty approbation which they accorded to the spokesmen, equally showed that the heart of the country was stirred. Mr. Milner Gibson was selected to reflect the popular voice within St. Stephen's Hall. He moved an amendment, the gist of which was a practical negative to the proposal. Amongst others who supported him by speech and vote was Mr. Gladstone. The arguments of the opponents of the Ministers prevailed, and to the great delight of the nation, Ministers were defeated by 234 to 215. This was on Friday. On the following Monday (the 22nd of February), Lord Palmerston announced the resignation of himself and his colleagues, and in a few days Lord Derby became for the second time Prime Minister of England.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LORD DERBY'S SECOND ADMINISTRATION.

THE first important measure introduced by the Administration of Lord Derby subsequent to the downfall of the Palmerston Ministry, was their bill for the abolition of the governing powers of the East India Company, their transference to the Crown and the home Government, and for the better government of India generally. The proposal in its first shape was looked upon with very great disfavour by the country at large, and especially by the magnates of the commercial community whom it had been the special object of Ministers to conciliate by certain provisions of the bill. Mr. Gladstone strongly expressed his coincidence of opinion with the objections urged against it. Indeed, he found fault with the very basis of the proposal, as well as with its details. He said that he could not see either in the first or the amended edition of the scheme any elements of good, and there was great difficulty in attempting to govern a people separated not only by distance, but by blood, and by institutions. The Court of Directors had been practically a protecting body to the people of India, and there ought to be supplied a no less efficient provision for that object. For this—a protection afforded to the people of India against the ignorance, error, or

indiscretion of the people of England—he looked in vain. He added, that there had grown up a system fraught with danger to the Parliament and to the liberties of the people of England, as well as of India, by undue and unconstitutional exercise of power by the Executive here, through the treasury and army of India, by which wars were commenced without the knowledge or consent of Parliament, and an accumulation of debt was cast upon India.

When the great debates upon the “clemency” proclamation of Governor-General Lord Canning, and the hasty resignation of Lord Ellenborough, came a little later in the year, Mr. Gladstone afforded his valuable aid to Ministers, and counselled his friend, Mr. Cardwell, to withdraw the motion hostile to Ministers, which he had laid on the table. Mr. Gladstone’s defection from his accustomed allies had much to do with saving the Ministry, and with the production of an unexpected and lame conclusion of a great Parliamentary conflict, that had for several days held the fate of the Government in suspense, and kept the country on the tenter-hooks of expectation. On more than one occasion, Mr. Gladstone did similar service to Ministers, and more than once there occurred more or less angry recriminations between him and the former colleagues whom he had helped to oust early in the year. At this period the state of political parties was extremely disjointed. In many men’s mouths were to be found the alternatives of a change of Ministry, a reconstruction of parties, or a dissolution. It was well known, that ere the offer was made to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, the post of Secretary for the Colonies was offered to and declined by Mr.



Gladstone. The debates were at once perplexing and exciting. The principal performers were changing their parts every night. Members and strangers entered the House with an utter uncertainty what Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Mr. Disraeli, or Mr. Gladstone would do or say. But each of them was almost expected to appear in exactly opposite positions to that which they had occupied on the previous evening. One night, Lord John and Mr. Gladstone were bolstering up the Government against the attacks of Lord Palmerston, Sir George Cornwall Lewis, and Sir Richard Bethell; and the next, Lord Palmerston was hotly and angrily declaring that Lord John Russell and Mr. Gladstone were the most ignorant and mischievous meddlers in foreign politics, Messrs. Roebuck and Bright hardly excepted. Mr. Gladstone and others—he being the chief—were eminently worthy of ministerial gratitude; for, when the Whitsuntide holidays came round, the opinion was generally expressed—an opinion directly the reverse of that generally uttered a very short time previously—that notwithstanding the paucity of their supporters in the House of Commons, the Administration would retain their seats for the remainder of the session.

After the recess, Mr. Gladstone continued his support to Mr. Disraeli on the important question of the Budget. The Budget of this year, owing to the commercial embarrassments of the preceding autumn, large reductions in the rates of the income tax in the previous year, and the necessity of increased expenditure in the navy, was a very severe ordeal for the financial abilities of Mr. Disraeli. When he rose he displayed a most unusual

amount of nervousness, which gradually wore away as he proceeded. He indulged in a deprecatory style of conciliation, and the most ornate compliments to the wisdom of Mr. Gladstone, and declared his determination to adhere to the pledge about the gradual reduction of the income tax given by the latter in 1853. Although Mr. Gladstone remained in his favourite attitude while Budget speeches are being delivered—namely, with arms folded, legs stretched out, and hat pulled over the eyes, and a general air of contemptuous inattention varied by an occasional yawn—yet it was clear that the Chancellor had got quit of his most dangerous critic, and that as a whole his scheme was safe.

While giving, however, a general support to the Financial Scheme, he did not omit to renew his now annual protest against Parliamentary thriftlessness. He stated his strong objections to the permanency of the income tax. He believed that its essential nature was to corrupt and demoralise; and that as long as Parliament consented, without a special purpose, to vote the income tax as part of our ordinary expenditure, so long would it be utterly in vain to talk of economy.

The principal subjects which occupied public attention in England at the commencement of 1859 were the Reform of Parliament, on which Ministers were pledged to introduce a measure, and the state of foreign politics, particularly with reference to France, Austria, and Italy. When Lord John Russell tabled his resolution of hostility to the Reform Bill of 1859, which was born of the "Willis's" Rooms compact, and which proved victorious, Mr. Gladstone, still acting at variance with all his recent political associates, gave a general, though a

guarded support to Ministers. If we could have a strong Government, he urged, formed by the Opposition, he should vote with Lord John Russell. But he saw that after carrying the resolution, the Opposition would follow separate courses. Greatly to the amusement of the House, he thus depicted the failures of previous Governments:—"In 1851, my noble friend, then the First Minister of the Crown, approached the question of Reform, and commenced with a promise of what was to be done twelve months afterwards. In 1852, he brought in a bill, and it disappeared, together with the Ministry. In 1853 we had the Ministry of Lord Aberdeen, which commenced with a promise of Reform in twelve months' time. Well, 1854 arrived; with it arrived the bill; but with it also arrived the war, and in the war was a reason, and I believe a good reason, for abandoning the bill. Then came the Government of Lord Palmerston, which was not less unfortunate in the circumstances which prevented the redemption of those pledges that had been given to the people from the mouth of the Sovereign on the throne. In 1855, my noble friend escaped all responsibility of a Reform Bill on account of the war; in 1856, he escaped all responsibility for Reform on account of the peace. In 1857, he escaped that inconvenient responsibility by the dissolution of Parliament; and in 1858, he escaped again by the dissolution of his Government. This series of events strengthens the misgivings of the people that the House is reluctant to deal with the question, makes it more hazardous to interpose obstacles, and requires the progress of this bill to completion." And, as the Government had said they would abandon the bill, if the resolution

were pressed and carried, he urged that it should be withdrawn and allowed to pass into committee.

