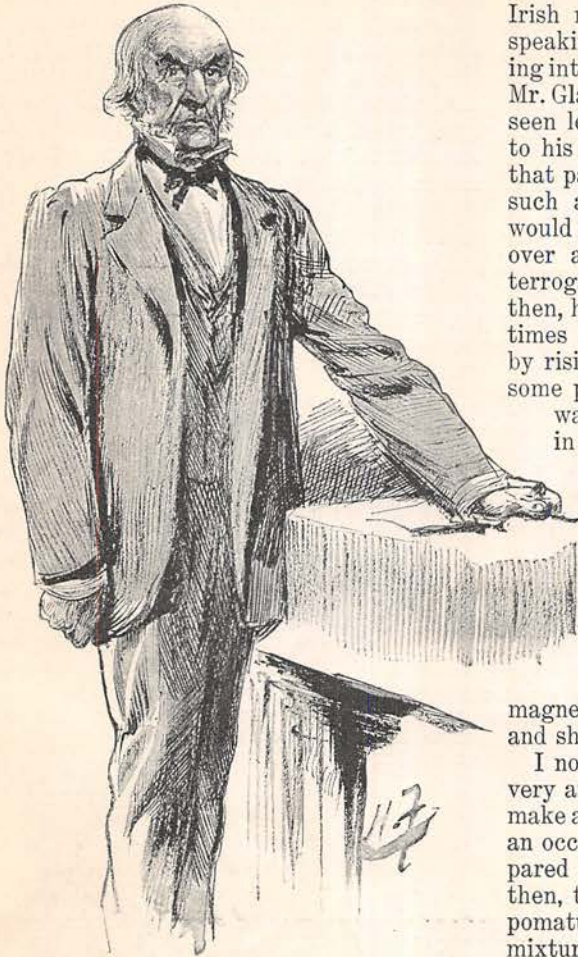


GLIMPSES OF GLADSTONE.

WITH SKETCHES FROM LIFE BY THE AUTHOR.



GLADSTONE SPEAKING.

UPON an ordinary night in the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone generally arrived shortly before question time was over. With a somewhat apologetic air he would walk to his seat, which was of late years between Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley; and, did there happen to be any political excitement in the air, his entrance was frequently signaled by a cheer from the Irish benches. Were he a little late he was wont to turn toward Sir William Harcourt or to Mr. John Morley, and make inquiry as to the course which affairs had taken. If nothing of importance had occurred, he would place an ink-bottle upon the table in front of him and begin to scribble.

But on occasion—as, for instance, upon an

Irish night when the Chief Secretary was speaking, and as a matter of course was being interrupted by Mr. Sexton or Mr. Healy—Mr. Gladstone was all attention, and might be seen leaning forward, with his hand placed to his ear in order to catch every syllable that passed. Now and then an exclamation such as «Quite right,» or «Hear, hear!» would escape from him, and he would look over at the Chief Secretary with an interrogative air, as much as to say, «Now, then, how can you answer that?» and sometimes he would follow up the interruption by rising and addressing the Speaker on some point of order. In fact, whenever he was present, his was the central figure in the picture. His quick, intelligent eye took in everything at a glance, and the impulsive gestures with which he accompanied a speech invariably compelled the attention of the most lethargic listener, while, even when he was not speaking, but merely sitting in his place, no one could fail to perceive the keenness, the activity, and the indescribable magnetism of genius which lifted him head and shoulders above all about him.

I noticed that he always appeared to be very anxious and restless before rising to make a speech. His first movement upon such an occasion was to arrange his carefully prepared notes upon the box in front of him; then, taking from his pocket the historical pomatum-pot, which contained, I believe, a mixture of egg-flip and honey,—a recipe of Sir William Clarke's,—he would place it out of view on the edge of the table by the side of the box. Then he would sit, placing both hands upon his knees, with his face firmly set, and with his hawk-like eyes fixed upon the Speaker, waiting for the signal to spring to his feet. Once up, he seemed composed enough, playing with the notes in front of him, and arranging and rearranging them. Then, leaning forward and laying his hand upon the box, he would begin slowly, latterly with a husky voice. When the graceful introduction with which he prefaced his remarks was over, there would come an ominous tug at his wristbands, followed by an easing of his collar with one finger, a step back, a flash from those passionate eyes, and then—but let others describe his speeches.

