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‘Enlarging the Text’: A Cultural
History of William Ewart Gladstone’s
Library and Reading

‘Thesis submitted in accordance with
the requirements of the University of
Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in
Philosophy by Ruth Clayton.’

March 2003

Ruth Clayton

‘“Enlarging the Text”: A Cultural History of William Ewart Gladstone’s Library and Reading’

This thesis explores Gladstone’s relationship with his book-collection and Library chronologically and thematically. It is interdisciplinary in scope and methodology. It is based primarily on study of Gladstone’s books and marginalia (preserved at Hawarden, North Wales) and integrates his reading and library ownership securely into our understanding of his life and career. ‘Enlarging the Text’, is a late quotation from Gladstone particularly appropriate to the thrust of the thesis. By it he referred to the persistent human desire to acquire and transmit knowledge. This study analyses Gladstone’s personal efforts to achieve this through the collection, use and eventual ‘public’ endowment of a library. The phrase refers both to this endeavour and the concomitant broadening of Gladstone’s mind, which I argue accompanied it. The thesis is divided into three sections: ‘Making the Reader’ (Chapters 1-3), ‘Transforming the Reader’ (Chapters 4-5) and ‘Enlarging the Text’ (Chapters 6-7).

Chapter One places Gladstone’s early book collecting and reading within the contexts of his family life and late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century society. Chapter Two presents a case study of Gladstone’s reading and reception of Sir Walter Scott and presents new insights into the significance of this textual relationship to his personal life, identity, nationality and understanding of political vocation. Chapter Three addresses the development and function of Gladstone’s private Library, principally located in Hawarden Castle. This chapter is concerned with issues of privacy and publicity, which is a central theme of the thesis as a whole, and concludes with discussion of Gladstone’s ‘forbidden’ reading and collecting outside the Temple of Peace.

Chapter Four deals with the events surrounding Gladstone’s first retirement in 1874-5. It looks in detail at the circumstances and meaning of Gladstone’s retirement, his uncertain status as an intellectual in politics and his continual struggle to decide whether his public vocation should best be lived out politically or theologically. It then seeks to explain how this statesman/scholar paradox was largely resolved in the years up to 1880. Chapter Five presents an analytical case study of Gladstone’s representation as a scholar and reader through visual imagery. It shows how Gladstone’s scholarly persona was subject to a multiplicity of ‘outside’ readings over the course of his life and conclusively demonstrates how his early unpopular image was visually reinvented (importantly by Gladstone himself) over the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Furthermore it constitutes a balance to the private, interior-focused sources, which are so fundamental to this project.

Chapter Six returns to the complex debate over Gladstone’s later religious attitudes. It questions previous characterisations of him as an ultra-orthodox religious dogmatist, which have both misrepresented his theological, ecclesiastical and epistemological views and have also made his foundation of St Deiniol’s Library extremely difficult to explain. It is argued that he is best described during his last years as a Liberal Catholic rather than as a High Churchman. The second part of the chapter provides fresh evidence for this through coverage of an important but previously overlooked aspect of the St Deiniol’s foundation: the impact of Gladstone’s relationship with the Liberal-Catholic Anglican *Lux Mundi* group, active in the Oxford of the 1880s. The final chapter discusses the circumstances and motivations behind Gladstone’s decision to found his Residential Library in rural North Wales and highlights the difficulties he faced in making this personal and practical contribution to the Liberal Catholic movement.

In summary, this thesis raises the profile of Gladstone’s Library as an historical source. It provides the first in-depth chronological and thematic study of Gladstone’s lifetime of book collecting and library building. It revises and fully contextualises the history and significance of St Deiniol’s Library, integrating it within the broader context of Gladstone’s intellectual and religious life. It offers a significant new interpretation of Gladstone’s later theology and presents a fresh perspective on the Gladstone ‘myth’ through study of visual representation and analysis of his intellectual and scholarly persona.

**To My Family
and
The Staff of St Deiniol's Library**

Turning now to the title of this paper, I remind the reader that the history of which it speaks is not the limited and fragmentary record commonly known under that name, but is nothing less than the sum total of human life and human experience, as lived and as gathered on the surface of the globe, within the lines already laid down. And here arises my concluding question. If in history, thus understood, there is an unity, should there not be a reflection of that unity in study?...Each writer is bettering (if he be not worsening) the thought, the frame, or the experience of man, upon the subject on which he writes, works, or teaches; he is enlarging the text; he is extending the bounds of the common inheritance.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE¹

Statues more or less representative of him have been reared here and there, but the books of St Deiniol's tell more of the kind of man William Ewart Gladstone was than could any sculpted marble or storied brass.

JAMES CAPES STORY²

¹ W. E. Gladstone, 'Universitas Hominum: Or, the Unity of History', *North American Review* 373 (December 1887), 589-602, pp. 601-2.

² James Capes Story, *The Hawarden Temple of Peace: A Description of St. Deiniol's Library, Founded by the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone* (Hawarden: William Bell Jones, The Post Office, 1905), p. 10.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations
 Acknowledgments
 List of Abbreviations

INTRODUCTION ❖ READING GLADSTONE READING 1

- Introducing Gladstone the Reader
- 1 Historiography
- 2 Methodology
- 3 Sources
 - 3.1 The Gladstone Diaries
 - 3.2 The St Deiniol's Collection
 - 3.3 The Gladstone Marginalia
- 4 Structure

SECTION ONE: MAKING THE READER

CHAPTER ONE ❖ THE GENTLEMAN'S INHERITANCE 1809-1839 23

- Introduction: Gladstone's Library in Context
- 1 Bibliomania in the Family
 - 1.1 Sir John Gladstone, 'the Founder'
 - 1.2 Anne Robertson Gladstone
 - 1.3 The Gladstone Children
- 2 'Rt. Hon. W. Gladstone, MP, Librarian': (Self) Knowledge and Identity
 - 2.1 Education, Obsession and the Beginnings of a Collection
 - 2.2 The Library as an Educational Resource
 - 2.3 Constructing an Epistemology: Gladstone's Concept of Study and his Reading of Locke
- Conclusion

CHAPTER TWO ❖ GLADSTONE, SCOTT AND 'SCOTTISHNESS' 56

- Introduction
- 1 Reconstructing the Scottian Frame of Reference
 - 1.1 Gladstone's Reading of Scott: An Overview
 - 1.2 Scott, Scottishness and the Formation of Identity
- 2 Reception: The Meaning of Scott
 - 2.1 Gladstone's Literary Estimation of Scott
 - 2.2 Scholarship, Self Education and Identification with the Scottian Hero
- 3 Appropriation: The Public Legacy of Scott
 - 3.1 Communicating Cumulative Knowledge
 - 3.2 Nationality, Politics and Public Association with Scott
- Conclusion