One of the most noteworthy points of this address was that portion of it in which he spoke most strongly in behalf of small nomination boroughs. He said he regarded them as supplying the race of men who were trained to carry on the government of the country, the masters of civil wisdom, like Mr. Burke, Sir James Macintosh, Mr. Pelham, Lord Chatham, Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning, Sir Robert Peel, all of whom sat first for small boroughs. If there was to be no ingress to the House but one, and that one the suffrages of a large mass of voters, there would be a dead level of mediocrity. The extension, the durability of our liberty, were to be attributed, under Providence, to distinguished statesmen introduced into the House at an early age. But large constituencies would not return boys, and therefore he hoped the small boroughs would be retained.

Ministers were defeated by a majority of thirty-nine on the night of the delivery of Mr. Gladstone's speech, and they forthwith availed themselves of their privilege of an appeal to the country. The new Parliament re-assembled on the last day of May, and a trial of strength was at once challenged, in the form of a vote of want of confidence moved by the Marquis of Hartington. The motion was aimed fully as much against the foreign—and especially the Italian—as the domestic policy of Ministers. They were defeated by thirteen, and at once resigned. Lord Palmerston was sent for, and, in the Administration which he formed, Mr. Gladstone returned to his former position at the Exchequer.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH FRANCE.

SHORTLY after his resumption of office in 1859, a measure was introduced, which Mr. Gladstone and other members of the Cabinet supported, by which it was proposed to open up the office of Lord Chancellor of Ireland to Roman Catholics. There was a general impression among the more decided Protestants, that such a measure, introduced at such a moment, meant more than met the eye; both the Irish law officers of the Crown being Roman Catholics. The Government evinced a "suspicious readiness" to take up the scheme. Mr. Newdegate groaned loudly, and a hostile motion of Mr. Whiteside was peculiarly deep in its Orange dye. What was most surprising was the tone and manner of Mr. Gladstone. While Mr. Cardwell was balancing the two parties in Ireland in his elaborate sentences, as an Irish Secretary is always obliged to do, Mr. Gladstone stood at the bar in an attitude which seemed to indicate something near akin to contempt for the business which his fellow-official was mincingly manipulating. But after Mr. Whiteside had spoken a few sentences, in which he referred in a sneering tone to Mr. Gladstone, reproaching him for inconsistency and tergiversation, he glided quietly into his seat; and when Mr. Whiteside sat down he started

up, with his face full of fire and his manner flushed with vigour, and in a masterly, keen, and crushing speech of only ten minutes—a speech at once dignified, humorous, argumentative, and piled up with epigram—concentrated every faculty of an orator, and all the scorn of an offended man of spirit. It was a burst of earnest speech-making rarely to be found in the House of Commons, and well worth waiting through a long hot summer night to listen to.

A not unfriendly contemporary critic thus described Mr. Gladstone on the night of the introduction of his 1859 Budget:—"As he walked up the House, we could not help remarking how slight, and thin, and weakly his person looks; and yet, since he has resumed the labours of an office which to no man can be light, but to him, whose earnestness is almost a disease, must be an ever-burning if not a consuming fire, he appears to have gathered freshness, alacrity, and cheeriness; to have dropped the fretful nervousness which characterises him out of office; and, in short, to justify the theory that great work is great happiness. . . . Speculation was rife whether there was to be a five or six hours' dissertation on finance; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer came, in a cool white waistcoat and trousers, looking like a cricketer who was prepared for a heavy innings, bets ran in favour of the longer period. The moment, however, that he commenced, the hints that had been going about all day about a provisional Budget appeared likely to be realised. He plunged at once, without a single prefatory flourish, into facts and figures, and so continued all through the very brief space—for a financial statement—of an hour and a half, to discourse in the most practical, plain, straightforward style

that could have been predicted of any one. One single, nervous, brilliant burst—but even that compressed into a sentence—comprised the peroration of the clearest, most masterly, and at the same time most frank and candid exposition which it was ever our good fortune to listen to from a Finance Minister. There was a sustained buoyancy all through Mr. Gladstone's speech, and he was occasionally even humorous, so much so as to evoke a smile, and nearly a laugh from the iron gravity of Mr. Cobden, although he did not succeed in chasing away even for a moment that grim and querulous expression which seems to have settled permanently on the countenance of Mr. Bright."

The Budget of 1860, with its close associations with the Commercial Treaty which Mr. Cobden had just contracted with France, and with its daring abolition of over three hundred Customs duties, will probably remain Mr. Gladstone's most magnificent monument as a Minister of Finance. Considerable financial changes were expected on the re-assembling of Parliament. It was known that there would be a serious deficit in the revenue to be supplied, and at the same time that increased armaments and defensive preparations would make augmented demands upon the public expenditure. The falling in of a number of Long Annuities would, however, furnish considerable, if not continuing, relief, and the character of the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave assurance that the opportunity now offered would not be neglected. The 10th of February, a date considerably earlier than usual, was fixed for the Financial Statement. He walked up the House with an alacrity most surprising, as he had just risen from a sick bed, and bent his head with conscious

pleasure before the hearty cheers which greeted his appearance. He spoke for four hours, without any trace of weakness, physical or mental. In his address he was playful and humorous, and the absence of "his accustomed touch of grimness" was remarked. Even gentlemen opposite were charmed into applause. The speech was so artistically arranged as to awake and retain attention, to pique and tease curiosity. It was not so much a speech as an oration, in the form of a great State paper made eloquent, in which there was a proper restraint over the crowding ideas, with nothing overlooked, and nothing put wrongly.

Among the more salient points of the great scheme thus remarkably introduced, the following may be accepted as the more important:—There was a deficit of £9,400,000, in all, to be met. If the existing war duties on tea and sugar were retained, the deficit must be about £7,500,000. No radical change could be made in the expenditure of the year. But, nevertheless, he maintained it was the duty of the Government to take further steps for the relief of trade and commerce in the direction of Free Trade. He then went on to explain in detail the concessions which we had made to France, and France to us, by terms of the Commercial Treaty. He denied that this treaty indicated any subserviency to France, and in glowing language called upon the two countries to inaugurate a new epoch of amity, as distinguished from former jealousy and ill feeling—a union of the two nations, not merely of the two Governments. The terms of the Treaty would cause a loss to the revenue of more than a million. But the loss was made up of remissions of protective duties, every one of which would yield relief to



