

BY FREDERICK DOLMAN.



FOR a village Hawarden has had an exceptional share in some of the principal events of our history. It was the scene of an important conference between Simon de Montfort and Llewelyn; Henry the Seventh visited it shortly after the Perkin Warbeck

rebellion; and it witnessed first a defeat and then a victory for the Parliamentary cause in the great Civil War. None of these occurrences, however, can have given the village the great fame which it was destined to gain from an event that took place in its old church on a certain July day in 1839. This event was the talk of the country-side for weeks, and it was celebrated by the villagers as making a red-letter day in their simple annals.

There was a double wedding at Hawarden Church, and the brides were none other than the two beautiful sisters of their popular squire, Sir Stephen Glynne. Of the bridegrooms comparatively little account was doubtless taken, and of the two, more attention was probably given to Lord Lyttelton, the betrothed of Mary, than to Mr. Gladstone, a promising member of the other House of Parliament, but still only the son of a man of business, whom her elder sister

Catherine had chosen from many suitors in spite of the opinion of some of her friends that he was not good enough for her. The villagers did their best to make the occasion worthy of itself; but if they could have foreseen its ultimate sequel in the ownership of Hawarden Castle by the greatest statesman of the century, they might well have abandoned the effort in despair.

When Mr. Gladstone married Catherine Glynne, it was highly improbable that as the result of the match Hawarden would ever become his property. His brother-in-law, although unmarried, was then only thirty-two—two years Mr. Gladstone's senior—and, in the event of his dying without issue, Mrs. Gladstone had a brother two years older, then Rector of Hawarden, to take precedence of her. As it was, it was not until 1874 that, Sir Stephen dying unmarried, and his brother Henry having predeceased him, dying without a son, the estate passed to Mrs. Gladstone's son, and so to the use of the ex-Prime Minister. But Hawarden has been Mr. Gladstone's home ever since his marriage. At first it was his intention to take his wife to a country seat in Scotland. But Sir Stephen Glynne found that his pecuniary resources were such as to make it difficult for him to continue to live at the Castle. To relieve him from this embarrassment his

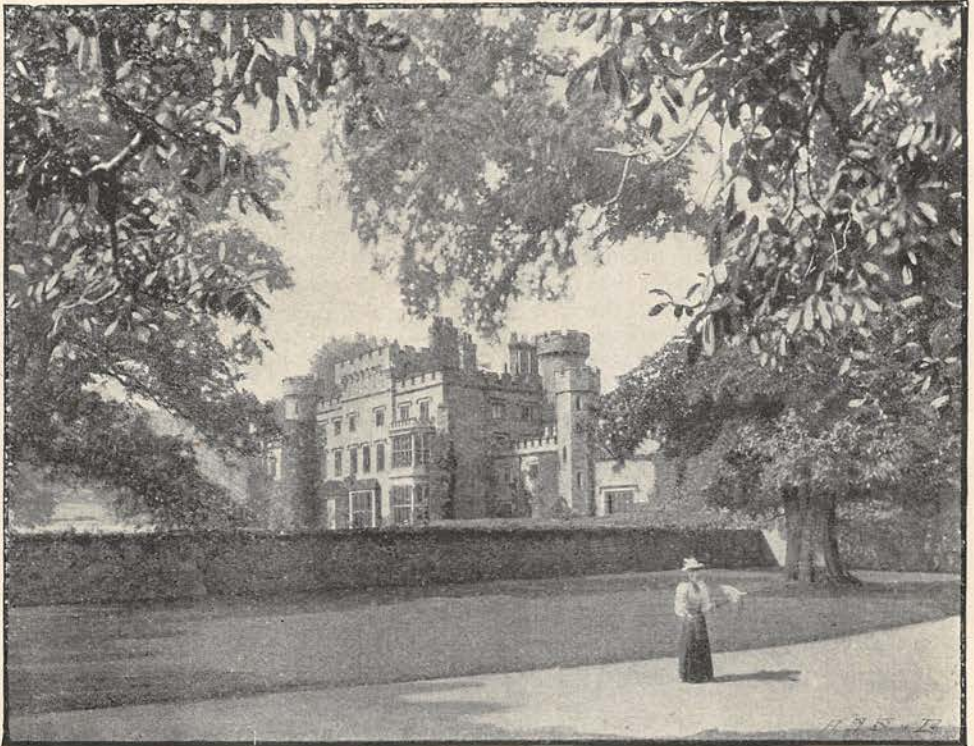
brother-in-law offered to purchase part of the Glynne estate and with his wife make his home at Hawarden. This course was adopted, and had none of the unpleasant consequences which most people would have anticipated. Until the time of his death Sir Stephen presided over the Hawarden household, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone living there as members of it, in perfect harmony with him, for a considerable part of the year.