As an artist, accustomed perhaps to use

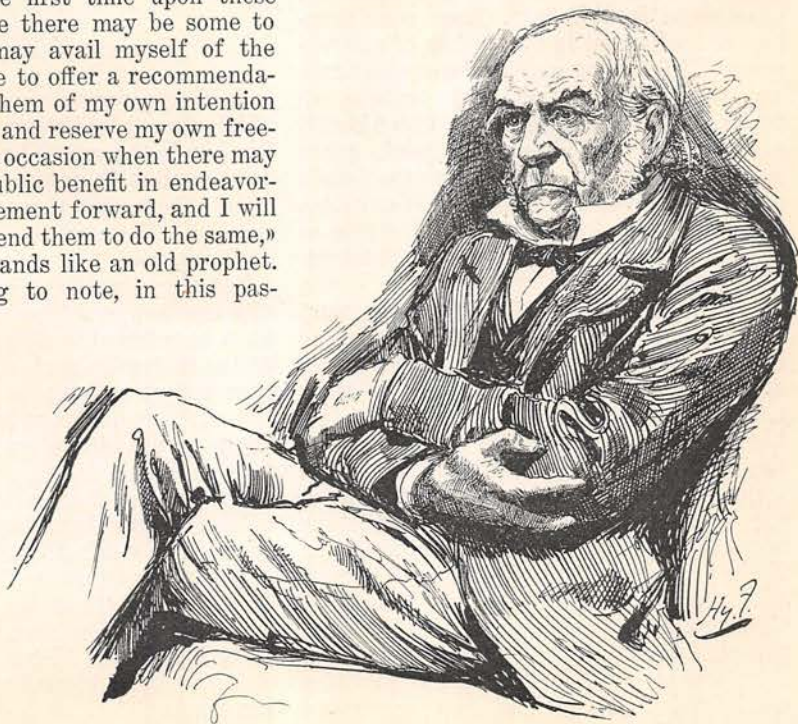
my eyes more than my ears, I content myself here with noting down certain personal traits—such, for instance, as that when the great orator paused to consider a difficult point he was wont to scratch the top of his head with the wrist of his left hand. When determined to drive an argument home to his listeners, he used to emphasize it by bringing down his ringed hand upon the box with a tremendous bang, of which energetic action evidence remains in the shape of many tell-tale dents in the boxes. I have examined these evidences, and it was interesting to find that the energy of the orator was much greater when he was out of office than when he was in power, the box upon the Opposition side being much more severely marked than its fellow in front of the Government bench, notwithstanding the terrific thumping to which that receptacle was subjected during the memorable oration of Thursday, April 8, 1886.

Another habit peculiar to Mr. Gladstone during debate was that of turning round and addressing members behind him. Upon one occasion, in 1889, he turned to his younger supporters and gave them this notable advice: «I stand here as a member of the House, where there are many who have taken their seats for the first time upon these benches, and where there may be some to whom possibly I may avail myself of the privilege of old age to offer a recommendation. I would tell them of my own intention to keep my counsel and reserve my own freedom until I see the occasion when there may be a prospect of public benefit in endeavoring to make a movement forward, and I will venture to recommend them to do the same,»—holding up his hands like an old prophet.

It is interesting to note, in this passage, Mr. Gladstone's advice to young members to keep their own counsel. He had practised what he preached from his earliest days in parliament. Keeping his own counsel and running as a dark horse have always been characteristic of him. In the Greville memoirs he is referred to as fol-

lows: «The great event which came off on Monday night was Gladstone's budget. He had kept his secret so well that nobody had the least idea what it was to be, only it oozed out that the income tax was not to be differentiated. He spoke for five hours, and by universal consent it was one of the grandest displays and most able financial statements that ever was heard in the House of Commons. A great scheme, boldly, skilfully, and honestly devised, disdaining popular clamor and pressure from without, and the execution of it absolute perfection. Even those who do not admire the budget or are injured by it admit the merit of the performance. It has raised Gladstone to a great political elevation, and, what is of far greater consequence than the measure itself, has given the country assurance of a man equal to great political necessities, and fit to lead parties and direct governments.»

