

## THE MAN AND THE TOWN.

### LORD SWANSEA AND SWANSEA.

WHEN Sir H. Hussey Vivian was created a peer he probably had not a moment's hesitation as to the title he should take. The place where he was born, the town with whose growth he and his family had been so closely identified, the industrial community he had represented for nearly forty years in the House of Commons—its name was the only one he could take with him to the Upper Chamber. Many peers sit there in the names of places with which their families have long ceased to have any connection. The Vivians and Swansea are likely, on the contrary, to be as long united in the future as they have been in the past, and whatever happens to the firm or the town the career of Lord Swansea is sure to be an enduring memory on the shores of the picturesque Welsh bay.

As the name will suggest to many readers, the Vivians are a Cornish, not a Welsh family. The transition of Lord Swansea's grandfathers from Cornwall to Wales is rather a long story, forming, as it was told to me one morning in the study of his Belgrave Square house, an interesting chapter in English industrial enterprise. In the latter part of the last century the owners and lessees of the Cornish copper mines were in a state of great discontent respecting the prices they received from the smelters for the ore. Mr. John Vivian, of Truro, the Deputy-Warden of the Stannaries, had an interest in one of the mines, and shared this discontent. With one or two gentlemen he projected what would now be called a "copper syndicate," with the object of "keeping the price of copper ores at a proper standard." The Cornish Metal Company was established in 1785 with a capital of £100,000, and Mr. John Vivian

became its Deputy-Governor. The minute book of this company is still in Messrs. Vivian's strong-room at Swansea, and from it many interesting little facts can be gathered regarding the Cornish mining industry a hundred years ago. In the course of a few years, having served its purpose, the company came to an end, but not so the keen interest which Mr. John Vivian had acquired in the development of the copper trade. One of Lord Swansea's treasures at Singleton, his beautiful residence, where the Prince of Wales and Mr. Gladstone, among other famous guests, have been entertained, is part of a silver tea-service which belonged to his grandfather. It was presented to him in 1801, as the inscription records, by "the lords of the copper mines in Cornwall . . . for the zeal and ability with which he served the mining interests of that county." It is supposed that about this time he established small copper-smelting works at Penclawdd, seven miles from Swansea, and thus, all unconsciously, began a new era in the fortunes of the town.

The site of these works, however, was not well chosen. It was too far from Swansea, and the estuary of the river was too shallow for the purposes of transport. Mr. Vivian's second son, John Henry, who succeeded him in the management of the business after being trained in the famous mining university at Freiberg, at once recognised these facts. In 1809 he obtained land from the Duke of Beaufort only a mile from the sea, and erected there the now famous Hafod smelting works and mills. As the imports of copper ore from Cuba, Chile, Australia, and other parts of the world constantly increased, the smelting works were again and again enlarged. When

Mr. Vivian's son, now Lord Swansea, joined the firm in 1842, they were the largest works of their kind in the world, and their output represented one fourth of the entire copper trade of the United Kingdom.

Swansea has been assisted by Mr. Graham Vivian, who has occupied himself principally with the commercial arrangements at the Hafod works, and Mr. Pendarves Vivian, who has had under his control the copper works at Margam, near Swansea,



SWANSEA.

*Photo by Gulliver, Swansea.*

Lord Swansea had then only just attained his majority. Between the time of leaving Eton and two years at Cambridge he had travelled all over the Continent, visiting the principal mines and mineral works. At first he was entrusted with the management of the spelter works, this metal having been the subject of the young man's special study, and under his direction new and improved furnaces were built. For three years Lord Swansea resided principally at Liverpool, superintending the firm's export business there. But in 1845 his father recalled him to Swansea, and, although he was only twenty-five years old, surrendered into his hands the general management of the great undertaking.