CHAPTER THREE ❖ GLADSTONE'S PRIVATE LIBRARY

88

- Introduction: The Search for Peace
- 1 The 'Inexorable Spirit of Collection'
 - 1.1 The Collection of Gladstone's Private Library
 - 1.2 The Process of Collection
 - 1.3 The Meaning of Collection
- 2 Collecting becomes Collection
 - 2.1 Housing, Organising and Cataloguing
 - 2.2 Organisation
- 3 The Temple of Peace
 - 3.1 Inside the Temple
 - 3.2 Outside the Temple
- Conclusion

SECTION TWO: TRANSFORMING THE READER

CHAPTER FOUR ❖ THE REAL MR. GLADSTONE? 1874-80

133

- Introduction
- 1 'Recollection and Retirement'
- 2 Becoming the Hermit of Hawarden: The First Retirement and the Sale of Books
- 3 The Meaning of Retirement
- 4 Independence of Solitude in the Heart of Midlothian
- 5 'The Spectacles of Books': Why was Gladstone jarred by *Middlemarch*?
- Conclusion

CHAPTER FIVE ❖ POLITICAL LOTUS EATER TO GRAND OLD BOOKMAN: THE CHANGING REPRESENTATION OF GLADSTONE THE READER

154

- Introduction
- 1 The Political Lotus Eater: Young Gladstone and Romantic Interiority
 - 1.1 Men of Letters and Scholarship in Victorian Society
- 2 From People's William to Grand Old Man
 - 2.1 The People's William
 - 2.2 The Heroism of Brain Work and the Rehabilitation of Scholarship
 - 2.3 The Hero Woodcutter
 - 2.4 The Powerful Reader: Autonomy, Withdrawal and Innovation
- 3 The Body in the Library: Death and the Transference of Knowledge
 - 3.1 Private Post Mortems?
 - 3.2 Rest in (the Temple of) Peace
- Conclusion

SECTION THREE: 'ENLARGING THE TEXT'

CHAPTER SIX ❖ GLADSTONE, LIBERAL THOUGHT AND <i>LUX MUNDI</i>	182
Introduction	
1 Gladstone and Religion	
1.1	The Great Christian Statesman?
1.2	The Problems of Analysis
1.3	Gladstone and Broad Church Ideas
1.4	Liberalism and Catholicism
1.5	Gladstone: A Liberal Catholic?
2 Gladstone and the <i>Lux Mundi</i> Group	
2.1	Charles Gore
2.2	Edward Stuart Talbot
Conclusion	
CHAPTER SEVEN ❖ ST DEINIOL'S LIBRARY: LIBERAL CATHOLICISM IN PRACTICE?	215
Introduction	
1 A Liberal Catholic Institution	
1.1	Regeneration or Memorialisation?
1.2	'The Meditated Foundation': A Brief Chronology
1.3	The Library and the Cultural Organisation of Knowledge
1.4	Future Plans
2 The 'Difficult and Critical Part of the Undertaking': The Perils of Practical Liberal Catholicism	
2.1	The Location of the Library
2.2	The Question of Community
2.3	A Question of Liberalism: Religious or Political?
Conclusion	
CONCLUSION	245
BIBLIOGRAPHY	250

**THE FOLLOWING PARTS OF THIS THESIS HAVE BEEN REDACTED
FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS:**

Fig. 0.1. John Tenniel, 'Critics', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 14 May 1870.

Fig. 0.2. Gladstone's Annotation Key, February 1836

Fig. 1.1. Thomas Hargreaves, *William and Helen Gladstone* (c. 1816).

Fig. 1.2. Alexander Munro's Sketch of John and Anne Gladstone's Memorial, Fasque, 1854

Fig. 1.3. Alexander Munro's Sketch for John and Anne Gladstone's Memorial, Fasque, 1854. (Later Version).

Fig. 1.4. Alexander Munro, *The Gladstone Memorial, Fasque* (1854).

Fig. 1.5. *The Library at Fasque* (2002)

Fig. 2.1. John Tenniel, 'Raising the "Fiery Cross." Midlothian, August, 1884', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 30 August 1884

Fig. 2.2. Harry Furniss, 'The Grand Old Campaigner in Scotland', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 25 October 1890. (Detail).

Fig. 2.3. Engraving after Raeburn's *Sir Walter Scott*, in the Temple of Peace

Fig. 3.1. *Exterior of the Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle* (n.d.)

Fig. 3.2. *Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle* (c. 1880)

Fig. 3.3. *The Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle* (1999)

Fig. 3.4. Moyniham, *Bust of Lord Beaconsfield*

Fig. 3.5. Alexander Munro, *Paolo and Francesca* (1853).

Fig. 3.6. William Dyce, *Lady with Coronet of Jasmine* (1859)

Fig. 5.1. William Bradley, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1839)

Fig. 5.2. Antonio Canova, *Venus Italica*

Fig. 5.3. W. H. Cubley, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1841)

Fig. 5.4. H. B., 'Another Corn-Law Caricature – "The New Christmas Pantomime"', 1845

Fig. 5.5. William Bradley, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1841)

Fig. 5.6. John Lucas, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1843)

Fig. 5.7. 'Holiday Occupations of the Gladstone Ministry', *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 9 August 1873

Fig. 5.8. 'Far from the Madding Crowd', *Judy*, 27 January 1875

Fig. 5.9. 'Goodbye!' *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 30 January 1875

Fig. 5.10. 'Arcades Ambol!' *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 14 April 1877

Fig. 5.11. 'A Terrible Threat!' *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 11 October 1884

Fig. 5.12. William Currey, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1877)

Fig. 5.13. William Currey, *William Ewart Gladstone and William Henry Gladstone* (1877)

Fig. 5.14. William Currey, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1877)

Fig. 5.15. *Gladstone and Family Woodcutting* (n.d.)

Fig. 5.16. Ford Madox Brown, *Work* (1852-65)

Fig. 5.17. Sydney Prior Hall, *Gladstone Reading the Lesson in Hawarden Church* (1892)

Fig. 5.18. Sydney Prior Hall, *Gladstone Reading in the Temple of Peace* (n.d.)

Fig. 5.19. Sydney Prior Hall, *Gladstone Reading in the Temple of Peace* (Watercolour Study) (n.d.)

Fig. 5.20. John McClure Hamilton, *Gladstone in the Temple of Peace* (Pastel Study) (1890)

Fig. 5.21. *Gladstone Editing Butler in the Temple of Peace* (n.d.)

Fig. 5.22. Prince Troubetskoi, *Gladstone in Downing Street* (n.d.)

