

The Handwriting of Mr. Gladstone.

FROM MARCH, 1822, TO MARCH, 1894.

(Born 29th December, 1809.)

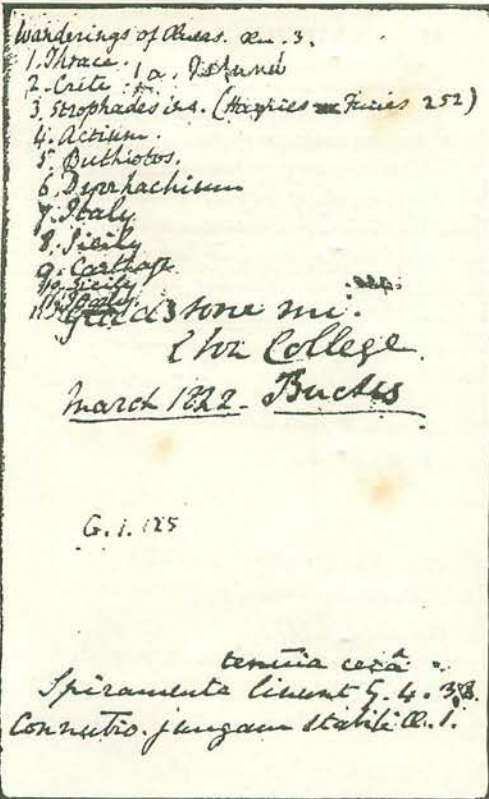
BY J. HOLT SCHOOLING.



ONE day while I was collecting the materials for this article, an observant man said to me: "There's not much character about Gladstone's writing. His signature is very commonplace." The speaker had not made any special study of the form of gesture which handwriting gives to us.

Is this series of human actions—traced by perhaps the most notable man of this century—lacking in characteristic traits, and are those signatures at which we will look commonplace? Perhaps yes—perhaps no. Let us examine them and try to answer the questions.

The great man who has been great among great men for nigh on fifty years, and who



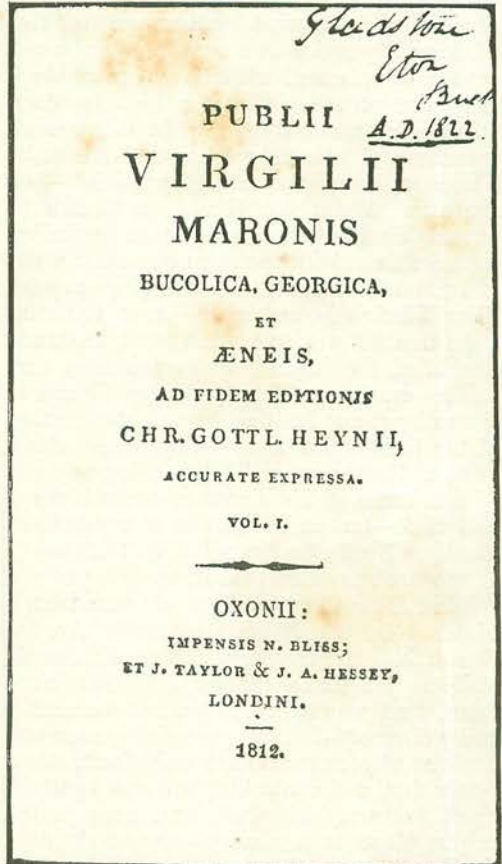
G. I. 125

temia cepa
 Spiracula limat 5. 4. 38.
 Conventus. jurgam stibit. a. 1.

NO. 1.—WRITTEN IN MARCH, 1822. AGE 12.

(Lent by Mr. Gladstone.)

Gladstone mi.; the notes about the "Wanderings of Aeneas" were written during 1825-1827. From the fly-leaf of the "Virgil" used by Mr. Gladstone when at Eton.
 Vol. viii.—10.



NO. 2.—WRITTEN IN 1822. AGE 12.

(Lent by Mr. Gladstone.)

Gladstone, Eton, Bucks, A.D. 1822. The title-page of the "Virgil."

has been specially exposed to the peculiar for-and-against bias that stamps and invalidates political opinions of all shades, will not be studied here as the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone, the politician, orator, and demagogue—but as plain William Ewart Gladstone, the man. It will indeed be strange if he whose facial movements, eyes, voice, walk, and general bodily gestures go some long way to show his individuality, should fail to show us something of himself in the recorded gestures traced by his hand when acting under the direct control of certain nerve-centres of his brain.