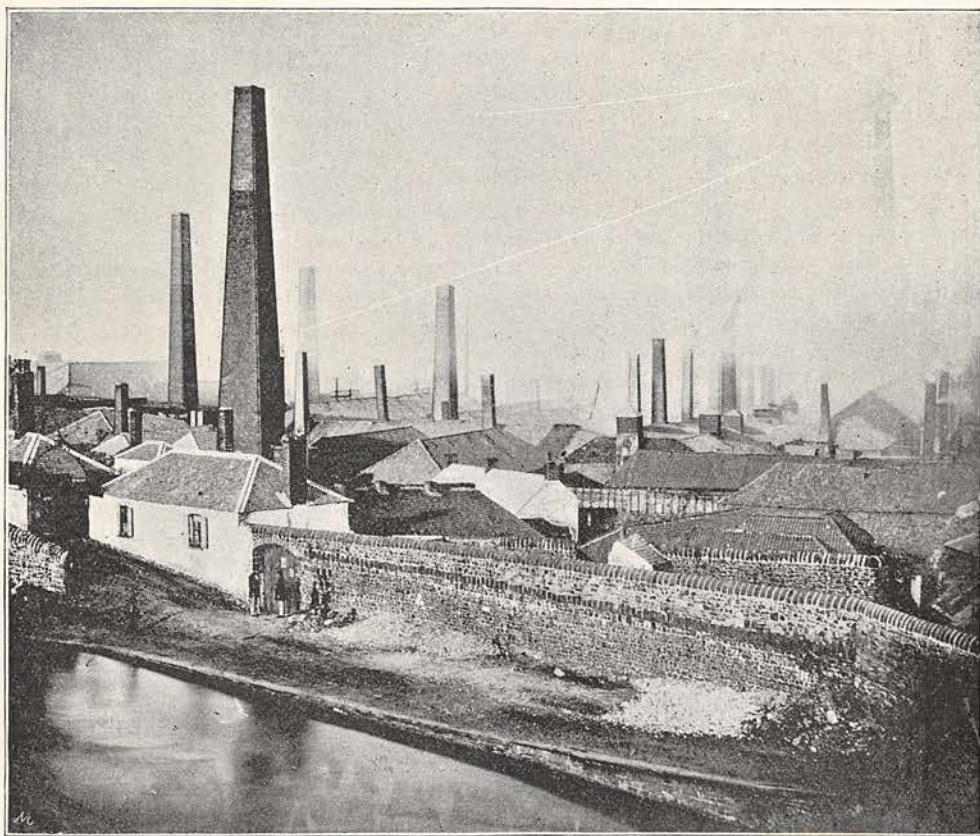
Mr. J. H. Vivian died in 1855, bequeathing his property in equal shares to his four sons, Henry Hussey, William Graham, Arthur Pendarves, and Richard Glynn. In the management of the concern Lord

which the firm had acquired in 1839. For these forty years the burden of management has mainly fallen upon Lord Swansea; it is due largely to his scientific skill and business ability that, in the face of severe foreign competition, the prosperity of Swansea's principal industry has been maintained, and that various subsidiary industries have contributed an increasing quota to the welfare of the town.

To me Swansea has two sides, the sea and the river. You turn one way, and you have an exhilarating walk along the shores of the bay, which is still picturesque, in spite of the attempt of the Great Western Railway to destroy its beauty by constructing its line for some distance between the town and the sea. The view of the Mumbles and the luxuriant foliage growing within a few yards of the waves, and the pretty little cottages along the road, can be pleasantly remembered. You turn the other way, and a short walk

brings you to a murky stream, with a long dilapidated street on one side and a range of tall chimneys, black-looking buildings, and huge heaps on the other. The contrast is an unpleasant if inevitable one. A considerable part of the dense mass of smoke proceeds from Messrs. Vivian's works, but it is in regard to this smoke that Lord Swansea has achieved the greatest triumph of his career, giving him what I consider to be his best claim on the gratitude of Swansea. From most of the other works in the Swansea valley proceed all the noxious fumes of the copper furnaces; from the Hafod chimneys practically only about half the sulphur acid gas is allowed to escape.

from 1812 to 1822 in a series of experiments. Even these distinguished scientists, however, were not equal to the problem; the experiments were a complete failure. Until 1864, when Lord Swansea took the matter in hand, nothing further was done; as the result of much study and thought, he came to the conclusion that quite a new type of furnace was required if the evil was to be overcome. Four years later M. Gerstenhoffer invented a furnace fulfilling the required conditions, and the English patent was at once purchased by Messrs. Vivian and Sons. There is a kind of poetic justice about this invention; in Lord Swansea's words, it realises "the old Latin adage 'Ex fumo



*Photo in 1855 by H. Hussey Vivian (now Lord Swansea).*

HAFOD COPPER AND SILVER WORKS.