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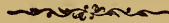
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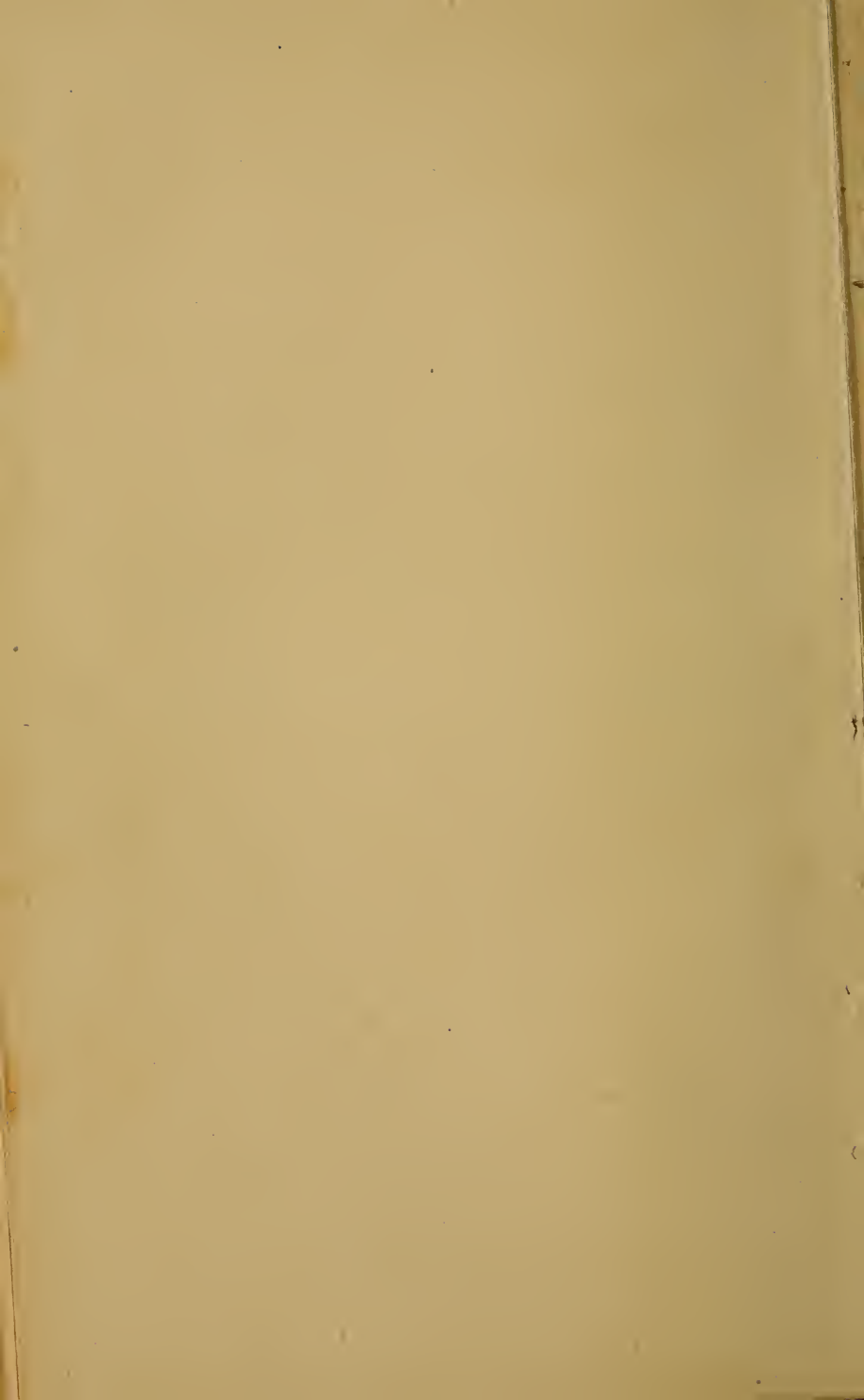
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the poor man. What had been done would be good for this country if France had done nothing; it was better for us in proportion as France did something. A number of other Customs duties, not stipulated in the treaty, were also doomed to extinction, at a total cost of about £400,000; and others were lessened at about double the same loss. The revenue thus sacrificed was chiefly recouped by the extension of the use of stamps upon various classes of commercial instruments, dock and warehouse warrants, and the like. The revenue from licences to houses where all classes of refreshment are sold, would be also largely widened in the area of its yield. He then said that he proposed to abolish the excise duty on paper—a proposition in the attainment of which he was disappointed for another twelvemonth by the opposition of the House of Lords.

Summing up, he stated that the total of the alterations and reductions he had proposed would give in all a relief to the consumers of about four millions, while it would cost a nett loss to the revenue of little more than half, or about equivalent to the amount falling in from the cessation of the Long Annuities. On the Customs tariff there would only remain forty-eight articles; and out of these only fifteen for purposes of revenue. To enable these great changes to be effected, the income tax was re-imposed, but for a year only; and a difference was made between the rates levied on incomes above and below £150 a-year. He concluded, amid great cheering, with an appeal to the House to support the principles of commercial reform, for which the country had already received so much honour and reward in scattering blessings among the people of the country,

and which he contended were carried out and advanced in his commercial plan.

So sweeping and thoroughly Liberal a measure necessarily was met by the keenest opposition from the occupants of the Tory benches. In succession, hostile amendments by Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Ducane were defeated by large majorities—majorities so large as to be conclusive as to the ultimate success of the Treaty and the Budget. Mr. Gladstone thus eloquently concluded one of his addresses delivered at one stage of the protracted discussion of his scheme :—

“ There were times of old when Sovereigns made progresses through the land, and when, at the proclamation of their heralds, they caused to be scattered heaps of coin among the people. That may have been a goodly spectacle ; but it is also a goodly spectacle, in the altered spirit and circumstances of our times, when a Sovereign is enabled, through the wisdom of her great Council assembled in Parliament, again to scatter blessings among the people in the shape of wise and prudent laws, which do not sap, in any respect, the foundations of duty, but which strike away the shackles from the arm of industry, which give a new incentive and new reward to toil, and which win more and more for the throne, and for the institutions of the country, the gratitude, the confidence, and the love of an united people. . . . We recommend this plan to your impartial and searching inquiry ; we do not presume to make a claim on your acknowledgments, but neither do we desire to draw on your generous confidence, nor to appeal to your compassion. We ask for nothing but impartial search and inquiry ; we know that it will receive that justice at your hands, and we confidently anticipate in its behalf the approval alike of Parliament and of the people of this empire.”



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE LAST WHIG ADMINISTRATION.

THE Budget of 1861 was awaited with great anxiety, and it furnished an occasion for a very keen and protracted party struggle. Mr. Gladstone, who spoke with exceptional brevity, concluded by moving three resolutions; one remitting a penny of the income tax; the second, for the continuance of the tea and sugar duties; and the third, about which the great fight arose, for the repeal of the paper duty. Mr. Disraeli went so far as to say that the Government had created an artificial surplus in order that they might perpetrate a financial caprice. On the ultimate and crucial division, on which the fate of the Ministry undoubtedly depended, the Government won by the sufficient majority of fifteen.

Mr. Gladstone's Budget speech was universally admitted on all hands to be a peculiarly happy effort. One who heard him, remarked with surprise, that when he rose he had no facts or documents with him, and, although he afterwards produced what looked like a first copy-book for a very small child, the most careful observation did not cause the detection of any reference to that book, except for the purpose of stating figures. The secret of the special charm of this speech lay in the fact that it was pervaded by good humour, and was not

verbose. He had a pleasant surprise in store for those hearers who had come to listen to a woful palinode, and there was a lurking sense of good-humoured triumph over his avowed opponents, and still more over his skin-deep friends, which gave a lightness and buoyancy to his demeanour, which, of course, spread to his audience. But the chief merit of the speech, in respect to its object, was the remarkable dexterity with which it appealed to the tastes, feelings, and opinions of both sides of the House. At one sentence, with his face half turned to the benches behind, Mr. Bright would break out into an involuntary cheer at once natural and hearty; while the very next moment the orator would lean, with a fascinating smile on his countenance, over the table towards gentlemen opposite, and minister to their weaknesses or prejudices with equal power and success. In every respect it was a masterpiece of oratory, and as it in the result actually led to something tangible—that is to say, to a surplus and a reduction of taxation—it was, of course, in every sense triumphant.