Look at every specimen of Mr. Gladstone's writing which is on these pages—in no one

of them will you see any embellishment of the signature, nor any complicated movements. Is this feature commonplace? I venture to say it is not: on the contrary, such simplification of handwriting is a most rare trait, but it may be seen in the writing of men who are remarkable for integrity, sincerity, and absence of ostentation. Moreover, the fact of doing any action in a simple as contrasted with a complicated manner is, psychologically, one of the marks of a high intellect. "But what about some of Mr. Gladstone's speeches?" I hear my readers exclaim. Ah! There we touch the tactful politician—not the man. When Mr. Gladstone intends to express himself definitely he stands unrivalled for a simple and direct choice of words: when Mr. Gladstone does not intend to express himself definitely, and when—as a politician—he thinks it wise to evade a point, he stands unrivalled for ingenious indefiniteness and subtle evasion. This quality of finesse is shown by the undulating, non-rigid direction of the lines of his handwriting across the page, and by the gradually decreasing height of the letters of his signature towards the end of it—for an illustration of my statement see No. 8; for a proof of its truth use your own observation in daily life.

What is another prominent characteristic of Mr. Gladstone? His vigour? Aye! that it is. His opponents have felt that, while they admired the strength that hit them, and which has sometimes seemed badly directed—like the power of a steam-hammer whose gear is for a while faulty. A power that, well controlled, will now lightly crack an empty egg-shell, and now deal mighty blows at a mass of iron worthy of the Titan's force. Where will you find such up-and-down direct vigour of movement as is plain—even to the non-expert eye—in these facsimiles of Mr. Gladstone's adult handwriting? I cannot match these gestures in vigour and energy with those of any other man except Prince Bismarck, and of Cromwell in his prime.

Is a strong—nay—a passionate nature one of the qualities of this great fighting man? How does a strong, earnest man often disclose himself by gesture alone—by gesture which will reinforce or even effectually take the place of spoken words? Is it not by the emphasis of nerve-muscular action that we judge a strong emotional side of a man? An earnest voice, a deep eye as compared with a shallow glance, a strong hand-gesture as contrasted with lax movement, will often show to us such

a trait. Now look at the incisive and clearly-traced writing with its deeply-cut strokes—they are the actions of a man who is thoroughly in earnest and whose nature is fiery and strong; no cynic, no insincere or shallow man can write in the way now mentioned. Had I the space, I would ask you to compare a letter written by Charles II. with the splendid writing of No. 23. And note this: strong as these movements are, they are held in thorough control; it is not until we reach the later specimens that some want of control over the strong nature is evidenced by the writing, which is also caused to be more irregular by defective sight.

Another point about this writing is the attention that is given to detail. The *i*'s are dotted, the *r*'s are crossed, the punctuation and arrangement of the writing are careful. These things show order and attention. See, too, how frequently Mr. Gladstone has placed a little separate stroke at the top of the small *r*, in order to show

92 P. VIRGILII MARON. &c. 539-542

Necdum etiam audierant inflari classica, necdum
Inpositos duris crepitare incudibus enses.

! Sed nos inmensum spatium confecimus æquor;
Et jam tempus equum fumantia solvere colla.

Enter the proximity of Virgil's imagination
from the union of these metaphors. He
uses the first (of a simile) at the end of
the first Georgic: "It has probably stolen
it from Horace (Sat. 1. 1.)"

The second he applied again in the
fourth ~~Georgic~~ lib.
"In the *extremo sublimi abstrusum*
Vela traham & proporem tenuis adhibere
prohm.
p. too 2. 41, 44.

In the first Georgic (l. 125)
Ante Jovon nuptis subigebant arva colani
In the second (513)
Aggrola incurvo terrena dia. out avibus
and (538)
"Dicens hanc vitam in terra sativus
Agebat
Virge etiam scriptum Dicitur Regis.
How to be reconciled?"

NO. 3.—WRITTEN 1822—1827.
(Lent by Mr. Gladstone.)

A page of the "Virgil" annotated by Mr. Gladstone when at Eton.

that it is an *r*. This may be seen in No. 6 (*Parsonage*), in No. 7 (*spare*), in No. 8 (*understand, presuming, urge*), in No. 9 (*dear*), in No. 11 (*sincerely*); and even as late as No. 30 (*character, your, yourself*) there is the same peculiarity, which, small and apparently insignificant as it is, has yet some real significance—for this is a little bit of evidence of deliberate care and fastidiousness that no careless or slovenly man can show in his writing. The boy showed the same carefulness; turn back to No. 3, which time has made indistinct, and there is much evidence of a fastidious pre-

cision and care. The Eton scholar wrote at the bottom of No. 3, "How to be reconciled?" and this is why the question was written. The boy wished to know how Virgil could reconcile two contradictory statements occurring in the 1st Georgic, line 125, and the 2nd Georgic, line 513; in the former the poet states that before the time of Jupiter, in the Saturnian age, agriculture was not in use, being unnecessary for the production of crops; whereas, in the latter quotation, the rustic of the Saturnian age is represented as turning the soil with his curved ploughshare. "How to be reconciled?" asked Gladstone

Mr. Self rose to move for a new cloth for the table
Mr. Gladstone seconded the motion & suggested to the Hon
 member the addition of a Book Case by way of amendment
Mr. Self was next willing to adopt the Amendment
 The motion, with the amendment, was put & carried.
 new. Dr

Ballots.