Early in his career Lord Swansea's father was much concerned about the destructive character of the sulphurous acid on the vegetation, and under the direction of his friends, Sir Humphry Davy and Prof. Faraday, large sums were spent

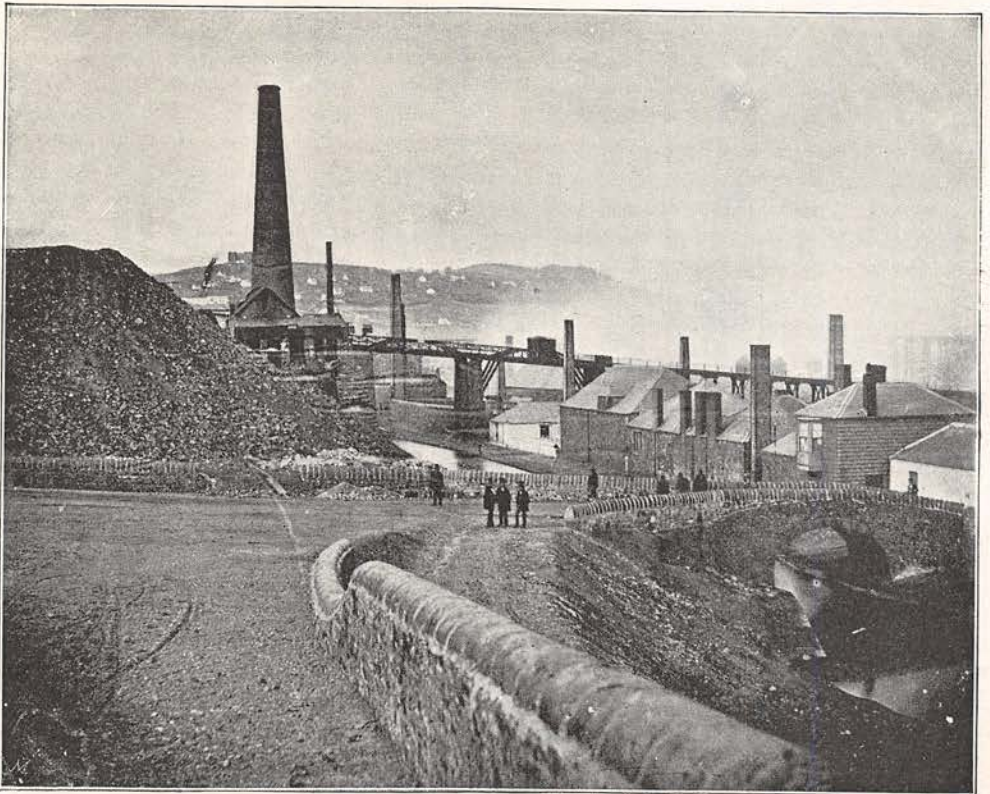
dare cererem.'" From being destructive to vegetable life the sulphurous fumes are rendered beneficial to its development. They are converted into sulphate of copper, which has been found to be the most effective remedy for phylloxera and

other diseases of the vine. Unfortunately, the poorer and more fusible ores cannot be treated in the improved furnaces.

It was in this way that Lord Swansea added the manufacture of chemicals to the copper-smelting industry. A large portion of the land on the banks of the Swansea is now occupied by the manufacture of alkali and sulphurphosphate. I did not attempt to inspect these, however, nor the numerous other buildings devoted to the extraction of silver and gold from the copper, the production of spelter, and the manufacture of chemical manures. Having spent an hour or so in going through the copper-smelting works, I contented myself with going up the shoot, as it is called (a narrow wagon-track up a hill composed of the copper

by the way, that in this mass of pyrites—the accumulation of three quarters of a century, minus the small quantities taken away from time to time by the railway for ballast purposes—is hidden away a very considerable fortune in the shape of infinitesimal elements of the precious metals.

The consumption of coal in these various works is of course very large. In 1842 the late Mr. J. H. Vivian, in conjunction with the late Mr. Michael Williams, M.P., purchased the principal collieries adjacent to Swansea to supply their respective works, and fresh “winnings” were made. Lord Swansea has since secured the entire ownership of these collieries for his firm. As illustrating further the varied character of the business



*Photo in 1855 by H. Hussey Vivian (now Lord Swansea).*

HAFOD COPPER AND SILVER WORKS AND COPPER MILLS.