The writer of this could never have dreamed of the way in which, many years afterward, Mr. Gladstone would cease to lead and direct his own government. What would the writer have said of the scene on the memorable afternoon when Mr. Gladstone introduced his Irish Bill? The rush made by noble peers for seats resembled the scramble at the pit door at Drury Lane on Boxing

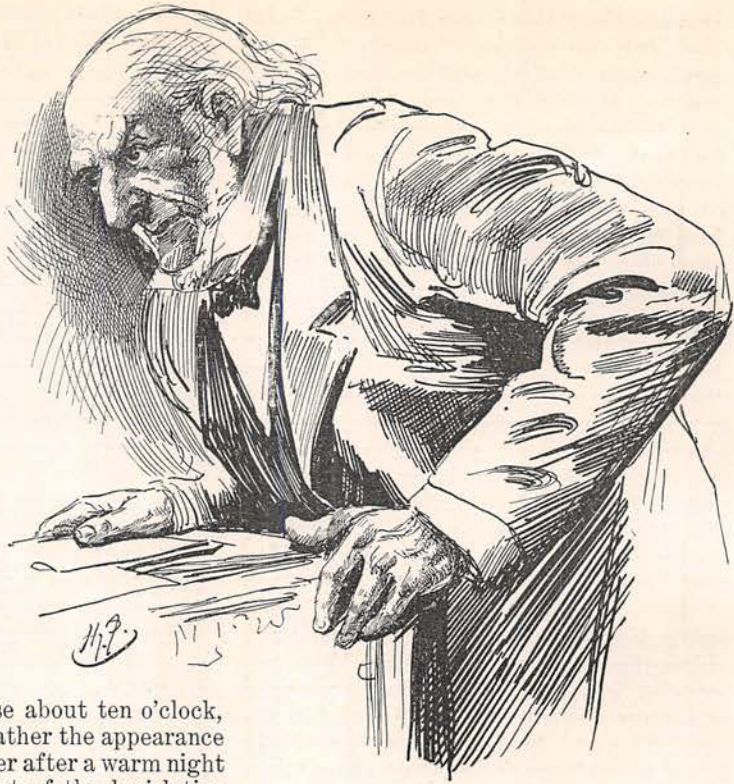


GLADSTONE UNDER FIRE.

Night, and some of the younger members of the Upper House seemed to enjoy it. The Duke of Marlborough came with the rush, and Lord Fife was conspicuous in the mêlée. The demand for seats for strangers for that never-to-be-forgotten day was unparalleled, and those lucky enough to get them saw one of the most remarkable scenes that ever took place in the House of Commons. Some members, to secure their seats, slept in the House all night, and the aspect of the place in the early morning must have been indeed strange.

I got down to the House about ten o'clock, and it then presented rather the appearance of the saloon of a steamer after a warm night in the Red Sea than that of the legislative chamber of Great Britain. There were members of Parliament in every state of attire—some with traveling-caps, and some with railway rugs, some resting, some restless, all weary. Some of these members, I need hardly say, belonged to the Irish contingent. Space will not allow of my entering into the details of this day, even did I not feel it quite beyond my power to convey anything like an adequate impression of a scene so memorable and so historical.

For the first time, I believe, chairs were brought in and placed down the center of the House, covering the floor, leaving a passage at each side for members to get to their seats on the benches. The members sat facing the Speaker, very much the same as on the top of an omnibus with garden seats upon it. There was not a vestige of room in any part of the House when Mr. Gladstone began his speech at half-past four o'clock. He had a rose in the buttonhole of his coat, with some leaves carefully placed about it. Getting up, as his custom was, slowly, he approached the table, and while his supporters stood and cheered him he arranged his notes on the table in front of him, and the mixture in bottles like pomatum-pots by the side of the box. It was the only occasion on which



GLADSTONE UNDER WAY.

he had two pomatum-pots instead of one, which showed that there was a long task before him in the speech he was about to make. At the outset he assured the House that he meant there and then to settle the Irish question. There was to be no beating about the bush.