To the people of Hawarden Mr. Gladstone is, and has been, much more the squire than the statesman, the lord of the manor than the leader of a political party. When his eldest son succeeded Sir Stephen Glynne—the last of a family which had been the owners of the Hawarden estate since the great Civil War—the Gladstone family might have been regarded as interlopers. It need not be said that such has never been the feeling of the villagers towards them since they learned to appreciate the frankness and kindness of all Mr. Gladstone's relations with them.

On arriving at Glynne Arms Hotel, in the centre of the village, one's attention is immediately attracted to the fine drinking fountain, in stone and marble, which stands in the wide open space between the inn and the principal entrance to Hawarden Park. A gold-lettered

inscription informs you that it was erected by the people of the village in 1889 in commemoration of the fifty years of married life which Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone had spent in their midst.

The big iron gates stand open, for Mr. Gladstone makes his park free to all comers. At the same time some privacy is secured by railing off the shrubberies and gardens adjoining the Castle and barring the footpaths leading to it by little wicket-gates marked "Private." But from the broad carriage road there is a good view of the whole south front of the building—such a view as must lead most people to declare that Hawarden Castle is a home worthy of even Mr. Gladstone's great career and splendid fame. No part of the building is older than 1752, but it is a castle in appearance as well as in name. The brick walls are enclosed in stone and surmounted by turrets and battlements. There is about them enough ivy to serve the needs of the picturesque without hiding the solidity and strength which the building as a whole suggests. The four oriel-windows form the most serious inconsistency in its design as a castle; but in place of the moat one instinctively looks for there is a garden filled with flower-beds of the Dutch pattern.



HAWARDEN CASTLE.

The oriel-windows probably date from the year of Mr. Gladstone's birth, when a considerable addition was made to the Castle. Mr. Gladstone himself some twenty years ago added a wing at the N.W. corner of the house, his main object being to provide himself with a new library and study—the apartment which he aptly named his "Temple of Peace." On the north front still another addition was made as recently as 1889, in the shape of a handsome new porch at the principal entrance—a piece of expenditure determined upon by the family as a gift to Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone in honour of their golden wedding.

The Castle occupies the site of an old house of wood and plaster called Broad-lane Hall. The old Hawarden Castle is a ruin on the highest hill in the park, and in the new an attempt has been made to realise in some measure what that once was. It is believed to date from the beginning of the 14th century, and the keep and the chapel are all that is left of the old structure besides some ruinous walls, on which the moss and ivy have been freely growing for centuries.

