

BY CHARLES MORLEY AND HULDA FRIEDERICHs.



AS two newspaper correspondents whose duty it was, with many other journalists and artists, to chronicle

the story of that mournful week at Hawarden when all the world was thinking of the great statesman, we had many a gossip with the plain and kindly folk who dwell in Mr. Gladstone's village.

They were full of homely little stories and incidents relating to the "old gentleman," as they often called him. Though so great in the eyes of the world the village, long accustomed to his simple habits and his homely ways, regarded him as one of themselves, and never

bothered him with genuflection or wordly homage. But though they are very blunt and outspoken in these parts, their sincere and genuine affection for him always showed itself very strongly.

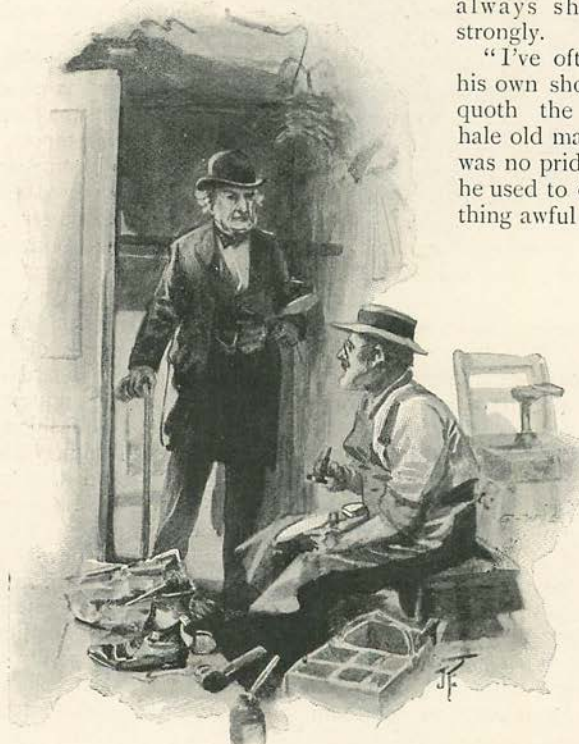
"I've often seen him bring his own shoes to be mended," quoth the village cobbler, a hale old man himself. "There was no pride about him. My! he used to cut 'em about something awful with his axes."

"Indeed!"

"He was always so hearty like, and always fond of asking questions, if he thought you could tell him something useful."

"What—about leather?"

"Ah! he knew a lot about leather. I remember once leather had gone up—there was a war on, or something. If leather went up so did



MR. GLADSTONE AND THE COBBLER.



soles and uppers. He couldn't make it out why shoe-mending should be only four shillings one month and five shillings another, and one morning he comes in, just as you might, and says, 'Bellis, how is this?' pointing to my bill. 'Well,' says I, 'leather's up.' 'Oh!' says he, 'how's that?' And then I explained how it come about. He was always very curious—whether it was about leather, or gardening, or cattle."

This devouring interest in leather and the common life about him no doubt accounts for the marvellous range of Mr. Gladstone's knowledge, and his ability to speak so as to thoroughly interest his hearers upon almost any subject. This little incident throws a strong light upon his investigating instincts—upon his passion for going to the root of the matter. The fact that though he was a very great and powerful man, who lived in a castle and had a retinue of servants to supply his wants, he was willing to carry his own shoes to be mended, and then take them away again—tucked under his arm, mind you, not concealed in a neat paper parcel—illustrates another side of his character. Though it certainly impressed us who dwelt in luxurious city much more than the child of Nature—that is the hale old man whose privilege it had been to cover Mr. Gladstone's feet with leather for many years—he was much more tickled by that eminent financier's sharpness in detecting a rise in prices; and yet, such a mysterious mixture is human nature, a tear trembled in his eye as he talked.

Another story told by a village dame of how, when striding up the hill one day, he relieved her little girl of a heavy pail of water, illustrates still another side of him—his kindness of heart. Another, related by a good woman who had travelled many miles to see his coffin as it lay in Hawarden Church, shows how apparently small things leave a profound and life-long impression upon many natures. She was one of a huge audience—some twenty thousand people—whom Mr. Gladstone had been addressing in the old Cloth Hall at Leeds. After his tremendous effort, he sat down evidently exhausted, and Mrs. Gladstone at once enveloped him in the very face of the multitude with her shawl, lest he should take a chill. Cheer after cheer saluted this homely incident, which took place many years ago, but is still fresh in this good woman's memory.

Another incident, illustrating his constitutional fearlessness, is told with much glee. During some fierce crisis (Irish troubles),

he was guarded by a *posse* of police, and was always followed by a detective or two. The story goes that, hating this espionage more than he feared assassination, he got so angry one day that he suddenly turned round, jumped a series of walls and hedges, and disappeared from view.

Mr. Gladstone's village climbs up a steepish hill, which begins at the lodge of the castle, to the summit by the park gates, winds past Hawarden Church, and quietly straggles to an end in the branching high roads. At first sight there is absolutely nothing of the ideal village about it. No picturesque detached cottages nestling under fruit-trees in the quaint irregularity that artists love. The white winding road is bordered on either side by a row of strongly-built stone cottages, into the best and only parlour of most of which you enter as soon as you open the front door. It is true, most of the cottages have windows with small leaded, diamond-shaped panes, through which the room within and the world without somehow look cosier and less stern than seen through the large modern sheets of glass. At the back of these little houses there are small old-world flower-gardens with rosemary and tiger-lilies and sweet clove pinks, and heartsease and showers of roses (not over-cultivated) blooming all through the summer. And beyond the garden walls, on the side adjoining the park, the tall old elms look down upon the cottagers, and the doings of the great army of rooks—"Mr. Gladstone's canaries," as they are called at Hawarden—are of constant interest and importance in this village of few excitements and events.