For some time the speech was listened to with the deepest interest and in silence, but when he referred to stripping the law in Ireland of its foreign garb, and investing it with a domestic character, he brought forth the first outburst of cheers from the Parnellites, who were not sitting on the seats, but half rising and half sitting, so intense was their interest and excitement in listening to every syllable falling from the great man upon whom their whole future depended. Then, when Mr. Gladstone went on to speak of all the Irish members sitting in a House of their own, there was loud laughter from all parts at the idea of the Ulster and Irish members sitting together like a happy family in their own country. He rose to oratory when he referred to the bill as Ireland's Magna Charta. It was a grand effort, and held the House en-

thrilled, though the Ulster members, who felt that their rights and their future were being jeopardized, once or twice laughed in a jeering way at some statement which to them was incredible, and when Mr. Gladstone sat down, the cheers that came from the Irish benches lasted for many minutes, and a number of other members could not resist joining, because they felt that an oration such as this deserved the applause of those against it as well as of those in whose interests it was made.

Then there came a reaction. The buzz of conversation rose as the House rapidly emptied, and the members went into the lobbies, or found their way into the dining-room, to discuss the great speech with approval or dissatisfaction. I had that night the pleasure of dining with a number of members of the Liberal side of the House, and four or five out of about fourteen were the loudest in their protests against the speech. These four or five members, after a week or two, were induced—in most cases from self-interest—to swallow the speech, but there is no doubt, if I am a correct observer, that the effect of the speech was to lose votes, and not to gain them. No one who made up his mind to leave Mr. Gladstone over this question came back to him afterward; but many who had decided to leave him until the speech was heard made up their minds that the propositions in it were not feasible, and adhered to him, and it is a curious study of

human nature to analyze the waverers during the week or two that followed this speech. It is well known to those behind the scenes that one great Liberal sat on the fence, and only tumbled on the side of Mr. Gladstone through pique at a remark made to him at a private dinner, twitting him for not taking a decided position. But I refer more to the smaller fry. Members whose instincts told them that they ought not to follow Mr. Gladstone in what he had done were moved by interest to take the opposite view directly afterward. However, I must not generalize or break away from the object of this article, which is merely to record a few impressions of Mr. Gladstone, and not to attempt to write as a politician.

How often before this had I seen Mr. Gladstone, arm in arm with his staunch supporter, Lord Hartington (now the Duke of Devonshire), walk down Parliament street to the House. Yet after the introduction of the Home Rule Bill I saw Lord Hartington assaulted by Gladstonian supporters when leaving the House after voting against Mr. Gladstone.

On the occasion of the scene that took place on the night of June 7, 1886, when he brought the question to a division, it was exactly twenty-five minutes past eleven when Mr. Gladstone rose in a crowded House, filled to its utmost capacity. Of course he received an ovation, but many felt that he would hardly be as effective as he had been on the