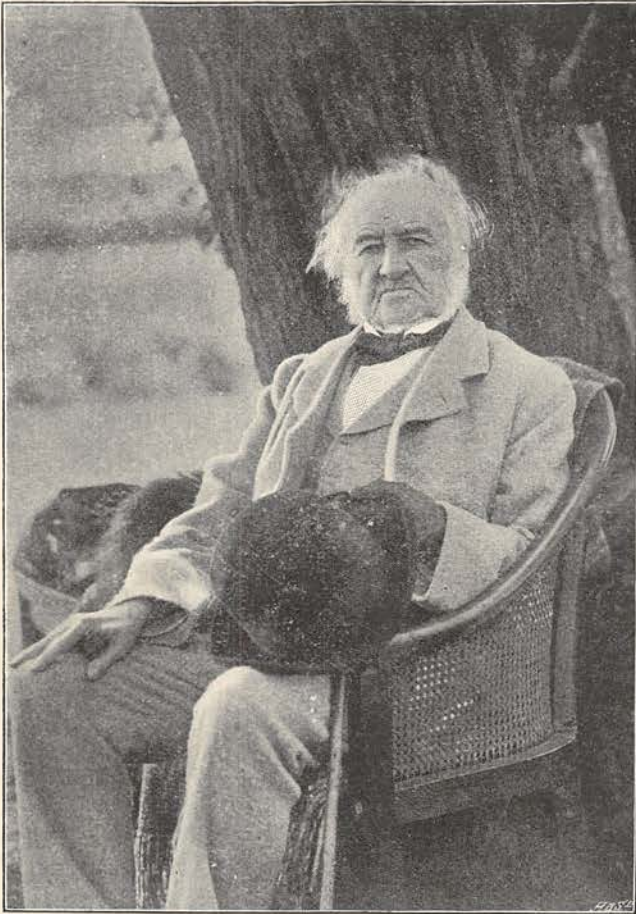
The outside of the new Castle, as I have said, conforms in its general design to its warlike prototype. In the interior there is not the slightest suggestion of the martial times when Charles the First was King—not even a suit of armour in the entrance hall or a brace of pistols on the walls. All is domestic

peace and comfort, with little luxury and no ostentation. Mr. Gladstone's favourite dog—a black Pomeranian called Petz—greeted you on the mat, and among a miscellaneous collection of hats and coats hanging on a huge stand you fancy you recognise one or two as belonging to the master of the house, whilst in a corner

some scores of walking-sticks, of all shapes and sizes, are surely some of the many tokens of affection he has received from people who had heard of his fondness for pedestrianism. Among the pictures in the hall I notice several "portrait groups" of the Ministries which Mr. Gladstone has formed.

A few steps to the right bring one to the "Temple of Peace," the apartment which is the visitor's first thought on entering Hawarden Castle. It is not very large for so large a house. Nevertheless, in his study, with its three turreted windows, Mr. Gladstone has

contrived to place about 15,000 volumes. All the shelves are of plain oak from trees felled by the statesman in the park. They were made by the village carpenter under Mr. Gladstone's personal direction, and in accordance with a plan by which some of the book-cases, instead of being ranged along the walls, stand out into the room at right-angles to each other, each shelf being wide enough for a double row of volumes. In this way Mr. Gladstone has been able to store such a great number of works around his writing-tables



(Photographed at Hawarden Castle Fête, August, 1894, by Messrs. Robinson & Thomson, Liverpool.)

W. Gladstone



Catherine Gladstone

(From a photograph by Mendelssohn, Pembroke Crescent, W.)

without sacrificing light or air or freedom of movement. In the centre of the room, besides three writing-tables—one for his correspondence, one for literary work, and the third for Mrs. Gladstone's occasional use—there is space enough for two or three tables on which are to be found newspapers and periodicals, photographs and various knick-knacks. The books are very methodically arranged. One large shelf is devoted to Homer and Homeric literature, another to Shakespeare and books relating to Shakespeare, a third to Ireland and the Irish question, and so on. They leave practically no room on the walls for pictures, but several busts in marble and bronze usually stand on the ledges of the shelves, including those of Tennyson and Beaconsfield.

Many articles scattered about the room derive additional interest from their being presents to the great statesman. The ink-stand on the "literary table," in use just now for Mr. Gladstone's edition of Bishop Butler's works, was given to him, for instance, by the gentlemen who at one time or the other acted as his private secretaries, and whose names are inscribed on a golden tablet.