Thus it happens that at first the sole interest of the place is centred in the castle, and in that glorious park which belongs almost as much to the village as to the Gladstone family, by reason of its great gates being nearly always wide open to one and all. But wait till you have lived in Hawarden village for a week, and your impression of its attractions will rise by leaps and bounds. Wait till the natives, having observed your doings for awhile, begin to account you a friend; till those under whose hospitable cottage-roof you may have been received await your home-coming at night-time, and invite you to sit in the old arm-chair of the spotless little kitchen, where the perfume of the tiny flower-garden comes in through the open doors and windows; till you are initiated in the joys and sorrows of the hour; till you have listened to the stories of Hawarden fifty years ago,



each one of which stories opens with the formula, "Now I'll tell ye"—; wait till every villager, as you pass his door in the morning, gives you a friendly greeting and honours you by treating you as a friend—and you will no longer think Hawarden an uninteresting or ugly village. To me it seemed, after a week, as if I had never come across a place so unaffectedly and gracefully primitive since years ago I was at Heligoland, where mine host and his lady, sitting in their cottage drawing-room in the pink dusk of the summer night, made inquiries as to whether I, hailing from the British Isles, was not an intimate friend of "the Browns in England, who lived next door to the church."

Hawarden hoped that Mr. Gladstone would be laid to rest amongst its dead in the churchyard, but that was not to be. So it cordially, nay proudly, accepted the nation's will that the Abbey should have his dust. But though the dust has gone, the spirit still haunts that quaint and old-world village on the Welsh borders. The church doors are always open. Here, in the dim red chancel, is the Gladstone pew. This, we are told, is the very prayer-book he used. It is an ancient tome, much worn, with large letters which to fading eyes would be very grateful. Close to Mr. Gladstone's seat is the shining eagle of brass upon whose extended wings, supported on the usual pedestal, rests the Bible whose lessons he was accustomed to read. They show you a cross let into one of the pew desks. There Archbishop Benson fell down in a fatal faint. A brass tablet affixed to an adjacent column informs the visitor of the fact.

How old this fabric is none can say with exactness, but yonder plate on the wall contains a list of rectors dating back for hundreds of years. What changes have taken place in this world since their voices rang within these ancient walls! But it is so still in the hot noontide that one is scarcely conscious of the life without. The cawing of the rooks which wheel their flight above the lofty elms and oaks in the rectory grounds; the chatter of the starlings overhead in the grey belfry tower; the rustling of the leafy boughs which overhang the open doors; the murmur of the soft summer wind; the hum of bees; the distant laugh of children in the meadows—these are the only sounds which speak of mortality.

In a little time this silence, so laden with solemn thoughts, becomes insupportable, and one goes quietly out and wanders for awhile amongst the crumbling tombstones,

stained with centuries of storm and sun; time has eaten out every letter; or moss and lichen have filled up the records of the past dwellers in Mr. Gladstone's village, who went to their graves mute and inglorious. There are sombre yews, churchyard shrubs in abundance; rank grass grows everywhere. A narrow, winding path brings you to the burying-ground of latter days, situated on an eminence which commands a lovely prospect of the Dee Valley, and the low hills over which hangs the smoke of Liverpool. It is a great sweep of sunlit verdure, with the famous sands of Dee to relieve it.

When Mr. Gladstone some years ago opened the bridge which crosses the river the story in the village goes that, pointing upwards at this spot on which I am now standing, he exclaimed with a lofty sweep of the arm: "There I hope to lie at rest." Here come creeping along two withered dames in white mob-caps, warming their old blood in the hot sun. They stop and croon about the day when Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone were married—how many years ago? Over fifty.

Here is the grave-digger—himself half-buried in a grave just by the spot where Mr. Gladstone would have lain—shovelling and holding a Yorick-like discussion with a pitman in his Sunday clothes. Something after this style the conversation runs:—

Pitman: "So they're taking him to Westminster Abbey!" bending over the grave.

Digger: "Aye," wiping his brow with the back of his hand, then bending down again to his work.

Pitman: "They didn't bury the Archbishop (Benson) in th' Abbey!"

Digger: "He were a greater mon than an archbishop," heaving a shovelful of gravel on to the heap, and picking out a cockle-shell or two

Pitman: "A greater mon than an archbishop! How's that? An archbishop is the head of the Church, and the Church is o'er all!"

Digger: "Why, he made the Archbishop an archbishop!"

Pitman: "But when he'd made the Archbishop he raised him o'er his own self, didn't he?"

Digger: "If he could make him he must have been a greater mon, I tell you."

Pitman: "No--no."

Digger: "Well, they're both i' Heaven now, and I know which will show hisself t'better mon o' two."

Exit Pitman.

Digger disappears in his pit.





\* THE SPOT WHERE MR. GLADSTONE WOULD HAVE LAIN.

The cronies, having solemnly stood by and listened to the suggestive dialogue, toddled away to admire the crown of lilies which lay on the sombre tombstone of Sir Stephen Glynne's grave under the old churchyard tree. But we lingered on, at the foot of the small grave that was being prepared for the burial of a village child. The grave-digger's genial face, as well as the sunlit peace of the spot, were more attractive just then than anything going on outside the gates of Mr. Gladstone's village cemetery. Presently, from out of the depths, the cheery voice came up again, explaining the whole art and science of gravedigging in a soil of yellow sand. It was easier work than digging out clay, to be sure, but you had to know what you were about, lest the walls of the little house you were building should fall in and you should be buried in the grave you had been digging for another.