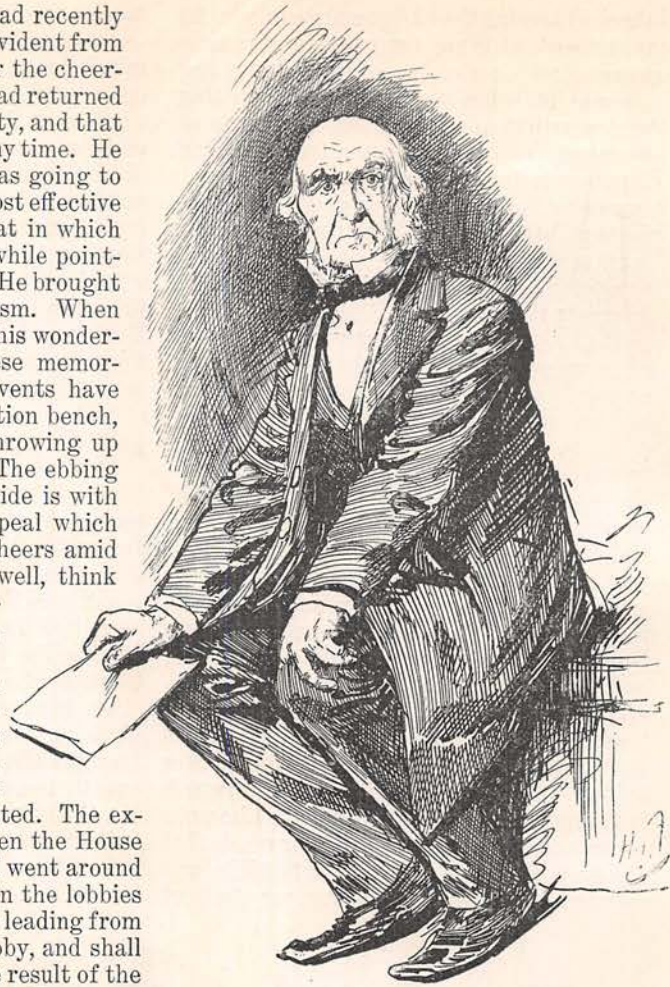


GLADSTONE AND LORD HARTINGTON GOING TO THE HOUSE.

former occasion, as his voice had recently been very husky. But it was evident from the first word he uttered, after the cheering had ceased, that his voice had returned with all its richness and intensity, and that his energy was as great as at any time. He also showed at once that he was going to make a fighting speech. The most effective of his lighter passages was that in which he criticized Mr. Chamberlain while pointing at him with his forefinger. He brought down the house with the sarcasm. When he rose to his highest point in his wonderful peroration, he uttered these memorable words (but how futile, events have shown), pointing to the Opposition bench, taking a step or two back, throwing up his face, his eyes sparkling: "The ebbing tide is with you; the flowing tide is with us." He concluded with an appeal which brought him the tumultuous cheers amid which he sat down: "Think well, think wisely, think not for the moment, but for the years to come, before you reject our plan."

The division was called at ten minutes past one on the morning of June 8, and perhaps there never was a division upon which so much depended and about which so much excitement existed. The excitement was at fever-heat when the House was emptied for the division. I went around to see the effect of the result in the lobbies below. I was in a little corridor leading from the inner lobby to the outer lobby, and shall never forget the scene when the result of the division became known. At first it was reported that the majority was only three (instead of thirty), and at this a cheer arose from every one present—one side because they had won, the other because the majority (they thought) was so small. Hats and sticks were thrown into the air, and all order was lost. Strangers, who are expected to observe the utmost decorum in this place, cheered again and again. Such excitement and utter disregard of the rules by strangers in the House was never before witnessed, and, I do not hesitate to say, will never be again.

Within the House the excitement was as great. It is a wonder that the different parties did not come to fisticuffs, for they seemed to lose all control over themselves in the excitement. The most conspicuous member at the moment was Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who jumped upon the seat, and called at the top of his voice for three cheers for the Grand Old Man.



GLADSTONE CATCHING THE SPEAKER'S EYE.

But as this article is merely to give the impressions of an artist, it is unnecessary for me to go further into scenes in which Mr. Gladstone took part at the close of his extraordinary parliamentary career. In fact, did I attempt an essay on Mr. Gladstone, I might be accused of exaggeration in the same proportion as my drawings of him are supposed to be caricatures.

I believe I am generally supposed to have invented Mr. Gladstone's collars; but as a matter of fact I merely discovered them. Many men wear collars quite as large as, and even larger than, his, but they are not so prominent in appearance, for the simple reason that when Mr. Gladstone sat down it was his custom to sit well forward. His body collapsed, so to speak, and his head sank into his coat. The inevitable result was that his collar rose, and owing to this circumstance,

I have frequently seen it looking quite as conspicuous as it is depicted in my caricatures.

When Mr. Gladstone, upon one occasion, met the artists of «Punch» at dinner, I was chagrined to find, when he walked into the dining-room, that he had discarded his usual large collar for one of the «masher» type. I felt that my reputation, for accuracy was

Gladstone's dress was very noticeable. He was then spruce, in a black frock-coat, light trousers, and wearing a flower in his buttonhole. This generally indicated that a great speech was imminent. Whenever there was any excuse for wearing them, Mr. Gladstone had a partiality for gray clothes, which were not too fashionably cut; and once I remember that he caused some sensation by



GLADSTONE LISTENING.

blighted, and sought consolation from the editor of a Gladstonian organ, who happened to be present.

«Yes,» he said; «he is evidently dressed up to meet the (Punch) artists. He is the pink of fashion and neatness now; but last night, when I met him at dinner, his shirt was frayed at the edges, and his collar was pinned down behind, but the pin gave way during the evening, and the collar nearly came over his head.»