Mr. Gladstone's study opens into the old library of the house—the Glynne Library, as it is called. In this apartment all the books are stored in mahogany cases built into the walls round the room, according to the old

plan. There is a dull uniformity about the leather bindings of the books, many of which are on topography and ecclesiology—the favourite subjects of the late Sir Stephen Glynne. In the wall-space left by the book-cases are several portraits of the Glynne ancestors, including one of Sir John Glynne, Lord Chief Justice in Cromwell's time, by Sir Peter Lely, and a very fine Vandyke of Sir Kenelm Digby. The morning-room and the dining-room, too, are filled with family portraits. In the drawing-room hangs Frank Holl's famous picture of Mr. Gladstone, and in the morning-room Professor Herkomer's. A copy of the portrait by Millais hangs in one of the corridors. Among the other most interesting contents of the morning-room is Mr. Gladstone's collection of ivories. At one time this was a great hobby with him, and the collection, for the beauty and variety of the carvings, is considered one of the finest in existence. The remnant of the statesman's once extensive collection of china is to be found in the drawing-room—a large and lofty apartment, richly decorated in white and gold, and supported by marble pillars at each end. All these rooms open on to the terrace from which Mr. Gladstone has often addressed a multitude gathered together on the lawn just below.

By the side of the Castle, but invisible through the thick trees from the carriage road, are Mrs. Gladstone's Homes for poor old women and orphans. The orphans, to the number of about twenty-five, are lodged in an old house called Diglane, which Sir John Glynne purchased in 1749. In this long, ivy-covered building during the last thirty years a great number of orphan boys have been brought up from infancy in a good, homely fashion under the care of matrons chosen by Mrs. Gladstone. Mrs. Gladstone first put the building to a charitable use during the cotton famine, when, as the result of a visit she paid to the most distressed districts, several of the most unfortunate families were lodged there for a time. The men were employed in the park in various ways, some in making roads which are still known as "the Lancashire roads." Then, when London was visited by its last cholera epidemic in 1866, Mrs. Gladstone took down to Hawarden a number of children who had lost their fathers and mothers, and this proved to be the beginning of the Orphans' Home. The old women's home adjoining occupies what was once the Glynnes' private brewery, and has seven inmates whose years vary from sixty to eighty. Not one is as old as Mr. Gladstone himself, and more than once, when paying the old women a visit, he has cheered

their spirits by reminding them of the fact.

In both these little institutions there is much evidence of the practical interest Mrs. Gladstone has taken, almost day by day, in their welfare. All the rooms are prettily decorated with pictures and photographs, and there is an ample provision of books. One of the rooms of the Orphanage has been converted into a little chapel, duly consecrated by

occasion, learning that the Home needed a new kitchen, the eminent physician obtained Mrs. Gladstone's permission to defray its cost.

The big wooden door through which I return to the park is a curiosity in its way. It is always studded with the signatures, mostly scrawled in pencil, of visitors to the Gladstone village, accompanied in some cases by such messages as "God bless the G.O.M.,"



"THE TEMPLE OF PEACE" (MR. GLADSTONE'S STUDY).

the Bishop of St. Asaph, where every Sunday a service is held for such of the old women as are unable to get as far as Hawarden Church, and where the boys meet every day for prayer. The many distinguished visitors to the Castle are naturally also interested in the widows and orphans whom Mrs. Gladstone has lodged right at her own doors. In the visitors' book I came across at random the names of Lord Napier of Magdala, the late Bishop of Oxford, Lord Spencer, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Lord Russell, and the late Sir Andrew Clarke. Sir Andrew Clarke used to show a very kindly concern for the old women; when visiting the Castle he would give them advice respecting their various little ailments, and on one

"Three cheers for him," and "Long may he live." The park is 250 acres in area, but its hilly surface and the skilful disposition of its timber and foliage favour the illusion of greater size. In places Mr. Gladstone's own activity with the axe for so many years, an activity to which a few fallen logs here and there still testify, has done much to improve the wood. The predominant trees are beeches and oaks, and the park contains many exceptionally fine specimens of both kinds. Quite close to the Castle there is a giant oak nearly 17 feet in diameter, and reputed to be nearly 400 years old. Mr. Gladstone's study is in the shade of a remarkable semicircle of limes which, in some unknown way, has got the

singular name of "Sir John Glynne's Dressing-Room." It is not very long since the trees in the park were a constant theme of conversation at the meal-table in the Castle. Before laying low any important tree, Mr. Gladstone used to take counsel with his family, and if good reason was shown by any of them in its favour, the tree was spared. As a rule, however, the statesman in seeking material for his favourite recreation only marked for destruction such trees, or parts of such trees, as were really cumbering the earth and doing injury to their neighbours. In a park so well-timbered there is, of course, plenty of strictly useful employment for the wood-cutter, and at times Mr. Gladstone was glad to have the assistance of his four sons, including the Rector of Hawarden, who were hardly less skilful with the axe than their father, in removing the superfluous and decaying timber.