Mr Gladstone proposed Mr. Chisholm, m Elected. Two bl. balls. ^(Hear)
Mr. Hamilton ----- Mr. Scarlett, ma. Elected. One bl. ball. ^(Hear)
Mr. Taunton withdrew his notice.
Mr. Sandes would & Dr. Bruce seconded the adjournment, at
 1/4 past five

President — Mr. Doyle
V.P. — Mr. Handley.
Pro. V.P. — W. E. Gladstone

Vivat Rex!

Absent Mr. Rogers (not called)
Mr. Sanders during
 part of the debate, with Dr. Keate

NO. 4.—WRITTEN IN OCTOBER, 1827. AGE 17.
 A page from the Journal of "Poy." This was all written by Mr. Gladstone as Pro. Vics. President of the Debate, which took place on the 24th October, 1827. The meeting was held over Miss Hatton's "sock-shop," the question for debate being: "Was Caesar justified in passing the Rubicon?"
 (Lent by the President (1894) of the Eton Society.)

minor. When, at the top of No. 3, he wrote, "Infer the poverty of Virgil's imagination from the union of these metaphors," Gladstone minor made a slip, despite his care, for *æquor* here means "level surface" and not "sea," as the youth seems to have supposed. There is only one metaphor used, viz., that of a race-course, and the translation of the two printed lines marked by young Gladstone is as follows: "But we have covered a large surface in the lists (race-course), and now it is time to loose the steaming necks of the steeds." Thus, Virgil did not commit the error attributed to him of faulty metaphors, confusing horses and sea.

By the way, is it not curious even to think of Mr. Gladstone ever having been Gladstone *minor*? A line worth noting occurs in No. 4: "Mr. Gladstone seconded the motion, and suggested to the Hon. Mover the addition of a Book Case by way of Amendment." As touching on Mr. Gladstone's love for books, I may point out that No. 19 was written to a bookseller: "Please to send me the marked lots as usual"; and that No. 32 refers to the removal of books from Downing Street when Lord Rosebery recently succeeded Mr. Gladstone. The words in No. 4, "Absent. Mr.

Sanders during part of the debate, with *Dr. Keate*," suggest a *mauvais quart d'heure* for Mr. Sanders, as Dr. Keate was the head master of Eton, and was known as the "terrific" Dr. Keate. The letter from which No. 19 has been taken said, with reference to the books ordered, "if any require 'doing up' please to do it." Mr Gladstone wrote No. 7

London May four 1833

Messrs Laumont & Newton

W. Gladstone.

Edinburgh.

NO. 5.—WRITTEN MAY 4, 1833. AGE 23.

at the Board of Trade. It was sent by hand to Sir Robert Peel, who returned it, writing on the back: "My dear Gladstone, I shall be very glad to see you *now* on Mint matter, and then to fix a time to see you on some other matters.—R. P." This specimen shows very plainly—as, indeed, do nearly all the others—the habit of clearly spacing-out the words in a line of writing, and the lines of writing in a letter: there is no confusion or entanglement of the upstrokes of one line with the downstrokes of an adjacent line—for the reason that a man whose mind works

London Wedd Christ first fifteen



Rev. Mr Hill

Shanklin Parsonage

W. Gladstone

Isle of Wight

NO. 6.—WRITTEN MARCH 15, 1837. AGE 27.

clearly and with precision, almost unconsciously performs all his actions with clearness and precision of method; he can only confuse and entangle his handwriting under exceptional circumstances, such, for example, as great agitation, illness, defective sight, etc. On the other hand, it is usually the case that persons who are not in the habit of forming clear and distinctive ideas upon the various sensations conveyed to the brain, also show in the choice and arrangement of spoken words a more or less marked degree of confusion and of want of lucidity, and the handwriting of such persons is remarkable for the lack of a proper spacing-out of the words or of the lines of words on a page of manuscript; frequently, the downstrokes of one line will be confused and intermingled with the upstrokes of the line below. A man who thinks clearly and with precision avoids all such confusion in his writing, even when circumstances cause him to write much on a small piece of paper—he merely varies the size of his writing, and thus preserves a clear differentiation of the symbols used in the act, a procedure which is in itself evidence of an intelligent adaptability to circumstances. For an illustration of this point compare Nos. 23 and 28, and notice how the confusion of gesture now alluded to is absent from every specimen on these pages, even from No. 32, which was written when eyesight was seriously defective. In fact, the

My dear Sir Robert Peel

*Can you spare me
two minutes on a Mint
matter which will be more
easily disposed of than we?*

Yours faithfully

W. Gladstone

NO. 7.—WRITTEN JANUARY 17, 1844. AGE 34.

see Nettleship at 12"—this statement referred to Mr. Gladstone's recent visit to the oculist. This feature of lucidity, and the great attention to detail already noticed in the writing, show a marked capacity for exactness in thought, rigorous definition, and fastidiousness in the choice and arrangement of words made use of to express thought—although, as has been stated, such expression is sometimes purposely obscured and rendered vague for the reason pointed out when I referred to the signature of No. 8 as illustrating finesse and a subtle mind.