Fig. 5.23. *Gladstone in the Temple of Peace* (c. 1885)

Fig. 5.24. 'Library, Hawarden', *Black & White*, Memorial Number, May 1898

Fig. 5.25. William Blake Richmond, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Pencil Sketch) (1898)

Fig. 5.26. William Blake Richmond, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Chalk and Pastel Study) (1898)

Fig. 5.27. William Blake Richmond, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Chalk and Pastel Study) (1898)

Fig. 5.28. G. Watmough Webster, *Room at Hawarden in which Mr. Gladstone Died* (1898)

Fig. 5.29. J. H. Spencer, *Gladstone laid out in the Temple of Peace* (1898)

Fig. 5.30. J. H. Spencer, *Gladstone laid out in the Temple of Peace* (1898)

Fig. 6.1. 'The Aged Reader' (1898)

Fig. 7.1. Plan showing the 'Tin Tabernacle' with the new Memorial Library and Residence, Douglas and Minshull (Architects), (1906)

Fig. 7. 2. *The Exterior of the 'Tin Tabernacle'* (1890)

Fig. 7.3. *The Interior of the 'Tin Tabernacle' (Humanity Room) and the First Permanent Warden, G. C. Joyce* (n.d.)

Fig. 7.4. *The Interior of the 'Tin Tabernacle' (Divinity Room)* (n.d.)

Fig. 7.5. Plan of the 'Tin Tabernacle' based on Gladstone's Dalmeny Memorandum

Fig. 7.6. *The Seventeenth-Century Grammar School and Master House which became the Hostel to the Library* (c. 1890)

Fig. 7.7. 'St Deiniol's Hostel: The Common Room' (1896)

Fig. 7.8. 'St Deiniol's Hostel: The Dining Room' (1896)

Fig. 7.9. 'St Deiniol's Hostel: The Prayer Room' (1896)

Fig. 7.10. 'St Deiniol's Library: The Warden's Room' (1896)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. No.	Description and Source	Following
Fig. 0.1	John Tenniel, 'Critics', <i>Punch, or the London Charivari</i> , 14 May 1870. Source: St Deiniol's Library.	p. 5
Fig. 0.2	Gladstone's Annotation Key, February 1836. Source: St Deiniol's Library. Photograph: the author.	p. 14
Fig. 1.1	Thomas Hargreaves, <i>William and Helen Gladstone</i> (c. 1816). Source: S. G. Checkland, <i>The Gladstones: A Family Biography 1764-1851</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), between pp. 64-5.	p. 23
Fig. 1.2	Alexander Munro's Sketch for John and Anne Gladstone's Memorial, Fasque, 1854. Source: FRO, GG 450.	p. 23
Fig. 1.3	Alexander Munro's Sketch for John and Anne Gladstone's Memorial, Fasque, 1854. (Later Version). Source: FRO, GG 450.	p. 31
Fig. 1.4	Alexander Munro, <i>The Gladstone Memorial, Fasque</i> (1854). Source: FRO, GG 450.	p. 31
Fig. 1.5	<i>The Library at Fasque</i> (2002). Photograph: Anne Isba.	p. 46
Fig. 2.1	John Tenniel, 'Raising the "Fiery Cross." Midlothian, August, 1884', <i>Punch, or the London Charivari</i> , 30 August 1884. Source: St Deiniol's Library.	p. 85
Fig. 2.2	Harry Furniss, 'The Grand Old Campaigner in Scotland', <i>Punch, or the London Charivari</i> , 25 October 1890. (Detail). Source: St Deiniol's Library.	p. 85
Fig. 2.3	Engraving after Raeburn's <i>Sir Walter Scott</i> , in the Temple of Peace. Source: Sir William Gladstone, Hawarden Castle. Photograph: the author.	p. 87
Fig. 3.1	<i>Exterior of the Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle</i> ([n.d.]) Source: FRO.	p. 100
Fig. 3.2	<i>Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle</i> (c. 1880). Source: FRO.	p. 100
Fig. 3.3	<i>Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle</i> (1999). Photograph: the author.	p. 107
Fig. 3.4	Moynihan, <i>Bust of Lord Beaconsfield</i> . Source: Sir William Gladstone, Hawarden Castle. Photograph: the author.	p. 107
Fig. 3.5	Alexander Munro, <i>Paolo and Francesca</i> (1853). Source: Birmingham City Art Gallery.	p. 122
Fig. 3.6	William Dyce, <i>Lady with Coronet of Jasmine</i> (1859). Source: Aberdeen Art Gallery.	p. 125
Fig. 5.1	William Bradley, <i>William Ewart Gladstone</i> (1839). Source: Sir William Gladstone, Hawarden Castle. Photograph: FRO.	p. 154
Fig. 5.2	Antonio Canova, <i>Venus Italica</i> . Source: Corbis.com.	p. 154
Fig. 5.3	W. H. Cubley, <i>William Ewart Gladstone</i> (1841). Source: Alfred F. Robbins, <i>The Early Public Life of William Ewart Gladstone, Four Times Prime Minister</i> (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1894), frontispiece.	p. 155

- Fig. 5.4 H. B., 'Another Corn-Law Caricature – "The New Christmas Pantomime"', 1845. Source: *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* ed. by Sir Wemyss Reid (London: Cassell & Co. Ltd, 1899), p. 337. p. 155
- Fig. 5.5 William Bradley, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1841). Source: Eton College. Photograph: Andrew Robinson. p. 156
- Fig. 5.6 John Lucas, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1843). Source: David Williamson, *Gladstone: the Man: A Non-political Biography*, 2nd edn (London: James Bowden, 1898), between pages 60-1. p. 156
- Fig. 5.7 'Holiday Occupations of the Gladstone Ministry', *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 9 August 1873. Source: FRO. p. 163
- Fig. 5.8 'Far from the Madding Crowd', *Judy*, 27 January 1875. Source: St Deiniol's Library. p. 163
- Fig. 5.9 'Goodbye!' *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 30 January 1875. Source: St Deiniol's Library. p. 164
- Fig. 5.10 'Arcades Ambol' *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 14 April 1877. Source: St Deiniol's Library. p. 164
- Fig. 5.11 'A Terrible Threat!' *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 11 October 1884. Source: St Deiniol's Library. p. 164
- Fig. 5.12 William Currey, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1877). Source: NPG. p. 166
- Fig. 5.13 William Currey, *William Ewart Gladstone and William Henry Gladstone* (1877). Source: FRO. p. 166
- Fig. 5.14 William Currey, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1877). Source: FRO. p. 166
- Fig. 5.15 *Gladstone and Family Woodcutting* ([n.d.]) Source: FRO. p. 166
- Fig. 5.16 Ford Madox Brown, *Work* (1852-65). Source: Manchester City Art Gallery. p. 168
- Fig. 5.17 Sydney Prior Hall, *Gladstone Reading the Lesson in Hawarden Church* (1892). Source: NPG. p. 168
- Fig. 5.18 Sydney Prior Hall, *Gladstone Reading in the Temple of Peace* ([n.d.]) Source: NPG. p. 168
- Fig. 5.19 Sydney Prior Hall, *Gladstone Reading in the Temple of Peace* (Watercolour Study) ([n.d.]) Source: NPG. p. 168
- Fig. 5.20 John McClure Hamilton, *Gladstone in the Temple of Peace* (Pastel Study) (1890). Source: Sir William Gladstone, Hawarden Castle. Photograph: the author. p. 170
- Fig. 5.21 *Gladstone Editing Butler in the Temple of Peace* ([n.d.]) Source: FRO. p. 170
- Fig. 5.22 Prince Troubetskoi, *Gladstone in Downing Street* ([n.d.]) Source: SNPG. p. 172
- Fig. 5.23 *Gladstone in the Temple of Peace* (c. 1885). Source: FRO. p. 172
- Fig. 5.24 'Library, Hawarden', *Black & White*, Memorial Number, May 1898. Source: FRO. p. 173
- Fig. 5.25 William Blake Richmond, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Pencil Sketch) (1898). Source: NPG. p. 173
- Fig. 5.26 William Blake Richmond, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Chalk and Pastel Study) (1898). Source: Sir William Gladstone, Hawarden Castle. Photograph: the author. p. 176