The park is divided into two parts by a ravine, along which flows a stream having a peculiar red tinge, due to the iron ore of the district. It is called Broughton Brook, and at one point forms a lake on which a row can be enjoyed. On its course through the park there are also two waterfalls. One goes by the name of the Ladies' Fall, and close by it is a beautiful beech-grove.

On the other side of the ravine are the

Bilberry Wood and Warren plantations, in whose glades, richly overgrown with bracken, Mr. Herbert Gladstone and occasional visitors to the Castle get some good sport during the shooting season.

From the entrance in the middle of the village to that on the road to Broughton Hall, the walk through the park is about two miles in length. Near the "Top Lodge" and the upper fall on Broughton Brook there stood an old water-mill, which is commemorated by a large stone with an inscription as follows:—

"Trust in God for Bread, and to the King for Justice, Protection, and Peace.

This Mill was built A.D. 1767 by Sir John Glynn, Bart., Lord of this Manor:

Charles Howard, Millwright.

Wheat was this year at 9s. and Barley at 5s. 6d. a Bushel. Luxury was at a great height, and Charity extensive; but the poor were starving, riotous, and hanged."

To the latter part of this inscription, if I mistake not, Mr. Gladstone once made an effective reference in one of his speeches.

Emerging from the park by the Top Lodge, I return to the village along a broad, sandy road, shaded on each side by big trees. From this road there is a good view of Chester in the valley below; the cathedral city is a seven miles' drive, but is considerably nearer, I should say, as the crow flies. At the beginning



HAWARDEN V LLAGE.



THE DRAWING-ROOM

of the long village street is a broken-down little dungeon of stone, with an iron-barred door of classical design. It was once the house of correction, and close by is the pump from which the villagers still draw some of their water. There are other suggestions of old-world life in some of the small cottages with their thatched and grass-grown roofs and whitewashed walls. The four village inns—notably the "Fox," which was once the changing-house for the Flint and Llangollen coach—are likewise souvenirs of a time that even Mr. Gladstone can hardly remember. In sharp contrast to these things are the handsome new buildings which Hawarden has seen erected in recent years, such as the Gladstone Estate office, the police station, and the village institute.

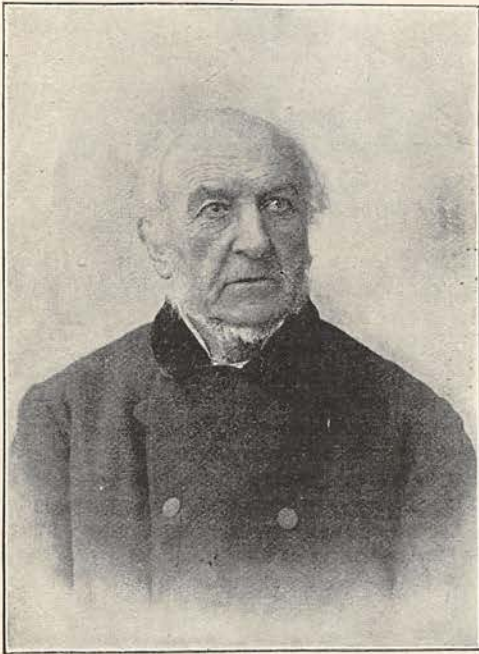
The Hawarden Institute, with the gymnasium adjoining, is a remarkable building for a village of less than a thousand inhabitants. It contains within its shapely red-brick walls rooms for reading and smoking, cards and billiards, and a library of about 5,000 volumes, whilst the gymnasium is furnished with a complete apparatus and a stage on which an entertainment or a lecture can be