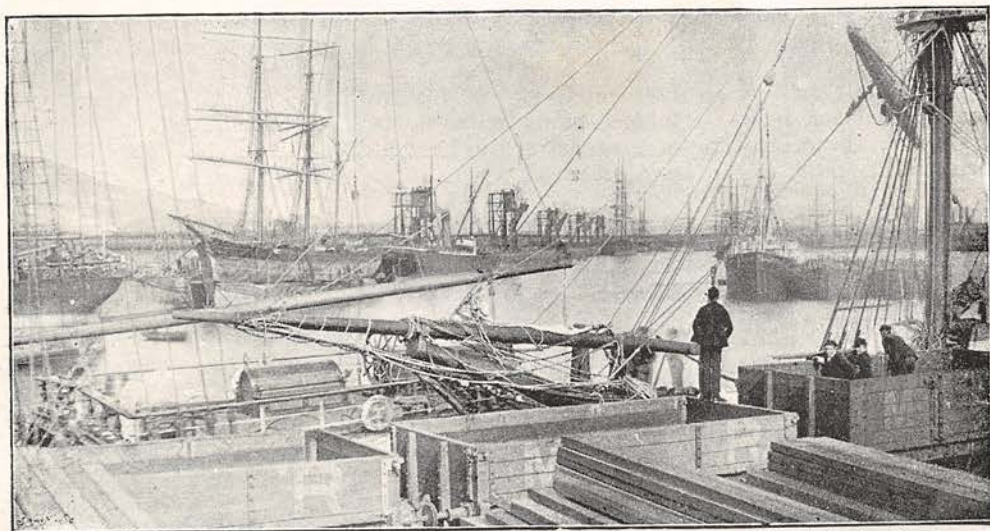
pyrites), and taking a bird's-eye view of the whole. It is an impressive albeit a smoky sight; there is such a fine suggestion of Promethean force about the innumerable tall chimneys and the belching flame. It is very aggravating to learn,

it carries on, it must be mentioned that a portion of the small coal obtained from the Swansea collieries is converted into patent fuel by Messrs. Vivian and Sons at their works on the North Dock, at Swansea. In all some 3,000 men are

now employed, the wages amounting to £200,000 a year.

In the offices of the company I am shown a vault full of old books covering the transactions of 110 years. The walls of the rooms are adorned by portraits of

which may be measured by the fact that since its establishment fully one fourth of the ores imported into Swansea have been taken to the Hafod works. His lordship has directly and indirectly been the means of greatly extending the trade of the port



*Photo by Gulliver, Swansea.*

PRINCE OF WALES'S DOCK, SWANSEA.

three generations of the Vivians, as well as several old servants of the firm. The offices, by the way, and the clerical staff strike one as singularly small considering the magnitude of the operations directed and recorded there. One can only suppose that the decentralisation system largely prevails. Near the offices are the schools, erected some fifty years ago at the firm's expense for the children of its workmen. Many men occupying influential positions in Swansea to-day owe their education to these schools.

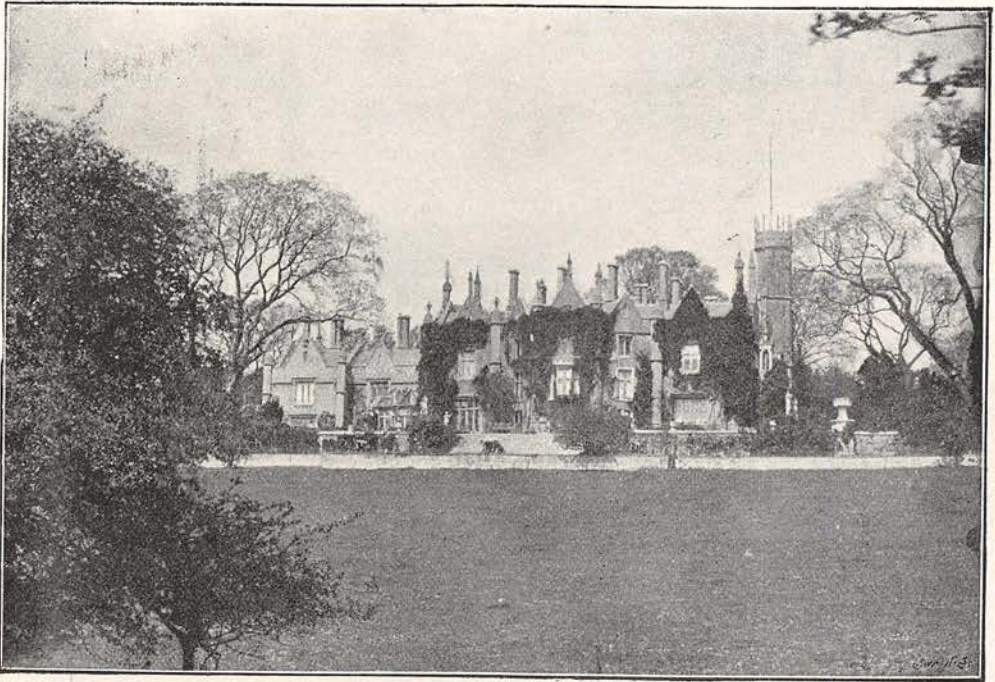
It is impossible to state with any exactitude the share which the Hafod works have had on the growth of Swansea. The whole of the Swansea to the foot of the Kilvey Hill, a once picturesque eminence which is now almost always hidden in smoke, is now practically covered with industrial undertakings, and every one has doubtless had its part in increasing the population of Swansea to its present figure, over 90,000. In establishing the Hafod works in 1809, however, Mr. J. H. Vivian was the pioneer, and the population at that date was only about 2,000. Lord Swansea during his directorship of his firm has not merely conducted its business as copper-smelters—a business