The entire absence of pretension that is so strongly evidenced by the handwriting of Mr. Gladstone is also illustrated by the wording of

many of his letters. No. 8 is taken from a long letter full of careful and precise advice to a relative; the reasons for a certain line of action are set out with the most painstaking detail, and then comes the sentence facsimiled: "Pray do not, however, understand me as pre-

Pray do

*not however understand me as
presuming to urge this upon you.*

~~*W. Gladstone*~~

NO. 8.—WRITTEN OCTOBER 21, 1847. AGE 37.

For the explanation of the two lines drawn through this signature, see page 74.

letter from which No. 32 has been copied contains these words: "I hope, however, to reach Victoria on Wednesday, at eleven, and

assuming to urge this upon you." Look also at the simple and considerate statement in No. 10: "do not let any one wait beyond usual

hours"; and at No. 11, which contains the first announcement of Mr. Gladstone's famous work on Homer. Can anything be more graciously simple than No. 12, both as regards the wording and the gesture which clothes the words? And No. 13, which is a fine specimen of simple, unpretentious movement, says: "If you have a mind to mention to your Editor a classical article for the Quarterly, I think I could write one." It is curious to observe

*I intend to send Mr Spottiswoode
M.S. in the beginning of the week.*

I remain very dear Sir

Faithfully yours

W. Gladstone

NO. 9.—WRITTEN OCTOBER 16, 1851. AGE 41.

have already laid stress upon the sincerity and conscientiousness that are shown in this

writing, the absence of pretension has just been illustrated, and yet I am now pointing out an imperiousness which some may consider contradictory to the previous statements. But this is not the case. The writer of gestures such as these must be

*I now send you a crossed cheque
for £1707. 11. 3. The Debentures you will
perhaps retain until sent for them. — it
may be this afternoon between five & six
but do not let any one wait beyond
usual hours*

*I remain dear Sir
yours faithfully.*

W. Gladstone

6 Carlton Gardens

May 24, 52

NO. 10.—WRITTEN MAY 24, 1852. AGE 42.

the utter want of anything like pretension or conceit in this handwriting, and then to notice side by side with this trait of character a pronounced — I had almost written a reckless — imperiousness of temper. This latter trait comes out in the vehement and sustained "rush" of the handwriting across the paper, in its strong and rather ascendant movement, in the heavy downstrokes, which sometimes end with a significant little angular hook, and in the rigid commencing strokes of the signature, which are often carried up much higher than the strokes which follow them. I

aware of his own superiority; he is, as I have shown, a man of strong convictions and earnest nature, and I explain the

*I have completed the substance of a
work which I propose to call 'Studies
in Homer and the Himeric age'. It
will I think extend to two volumes.*

Very sincerely yours

W. Gladstone

NO. 11.—WRITTEN JANUARY 7, 1857. AGE 47.
The first announcement of Mr. Gladstone's work on Homer.

existence of this vehement imperiousness of gesture by the fact that Mr. Gladstone has probably a deeply-rooted, sincere, and conscientious conviction that what he does and thinks is right and true—it is not possible, in the presence of the fine traits noticed, to ascribe this imperiousness to a mere personal vanity and love of power.

No. 14 shows the two ends of a slip of paper, similar to those now used, that was placed inside a locked despatch-box sent by Mr. Gladstone to his private

secretary, Mr. West. When the House is sitting you may see official messengers carrying these despatch-boxes to and fro.

Would eleven on Wednesday suit you for the final touching yet to be done to your book? I could then bring my wife—who I do not doubt will be much pleased. I remain
 Very faithfully yours
 Wm Gladstone

NO. 12.—WRITTEN NOVEMBER 30, 1861, TO MR. G. F. WATTS, R.A. AGE 51.

If you have a mind to mention to your Editor a classical article for the Spectator, I think I could write one

Sincerely
 Wm Gladstone

NO. 13.—WRITTEN OCTOBER 17, 1867. AGE 57.

One end of the slip projects from the lid and shows the name of the addressee and the name of the sender of the despatch-box:

when this is returned, the position of the slip in the locked box is reversed, the other end being left projecting. Notice the strong line below the signature, how it thickens and ends in a sort of club shape at its end—it is a gesture of determination and resolute force, which is again well shown, for example, in No. 18.