delivered to an audience of 300. The Institute took the place of a working-men's club, which Mr. Gladstone was instrumental in starting some years ago, and the funds for the new building were partly raised by a *fête* held in Hawarden Park. It now has 200 members, representative of all sections in the little community, who pay an almost nominal subscription for social and educational advantages such as very few villages at present enjoy. Mr. Gladstone has made some valuable contributions to the library, but the bulk of the books, it should be said, have been given by Sir Isaac Pitman as a mark of esteem for his fellow-octogenarian. The gymnasium was mainly the work of the Rev. Harry Drew, as an outcome of the zealous interest which Mr. Herbert Gladstone has always taken in physical recreation generally, and more particularly in the physical recreation of the youth of Hawarden. In connection with it are flourishing cricket and football clubs.

The church, which Mr. Gladstone has made better known than any other village church in the country, is situated just off the long street that Hawarden practically consists of,

on a little hill below which a great tract of pastoral country spreads itself out before one's eyes. In the lane leading to the church is the school-house for the girls and infants—the boys' school being in another part of the village. There is a handsome gate to the churchyard of gilded iron, erected to the memory of the late Sir Stephen Glynne in 1874, bearing the inscription, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving." St. Deniol's is not an edifice of any great beauty; but standing where it does, close to richly-tinted foliage, and overlooking fresh green pastures, the dull brown stone square tower, and short ornamental spire are distinctly pleasing. There is a small bust of St. Deniol, who was founder of a monastery at Bangor and the first bishop of that See, in a niche over the door of the church.

The rector's notices in the porch include one which is indicative of the earnestness with which the Rev. Stephen Gladstone performs his parochial duties. It invites any parishioner



MR. GLADSTONE.

(From a photograph taken in Paris by Van Bosch.)

desirous of seeing the rector to call upon him at stated hours, unless work should occupy him all day, when he is free to come at any time. The church register goes back to 1585, but it is doubtful whether any part of the church is 300 years old. The greater part of the old church, which had been more than once altered and "restored," was destroyed by

fire in 1857. It was then reconstructed at a cost of £8,000, under the direction of Sir Gilbert Scott, and reopened by that great friend of Mr. Gladstone, the late Bishop Wilberforce.

Mr. Gladstone's reading of the lessons was wont to draw crowds from most distant places to Hawarden Church. To hear the sacred word spoken in the statesman's matchless voice is no longer the privilege of the Hawarden churchgoer. Mr. Gladstone did not discontinue the practice a short time ago because it ceased to give him pleasure; but with improved railway communication the number of strangers who came to worship in the church seriously inconvenienced and frequently excluded the rector's own parishioners. As soon as Mr. Gladstone realised that such was the result of a habit which many years had endeared to him, he at once gave it up. A Sunday visitor at Hawarden, however, may still have the pleasure of seeing the great statesman emerge from the park gates, walk along the road with a quick, firm step, enter the rectory garden, cross the churchyard, and so into the church, to take his place in the family pew in the chancel. Then in the dim light of stained-glass windows, it is not difficult to imagine him once more standing at the lectern, his white-haired head slightly bent over the massive volume resting on an eagle's wings carved in oak, and his face full of reverent earnestness as his lips give forth all the music of the words. It is probably to Mr. Gladstone's example, more than to the efforts of the clergy, that the parishioners of Hawarden are such good churchgoers. There is accommodation for some three or four hundred, and even with no strangers present there are few vacant seats.

It may be presumed that Mr. Gladstone's lessons in elocution have not been lost upon the curates in performing the duty which he was accustomed to fulfil, whilst to the occupant of the pulpit his presence serves as something like a constant inspiration. In addition to Mr. Gladstone's son, the rector, and his son-in-law, the Rev. H. Drew, Warden of St. Deniol's, there are five other clergymen attached to the parish of Hawarden, which includes one or two smaller villages and village churches. They make, it must be said, the fullest provision for the spiritual needs of the parishioners, including a service every morning at 8.30 at Hawarden, by attendance at which Mr. Gladstone usually begins the day. The ringing of the church bells is one of the most familiar everyday sounds in the village. This peal of bells, which is exceptionally soft and sweet, was placed in the tower as long ago as 1742.