by introducing, in 1846, the extraction of silver from copper, and in 1850 the extraction of gold, by beginning five years later (for the first time in Wales) the production of cobalt, nickel, and bismuth, and by building in 1871 separate works for the treatment of silver lead ores.

Swansea's shipping has not grown in proportion to its industrial prosperity. At one time, Lord Swansea assured me, quite one fourth of the copper was shipped; nearly the whole of it now goes by rail. The clearances from Swansea last year amounted to rather less than a million and a half tons as compared with over seven millions from Cardiff. Lord Swansea has naturally taken an active part in the improvement of its dock accommodation; the three docks have all been opened since his lordship came of age:—the North in 1852, the South in 1859, and the East (called the Prince of Wales's) as recently as 1881. The East Dock, of which Lord Swansea laid the first stone in 1880, is the finest of the three; it contains twenty-three acres of water thirty-six feet deep, and has a lock 450 feet long. When the late Mr. Vivian first came to Swansea there was a depth of only eight feet of water in the harbour.

In walking through Swansea one is not very much impressed by the evidences of prosperity it affords. Many of the principal streets are very narrow, and few buildings have any architectural pretensions, while too many of the shops and houses are undeniably mean. Some districts, such as the streets known as "Little Ireland," where a number of the poorest Hibernian settlers live, are wretchedly squalid. Yet I am told that during the last thirty years great improvements have been made; a whole colony of slums in the centre of the town have been swept away. The only statue I

grace, however. It has long since adopted the Free Libraries Act, and a goodly collection of books is housed in a substantial if plain-looking building. It has in recent years acquired, either through private enterprise or public spirit, several very picturesque recreation grounds, and one of these, known as Cwmdonkin, secures for the public about the finest view to be obtained of the Mumbles and Swansea Bay. The oldest and finest buildings in the town are the Guildhall and the Royal Institution of South Wales, which are situated close to the docks in what was at one time considered the most aris-



SINGLETON, LORD SWANSEA'S RESIDENCE.

*Photo by Gulliver, Swansea.*

discovered in Swansea which is worthy of note was the one of Mr. J. H. Vivian—his lordship's father—in front of the Town Hall. Some of the houses are interesting on account of their age; one of these bears an inscription which records, "In this house Beau Nash saw the light." The picturesque value of Swansea Castle has been almost entirely destroyed; what remains of the ancient building, which has an unusually sanguinary history even for a castle, is surrounded by a motley collection of houses, and thus hidden from view.

The town is not without its signs of

tocratic quarter of the town. Swansea would doubtless have had a third building to rank with them had it been chosen as the site for the new University College of South Wales. But in this matter in 1882 Swansea had to concede to Cardiff its position as the Welsh metropolis. Before the arbitrators on the contending claims of the two towns, Mr. Mundella and two other members of the Committee of the Council on Education, Lord Swansea made a gallant but unsuccessful fight on behalf of his birthplace.

The proximity of a magnificent bay must provide substantial compensation for some