- Fig. 5.27 William Blake Richmond, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Chalk and Pastel Study) (1898). Source: Sir William Gladstone, Hawarden Castle. Photograph: the author. p. 176
- Fig. 5.28 G. Watmough Webster, *Room at Hawarden in which Mr. Gladstone Died* (1898). Source: FRO. p. 176
- Fig. 5.29 J. H. Spencer, *Gladstone laid out in the Temple of Peace* (1898). Source: FRO, GG 1983. p. 177
- Fig. 5.30 J. H. Spencer, *Gladstone laid out in the Temple of Peace* (1898). Source: FRO, GG 1983. p. 177
- Fig. 6.1 'The Aged Reader'. Source: *William Ewart Gladstone* [Illustrated Memorial Pamphlet], (Bristol: J Hepworth & Son Ltd, 1898). p. 212
- Fig. 7.1 Plan showing the 'Tin Tabernacle' with the new Memorial Library and Residence, Douglas and Minshull (Architects), 1906. Source: St Deiniol's Library. p. 220
- Fig. 7.2 *The Exterior of the 'Tin Tabernacle'* (1890). Source: FRO. p. 220
- Fig. 7.3 *The Interior of the 'Tin Tabernacle' (Humanity Room) and the first permanent Warden, G. C. Joyce* ([n.d.]) Source: FRO. p. 221
- Fig. 7.4 *The Interior of the 'Tin Tabernacle' (Divinity Room)* ([n.d.]) Source: FRO. p. 221
- Fig. 7.5 Plan of the 'Tin Tabernacle' based on Gladstone's Dalmeny Memorandum. Source: the author. p. 221
- Fig. 7.6 *The Seventeenth-Century Grammar School and Master House which became the Hostel to the Library* (c. 1890). Source: FRO. p. 243
- Fig. 7.7 'St Deiniol's Hostel: The Common Room'. Source: Hulda Friederichs, *In the Evening of his Days: A Study of Mr. Gladstone in Retirement, with Some Account of St. Deiniol's Library and Hostel*, Westminster Gazette Library (London: Westminster Gazette, 1896), p. 138. p. 243
- Fig. 7.8 'St Deiniol's Hostel: The Dining Room'. Source: *In the Evening of his Days* (1896), p. 139. p. 243
- Fig. 7.9 'St Deiniol's Hostel: The Prayer Room'. Source: *In the Evening of his Days* (1896), p. 141. p. 243
- Fig. 7.10 'St Deiniol's Library: The Warden's Room'. Source: *In the Evening of his Days* (1896), p. 122. p. 243

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Some of the material in the Introduction and Chapter Two, concerning Gladstone's annotation key and reading of John Locke's philosophy, has already been published in *Notes and Queries* in a different form and is reproduced with permission here.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMG	Anne Mackenzie Gladstone, sister
ARG	Anne Robertson Gladstone, mother
BL GP	British Library, The Gladstone Papers [Additional Manuscripts 44086-44835]
CG	Catherine Gladstone, wife
EST	Edward Stuart Talbot, warden of Keble College, Oxford and nephew by marriage
FRO	Flintshire Record Office, Hawarden
G	William Ewart Gladstone
GD	M. R. D. Foot and H. G. C. Matthew, eds., <i>The Gladstone Diaries: With Prime Ministerial Correspondence</i> , 14 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968-96)
GG	The Glynne-Gladstone Manuscripts, Flintshire Record Office, Hawarden
HJG	Helen Jane Gladstone, sister
HNG	Henry Neville Gladstone, son
JG	Sir John Gladstone
NPG	National Portrait Gallery
PMP	J. Brooke and M Sorensen, eds., <i>The Prime Minister's Papers: W. E. Gladstone</i> , 4 vols (London: HMSO, 1971)
RG	Robertson Gladstone, brother
SEG	Stephen Edward Gladstone, son
SNPG	Scottish National Portrait Gallery
SP	Speeches and Pamphlets, St Deiniol's Library Collection, Hawarden
SW	Speeches and Writings, St Deiniol's Library Collection, Hawarden
TG	Thomas Gladstone, brother

INTRODUCTION ❖ READING GLADSTONE READING

Introducing Gladstone the Reader

This thesis is an attempt both to chart chronologically and explore thematically William Ewart Gladstone's relationship with his book-collection and Library. It is fundamentally an historical study, addressing questions of development and change over time but it is also interdisciplinary in both its scope and methodology; a necessary requirement when writing about either the polymathic Gladstone or libraries, the very storehouses of interdisciplinarity. It is an essay in biography, a history of a book collection, an exploration of reading and reception, and an exercise in nineteenth-century cultural history. It is an effort to write a history of a famous and much-written about individual from a new and significantly overlooked perspective.

It is based primarily on study of Gladstone's surviving books and marginalia and, on the basis of such new evidence, seeks to integrate his reading and library ownership more securely into our understanding of his life and career. It endeavours to address several key questions within this bibliographic context. Firstly, it sets out to explore how far Gladstone's reading and Library functioned as significant, integral aspects of his existence rather than as just peripheral concerns subjugated to his political preoccupations; a question to which no clear answer has yet been given. This begins with an attempt to chart and analyse the development of his reading habits, book collection and attitudes to scholarship from childhood, and subsequently reviews the question at key points in Gladstone's life, notably his first retirement in 1874-5 and his foundation of St Deiniol's Library at Hawarden, Flintshire, in the 1880s. Such an approach is partly indicative of what John Gardiner recently called 'the growing correspondence between private emotion and public action that has revolutionised Gladstone studies since the *Diaries* began to appear in the 1960s',¹ but it is also prompted by a belief that Gladstone's private intellectual concerns and his identity as a scholarly, theologically-minded intellectual have remained of marginal interest to most of his historians, to the detriment of our understanding of his motivations and behaviour. Above all this attitude has hampered the development and satisfactory articulation of any organic explanation of why Gladstone

¹ John Gardiner, *The Victorians: An Age in Retrospect* (London and New York: Hambledon Press, 2002), pp. 190-1.

founded a residential library in his final years. In consequence, this thesis secondly aims to investigate and elucidate the background, rationale and broad context of this foundation in the hope of offering, for the first time, an explanation of its institution which makes sense in the broader context of Gladstone's life and thought.