In No. 15 there is much less of the strong angularity we have observed and do observe in many of the other speci-

mens. Notice the more curved form of the final strokes of the words in No. 15 as compared with the vigorous angles of many other illustrations: for example, the *e* of *one*, the *t* of *it*, the *d* of *could*, the *l* of *delightful*, the *e* of *Gladstone*, etc. The words of this facsimile, "I think there could be no one towards whom it could be more easy and delightful to put it in practice," are taken from a very splendid letter in which the writer referred to the exercise of the "virtue of forgiveness." The graciousness of the words is matched by the graciousness of their gesture, and we do not need to be very observant to know that kindly and gracious acts are usually accompanied in their expression by pliant and gentle movements, rather than by abrupt and angular bodily gestures. In such cases, the nerve-muscular machinery that controls the hand will impart to that also a gentler and more rounded movement. This is specially true when a man of sensibility and feeling acts

upon the impulse of kind feelings. We here touch upon another side of Mr. Gladstone's nature—his sensibility. Even a casual glance over the many facsimiles now given will show

considerable variation in the handwriting, even at short intervals of time. There is variation in the slope of the writing and in the size of it, in the shape of the same letter of the alphabet; and, most marked of all, there is variation in the height of letters composing single words. All these little facts, which are plain enough when pointed out, combine to show a sensitive as contrasted with a phlegmatic and immobile temperament—and for the following reason: A calm, philosophic, unemotional man, who is guided mainly or entirely by cold processes of reason, shows little variation in his various forms of outward expression, handwriting



NO. 14.—WRITTEN IN 1869. AGE 59.
A despatch-box slip.

I think there could be no
one towards whom it
could be more easy and
delightful to put it in
practice—

As ever yours

Wm Gladstone

NO. 15.—WRITTEN JULY 14, 1870. AGE 60.

among the number. He may appeal to the intellect of others, but he will not stir their emotions and feelings as will a man of keen sensibility, who is also a man of great intellectual power and vivid energy and force. Such a man is Mr. Gladstone, but we may see the signs of sensibility I have now mentioned in the handwriting of many persons who show no signs of the great power which is here enhanced and rendered brilliant by this very quality of sensibility to impressions. With many men, this trait is a defect of the character, even though it lead, as it often does, to the *delicatesse* of observation and quick perception which go to make the temperament of an artist—whatever be his art.

A good contrast with No. 15 is the quick,

NO. 17.—WRITTEN DECEMBER 28, 1871. AGE 61.

impetuous movement of No. 16. Here, nearly every stroke combines with another to form an acute angle—a sufficiently plain example for the observant reader of how the movements of a sensitive man vary with his mental state. Again, it has been noticed that when we write under the impulse of strong affection for the person addressed, our writing slopes more to the right hand, more away from a vertical position than when we write a letter upon some business matter to a person about whom we care nothing. No. 17 illustrates this, for it slopes very considerably, and it was written to a person to whom Mr. Gladstone is deeply attached. Of course, I speak of free and natural gesture in writing, because hand-

writing is not free and natural gesture when a writer deliberately cultivates a special style of writing, such, for example, as that of a Civil Service candidate, who may spend six months in de-naturalizing his own handwriting in order

NO. 16.—WRITTEN IN 1871. AGE 61.

to acquire the conventional style that his examiners may require from him. Quite recently, a letter of this sort was submitted to me, and at once rejected as faulty data upon which to base an opinion, simply because the gesture of it was obviously studied and non-natural.

One of the ways in which Mr. Gladstone shows his extraordinary energy and ardour is the almost constantly ascendant movement of his writing upon the paper—his signature especially. To maintain this peculiarity through the seventy-two years of his life that are now under analysis is an altogether abnormal instance of vitality and force. Examine your own writing when you write under conditions of mental depression or bodily fatigue, and note how the words in a line

NO. 18.—WRITTEN IN 1873. AGE 63.

tend to droop below the horizontal level from which each starts, and how the lines of writing will often descend towards the right hand of the page. In No. 20 we have one of the very few

instances, out of a large number of specimens, where even Mr. Gladstone's writing droops. Inspection of this facsimile of a black-edged post-card will show that numerous words drop down, and that the "W. E. G." at the end shows the same abatement of ardour. This was

Please to send me the
 marked lots as usual:

NO. 19.—WRITTEN IN 1874. AGE 64.

One line in haste to express
 sincere thanks for your
 kind and sympathetic
 note. I have I assure you
 very cordial regards
 him in the utmost fulness:
 which is not what in other
 respects the calamity has
 been. All this in trust will
 be to good. With kindest
 remembrance your affec-
 tionate Wm. G. C. 25. 76

NO. 20.—WRITTEN APRIL 25, 1876. AGE 66.

from either No. 21 or No. 22, which have just been referred to. In this splendidly simple and vigorous piece of movement, which, to the sensitized eye, seems to diffuse courage and manful action as much by its black and white tracing as by the noble words it contains, we have as plain a piece of evidence as we could wish to see of the noble simplicity, integrity, and fiery earnestness of Gladstone the man. Nearly every line runs straight across the paper—there is scarcely any of the undulating direction of the lines which has been cited as evidence of the politician's subtlety—the strokes are all firm, strong, and simple. Mr. Gladstone was speaking right from his heart when he wrote these lines, and the words which follow those facsimiled are: "Be thorough in all you do, and remember that though ignorance often may be innocent, pretension is always despicable. Quit you like men, be strong, and the exercise of your strength to-day will give you more strength to-morrow. And may the blessing of the Most High soothe your cares, clear your vision, and crown your labours with reward." So long as the page of handwriting shown in No. 23 remains in existence,

written under sad circumstances. If we wish to see how deep feeling, emotion, or agitation will sometimes cause us to unnecessarily repeat our written as well as our spoken words, we can look at No. 21, which says: "Forgive my sending you two pamphlets, one with with a horrible but true indictment against the Turk." We may also compare the agitated movement of No. 21 with the much calmer and very different gesture of No. 22, which was written to Mr. Gladstone's secretary, asking him to see about the return of Income-tax to a maid of Mrs. Gladstone's.