The outbreak of the war in America had considerable influence on the Budget of 1862. It was of a peculiarly simple character. Mr. Gladstone said that, in considering the causes which influenced the revenue for the year, they might all be expressed in one word—America; and the main question in relation to our export trade was, whether a large portion of the population of this country was to be supplied with the raw material, without which they would be deprived of employment. He referred with justifiable pride to the fact, that the increased trade which had been created by the treaty with France, had gone very far to make up for the

loss of business with America. He said he was spared the necessity of imposing any additional taxes, but was in the unpleasant position of being unable to remit any. An important minor point was the abolition of the precarious and irritating hop duty, and the substitution for it of a fixed tax of threepence per barrel on beer. He concluded a plain, and not in any way remarkable, address by emphasising that fact, to which, year by year, he recurred, that if we hoped to effect a remission of taxation, it was not to be had except by judiciously and gradually, but resolutely, applying to every department of the public service the principles of true economy. Though not without considerable debate, the financial measures of the Government received the sanction of both Houses of Parliament.

In this session there was an extremely animated discussion on the condition of the new Kingdom of Italy. Sir George Bowyer had made a speech highly eulogistic of the Papal temporal Government, and of the rule of the various dethroned princes; and had drawn one of his fanciful glowing pictures of the new state of affairs. Mr. Gladstone addressed himself energetically to the refutation at once of the laudations and invectives of the Papal baronet. He said, Sir George evidently regarded the improvements in the laws, the free institutions, and the social ameliorations introduced into the Kingdom of Italy, which others considered as demonstrations of freedom, as nothing. The revolution took place but two years ago, and what had been the result in that short period? As regarded two-thirds of the Italian Kingdom, Sir George had practically renounced and abandoned the case; and as to the other third, it could clearly be

shown that things were improving. With regard to Rome, Sir George required the House to believe that people were perfectly satisfied ; but there were 20,000 French troops kept there for some purpose, which had not been explained. Speaking as an individual, he said he could not but regret the continuance of that occupation ; and he most earnestly hoped, for the sake of the name and the fame of France—for the sake of humanity and the peace of Europe—it might soon be done away with. With respect to the temporal government of the Papacy, one of the questions involved in the discussion, Mr. Gladstone argued, in powerful and uncompromising terms, the impolicy, as well as the injustice of prolonging it.

There being a considerable surplus in 1863, the general expectation was, that the income tax and the tea duty would come in for reduction. Nor did Mr. Gladstone disappoint the general expectation and desire. He appeared in high spirits, as well he might. That the revenue exhibited such buoyancy, in spite of many adverse circumstances and heavy drawbacks, such as the American War, the extensive stoppage of manufactures at home, and the serious falling off in agricultural productions in Ireland, afforded ample ground of the soundness of the system which he had done so much to create. He was enabled to reduce the duty on tea from 1s. 5d. to 1s. a lb., and to give an abatement of 2d. to all classes of income-tax payers. The reception of the Budget was in the highest degree favourable. By this time Mr. Gladstone's management of the finances had become the very main strength and support of the otherwise lethargic and comatose Administration of the declining Lord Palmerston.

An interesting personal incident associated with the

introduction of the Budget of 1863, was the presence, for the first time, of one of the Queen's sons, Prince Alfred, accompanied by Prince Louis of Hesse, in the diplomatic gallery of the House. They, like all the world, wished to hear Mr. Gladstone convert figures into flowers of rhetoric. They may have been disappointed; for he never delivered a less ambitious, plainer, or more straightforward financial statement. It was amusing to observe that whenever Mr. Gladstone made a point or got a cheer, Prince Louis turned to Prince Alfred for an explanation, which his Royal brother-in-law appeared either unable or disinclined to afford. Indeed, it appeared on the whole that the Princes were not overwhelmed with delight at what they heard, and seemed puzzled to make out why so much fuss had always been made about Mr. Gladstone's Budgets. At the end of two hours, they had had enough of it, and retired with alacrity.

The effect on Mr. Disraeli was still more palpable, but from a different cause. He had deputed to Sir Stafford Northcote the task of picking up points for criticism, and that careful subordinate sat by his side, with an elaborate apparatus of note-book and pen. But as the speech went on, and disclosed a more and more pleasing condition of affairs, more stern and fixed grew Mr. Disraeli's face, and blanker and more lengthy grew Sir Stafford's. His note-book lay neglected on his knee, and his whole aspect and demeanour denoted that his occupation as second critic of the Budget was this time gone. Mr. Disraeli did not even stay to the end of the speech, but as soon as Mr. Gladstone got to what may be called the supplement of his address, groped under his seat for his hat, and disappeared for the evening.

The general election of 1865 took place under circumstances of rare tranquillity. There was no definite issue to be tried, no election "cry." The Parliament was near the period of its natural death, which the Palmerston Ministry chose by a slight interval to anticipate. The Government appealed with confidence to the success of their efforts in maintaining external peace, and to the triumphant result of their commercial and financial policy; and they counted on a certain, though moderate accession of strength in the new Parliament. The only exciting contests were those for the University of Oxford and the City of London. Mr. Gladstone had indicated certain symptoms of a willingness to take into consideration the alleged abuses of the Irish Establishment; and the Church and State element at Oxford was at once aroused against him. Mr. Gathorne Hardy was put up as a candidate to oppose him, and their respective friends made the most strenuous exertions in the favour of each. Had the election depended upon the resident members of the University, Mr. Gladstone's return would have been certain, but the new voting paper system, by which thousands of the country clergy and squires could record their suffrages without any trouble or expense, proved fatal to his candidature. At the close of the poll, which lasted five days, Mr. Hardy was 180 a-head of his illustrious rival. Thus terminated, after eighteen years' faithful service, Mr. Gladstone's connection with that academic seat, of which he has been the greatest lay ornament in his and our time.

The election for South Lancashire was still open, and preparations for a keen struggle between the Liberal and Conservative parties had for some time been made.

On the 17th of July the nomination had taken place, and Mr. Gladstone's name had been proposed, ere the result at Oxford was as yet known. On the 18th, Mr. Gladstone went to Manchester, where he had a conference with the Liberal Election Committee, the result of which was the immediate issue of this address:—

“I appear before you as a candidate for the suffrages of your division of my native county. Time forbids me to enlarge on the numerous topics which justly engage the public interest. I will bring them all to a single head. You are conversant—few so much so—with the legislation of the last thirty-five years. You have seen, you have felt, its results. You cannot fail to have observed the verdict which the country generally has, within the last eight days, pronounced upon the relative claims and positions of the two great political parties with respect to that legislation in the past, and to the prospective administration of public affairs. I humbly, but confidently, without the least disparagement to many excellent persons from whom I have the misfortune frequently to differ, ask you to give your powerful voice in confirmation of that verdict, and to pronounce with significance as to the direction in which you desire the wheels of the State to move. Before these words can be read, I hope to be among you in the hives of your teeming enterprise.”

The election took place two days after. The constituency returned three members. Two Tories stood first and second, Mr. Gladstone heading the fourth on the list by less than three hundred votes out of nearly 9,000 recorded in his favour. Mr. Gladstone's return for Lancashire was not regarded by the Liberals—who looked upon him as their future leader—as a subject of greater congratulation than his rejection at Oxford. They thought he was fettered by the latter connection, and would advance more quickly as a non-academic member. The result has demonstrated the accuracy of their surmise and hope.