The large churchyard is almost filled with grave-stones, many of which, on reference to the ages of the deceased, testify to the healthfulness of this village on the breezy hill-side. On the white marble cross of a grave on which a few simple flowers are growing, below the words "W. H. Gladstone, who passed away 4th July, 1891," is a verse chosen

The rectory itself is a very old-fashioned brick building, which was made the comfortable residence it now is as long ago as the battle of Waterloo, by the Hon. George Neville Grenville, Mrs. Gladstone's uncle, who was then Rector of Hawarden.

The church has given its name to the library and hostel for theological and other



SIR JOHN GLYNNE'S "DRESSING-ROOM."

by the ex-Prime Minister shortly after his son's burial:

"Soon shall come the great awaking,
Soon the rending of the tomb;
Then the scattering of all shadows,
And the end of toil and gloom."

On the other side of the churchyard, opening on to two footpaths across the fields, is a quaint old lich-gate surmounted by a wooden cross. Another gate near the church gives admittance to the rectory garden through which Mr. Gladstone usually makes his way to service. The garden is a very charming one, with its skilfully arranged lawns and flower-beds, shady nooks and rustic seats. In bygone years it was Mr. Gladstone's favourite spot for reverie and meditation,

students in which Mr. Gladstone has recently realised the dream of half his lifetime. These buildings are close to the church on a lower slope of the same hill. St. Deniol's Library has at present but a temporary habitation, a large building of galvanised iron, having the greyness of its aspect partially relieved by a light red paint. But the 30,000 books which Mr. Gladstone has had transferred from the Castle, together with the two or three thousand that have come from other sources, are now all on thier shelves, arranged and classified on much the same system as has been adopted in his own library. Mr. Gladstone has taken a personal share in the work, and in September, 1894, placed the library and hostel in the charge of the Rev. Harry Drew

as Warden. Some of the greatest treasures in the statesman's magnificent library have already been given up to the use of those who come to study here, the only restriction imposed being that in no case shall Mr. Gladstone's own annotations be transcribed. In the warden's sanctum I notice the big chair of carved oak which was presented to Mr. Gladstone by the Liberals of Greenwich.

Mr. Gladstone was not content with providing this fine library for the service "of students (lay and clerical) of any age," to quote the circular which was drawn up by his own hand, "inquirers, authors, and clergy or others desiring times of rest." He recognised that they would require board and lodging of a different kind from what could be obtained in the village inns, and on terms that would not unduly tax the slender means of many such students. The old Harwarden Grammar School had become vacant in consequence of the operation of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, and this building Mr. Gladstone resolved to turn to account as a "hostel," employing a good old French word which has now almost become obsolete. The hostel, which is close to the library, is a two-storied brick house nearly 300 years old, its outer wall having the date 1606, and the great beams across the ceilings giving evidence of its age. With very little alteration it has been admirably suited to its new purpose.

Twelve students can find accommodation there of a simple yet comfortable kind. The old schoolroom itself, with its large latticed windows, has become their "common room," cosily furnished and daintily decorated with many little knick-knacks from Mr. Gladstone's own home.

Mr. Gladstone is now forming a trust for the Library, which, in due course, will be housed in a building of more enduring material and of architectural beauty. The trustees will be the Rector of Harwarden, the Hon. and Rev. A. T. Lyttelton, the Countess Grosvenor, C. B. Toller, Esq., Henry N. Gladstone, Esq., Sir Walter Phillimore, the Hon. Mrs. W. H. Gladstone, and George W. E. Russell, Esq. For generations to come, therefore, St. Deniol's Library will be a fitting memorial of the great statesman's long association with the Flintshire village, and of the healthful, intellectual, and religious life he led there. To those who go to Harwarden to partake of Mr. Gladstone's gift of restful study, the place must always be full of the inspiration of his great example. Reading the books which he read, treading the paths he trod, worshipping in the church he loved, the students cannot fail to feel the influence of the great mind and strong character which, after dominating a nation, could turn with absolute content to the simple duties and little pleasures of a village.



ST. DENIOL'S LIBRARY.