Very different is No. 23

so long will there exist for future biographers indisputable evidence of the great and noble

Forgive my send-
 ing you two pamphlets, ^{one with} with a
 horrible but true indictment a-
 gainst the Turk. Yours so nearly
 Wm. G. C. 28. 77

NO. 21.—WRITTEN MARCH 28, 1877. AGE 67.

My dearest

My wife's maid is anx-
 ious to get Anne Jane returned
 on her £230 europ. Dist. Railway
 5% Preference -

NO. 22.—WRITTEN MARCH 24, 1879. AGE 69.

Be assured that every one of you has his place
 and vocation on this earth; and that it rests with
 himself to find it. Do not blame those who say that
 nothing succeeds like success: ^{often} Gentlemen however
 enough humble efforts succeed, especially in youth,
 by its ^{proficiency gained} reflectal action, better than success: which in-
 deed in early life, sometimes serves but to relax and
 stupefy. Get knowledge all you can; ^{the more you} and of ~~the~~ get,
~~is rightly done with always feel how small~~
 the more you breathe upon it ^{the more} the more invigorating
 and enjoy the ^{and enjoy the} ^{indignity} ^{of} ^{your} ^{own} ^{position}
 as the more you will be conscious how small is the
 elevation you have reached in comparison with the
 immeasurable heights attained that yet remain unscalable.

qualities possessed by Mr. Gladstone—the more so because this study of gesture is advancing in the estimation of men who observe carefully and who reflect cautiously upon what they see.

To those who can catch the spirit of this

interesting study there will come something like a revulsion of feeling when they look at No. 24 and then again scan No. 23. In No. 24 the politician comes out, although the letter is, of course, a perfectly proper one in the circumstances under which it was written.

Here we again see the undulating lines of writing across the page, and here is a good specimen of the undulating signature dwindling into a point. If Mr. Gladstone had tried to write his Glasgow address (No. 23) in the same kind of writing used for No. 24, he could not have written the splendid words of that address—for the reason that his

mental conditions differed widely upon the two occasions. Is it not to be regretted that so many little persons with political sentimentalities will rancorously express opinions upon this or that great politician which are

I wish I would like
to put a question as to the falling
off in the Ensign, if I could give
him a reassuring answer.

W. Gladstone

NO. 24.—WRITTEN APRIL 1, 1881. AGE 71.

the House of Commons, while the election of them reflects small credit upon the intelligence of their constituents, and upon the capacity of these voters for drawing even the most elementary deductions from facial expression.

In No. 25 we have the concluding words of a specially interesting letter that contains Mr. Gladstone's sentiments towards Edmund Burke. After writing, "Yet I venerate and almost worship him, though I can conceive its being argued that all he did for freedom, justice, religion, purity of government in other

I would be very more
alive. Believe me always
Sincerely yours
W. Gladstone

NO. 25.—WRITTEN OCTOBER 13, 1884. AGE 74.

based, if indeed they can be said to have any base, upon a scanty and superficial survey of political actions of any kind—for who can understand the mazes and intricacies of a prominent political life? And how few are the politicians who can show to us in their recorded gestures upon paper the magnificent qualities that are here detected and exposed—the handwriting of some of these men makes me wonder at their effrontery in occupying a seat in

respects and in other quarters, was less than the mischief which flowed out from the Reflections," Mr. Gladstone wrote the one short sentence facsimiled, "I would he were now alive." This No. 25 is an excellent

W. Gladstone
with all good wishes in all good things

NO. 26.—WRITTEN IN 1885. AGE 75.

From a "Tennyson" Birthday-book, lent by a relative of Mr. Gladstone.

illustration of sincere, earnest, and frank gesture—observe the straight “run” of the writing, and see how the concluding letters of the signature increase in size instead of being fine-drawn down to a point. The “Tennyson” birthday-book, from which No. 26 has been taken, contains three quotations printed in the space allotted to the 29th of December. I quote the first and last of these because, curiously enough, they illustrate with approximate truth two extremes of the opinion held, as regards Mr. Gladstone, by some of his most ardent political adherents and opponents. The first quotation is, “Our noblest brother and our truest man” (“Gareth and Lynette”); the last, “He taught me all the

May Queen”). As the great majority of those who hold strong opinions in favour of or against Mr. Gladstone have probably no surer basis for their appreciation of him than the published accounts of his political words and

*By god this what can
one say but that a Christian is
gone home -*

Believe me my dear Cousin

Affectionately yours

W. Gladstone

NO. 27.—WRITTEN OCTOBER 10, 1888. AGE 78.

mercy, for he show'd me all the sin” (“The

acts, it would appear that an equally reliable way of forming such opinion lies in the chance association of this or that quotation in a printed book with the great man's name—certainly, this method would be far less troublesome in its application.