The title, 'Enlarging the Text', is a late quotation from Gladstone particularly appropriate to the thrust of the thesis. It not only highlights this study's aim to provide a broad and interdisciplinary study of Gladstone but also reflects an intention to explore, within the context of his Library and reading, a discernible tendency towards broadness of outlook in Gladstone's later intellectual and religious persona, which appears to have extended far beyond and did not necessarily issue from his political liberalism.

1 Historiography

William Gladstone is, in both contemporary and historical terms, one of the most archetypal and representative of eminent Victorians.² His political career, which spanned over sixty years, ensured this gargantuan status amongst his own contemporaries and has provided the rationale for over 100 years of biography and scholarship. However this coverage, extensive, illuminating and instructive as it is, has on the whole only provided an in-depth and rounded study of Gladstone as politician. This is not to deny that Gladstone's major biographers have recognised that he was a great deal more than that. All have acknowledged and made good use of non-political evidence that survives amongst the vast collection of material relating to his life and career. As a result extensive information about and analysis of Gladstone's personal, religious and intellectual life has been made available in both popular and academic domains. However, there are significant omissions from the picture as we have it at present. Firstly, whilst Gladstone's non-political interests and activities have been covered in a general way, at the time of writing, specialist studies, especially of Gladstone's intellectual life, have lagged significantly behind those of his political career both in number and scope. Secondly, the way historians have habitually tended to conceptualise Gladstone - by consistently privileging his political interests and aspirations - has significantly distorted their analyses and our understanding of how he himself prioritised and integrated his diverse interests

² Note his prominence in the most recent general histories of the period: A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Hutchinson, 2002), Ch. 6; Simon Schama, *A History of Britain: The Fate of Empire, 1776-2000* (London: BBC Worldwide Ltd, 2002), pp. 365-9, 372-8; Gardiner, *The Victorians*, Ch. 11; Matthew Sweet, *Inventing the Victorians* (London: Faber & Faber, 2001), pp. 30, 64, 98, 213.

and managed to negotiate the private and public aspects of his life. Thirdly, important bibliographical sources for Gladstonian scholarship remain sidelined and underused.

Thus there is a clear requirement to broaden our historical understanding of Gladstone as a nineteenth-century individual. This need provides excellent rationale for wanting to say more about him and being able to justify saying it, and the wealth of neglected source material available supplies great opportunities for further research. The focus of this study, Gladstone and his Library, exemplifies such a combination.

When he died in 1898, Gladstone had read, according to his Diary, approximately 20,000 titles (including periodical articles), written by over 4,500 authors.³ He also owned a sizeable Library of over 30,000 items. This provided its owner with an invaluable resource in both his professional and literary endeavours, and in his private life. There is no doubt that Gladstone's books held a position of central importance to him during his life: he spent a goodly proportion of that life reading in his Library and employed the information which he found there in a diverse number of ways. In addition William Gladstone's principal retirement project was the foundation of a Library. The late 1880s and 1890s saw the inauguration of St Deiniol's Library, which received the majority of Gladstone's books, housed in a temporary iron building.

The value Gladstone accorded to his books and his Library has never been lost on his biographers. A report in *The Library* of 1898 noted that nothing was

So engaging the attention of his biographers in the daily and weekly press as his love of his library, his power of absorbing himself in his books whether in or out of office and often under the most engrossing aspect of public affairs.⁴

Many popular contemporary biographies contained chapters on Gladstone's home life and his amazing reading habits. Two notable examples: in 1890, Gladstone was featured as one of *The Bookworm's* series of 'Bookworms of Yesterday and To-day',⁵ and in 1896 the *Westminster Gazette* published Hulda Friederichs' *In the Evening of His Days. A Study of Mr. Gladstone in Retirement, with Some Account of St Deiniol's Library and Hostel*. This extended

³ M. R. D. Foot and H. C. G. Matthew, eds., *The Gladstone Diaries: With Prime Ministerial Correspondence*, 14 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968-96), Vol. 14, p. xi.

⁴ Quoted in Frederick W. Ratcliffe, 'Mr Gladstone, the Librarian, and St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden', in *Gladstone, Politics and Religion: A Collection of Founder's Day Lectures Delivered at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, 1967-83*, ed. by P.J. Jagger (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 49.

⁵ 'Bookworms of Yesterday and Today: The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.' *The Bookworm* 3rd Series (1890), 161-5.

version of an 1894 article was one of the earliest texts written to publicise the Hawarden Library and is a key document for understanding how Gladstone's reading and librarianship were received and evaluated in a public sphere.⁶

Today there remains as much mythology associated with Gladstone's books and reading as with any other aspect of his life. A prominent example being Roy Jenkins' colourful depiction of Gladstone, 'at the age of eighty-six pushing barrows full of the contents of his own library' from Hawarden Castle to St Deiniol's.⁷ However, unlike the ubiquity and seriousness of Victorian interest, Gladstone the reader has remained somewhat on the sidelines of modern, professional Gladstonian scholarship. He has been enlisted to support such mainstream manifestations as Gladstone the Christian Statesman and Gladstone the Home Ruler, but has never been brought centre stage for any sustained examination.

All the full-scale biographies of Gladstone pay some attention to Gladstone as a reader, a collector of books and as the founder of St Deiniol's Library, particularly Colin Matthew's, which drew on his unparalleled knowledge of Gladstone's Diary and lists of reading. But generally speaking, the question of the importance of Gladstone's Library and the ways in which he used it are very much background details on the broad canvas of Gladstone's political life and achievement.

Gladstone is still essentially seen as a purely political animal – with his religious preoccupations having received some concentrated interest particularly in the work of David Bebbington, Perry Butler and Peter Jagger.⁸ His literary output has not been covered in the same depth. His classical scholarship is largely dismissed as amateurish and misguided and there has been fleeting mention of his interest in historical methods and approaches.⁹ Coverage of Gladstone's Library has not often been taken seriously: note,

⁶ Hulda Friederichs, 'Mr Gladstone's Library & Hostel at Hawarden', *Westminster Budget* (Supplement) (23 November 1894); Hulda Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days: A Study of Mr. Gladstone in Retirement, with Some Account of St. Deiniol's Library and Hostel*, Westminster Gazette Library (London: Westminster Gazette, 1896). Cf. Ch. 5 & 7.

⁷ Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 178.

⁸ Perry Butler, *Gladstone: Church, State and Tractarianism: A Study of His Religious Ideas and Attitudes, 1809-1859* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Peter J. Jagger, *Gladstone: The Making of a Christian Politician: The Personal Religious Life and Development of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1832* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1991); David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993); J. P. Parry, *Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party, 1867-1875* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Alec Vidler, *The Orb and the Cross: A Normative Study in the Relations of Church and State with Reference to Gladstone's Early Writings* (London: SPCK, 1945).