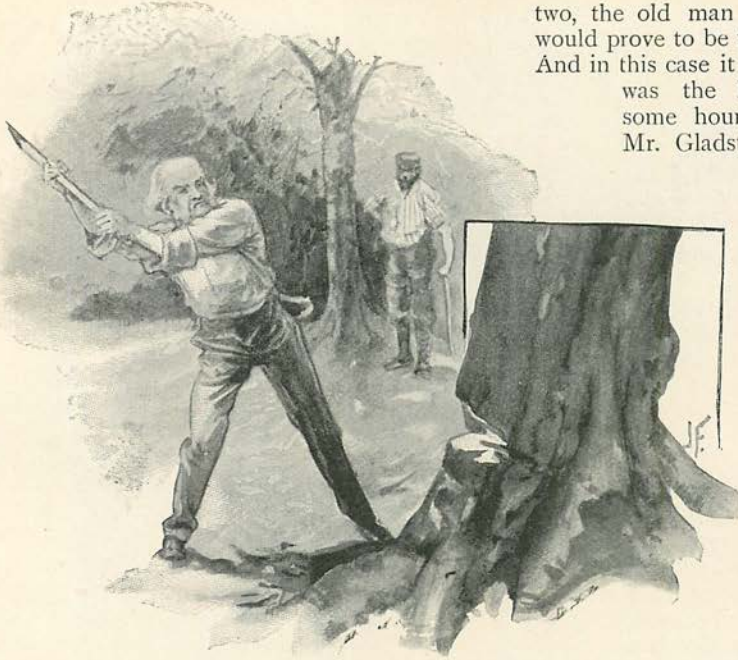
He had stories in plenty to tell about the strange things he and others before him had found embedded in the sandy soil. Years, years ago a great crucifix of black oak had been dug out, and he himself found pieces of ancient oak even now. Then there were bits of prehistoric pottery, fashioned, no doubt, by the children of a thousand years ago. Here, indeed, in this spade of sand, there was a piece of the very oak he was a-telling of, and in the afternoon, when we returned to gaze upon the muffled bells while the grave-digger tolled the minute bell, he presented me with a fragment of ancient earthenware, another of the treasures to be dug up in Hawarden Churchyard.

Unlike the natives of some districts in the

North, the inhabitants of Hawarden are easily persuaded into a friendly chat. You have but to suggest a subject of local interest, and you need have no fear of a rebuff. At the time when we were at Hawarden, the all-absorbing interest was, of course, that of Mr. Gladstone's life and death. Chiefly, however, it was of his life they spoke, of the point of view from which they knew him, which was very different from the point of view of the wide world. They mourned not so much the statesman and the deep thinker, but their "old gentleman," the chief villager, who "had no nonsense about him," and whose doings when he was at home and about amused and interested every member of the community.

Our grave-digger, leaning on his spade, deep in the grave, and looking up at us with the perspiration streaming down his bronzed, handsome face, pointed to the old trees in the rectory grounds, over there, behind the church. That was the only place where he had ever known Mr. Gladstone to be beaten when he was cutting down a tree. Yes, before he became a grave-digger he was a woodman on the estate, and hadn't the old gentleman and he done many and many a job together? Mr. Gladstone would select a tree, and then he would set to work without





"HEWING AWAY WITHOUT A WORD."

any assistance whatever, going at it with a vigour and determination as if he was a-fighting of an enemy. For hours and hours this would go on, the woodman working near by, Mr. Gladstone hewing away without a word, without a pause, whack! whack! whack! chips flying, the tree-top in a tremble, the wood-cutter in shirt-sleeves, with lips compressed, eyes bent steadily on his work, and grey locks ruffled by the breeze.

But one day Mr. Gladstone had a new experience. There was an old holly-bush in the rectory grounds, and this was to be done away with. It was an ugly old thing, with a thick, gnarled trunk. Now holly-wood, you must understand, is the nastiest stuff to deal with in the woodman's experience, and even at best it is a tough job to get an old holly-tree down. That there old stager in the rectory garden was wuss than anything either the amateur or the professional wood-cutter had ever met. Bless the ugly thing, it wouldn't and it wouldn't come down! The sound of Mr. Gladstone's axe rang steadily through the air, but to the ear of the connoisseur the sound told a story of hard, knotty, obstinate wood. He dared not offer advice—the old gentleman was not of the sort that you could make free with, though he never "put on side"—but he waited about, and wondered which of the

two, the old man or the old shrub, would prove to be the more obstinate. And in this case it was the wood that was the hardest, for, after some hours of steady work, Mr. Gladstone put down his axe, called his man, and confessed, with a grim smile, that the holly-tree was too much for him. They managed it between them.

Eh, he was a masterful man, was Mr. Gladstone, and, mind you, he was master in his own house as well as outside. Not but that Mrs. Gladstone had a wonderful influence over him. If she

wished for a thing, the old gentleman would let it be, and his ladies arranged nearly everything in and about the castle as they thought best. He liked it: it allowed him to devote himself entirely to his own work. All the same, once an arrangement made, it must be kept to the minute. If the carriage was ordered for three o'clock, Mr. Gladstone expected it to be at the door exactly at three. If it was five minutes late, out would come the order that it could go back to the stables. It was not required that day. Or the rest of the party must drive out alone. Mr. Gladstone meant to drive at three, and since he could not do that he was not going at all.