*My dear
my sorry, to say no, but (1) I have
been obliged to make it a rule to
decline the publication of my
letters, (2) the subject of this letter
is one which I feel ought not to be
introduced to the world except
in connection with a full & slow
our explanation. — These difficulties do not apply to your
taking if you choose an inde-
pendent notice of the letter
Yours sincerely*

W. Gladstone

Mar. 25. 91

NO. 28.—WRITTEN MARCH 25, 1891. AGE 81.

The letter from which No. 27 is copied was written in reply to one sent to Mr. Gladstone by a relative announcing the death of a kinsman: “Beyond this, what can one say but that a Christian is gone home.” Simple and homely words, that illustrate the plain sincerity of their writer's religious belief. No. 28 is worth more than casual attention, and for more than one reason. In the first place, the “rule” expressed on this post-card has limited the illustrations here given to a careful selection of extracts, and has prevented the insertion of many passages of even greater interest than those now facsimiled; in the second place, the painstaking detail of No. 28 is specially noteworthy, not only as regards the words written, but also on the score of the marked attention that is given to the details of the writing—here comes in another feature of Mr. Gladstone's nature, his courtesy.

In going through a large number of his letters, etc., I have been much impressed by the courteousness of the gesture, quite apart from the wording of the letters. For when we write a letter, it is surely a mark of courtesy to give full attention to the way in which we perform that action, just as much as the numerous little courtesies of speech will proclaim the refinement and politeness of a speaker. Whether Mr. Gladstone is writing to a stranger, or sending an order to a bookseller, or writing to a personal friend, there is the same attention given to the details and arrangement of the handwriting—he cannot permit his written gestures to be slovenly and therefore wanting in proper courtesy to

*This was not
written as that Home Rule had been
adopted in its place by the people
of Ireland. Your faithful X, O'Brien*

*W. Gladstone
May 25. '92*

NO. 29.—WRITTEN MAY 25, 1892. AGE 82.

his correspondent. This peculiarity, the reason of which is obvious as soon as it is pointed out, might escape notice if I did not specially mention it, for many intelligent persons overlook the fact that in the act of writing each of us performs that act in our own individualistic way—a courteous man will employ courteous nervous muscular movements, and a slovenly and impolite man will take no more heed of the little courtesies shown in handwriting than he will of the polite details of speech. A point like this serves as a simple and sufficiently good illustration of the reasoning pro-

cesses which may be usefully employed in this study of gesture: it will probably appeal to those who can recognise that facts entirely overlooked, or which are regarded as being of small account by ordinary observers, are really of great moment in their special provinces—it will probably not appeal to those who attach no weight to facts unless they are presented to their consciousness by the ton weight or by the square acre.

An article upon Mr. Gladstone—even a non-political one—could, perhaps, scarcely be regarded as complete without some reference to Home Rule, so, in No. 29, I give part of a post-card, written prior to the general election of 1892, that contains a statement by Mr. Gladstone about Home Rule and “the people of Ireland.” No. 30 also relates to political matters, and must have been pleasant reading to the receiver of this letter, especially as he probably attached no importance to the droop below their horizontal level of many words in this specimen—even if he noticed this unusual peculiarity in Mr. Gladstone’s writing, which smacks of weariness and fatigue, that we are not surprised to notice when we

consider how many letters similar to No. 30 were, almost of necessity, written at the stated time by this aged leader of men.

I am not permitted to give the text of the letter from which No. 31 has been extracted, nor can the name be mentioned of the person

*I conceive you to possess
all the qualifications of
character, ability, and political
insight and consistency,
which will make your name
at the poll alike honourable
to your constituency, with
yourself, and respectful to the
public.*

NO. 30.—WRITTEN JUNE 14, 1892, TO A CANDIDATE FOR A SEAT AT
THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION. AGE 82.

to whom it was written. It must suffice to say that the last sentence, part of which is shown, ran: "This is all the more kind because we do not altogether agree in matters of opinion, although I trust we have a deep concurrence in what underlies them."

Here again

is the fine signature, larger than preceding ones, perhaps because of eye-trouble, but with the end of the signature as large or larger than the other non-capital letters of it. The

but we have a deep
concurrence in what
underlies them. Believe me,
Sincerely yours

W. Gladstone

NO. 31.—WRITTEN MARCH 21, 1893. AGE 83.

whole of this writing is a wonderful piece of movement, in its earnest vigour, to come from the hand of a man aged 83-84—despite certain irregularities which may have been

on E. Monday or Tuesday.
You will see how much
we mean, or they may be
kept here. How the circle
it is difficult to be pre-
cis. -

Yours sincerely

W. Gladstone

NO. 32.—WRITTEN MARCH 19, 1894, FROM LION MANSION, BRIGHTON. AGE 84-85.

caused by defective sight as well as by the emotional feeling expressed in the letter : genuine and deep feeling is often a sad disturber of regularity in handwriting, as it is, indeed, in speech and in other modes of expression.