⁹ For coverage of G's classical scholarship cf. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *Blood for the Ghosts: Classical Influences in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Duckworth, 1982), Ch. 9; Agatha Ramm, 'Gladstone's Religion', *The Historical Journal* 28

for example, Michael Lynch's comment that whilst the theme was 'intrinsically interesting' it 'appears rather lightweight when set beside...powerful political analyses' as a case in point.¹⁰

The influence of cultural history seems to have had little impact on the way full-scale portraits of Gladstone have been painted. By contrast the historiography of Gladstone's great rival Benjamin Disraeli reflects an entirely different conception of him as an historical individual. Disraeli was a successful novelist, celebrated wit and dandy as well as accomplished politician. The attractions of his personality are reflected in recent scholarly treatments of him, for example, *The Self-fashioning of Disraeli 1818-1851* edited by Charles Richmond and Paul Smith, which includes essays on Disraeli's Romanticism, Orientalism and on his interpretation of English History.¹¹ Gladstone, on the other hand, still suffers from a forbidding image and in general scholarly approaches to his life and character adopt an appropriately conservative frame of reference. The *Punch* cartoon 'Critics' by John Tenniel [fig. 0.1] exemplifies Gladstone's reputation for disapproving ponderousness amongst his contemporaries, here referring directly to his scholarship and literary criticism, and Gladstone is still seen as a rather severe man preoccupied with politics and burdened with a serious brand of religion.¹² If you are not interested in political history, the assumption goes, then there is very little to get excited about in Gladstone apart, of course, from his penchant for rescuing prostitutes. This may appear a one-sided representation but consider the emphasis of the last major piece of Gladstone scholarship to be published, Richard Shannon's completed two-volume Gladstone biography.¹³ This is a full scale and masterly political biography, making full use of the diary evidence but, as Stefan Collini commented at the time of its publication,

At times...the perspective of the biographer as retrospective lobby correspondent can seem a little restricted, and...Gladstone's intellectual and literary life occupies very little space indeed in this huge book...When in 1894 he [Gladstone] does, finally relinquish the premiership, at the age of 85, Shannon deals briskly with his retirement plans.¹⁴

(1985), 327-340. History: cf. Derek Beales, *History and Biography: An Inaugural Lecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

¹⁰ Michael Lynch, '[Review of Jagger (ed.) (1985)]', *Victorian Studies* (Spring 1986), p. 489.

¹¹ Charles Richmond and Paul Smith, eds., *The Self-Fashioning of Disraeli 1818-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹² Cf. Joseph S. Meisel, 'The Importance of Being Serious: The Unexplored Connection between Gladstone and Humour', *History* 84, 274 (April 1999), 278-300.

¹³ Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Peel's Inheritor 1809-1865* (London: Penguin, 1982); Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister, 1865-1898* (London: Allen Lane, 1999).

¹⁴ Stefan Collini, '[Review of Richard Shannon, *Gladstone*, Volume III]', *The Guardian*, 8 May 1999.

Shannon is not alone in paying less attention than he might to the use Gladstone made of his last years. This constitutes a significant omission in the gamut of Gladstone scholarship. It was a time of major and far-reaching projects in Gladstone's literary life and more particularly in the development and publicising of St Deiniol's Library. Gladstone's attitude to retirement, which had been seriously occupying him for decades before he did finally hang up his political axe, was unsurprisingly complex considering the real shift in cultural attitudes to that period of life occurring in the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ Gladstone lived so long, did so much and read so many books that any biographer attempting to chart his life in its entirety, when arriving in the late 1880s must be willing him to retire and die with sufficient intervening incident to fill neatly the last chapter. But Gladstone did not conform to this biographical model, however forcibly some have tried to make him fit it. He painstakingly planned and founded a residential library in North Wales with as much commitment and research as he was wont to invest in his political activities. The question of why and how this should have been so is a question that my research will attempt to answer.

I have been careful to limit my strictures to prevailing trends in published full-scale treatments of Gladstone. David Bebbington's forthcoming book on the Gladstonian mind is eagerly awaited and there have already been many papers and chapters that begin to redress this traditional balance and approach Gladstone's intellectual preoccupations more centrally. There is also a growing awareness of the importance of Gladstone's Library as an historical source.

In 1999 Roy Jenkins vividly described Gladstone's 'physical and...intellectual obsession with books' noting that 'the handling of the books appeared to give him the same sort of satisfaction that a dedicated old-style grocer might have got from cutting and wrapping pounds of butter and cheese'.¹⁶ This followed in the footsteps of Fred Ratcliffe's Founder's Day lecture of 1985,¹⁷ and Peter Jagger's chapter narrating the foundation of the Library in his 1998 collection of Founder's Day lectures.¹⁸ There is also a usefully expanded treatment of the founding and later history of St Deiniol's by T. W. Pritchard.¹⁹

¹⁵ Cf. Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 144. Full coverage of G's attitude to retirement is given in Ch. 4 and 5.

¹⁶ Roy Jenkins, 'Gladstone and Books', in *The Grand Old Man: Sermons & Speeches in Honour of W. E. Gladstone (1809-1898)*, ed. by P.B. Francis (Hawarden: Monad Press, 2000), 21-26, pp. 21-2.

¹⁷ Ratcliffe, 'Librarian'.

¹⁸ Peter J. Jagger, 'Gladstone and His Library', in *Gladstone*, ed. by P.J. Jagger (London: Hambledon Press, 1998), 235-253.

¹⁹ T. W. Pritchard, *A History of St Deiniol's Library* (Hawarden: Monad Press, 1999).

These are valuable and concise narratives, making important use of diary entries, family letters and uncatalogued documents relating to the foundation of St Deiniol's. However, they necessarily fall far short of providing a full account of Gladstone's collection of books and maintenance of his Library. In addition, their coverage of his foundation of St Deiniol's does not on the whole satisfyingly integrate the Library into the complex maze of Gladstone's intellectual, and particularly theological, development.

As mentioned above, there has been significant interest in Gladstone's plans for and institution of St Deiniol's Library but this necessarily deals with the period from the 1880s to his death. When one considers that Gladstone started collecting books even before he began his Diary, only a small period in the life of his collection has been uncovered. Very little work has been done on Gladstone's experience of private library ownership in the earlier part of his life, nor have scholars addressed the broader historical and cultural implications of the collection he amassed in over eighty years of collecting. Another largely 'neglected source' of Gladstone scholarship is his marginalia, to which John Powell directed scholarly attention in 1992.²⁰ Powell's article included an illuminating micro-study of Gladstone's reading of political biography referring to several hundred books in the St Deiniol's collection. However, significant limitations were placed on study of Gladstone's annotations by the cryptic nature of his code. The usefulness of the marginalia to my research was greatly enhanced thanks to my early (and purely serendipitous) discovery of Gladstone's own hand-written key to his notation system in the second volume of a set of John Locke's *Works* (which I will discuss in more detail below). This enabled me to be precise and accurate in decoding the majority of Gladstone's textual responses.