But don't you make a mistake and think because he was a bit masterful that he was not as pleasant a companion as you could wish for any day. The grave-digger knew better. Over at the further end of the village a little coffee-house invites the temperate into its cool, clean parlour. The grave-digger's missus presides over it—more power to her! And one day, shortly after it was opened, would you believe it but that a whole party of the castle people came driving up to the door! There was Lady Grosvenor, and Mr. Gladstone's daughter, Mrs. Drew, and ever so many more swells, and there, bless me! there was the old gentleman himself. They all came in; they all



wanted coffee, and the missus had her hands full, I can tell you. Didn't they just make themselves at home, laughing and joking, and thinking everything so nice, and looking over the whole place, while waiting for their refreshments! And when the coffee was ready, and they were just going to sit down to it, there was no Mr. Gladstone to be found. Where in the world had he gone? What had become of him? While they were all calling for him, his voice came up from the kitchen, saying that he had found out the best place in the whole house, and he was going to stick to it! And there he sat, in the wooden arm-chair in the kitchen, a-talking to the missus just as if it

were few. Now a large staff of operators from Liverpool had taken possession of it and fitted up their mystic apparatus in every corner, even in the private apartments of Mr. Jones, the postmaster. At night, when dozens of journalists flooded it with their thousands and thousands of words detailing the news of the day to every part of the globe, the scene often beggared description. At the counter the chief of the staff received each dispatch, put his mark to it, and handed it over to be forwarded. In a minute you saw the words converted into holes which rather resembled a blind man's book printed on paper tape. Miles and miles of it lay in coils upon the floor, awaiting its turn to be

put into the mouth of the transmitter which forwards it automatically. Click, click—thump, thump—thump—from a score and more of instruments: never before had that little post-office heard such a din and clatter! Between nine o'clock and midnight this was *the* sight of the village, which congregated in the street without and hung at the windows, peering in at the eerie sight. The candles, guttering in necks of bottles, the lamps, which lighted the sweating operators, cast upon the faces of the spectators a lurid light

which gave them quite a ghostly look. Nevertheless, there were odd spells when the wires rested. This was generally in the small hours of the morning. It was during one of these, about 1 a.m., that the weary postmaster told me how Mr. Gladstone once stopped the Irish Mail. The story sounded quite melodramatic, I can assure you. It happened a good many years ago, when communication was not so easy as it is now, that Mr. Gladstone received a command to see the Queen. What the nature of the business we will leave to conjecture. We must suppose it to have been urgent. At all events it was found that unless he travelled



"THERE HE SAT IN THE WOODEN ARM-CHAIR A-TALKING TO THE MISSUS."

was you, and he took his coffee there, and enjoyed hisself. And wasn't the missus just pleased with the old gentleman!

During the memorable week in which Mr. Gladstone died the little village post-office served as the symbol of the throbbing heart of the great world without. Hawarden itself was as peaceful and silent as could be, and no stranger passing through it would ever have thought that the eyes of the globe were gazing sadly upon it. But within the four walls of this humble cottage—for it is no more—the click of the telegraph instruments seldom ceased. On ordinary occasions it is scarcely necessary to say that the calls upon



by the Irish Mail his arrival in London would be inconveniently delayed. Accordingly Mr. Gladstone drove to the nearest signal-station, climbed into the box, and asked the man in charge to stop the mail. Said the signalman: "No, sir; I'm afraid I can't." "Oh!" replied Mr. Gladstone, took thought for a moment, and then went on: "Which is the lever?" "This." "Is that her coming?" "Yes." And down went the lever, to a reluctant standstill came the Irishman, and in got Mr. Gladstone. I heard the story again, this time from a real signalman. It is well proved, at all events.

The landlady of the Glynne Arms tells a very amusing story of an incident which took place in the large dining-room of that establishment, so well known to tourists and hero-worshippers who make the pilgrimage to Mr. Gladstone's village. It is but a barely-furnished chamber, with a couch or two, a substantial sideboard, a large number of rather hard chairs, a table of great length, a few prints, portraits and so on, and a clock. From the clock hangs the tale of the landlady. Once upon a time—the exact date is of no consequence—Mr. Gladstone was presiding at a large local dinner-party, when the diners were mostly tenants, farmers and villagers. After the dinner it is needless to say that Mr. Gladstone rose to address them. You must imagine that he had wound his hearers well up, when suddenly, in the midst of a most sonorous and eloquent passage, another speaker, who was also, alas! well wound up, interrupted him. "Cuck-oo," it said. "Cuck-oo—cuck-oo." He had forgotten what o'clock it was, but the audacious bird proceeded amidst an awful hush which had come over the honest, stolid faces gathered round the hospitable board of the Glynne Arms. All of them were turned towards the great statesman in dismay. Then somebody tittered. Even Mr. Gladstone, after a stern look at the speaker, smiled. Then, with a twinkle in his eyes, he waited in silence, still regarding the cuckoo as much as to say: "Gentlemen, let us hear what he has got to say." The cuckoo might well have

disconcerted a man less skilled in dealing with hecklers, ejaculations, rude noises, interruptions in and out of Parliament. This is not an allegory, full of symbolism, but a true story. Nevertheless, it is not difficult of application. I did not see the talkative bird. He may have been out of order again. But the chair in which Mr. Gladstone always sat at such festivities still remains in the possession of the landlady, who shows it with every sign of affectionate regard. It is a plain mahogany one, upholstered with black horsehair, hard, unornamental, and provided with arms. If they ever have a Gladstone museum in Mr. Gladstone's village it will deserve a conspicuous position. So, too, will the cuckoo, if it is alive. The above story, I am sorry to say, loses much of its value when put into cold print. The genial accents of our landlady are wanting, the dialect, half Lancashire, half Cheshire, with a dash of Welsh; the frequent gestures; the hearty laugh.