Upon great occasions in the House Mr.

appearing in the House wearing a wedding-favor. Something had evidently tickled his sense of humor upon the occasion, for he was «smiling all over» as he came in; and when he sat down by Sir William Harcourt, to whom he related the joke, his merriment seemed to increase. Afterward he repeated it to Mr. Chamberlain, and again to the Speaker, finally quitting the House to tell it anew outside.

In this short article I have not touched upon Mr. Gladstone outside of Parliament,

although few politicians have made more public appearances outside the House than he. Still, I have always been of the opinion that he was seen at his best in the House of Commons. When addressing public meetings out of doors he appeared to me to labor under a great disadvantage; not on account of the matter which formed the staple of his speeches, but merely because his manner did not appeal to the theatrical tastes of a popular audience. His style, in fact, was too refined for such assemblies, abounding as it did in graceful periods and elaborately constructed sentences. I am referring, of course, only to his public utterances since the year 1873, when I saw him for the first time. Sir William Harcourt always strikes me as far better suited for the rôle of a public speaker at these mass-meetings; not because his greater physique gives him a more commanding presence,—for a few others, less liberally endowed by nature in that respect (as Lord Randolph Churchill, for instance), have proved formidable rivals to him, and also Mr. John Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, who will both probably be remem-

bered as having been more effective upon the platform than Mr. Gladstone,—but because he knew better how to appeal to popular sympathies, and had his finger, so to speak, more closely upon the pulse of the public, than his great leader in Parliament. Mr. Gladstone always eschewed clap-trap of any sort, and was as inexperienced in the use of what I may call the political blunderbuss, of which Sir William must be accounted a passed master, as in the daring recklessness of the late Lord Randolph Churchill, or in the personalities of Mr. Labouchere. It mattered little, however, after all; for so great was the public admiration for the illustrious leader of the Liberal party that merely to see him was to the majority of his audiences enough.

Penetrating as his voice was, it was absolutely impossible for any but those standing immediately about the platform to hear him upon such occasions as that of the famous Blackheath meeting, or those at Birmingham and elsewhere; but the masses nevertheless came in thousands, and were more than repaid for their trouble by catching even a distant glimpse of William Ewart Gladstone.

Harry Furniss.

THE KINDS THAT CURED.

WHEN the weather was warm, as on this June day, Cutler's Island folk enjoyed the interval between forenoon meeting and Sunday-school, and made large use of it. Few of the pews in the meeting-house were cushioned. Neither was the minister's rhetoric. As his mild monotone ended with the benediction, there was a general stir and stretch. Elderly women and lovers sought the burying-ground. The children wandered off to Checkerberry Knoll. The men grouped at the steps, and, above all others, exemplified that restraint which appertains to Sunday clothes. Secular conversation was tabooed, and though theirs was that Puritan habit of independence which does not fear to criticize the minister, they would not do it on his and the Lord's day.

If the sun shone and no wind blew from the east, it sometimes chanced that the severity of custom insensibly moderated. The meeting-house had a wide outlook; it fronted the Atlantic. When the warmth and the wideness had wrought, the people spoke of their successes, which were «mercies,» or preferably compared their states

of health, finding therein occasion for sympathy or thanksgiving. Even the class-leader, Brother Mitchell, felt that illness was a theme appropriate to the Sabbath; discussed at the church door, in view of the graveyard, it brought the other world appreciably near. His lean and long-drawn face was capable of emotional changes at such seasons. It broadened almost into tenderness when Eli Martin appeared; and before he could reasonably expect the congratulations he coveted, the class-leader's welcome was ready.

«Well, brother—» His voice creaked and failed, like a machine out of use. He stared at Martin with the pathetic earnestness of the tongue-tied, and shook his hand vigorously up and down.

«Oh, pooty well, thank ye.» The newcomer nodded impartially around, straightening himself to stand inspection. «Et six flapjacks f'r breakfast, I did!» he proclaimed, chuckling. «Victuals taste good ag'in. Cal-late I 'm beginnin' to pick up flesh!»

The listeners nudged each other and exchanged that amused, superior smile which