In conclusion to this review of the historiography relating to Gladstone and his Library, we may propose the following: Gladstone's Library, the core of which is preserved at St Deiniol's, reflects a considerable investment in terms of both time and money on the part of its owner and as such merits study in its own right. In addition, if we consider the annotations as valuable examples of immediate engagements between Gladstone and his texts, the Library represents a surprisingly underused source in research into Gladstone's life and interests and offers significant potential for their reconfiguration and reinterpretation. As the film character Elliot Carver observed in *Tomorrow Never Dies*

²⁰ John Powell, 'Small Marks and Instinctual Responses: A Study in the Uses of Gladstone's Marginalia', *Nineteenth Century Prose* 19 (Special Issue) (December 1992), 1-17, p. 3.

(1998): ‘The key to a great story is not who, or what, or when, but why’.²¹ So John Powell noted about coverage of Gladstone’s reading: ‘The prodigious quantity and breadth of his reading had always been a source of wonder. There had been less interest in how and why he read’.²² Powell rightly argued that, despite unparalleled political coverage, significant gaps remain in our understanding of Gladstone the man. Many of these gaps involve the relationship between Gladstone and his books. So it is that a central aim of this project is a commitment to widening the scope of both our approach to Gladstone as an historical figure and our conceptualisation of libraries as cultural and historical signs and artefacts.

2 Methodology

As James Raven has observed, scholarly interest in reading has grown concomitantly with an increasing questioning of ‘traditional’ demarcations between academic fields.²³ One of the important features of this study of Gladstone’s Library and reading practice is the way in which it crosses subject boundaries. As a result, although this study is in essence and general method an historical survey, it aims to be first and foremost interdisciplinary. In the chapters that follow I have taken every opportunity to incorporate and learn from insights and methodologies practised in other disciplines (principally those of theology, art history and literature) and have, wherever possible, accorded them that depth of study and respect which they deserve. This study challenges intra- as well as interdisciplinary boundaries. A primary aim has been to get away from the persistent and patently hierarchical conception of Gladstone as first and foremost a Victorian politician. The majority of assessments of his life have been mediated through this ubiquitous lens. But the use of this representation, as a simple synonym for and benchmark measurement of his entire existence in history, has had a restraining and a distorting effect on our understanding of him as a complex individual who lived between 1809 and 1898. To exclusively label him a Victorian devalues the significance of his experiences up to the age of twenty-eight whilst to prioritise the importance of his political and public life indicates the wilful implantation of our own values into our understandings of remote individuals and periods in the past. As Raven *et al* have remarked, evidence of reading by individuals ‘oblige[s] us to make the move from the general outline to the specificity of experience

²¹ *Tomorrow Never Dies* (United Artists/Eon productions: 1998).

²² Powell, ‘Gladstone’s Marginalia’, p. 3.

²³ James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor, eds., *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 4.

and then back again to reflect on the significance of individual readings for the general historical account'. This study of Gladstone's reading thus keeps in clear view their 'recognition that reading can be highly individualistic' as well as 'culturally conditioned...but not in any easy sense reducible to a cultural norm'.²⁴

This study also attempts to approach the Library in a new and imaginative way. Library history has in some ways developed along similar, well-defined lines to Gladstonian historiography. Alistair Black, in an excellent 1997 article on Victorian libraries, pondered the following question:

Given the amount of time they spend in libraries, and considering that libraries are...cultural agencies housing the literary heritage and cultural memory of the societies in which they are located, it is surprising that cultural historians...have been reluctant to turn their attention to libraries...as worthy subjects for full and rigorous investigation. This has resulted in the evolution of library history along a very traditional path, without the infusion of the imaginative, interdisciplinary and critical perspectives and methodologies that have informed the development of mainstream history in recent decades.²⁵

This critique applies as much to Gladstone scholarship as to Library history and is one I have tried to address through my work on the Gladstone Collection at St Deiniol's through a dynamic programme of historical investigation integrating chronology, theme and theory.

The post-modern critique of the self-reflexivity and constructed patterning inherent in all historical projects is one no historian today can afford to ignore; it is indeed difficult to overestimate the complexity of human histories and storytelling. The activities of writing, reading and library building are all deeply involved in this search for meaning, story and order in human history. Thus any project dealing with Gladstone's reading and the development of his Library must engage seriously and critically with the burgeoning body of scholarship relating to histories of reading and print culture, the majority of which have had their genesis in literary and cultural studies.²⁶ These histories are interested in what

²⁴ Ibid., p. 15. Sherman in this volume notes how the representation of his subject, Elizabethan John Dee, as library creator and reader provides an important new perspective on him. W. H. Sherman, 'The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance: John Dee Revisited', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 62-76, p. 63.

²⁵ Alistair Black, 'Lost Worlds of Culture: Victorian Libraries, Library History and Prospects for a History of Information', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 2 (Spring 1997), 95-112, p. 95.

²⁶ Cf. e.g. Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987); David D. Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1996); Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (London: Viking, 1996); James Smith Allen, *In the Public Eye. A History of Reading in Modern France, 1800-1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Valentine Cunningham, *In the Reading*

libraries represent, what are the purposes and consequences of reading, what are readers' qualifications and characteristics, how are books treated, what is the relationship between reading, knowledge and civilisation and how was it expressed in image and practice.²⁷ Raven *et al* suggest a useful list of questions to ask when studying readers. How and why do people read? In what circumstances do they take up the written or printed word? What do they make of the signs on the page? What do they and others think happens when they read, and what do they imagine might be the consequences of reading? How has practice and representation altered or been seen to alter over the centuries? And how do we accommodate these changes in our understanding of literary creativity and reception?²⁸ And, as Roger Chartier commented, how can we 'organize this indistinguishable plurality of individual acts [of reading] according to shared regularities?'²⁹ The question of how I have dealt specifically with the sources at my disposal will be addressed in the following section, but one broad point can be made here about my overall approach to Gladstone's reading. Throughout my work I have tried to privilege Gladstone's response to the texts he read over and above what I or other scholars might deduce about their meaning. In this, I follow the broad approach taken by scholars like Stanley Fish, who believe the reader's response is equally, if not more important than the words on the page.³⁰ Thus, when reading a text annotated by Gladstone, I always try to read according to the map his annotations provide.

3 Sources

3.1 The Gladstone Diaries

The initial source for building up a basic chronology of Gladstone's pattern of book collecting and arrangement is the fourteen-volume edition of the *Gladstone Diaries*: 'the touchstone for all judgements of Gladstone'.³¹ In the *Diaries* we have an extensive record of books, pamphlets and articles which Gladstone listed as having read. These are

Gaol: Postmodernity, Text and History (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994); Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁷ James Raven, 'From Promotion to Proscription: Arrangements for Reading and Eighteenth-Century Libraries', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 175-201, pp. 176-7, 179ff.