It was she who, standing candlestick in hand, told another one about the great man. The occasion was one of those gatherings of enthusiastic tourists—they call them "trippers" in those parts—who had come from far and near to hear an address from Mr. Gladstone on some popular subject or another. Mr. Gladstone was well accustomed to homage and admiration, which his great



"SHE FLUNG HER ARMS AROUND HIS NECK,"



gifts never failed to call forth, but he was just a *little* taken aback when a woman of the people—clothed chiefly in a blanket, if I remember aright, at all events in lowly and not too plentiful garments—suddenly approached the orator and flung her arms round his neck, imprinting a chaste kiss upon his brow, with a hearty “Bless thee, lad!” The story goes that both Mr. Gladstone and Mrs. Gladstone laughed heartily, and took care that the old dame was regaled.

One of the social centres in Hawarden village is the Glynne Arms Hotel. Right opposite the park gates it stands, “four-square to all the winds that blow,” with roses and laburnum and guelder roses winding round its front windows, and with a signboard wonderful to behold on the top of the pillared porch. Hams hang down from the ceiling in the bar, and before the great blazing kitchen fire a row of cats take up the best positions once the cooking of the day is over. The landlord of the Glynne Arms (long may he reign!) is somewhat of a “character.” First of all he is a strict teetotaller, and I would not care to be in the shoes of that member of his household whom “the boss” catches imbibing alcoholic drink. No, not even the innocent glass of ale is permitted. Another of his “peculiarities” is that, far and near on that country-side, mine host of the Glynne Arms is known as a powerful friend and protector of all dumb things. Inquire into the history of one of the dogs, and it is almost sure to turn out to be a tragedy, with an ending as happy as that of a fairy-tale. That ending invariably is: “And then father took him in, and here he has been ever since.” (I am quoting the brown-eyed daughter of the house.)

From barge and farm and foundry these dependents have come to stay at the Glynne Arms, and a merrier and more jovial army of domestic animals it would be hard to find than those whom you can see any day in the large square courtyard behind this village inn. The stables look out upon the yard; from each door there looks a sleek, fearless, spirited horse. Among them, self-satisfied and frisky, a comely donkey moves about. He was a present to Dorothy Drew, from one of her grandfather's friends and the little girl's admirers. Dorothy is not a child to be easily beaten by a donkey, but this specimen proved too much for her. Hence he was caused to join the domestic menagerie at the Glynne Arms, where he is in clover, physically and morally.

We were driving into Chester one sunny May morning, leaving sad and sorrowing Hawarden behind. On the box sat the son of mine host of the Glynne Arms, and between the shafts was a young, docile, high-spirited creature, which delighted visibly in his work. It is always interesting to “talk animals” with a member of the Glynne Arms' household: hence we talked horses, and were told stories of quick runs into Chester and elsewhere. Any of the young animals would do the six and a half miles in thirty-five minutes, and think nothing of it. And to look at the dapple-grey in front of us, stepping out with such evident pleasure in his work and pulling the reins to get on faster, we could well believe it.

“We did it in less than half an hour once, not long ago,” said our young driver, with a gay twinkle in his eye. Plainly, a good story lay behind that statement, and “How was that?” we asked accordingly. “Why, it was when Mr. John Morley was staying at the castle. He wanted to catch a train; if he missed it, there wasn't another that day, and it was important that he should get back to town. So we were told at the castle to put our quickest horse in and get there in time. The castle people knew that it was safe to give such an order to us, for my father would rather lose his best customer than over-drive one of his animals. He'll have none of that sort of thing done to the creatures that serve him well. But we have a young horse—no, not this one, a better one for speed—that would do it easily, and him we put in, and off we went. We got into Chester five minutes before the train left, and the animal hadn't so much as turned a hair. But Mr. Morley, he didn't like it, and said so, and a few days after the old gentleman had got to know about it, and grumbled a bit. Only, he never was unreasonable; we told him how it was, and that Mr. Morley was a bit nervous. He said no more, but smiled quietly to himself, and it was all right.

“Driven Mr. Gladstone? Why, bless you, of course I have. I drove him the last time he and Mr. Armitstead and that party from the castle went up the mountain. It was too far for the castle horses to go to the foot of the mountain, so our horses took the party. The old gentleman always talked—there wasn't a bit of pride in him. But he always talked about you and your affairs; never about things you didn't know anything about. How old were you? Were you a teetotaller, like father? What was your work? Were



you fond of horses? What breed were these horses? How long did they last with our work, and so on. Very quietly, but sharp, always all there and always friendly." And so we chatted on, went back from Mr. Gladstone to the Glyne Arms' horses and cattle, and the whip pointed to a distant field on the Hawarden estate.

"Father had an old horse shot there only the other day. He was twenty-six years old, and hadn't worked for some time. We never sell old horses. Not we. Father would do many things before he would sell an old slave who has been a good servant to him. They are pensioners as long as they can enjoy life, and when they get stiff, and can't take their food any more, a bullet is put through their heads, and in a minute they are dead. We had one old horse shot and buried there, a great pet, and for a long time we could not go near the place, none of us, for thinking of the poor old fellow. The people about here often joke about it, and say that field is our private burial-ground."