Lord Palmerston died on the 18th of October, 1865,

and a few days after, his honoured remains were laid in Westminster Abbey. With him, every one felt that an era of English history had passed away, and that the party of which he had been the head up to the moment of his decease, must at once, or soon, develop a decisive and an unmistakable policy. The first question that arose was, who shall be his successor? The names of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville were for a few days in some men's mouths; but Earl Russell was appointed Premier. Mr. Gladstone, however, was the real inspiring spirit of the reconstituted Cabinet. During the recess, public curiosity grew keener as to whether the Russell-Gladstone Cabinet would introduce a Reform Bill, and that a truly Liberal one. In November, Mr. Bright, speaking at Birmingham, and evidently with authority, stated that the Ministry was "pledged to introduce a measure of Parliamentary Reform, and an extended suffrage for the people—and *I believe it will redeem its pledge.*" This significant utterance gave great satisfaction to the thinking portion of the unenfranchised classes, and to the Liberal section of the community generally throughout the land.

On the 12th of March, 1866, Mr. Gladstone introduced the Reform Bill which will continue identified with his name, and frankly and unreservedly announced that the Government staked their existence on the issue they had raised. His memorable phrase was:—"We have crossed the Rubicon, and burned our boats." Yet the speech in which he introduced the measure lacked his usual fire, and the spontaneity and unforced eloquence which he had frequently expended on inferior themes. The chief promises of the measure were, the lowering of the



county occupation franchise to £14, and the borough to £7, the addition of a £10 borough lodger franchise, a £50 savings' bank franchise, the disfranchisement of persons employed in Government yards, and others, which are now of no interest.

When Mr. Gladstone rose, on the 12th of April, to move the second reading of the Bill, he entered a second time—and, being now fairly put on his mettle by opposition, with his wonted fire—on the vindication of the principles of the proposal. He thus concluded:—“Enough, and more than enough, of vain, idle, and mocking words have been uttered. Acts and deeds are wanted. I beseech you to be wise, and, above all, to be wise in time.” When he sat down, Lord Grosvenor moved an amendment, which was seconded by Lord Stanley. After several nights' debate, in which all the Parliamentary athletes took part, Mr. Gladstone replied, closing with the emphatic words, “You cannot fight against the future; time is on our side. The great social forces are against you. They are arrayed—they are marshalled on our side. The banner which we carry, although it may, perhaps, at this moment droop over our sinking heads, yet it will soar again, and float in the light of heaven, and will be borne in the firm hands of the united people of these three kingdoms—not, perhaps, to an easy, but to a certain and not distant future.”

Amid the most tumultuous cheering, Mr. Gladstone resumed his seat; and the division was at once taken, all men's hearts present throbbing with excitement. The result was, for the second reading, 318; against, 313—majority, five.

’Twere tedious to recite at length the subsequent

movements made against the Bill. The end approached. On Mr. Walpole's motion to raise the county qualification from £14 to £20, the Ministerial majority amounted to fourteen, all the Tories and all the "Adullamites"—that exquisitely humorous term of Mr. Bright's application—still, to a man, voting one way. A somewhat similar amendment by Mr. Ward Hunt reduced the majority to five, the point at which it had stood in the instance of the attack led by Lord Grosvenor. At last came the amendment of Lord Dunkellin, a Whig, and the son of an ex-Whig Cabinet Minister, substituting rating for rental; in other words, greatly lessening the scope of the area of enfranchisement. On this, Ministers were beaten by eleven. Forthwith, Mr. Gladstone informed the House that the Ministers had made a communication to Her Majesty; the nature of, and reply to which, he could not divulge until after a few days' delay—the Queen being at Balmoral. After a week's suspense and anxiety, Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone stated that the Ministers had determined upon the alternative of resignation. This greatly chagrined not a few of the Adullamites, who had not contemplated such a result. But Mr. Gladstone reminded his auditors of his expressed determination to stand or fall by his measure. He might have reminded them that he not only "besought them to be wise, but to be wise in time."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE IRISH CHURCH STRUGGLE.

IN the session of 1868, Mr. Gladstone thoroughly succeeded in rallying round him once more the whole body of the Liberals. The "Adullamites" and the "Tea-room party" were blotted out of existence. Not only did he succeed in re-uniting his disorganised party, but he associated the last session of the dying Parliament with an almost certain triumph of the future. His good fortune, rather than any marvellous prevision, enabled him to associate his own legitimate ambition with what many believe to be the cause of expediency and justice. There was a felicitous coincidence uniting party interests with what a large class believed to be the demands of duty.

The Government itself had led up to the subject of Irish legislation ; as the event proved, thereby playing into their adversaries' hands. Mr. Gladstone naturally took the place of Ministers from the moment it appeared that they had no definite policy to suggest. Before the opening of the session, Lord Stanley had stated at Bristol, that the Irish question imperatively demanded immediate solution, and it was afterwards formally announced in both Houses that the result of the deliberations of the Cabinet would be stated by the Irish Secretary. On the 10th of March, after Mr. Maguire had, with remark-

able diffuseness, recited the long list of Irish grievances, Lord Mayo rose to redeem the pledge of his colleagues. He disappointed both friends and foes by his announcement of the intention to establish and endow an Irish Roman Catholic university, and the promotion of religious equality by a process of "levelling up," which was understood to mean the partial endowment of the Catholics and such of the Nonconformists as would accept State aid. Mr. Gladstone instantly seized the opportunity afforded by the development of so crude and unsatisfactory a scheme. At the conclusion of an address, elaborate beyond measure, and irritating by its absence of practical suggestion or revelation of policy, he declared just ere sitting down, in the plainest and most unmistakable language, that the Irish Church must cease to exist as an establishment. The fact of the thorough acquiescence of his party became speedily apparent; Earl Russell himself being the first to withdraw his published scheme for the division of Church property in favour of Mr. Gladstone's bolder and simpler proposal.

A fortnight afterwards, he moved that the House should go into committee for the purpose of considering a series of three resolutions, which affirmed, in few phrases, the expediency of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church. He proposed to recognise all vested interests and all private benefactions to the Church, and to apply the marginal sums not so absorbed to purposes connected with the general benefit of all classes—carefully, however, avoiding all detail or even clue to his intentions on the latter point. It was expected that the Government would meet this stroke either by a direct negative, or by moving the previous

question ; but Lord Stanley laid upon the table a colourless amendment, the purport of which was to leave the whole matter open to the consideration of a new Parliament. He was bold enough, when speaking on behalf of his amendment, to admit that no educated man could either defend the existing condition of the Irish Church, or rest satisfied with an internal re-distribution of its endowments, such as had been effected by his father thirty-five years before. This alarmed the bulk of the Tory party ; and Mr. Gathorne Hardy, speaking as their mouthpiece, attached to the amendment a high Conservative and ultra-Protestant interpretation. The exigency of the case compelled Mr. Disraeli to endorse this version. The issue between the two great rivals was made unmistakably clear and definite. On a division, Mr. Gladstone won by the telling majority of sixty.