Not the least remarkable of the pieces of Mr. Gladstone's writing that we have here is that given in No. 32. It was written two or three days before the oculist consulted by Mr. Gladstone gave his recent opinion upon his patient's eyesight. Although many individual strokes are here indistinctly defined—owing to the infirmity mentioned—there is no confusion between word and word, or between line and line of the letter. The clear-thinking, precise, and fastidiously courteous mind triumphs over grave physical trouble, backed up and invigorated as it is by the

splendid energy of the man. Look at the signature of No. 32, straight, firm, and powerful ; with an upward movement instead of the droop that might so well be expected in the signatures of smaller men in similar circumstances—there is but one slight defect at the top of the *W*. Not only did this letter refer to an appointment with the oculist on the 21st of March, but it mentioned the illness of Mrs. Gladstone, and said: "Our little grandchild has the beginnings of what will probably be declared measles or whooping-cough." Notwithstanding the illness of those dear to Mr. Gladstone, despite his own illness and trouble, he goes on to mention details about "some book-clearing-out business for Thursday morning" at Downing Street. The portion facsimiled relates to the moving of these books, the last words being: "and in

the circumstances it is difficult to be precise." The first words of this letter are: "The stars seem rather to fight against us." If no other act of Mr. Gladstone, except the gesture of this letter, existed to prove his splendid courage, this facsimile alone would furnish ample proof of it.

We have answered the questions with which we started, and now for a word of explanation blended with an apology—if such be needed—for plain speech. In these sketches of character based upon written ges-

Taryue I seev,

My dear David

I suppose the enclosed is for your son, being among my letters and having had the address I recd of open, I at once explained it was not for me & therefore made no attempt to read it. I got home yesterday rather puzzled with my long & shaped downing.

Believe me Yr affctn Brother

JG

J Gladstone Esq

LETTER BY MR. GLADSTONE'S FATHER.

A letter written by Sir John Gladstone, Bart., on December 8th, 1847, at the age of eighty-three. In this facsimile there is a general likeness to the handwriting of Mr. Gladstone, and there is a particular correspondence as regards the forceful energy, marked simplicity, and the clear "spacing-out" of the written gestures of both father and son. The extreme angularity of Sir John Gladstone's handwriting runs almost into harshness—certainly it shows a stern and imperious nature—while the graciousness that comes out in Mr. Gladstone's writing is not so apparent in this specimen of his father's gesture.

ture it is perhaps to be preferred that the subjects chosen for them should be of a generation prior to our own. I have analyzed the writing on these pages by the light that many years' study of one branch of psychophysiology ought to give to a student, and, while preserving the respect that is due to my subject, I have striven to maintain the fidelity that must be preserved in the exercise of my art. In most cases, the reasons for this or that piece of deductive reasoning have been given side by side with the deduction stated—but it has, of course, been impossible to give in a magazine article all the detail of explanation and of demonstration that I have given elsewhere. "Handwriting and Expression," Kegan Paul, 1892. The basis and the method of this study of gesture should appeal to any sound intellect, but its accurate practice as an art cannot be undertaken by those who have not completely studied

the data upon which the scientific theory is based.

For the concluding illustration, let us place close to the old man's letter, written on March 19th, 1894, a facsimile of the inside cover of the boy's "Virgil," used at Eton in March, 1822, which shows the Gladstone crest and the Gladstone motto: *Fide et Virtute*—for has not this man among men as just a right to have this motto placed close to him in his old age, as had the valorous and pure-minded scholar—who turned his glass upside down and refused to drink a coarse toast proposed, and who, at Eton Fair, championed some pigs that were being tormented by his school-fellows, offering in response to their banter to write his reply "in

good round hand upon their faces"—a justly-earned right, even then, to paste this book-plate in his "Virgil" as a guiding star to him throughout his future life?



NO. 33.—INSIDE COVER OF "VIRGIL."

(Lent by Mr. Gladstone.)

The inside of the cover of his "Virgil" used at Eton, showing Mr. Gladstone's crest and motto.

NOTE.—I express gratitude for valuable aid as regards the loan of MSS., letters, etc., to Mr. Gladstone, Mrs. David Gladstone, Mrs. Bennett, of Aigle, Switzerland, Archdeacon Denison, Mr. W. S. Holt, Mr. G. W. E. Russell, M.P., Mr. Sidney Harvey, Mr. John Murray, Mr. C. Kegan Paul, Mr. F. Warre Cornish, M.A., Vice-Provost of Eton, M. J. Crépeux-Jamin, of Rouen, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. G. H. Murray, C.B., of No. 10 Downing Street, the President (1894) of the Eton Society, The Graphological Society of Paris, Mr. Arthur Nash, of Exeter College, Oxford, and to Messrs. Noel Conway, autograph dealers, of 508, New Street, Birmingham, who very kindly placed their large collection at my service.—J.H.S.