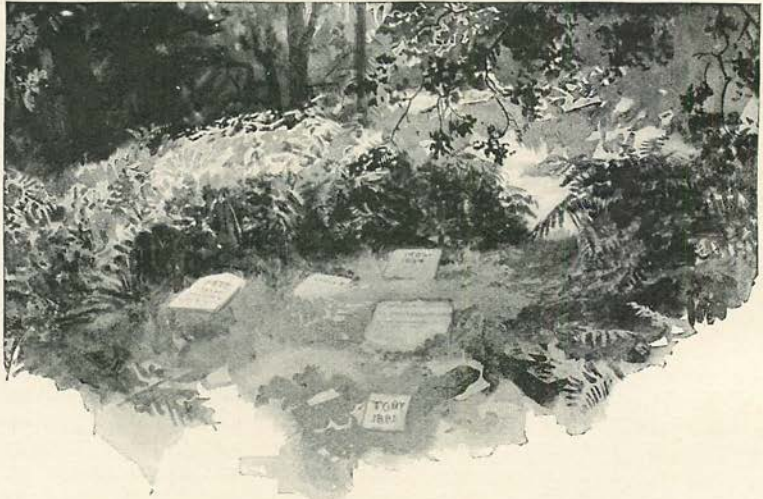
We had reached Chester, and the stories came to an end. But, *à propos* of private burial-grounds at Hawarden, there is one, deep in Hawarden Park, which deserves special mention in a description of Mr. Gladstone's home surroundings. The park, as I have said, is open to the public. I do not know of any park, private or public, in England, Scotland, or Ireland which is superior for natural beauty to Hawarden Park. Between the

hours when we were on duty at Hawarden, chronicling the events of the sad week last May, after the master of Hawarden "fell upon sleep," we took long rambles about the grounds, and each time we were struck anew by the glorious beauty of these hills and dells; these streamlets, lakes, and pasture-lands; these woods of splendid trees; these glades of all that is most lovely among our forest flowers and shrubs.

All the wide and well-kept carriage roads through Hawarden Park may be used by

the public. Only here and there a narrow foot-path marked "private" branches off, and these paths are all that the Gladstone family have reserved for their own use. By special permission we were allowed to roam about these footpaths, one of which leads to a tiny private graveyard. The setting sun dipped all the tree-tops into gold as we went up the hill to find the small hillock under which faithful little Petz, Mr. Gladstone's black Pomeranian and devoted, constant follower for the last ten years, was laid to sleep when he died a few weeks before his beloved master. The sheets of wild hyacinths grew like a blue veil over last year's dead bracken; the great old hawthorn trees, snow-white with blossoms, sent clouds of incense through the park; the pheasants were clucking, the rabbits feeding, the corn-crakes calling, and the thrushes singing. All things told of new life, and the golden sky with its pink cloudlets stretched in unearthly glory over this ideal English woodland scene.

And there, on the hill-side, in one of the



THE DOGS' CEMETERY, HAWARDEN PARK.

most silent and the most beautiful parts of the park, is the little dogs' graveyard where for many years past the pet dogs of the Gladstone family have been buried. A great old oak overshadows the spot, the ruins of the old castle are seen on the opposite hill, and down in the dale the rapid stream is gurgling its way along towards the waterfall and the fishponds. Is it profane that, looking around you, as you stand under the oak through the young foliage of which the golden light trickles upon the tiny graves beneath,



you quote, almost instinctively, the opening line of one of the hymns Mr. Gladstone loved so well?—"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin."

Over at the castle the master lay dead; the Union Jack was floating half-mast high from the ruined tower; the village, the country-side, the nation—nay, the civilized world—was in mourning for him, and here, in the very presence of death, there was nothing of the "sadness of farewell," only "peace, perfect peace." Mr. Gladstone's own friends felt it so; we, the strangers within the gate, could not help but feel it, and never more strongly than that May afternoon when we stood among the tiny graves on the hill-side.

There are quite a number of these small mounds, and over each of them is placed a simple granite stone with an inscription. One of these stones, the largest, dates back twenty years. It was placed there, in 1878, "in memory of three favourite dogs, who died within a few weeks of each other and are here buried." Mosses have crept round the stone, tall grasses wave over it, and the leverets play their baby games about it. It is getting somewhat difficult to make out the second part of the inscription on this stone, but we had the valuable assistance of an old village dame whose husband had been a woodman on the estate, and who knew every nook and corner in the park. She showed us, by example and precept (which, of course, we humbly followed), how by dint of a little rubbing and scouring the text might be laid bare. It was this: "When Thou hidest Thy face they are troubled, when Thou takest away their breath

they die, and are turned again to their dust."