We here insert the following anecdote, neither vouching for, nor throwing doubts upon its accuracy. Nor would it find a place in our pages, but for the circumstance that it is extracted from a communication inserted, after the close of the session, in the *Guardian*, a Church newspaper, with which it is matter of notoriety that Mr. Gladstone has long held peculiarly intimate relations :—

“When Mr. Gladstone gave notice of his resolutions, a Roman Catholic gentleman of great ability, who enjoys the confidence of the Irish hierarchy, and is deep in the secrets of the Vatican, requested an interview with Mr. Gladstone, to whom he was till then, I believe, personally a stranger. In that interview he urged on Mr. Gladstone the abandonment of his Irish Church policy as being most prejudicial to the interests of the Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Gladstone replied, I believe, somewhat as follows :—That he had considered the question in all its bearings ; that the disestablishment of the Irish Church was an act of political justice ; that justice would, in the long run, be

beneficial to all legitimate interests ; that the time had, in his opinion, arrived for declaring a policy for Ireland ; that the disestablishment of the Irish Church seemed to him to be both the most just and the only satisfactory policy, and that he was determined to risk his political future on its accomplishment. When you consider the state of opinion at the time, the risk was very great, though Mr. Gladstone's unexpected success has made the public insensible to the danger he was running of making shipwreck of his political reputation. If he had failed, it would have discredited his statesmanship for years to come, and failure was clearly on the cards, and was, at first, confidently predicted by the Tory press, and even by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and, I think, the *Saturday Review*."

After the Easter recess, the first resolution was re-affirmed by a majority increased to sixty-five, and for a few days it was alternately reported that Ministers would either resign, or make an appeal to the existing unreformed constituencies. Ultimately, however, the Premier stated that he would carry the session to its termination, and reserve the final decision of the great issue for the arbitrement of the new and enlarged constituencies in the succeeding November.

A complementary measure for suspending all nominations to vacant benefices in the gift of the Crown, was passed by the Commons and rejected by the Peers. The conflicting decisions of the two Houses left a definite issue which admits of no compromise, and which must necessarily be fought out at the hustings. Even Lord Salisbury admitted in his place that, on this, as on all questions of similar importance, the will of the House of Commons, if endorsed by the nation, must ultimately prevail. Such was the issue on which the newly-enfranchised had to record their first verdict.

CASSELL'S  
REPRESENTATIVE  
BIOGRAPHIES.