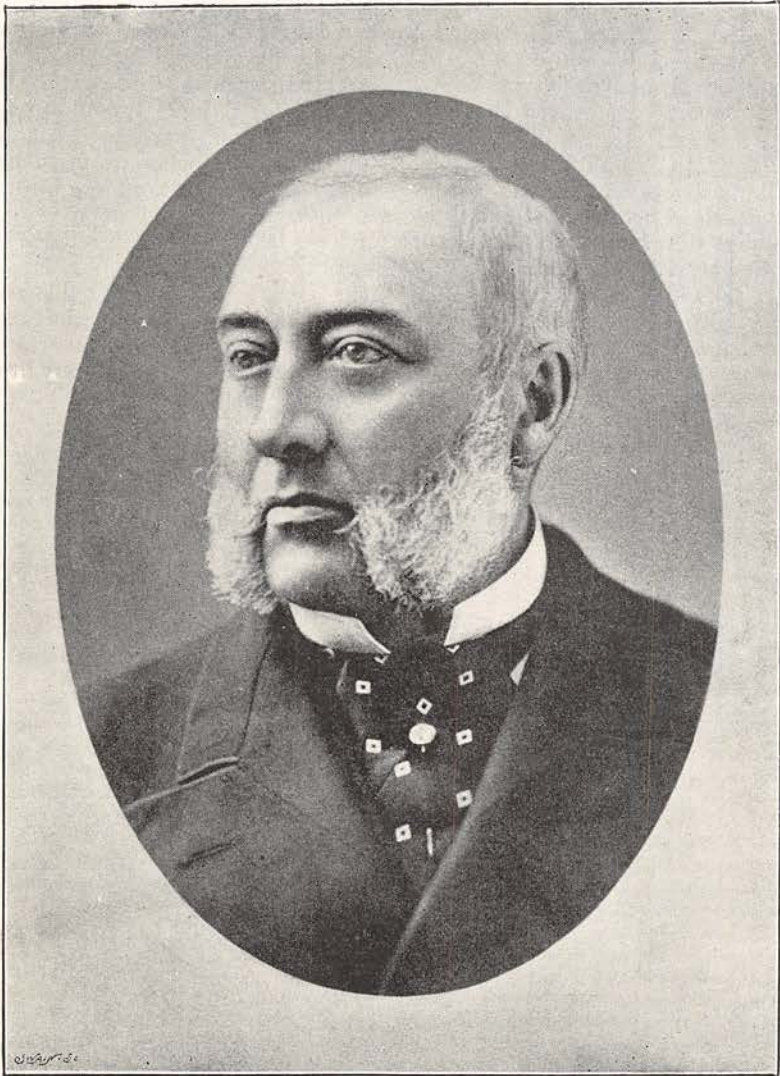
of the shortcomings of life in Swansea. It gives Lord Swansea one of the most beautiful residences in the country, within a quarter of an hour's drive of the works which have made his wealth. "Singleton" is situated on the seashore, but a short distance from the town. The sea-air notwithstanding, the extensive grounds are so well timbered that not a vestige of the mansion can be seen from the roadway. From its upper windows, on the other hand, the whole of the coast to the Mumbles, four miles distant, can be viewed. Singleton is about eighty years old, but being built of a sensitive stone, which is largely ivy-covered, it looks older. In design it is rather long and straggling, having but two stories. The most notable feature of the gardens is an orangery, a large domed glass-house which is sometimes lent by Lord Swansea for local charitable concerts; in these, by the way, his three daughters occasionally take part.

Singleton is rich in pictures. In the drawing-room are several fine specimens of Murillo, Velasquez, and other masters. The dining-room is filled with portraits of Lord Swansea's ancestors—his grandfather, the warden of the Stannaries; his uncle, the soldier, who distinguished himself at Waterloo, and was raised to the peerage as Lord Vivian; his great-uncle, Colonel Hussey, who fell at the head of his regiment in the siege of Quebec; and of various ladies of the family. But the

place of honour is given to his lordship's father, of whom, I believe, there are three or four portraits at Singleton.

Lord Swansea is fond of his home, as he well might be, and a considerable part of each year he spends there, attending to his enormous business, and taking an active part in local affairs as an alderman of the Glamorganshire County Council, treasurer of the South Wales University College, and in other positions of usefulness. Probably about the happiest weeks of his life were those which the Prince of Wales, in 1881, and Mr. Gladstone, in 1887, spent as his guests at Singleton. His Royal Highness went to Swansea to open the dock to which his name was given, whilst the late Prime Minister, as we all remember, visited it in the course of a political tour, and delivered there the speech on Home Rule that removed the scruples which Lord Swansea (then Sir H. Hussey Vivian) and some other Liberals felt at that time in supporting his Irish policy. If you should visit the Mumbles—and few people leave Swansea without having visited the famous headland and the village, which nestles under its protection—you will still be shown the little refreshment shop at which Mr. Gladstone drank a glass of milk, to the lasting delight of the proprietress, an old retainer of Lord Swansea's, who bethought himself of this kind service to her when walking with his illustrious guest.

FREDERICK DOLMAN.



*Photo by Chapman, Swansea.*

LORD SWANSEA.