Next, there is a small stone, with no other inscription than this: "Toby, 1881," but our friendly guide remembers Toby well. "She was a dear little dog, and a great pet with the ladies," she tells us, and then, by contrast, she points to another stone, on which the writing is still quite distinct. "Sheila. Died July 7th, 1886," and below, "Ask now the Reason, and they shall teach thee." Sheila, it seems, was one of the biggest

dogs that ever was made a pet of at Hawarden Castle, and "everybody was afraid of the creature," we learn. There is one other little gravestone. "Peggy, 1884," is engraved upon it. Then comes the grave of little Petz, Mr. Gladstone's constant companion during the last ten years of his life. How pretty it was to see him trotting at his master's heels through Hawarden Park, on the long, lonely, silent rambles which the two



MR. GLADSTONE AND PETZ.

took together. Petz, loveliest of small black Pomeranians, just bristled with importance and with pride. Where Mr. Gladstone was there Petz was also; in the Temple of Peace he lay at his feet, following you intruder with his keen, watchful eye. In the dining-room he expected his biscuit from the master's hand; in the drawing-room he reposed before the fire, in sociable mood; at St. Deniol's library, when Mr. Gladstone sat reading in the corner and no one dared disturb him, Petz, when he considered that the horses must be kept waiting no longer, pushed his little cold nose against the master's hand, and suggested an immediate adjournment of the sitting. Petz's vitality and energy

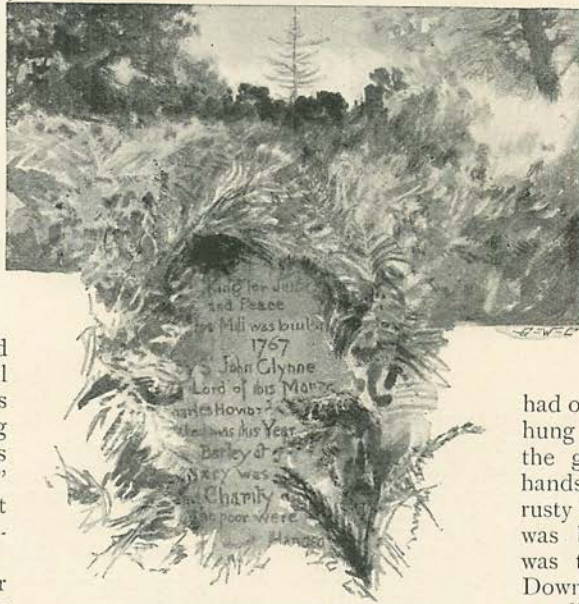


seemed inexhaustible, and now he lies at rest under that tiny hillock. When his dear master went away last autumn Petz began to pine and fret, and a few days before the dying man came back to his home the little dog lay down and died, and those who knew and loved him best say that it was of a broken heart the faithful creature died. Therefore, when Petz's headstone comes to be erected (it probably is erected by this time) it is to bear the inscription "Faithful unto Death."

This evening in May only a small wreath of moss lies on the hillock under the old oak, and someone has scattered a handful of blue hyacinths and rosy rhododendrons on the brown soil. A robin is singing in the white hawthorn, the sunset flames in the sky, and we leave the graveyard in its silent, sunny peace.

There is one other interesting tablet in Hawarden Park. Our friendly old lady, who was just as interested as ourselves in this expedition, took us down to it. It is in a spot of exquisite beauty. In the years which are no more a flour mill used to stand near by. Now there is only a rapid, rushing waterfall above the fish-ponds; a romantic dark walk under old yew trees; and a wealth of ferns and wild flowers all around. The stone stands upright against a grassy bank, in a living frame of ferns and cuckoo flowers, and with a clear, small streamlet singing its song as it runs along in front of this "sermon in stone." For such, indeed, it is, bearing the following inscription:—

"Trust in God for Bread, to the King for Justice, Protection, and Peace. This Mill was built A.D. 1767. By St. John Glynne, Bart., Lord of his Manor of Hawarden. Wheat was this year at 9 shillings, and barley at 6 shillings, a bushel, at great height, and Charity extensive. But the poor were starving."



AN INTERESTING TABLET IN HAWARDEN PARK.

Sir St. John Glynne, the millwright, and the mill itself are dust; the old stone remains generation after generation.

On one of those mournful days immediately after Mr. Gladstone's death I paid a visit to Mr. Bailey, builder and carpenter, who made the coffin. He was, naturally enough, very proud of his work, and took infinite pains to piece it together for me, discoursing upon his sombre art with infinite eloquence. Would that he could say that the oak had grown in Hawarden Park!—but, alas! it was foreign, though what country had the honour of producing it he knew not. To his simple workshop Mr. Gladstone had paid many a visit, stepping in just as a humble man might do, in the course of a walk. He was always curious, always interested. His call was, of course, always connected with some work which he wished to be carried out: there were bookshelves to be made, a writing-table to be altered, and so forth; and if he didn't come himself he often wrote. Mr. Bailey has some very minute autograph instructions amongst his Gladstone collections. Like all the residents in Mr. Gladstone's village, he is a hero-

worshipper. In the old days chips from the trees which the great man had cut down were greatly in demand. But Mr. Bailey has more curious relics than those. He very kindly showed me (for instance) a thin overcoat which Mr. Gladstone

had once worn. Thereby hung a tale. Holding the garment up in his hands, he pointed out a rusty patch which he said was blood. The story was that hurrying from Downing Street to keep a dinner engagement one evening Mr. Glad-

stone was knocked down by a hansom, with this result. He also had a flowered dressing-gown which had once covered that stalwart frame. And of photographs he had many. After we had looked at those he took me over to his relative's—



one Tom Bailey, as he is familiarly called. Tom, if I may also take the liberty, was the man who shot the cow which very nearly dispatched Mr. Gladstone. It was in the August of 1892 that an honest farmer, one Paul Jones, bought a cow at Chester Fair. Paul took the beast back to his farm at Pentrobin, whence, being of a wild and wandering nature, it escaped, and at length made its way into the Park at Hawarden. One afternoon it encountered Mr. Gladstone in an unfrequented glade through which he was walking. The cow regarded him with such threatening looks that he shook his stick at it: there was a mad rush; and in a moment he found himself on the ground with