*THE RIGHT HON.*

W. E.  
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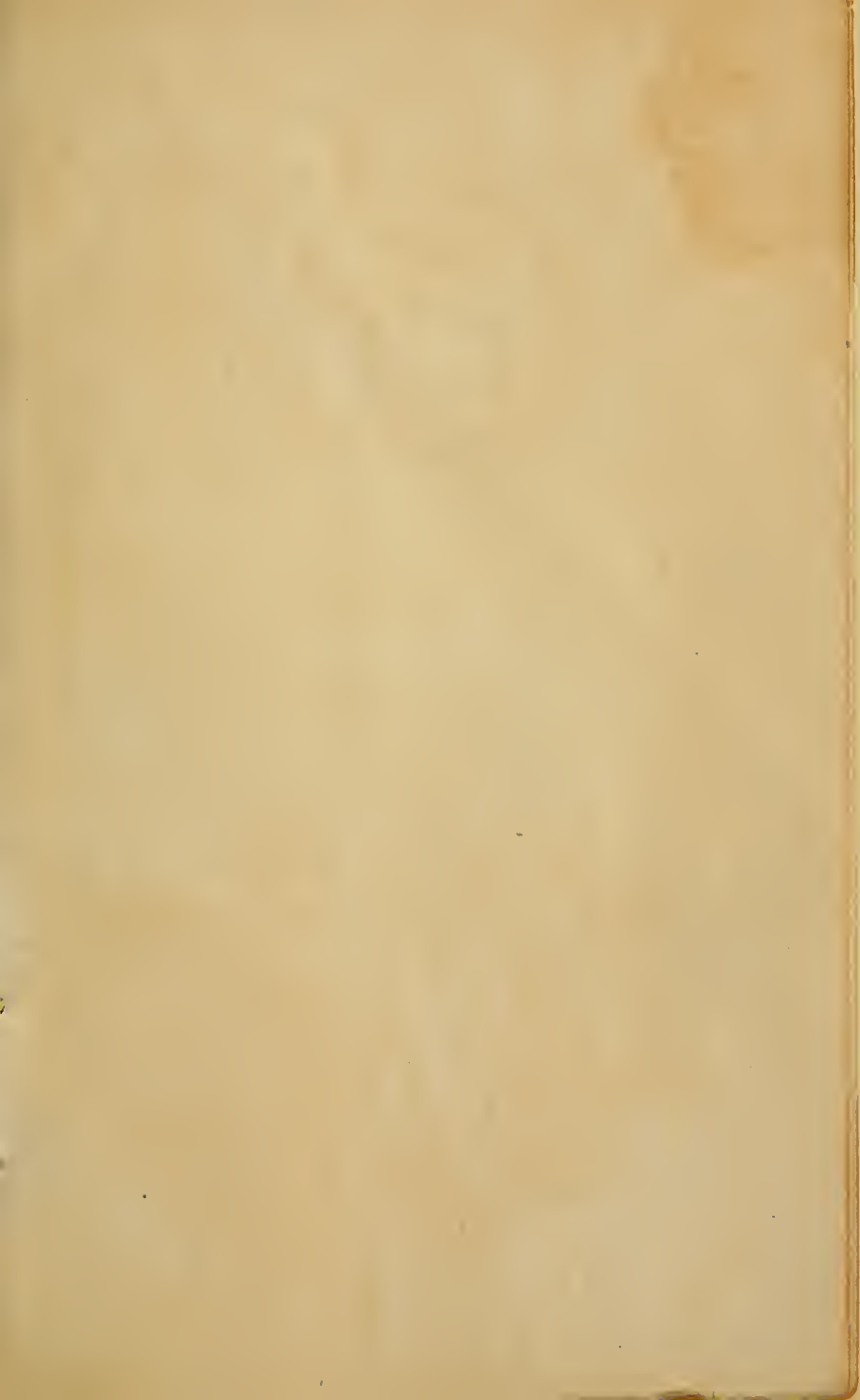
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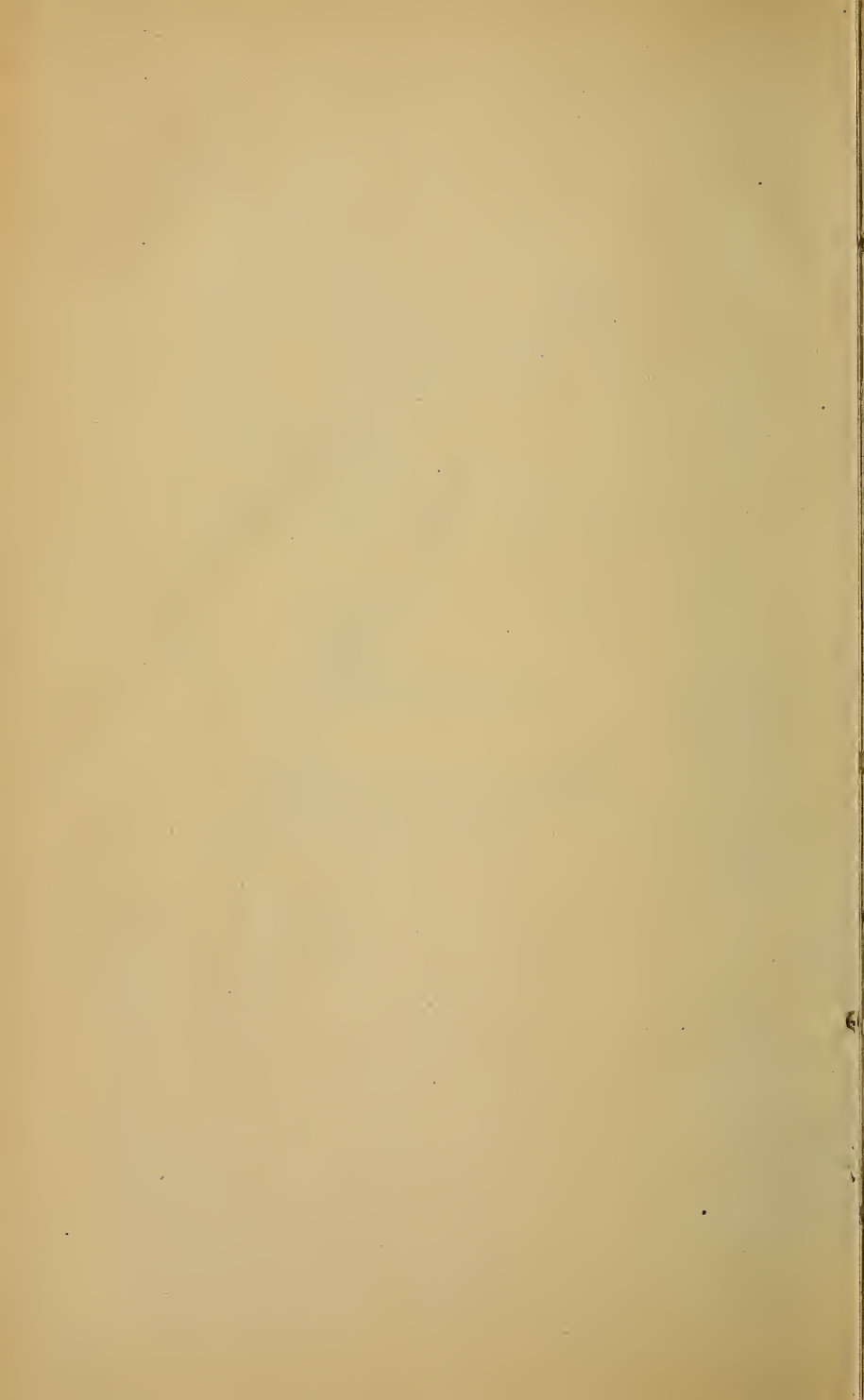
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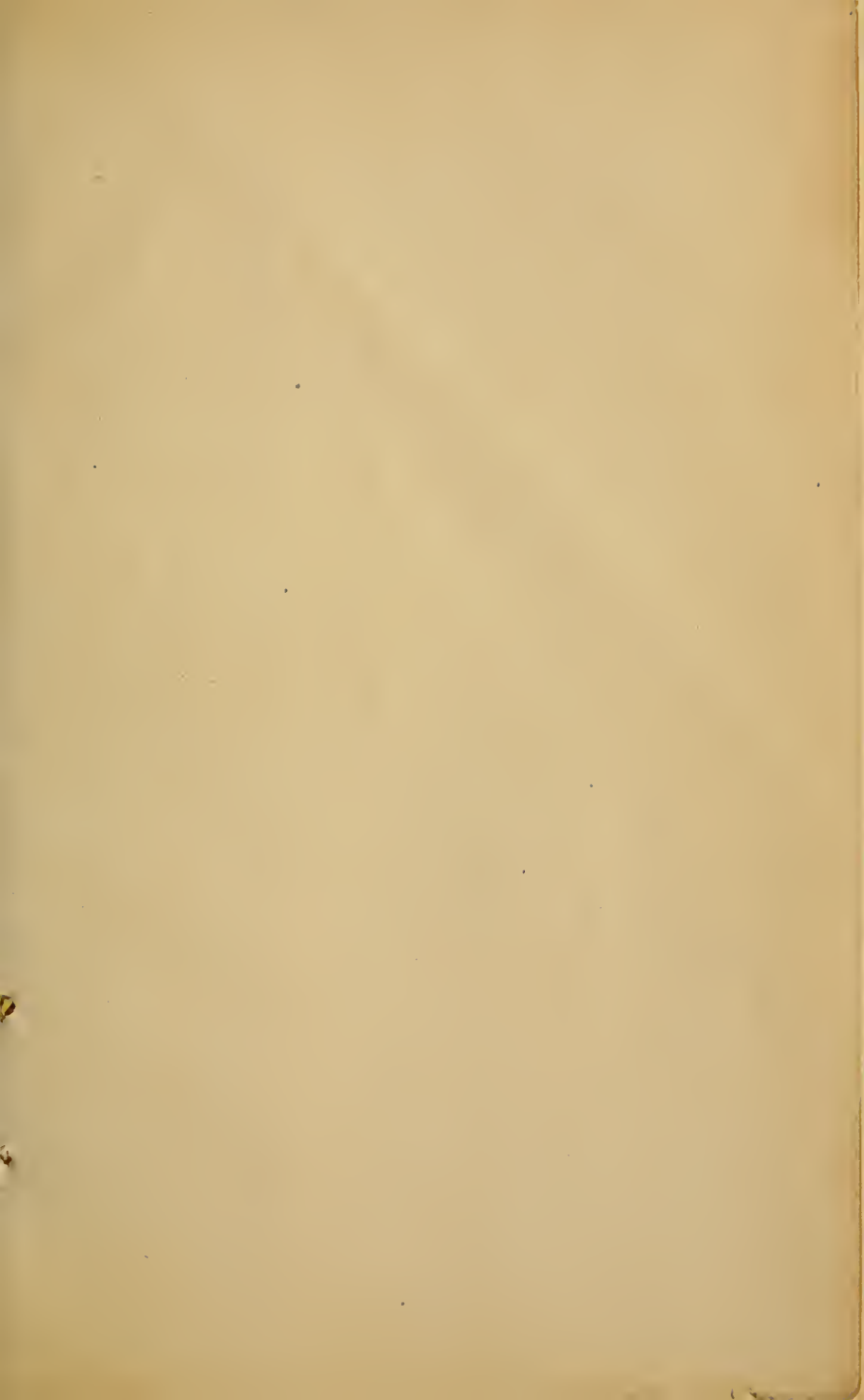