with his gun he said he had been shooting winkles. The cow was hauled away, and a butcher who had purchased it from Paul Jones sent it up to Chester. Meanwhile Tom Bailey heard for the first time that the cow he had been asked to shoot had nearly killed Mr. Gladstone. Then did he post to Chester to secure as trophies the horns which had nearly become so famous throughout the whole wide world. He was so lucky as to get the hide and hoofs as well, and, with his booty in a bag, he dropped into an inn for refreshment. Two cattle dealers happened to be in the parlour at the time. When he told them what he had, one of them asked him what he would take for the

hide and hoofs. As he had only just given two guineas for it he said he would take a five-pound note. This offer was no sooner accepted than it occurred to him for the first time that the animal was worth much more as a speculation. Whilst turning over the matter in his mind a third person who had heard the conversation slipped out, and running to the butcher's shop bought the jaw-bone and the lower teeth of the poor mad cow. A general stampede followed, and in a very short time every pound of meat and bone had



"IN A MOMENT HE FOUND HIMSELF ON THE GROUND."

the snorting brute over him. It was well for him that the cow had crumpled horns and could not gore him. After a terrible minute or two the cow retreated a yard or two; up rose Mr. Gladstone and fled behind a tree awaiting a second attack. But it never came. The mad beast it was that ran. The matter was kept quiet, but word was sent to Tom Bailey's from the castle that a mad beast was roaming about. So he took his gun, and after hunting for some time discovered the animal lying in a patch of tall ferns, with only the top of its head visible. A bullet high in the forehead stunned it; another behind the shoulder settled it. That night when Tom was seen

been sold. Cow never sold so well before. Then did one Thompson, a cattle dealer at Denby, buy up the hide and hoofs from the other two who had purchased them from Tom Bailey, intending to stuff the beast and send it to the World's Fair in London. But, alas! Tom Bailey would part with neither horns nor skin of head, so his scheme ganged agley. They are now handsomely mounted in Tom Bailey's bar, and inclosed in a case of Hawarden oak for all the world to see.

*A propos*, I myself knew two veterans who indeed positively worshipped the Grand Old Man. One of these is Mr. Edward Hall, of the Covent Garden Opera House. Many a score of the very choicest





THE HEAD OF THE COW THAT ATTACKED MR. GLADSTONE,  
AND TOM BAILEY, WHO SHOT THE ANIMAL.

buttonholes has that gentleman conveyed long distances to his hero. The other was Simeon Shorter, a Birmingham blacksmith, who once made a pilgrimage to Mr. Gladstone's village with an axe of his own forging. He told me the story with his own lips some years ago.

Simeon was an ardent teetotaller, in spite of his hot work, and had corresponded with Mr. Gladstone upon total abstinence particularly for some years. One day it occurred to him to offer to his hero an axe of his own forging as a *bonâ fide* specimen of his own daily occupation, and also as symbolical of the action desirable to be taken with regard to the upas tree of society—that is, intoxicating drink. Mr. Gladstone thanked him for his kind thoughts, and expressed his willingness to accept the symbolical offering. Accordingly, Simeon forged the axe of solid steel, had engraved upon it the Gladstone arms, the Staffordshire knot, and, on the reverse side, a couplet from one of his poems, for Simeon was—perhaps is still—one of the thousands of minor poets whose songs are for the air and the closet.

'Twas Vulcan wrought an axe of solid steel,  
For wise Minerva's cautious arm to wield.

In due time Simeon took the train to Chester, and thence trudged, glittering axe on shoulder, to Hawarden. When he reached the lodge gates he was so struck by the beauty of the park—which recently received such abundant recognition from the picturesque gentlemen of the Press—that he burst into poetry, also inspired by the thought that he was himself treading in the very footsteps of the Grand Old Man. His muse awoke as :—

I stood and mused bewild'rd as I viewed  
The classic gash inflicted deep beneath the bark  
By magic arm, and Herculean nerve and brain,  
As wise Minerva struck the timely fatal blow,  
And Jove in thunder spake applause through  
all the Heavens—

His loudest echoes as they rolled from pole to  
pole—

Which then awoke me as I stroll'd and stood  
before

The open'd classic gate ; near towers majestic  
Reared their ancient head. I onward moved  
A step or two, then found myself within  
The grand and noble castle yard.

Simeon told me the whole story one night in his cottage just outside Birmingham. Such enthusiasm as his does one good in these degenerate days. The

following dialogue took place between the two.

Mr. Gladstone (shaking hands heartily) :  
“ You are a working man from Birmingham. You have, I understand, brought me an axe of your own make of solid steel. I heartily thank you for it. I greatly respect the men of Birmingham. I am far advanced in years. I shall not do much more work.”

Simeon Shorter : “ The axe I bring, honoured sir, is the symbolical axe of solid steel I had promised. It has an oak handle, is of solid steel, with an engraved inscription upon it symbolical of retrospect, present, and prospective. Thus : The oak handle is symbolic of the wooden walls of Old England ; the solid steel the iron and steel present ; the Gladstone arms and Staffordshire knot the unity of nobility and labour expressed by the couplet.”

And thus ended the hero-worshipper's memorable interview and visit to Mr. Gladstone's Village. But one cannot go a yard or converse with any without hearing a tribute, simple enough no doubt, to the famous figure which will ever haunt this quiet and lovely spot.