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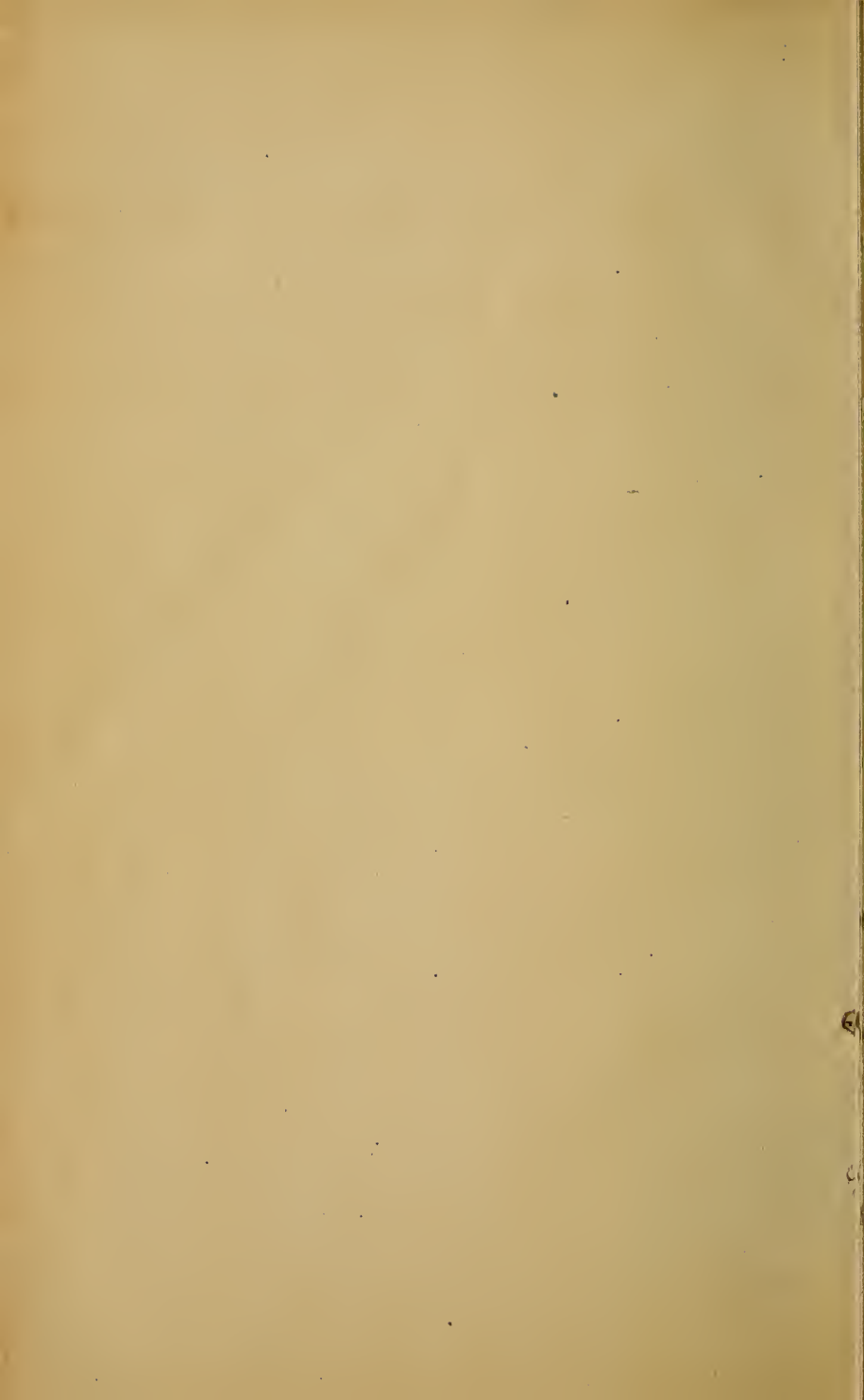
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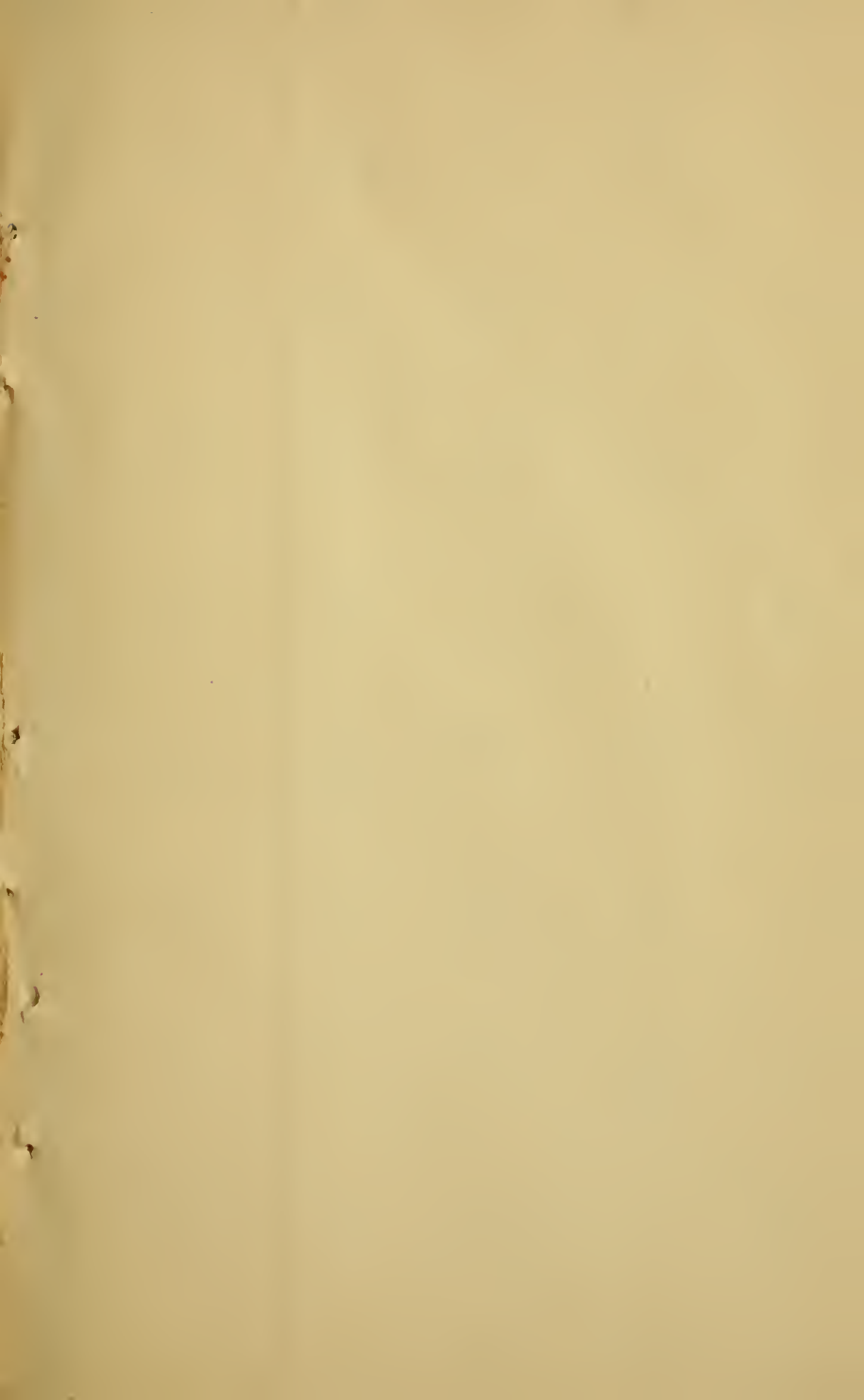












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