²⁸ Raven, Small, and Tadmor, eds., *Reading in England*, p. 2.

²⁹ Roger Chartier, 'Texts, Printing, Readings', in Lynn Hunt (ed.) *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, CA, 1989), 154-75, p. 150, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁰ Cf. e.g. Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

³¹ Powell, 'Gladstone's Marginalia', p. 2.

collected together alphabetically in a separate section of Volume 14 under the heading 'Gladstone's Reading'. In his introduction to this index volume, Colin Matthew explained the significance of such a record:

I know of no other major figure who attempted to record, day by day, his or her reading over a lifetime...Since a part of each day was systematically reserved for reading...and since Gladstone read as eclectically as any Victorian, the record of his reading is a tour not only of Victorian high culture...but also of the by-ways of nineteenth-century political, religious and literary life.³²

The Diary is essential to an understanding of the chronological development of the Library and was my initial reference guide to Gladstone's recorded reading. In its many entries are recorded not only detailed lists of Gladstone's reading but evidence of book-buying (in Britain and in the rest of Europe), contact with booksellers and the arrangement, housing and cataloguing of his growing collection. It also provides information on visits to and comments on major libraries such as the Bodleian, the British Museum Library and the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, meetings with librarians and other bibliophiles. There are also many entries relating to Gladstone's reading methods. References are also made to pornography and the use of reading with rescue cases. The diverse documentation of Gladstone's passion for books and reading in this one source underlined the need for careful project planning. It was not possible to cover everything; for instance I provide no in-depth study of Gladstone's Irish reading. And the source is not without its limitations when used alone, as Colin Matthew stressed

There are gaps in this record of his reading. He recorded much – about 17,500 book and pamphlet titles, and in addition to that figure, many periodical titles – but not everything. Nor did he list newspaper reading.³³

And John Powell, discussing the Diary, reiterated the need for 'the cautious use of self-referential evidence'.³⁴

3.2 The St Deiniol's Collection

Gladstone biographers and scholars have long recognised and held significant the fact that he was both a voracious reader and the possessor of a substantial Library. Numerous speculations have been made about the precise relationship between Gladstone, his life,

³² Foot and Matthew, eds., *GD*, Vol. 14, p. v.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Powell, 'Gladstone's Marginalia', pp. 2-3. Cf. also Derek Beales, 'Gladstone and His Diary: 'Myself, the Worst of All Interlocutors'', *The Historical Journal* 25 (1982), 463-469.

career and beliefs, and his Library and reading and its wider historical significance. Such suggestions, though largely unsubstantiated, have tantalisingly hinted that profound insights and surprising revelations might well be revealed were this relationship to be further explored. The means to undertake such substantiating work exists primarily in the shape of Gladstone's surviving book collection, preserved at St Deiniol's Library in Wales. This source, comprising the bulk of Gladstone's personal Library, has been comparatively little used in general studies and has not, until now, been the focus of any in-depth scholarly investigation. The primary source on which most comments on Gladstone's reading habits have previously been based is the list of his reading recorded in his Diary. However, as the indexed list (purely for reasons of time and money) was never checked against the St Deiniol's Collection, its usefulness is somewhat circumscribed.³⁵ Firstly, many of its entries remain editorial conjectures. Secondly, the scope of most comments based on it are limited to the simple equation between Gladstone's having read a book and expressed a broader interest in its subject in his Diary or elsewhere. The St Deiniol's Collection offers the opportunity to expand on this in several important ways. Firstly it offers the prospect, within certain limits, of being able to confirm exactly which texts Gladstone read and owned. Secondly, and more importantly, the presence of Gladstone's marginalia within a significant number of these texts, which have hardly been used at all by scholars, offer a new and potentially important perspective on Gladstone's reading and reception of texts and their relationship with his broader thinking.

3.3 The Gladstone Marginalia

Powell proffered Gladstone's marginalia as a source that might provide insights into Gladstone's immediate thoughts on a vast range of subjects, providing

A rare access to his inner life by serving as small bridges between the mass of consciously constructed evidence traditionally used by historians, and the ephemeral clues of psychohistory which have promised much but delivered little. Although cryptic, these psychological ruins have the advantage of being both tangible as evidence, and about as close to representing instinctual responses as one is likely to get from Gladstone's pen.³⁶

Echoing Thomas Jones' earlier recognition that Gladstone's marginalia was 'evidence of an alert, critical, and encyclopædic intelligence' which 'might furnish fresh proof...of the

³⁵ Foot and Matthew, eds., *GD*, Vol. 14, p. v.

³⁶ Powell, 'Gladstone's Marginalia', p. 3. I think there is an exception to this dismissal of 'psychohistory' in Travis L. Crosby, *The Two Mr Gladstones: A Study in Psychology and History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997).

amazing contents of his voracious mind',³⁷ this interpretation rings true when one thinks of Gladstone's attitude to the documentary material that he was to leave behind. He must have been aware that, after his death, his letters, diaries, and other writings would be used as references in written accounts of his life. He had himself aided researches into the lives of his deceased mentors and contemporaries by allowing access to his letter collections.³⁸ And yet, he left no definite proscription on their use, which, considering the content of the Diary, strikes one as surprising. However, one source for which he did legislate was his book annotation. As Hulda Friederichs stressed in her account of St Deiniol's

None of Mr. Gladstone's annotations on the margins may be copied or quoted as illustrating his views on certain questions, since such quotations might convey an altogether wrong impression...Mr. Gladstone often jots down marginal remarks when an idea occurs to him while reading, though that idea may in no way represent his views.³⁹

This may be so, but this Gladstone-approved account at least supports the idea that the annotations are examples of an unguarded Gladstone, a persona who is not so clearly to be found, for example, in his later, self-conscious autobiographical writings. Powell gives a thoughtful critique of the annotations as a source. He considers the problems of their often-cryptic nature and the complex relationship between reader and text. It is dangerous, for example, to assume the direct influence of a text 'for people sometimes retain the unexpected when reading, or come to a work for seemingly inexplicable reasons or for justifying a position already taken'.⁴⁰ Nonetheless

They provide an unparalleled access to Gladstone's inner life, which better informs one's understanding of evidence drawn from traditional sources. They are tangible and verifiable, and therefore may properly be drawn within the scope of historical inquiry. Too, the marginalia further delineate the gap between Gladstone's public and private personalities, suggesting possible explanations for a number of questions which have resisted closure...since his death. In all, Gladstone's humanity is enhanced. He becomes more ambitious, more self-conscious, less self-assured. The marginalia help one to sense the instinctive personality, before the weight of observation, reflection, duty, and calculation began to impinge.⁴¹

It is an illuminating and intelligent study, drawing on psychological methodology and is very different from early essays in 'psychohistory' to which JP refers.

³⁷ Thomas Jones, 'Marginal Notes by Mr. Gladstone', *Cylchgrawn Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / The National Library of Wales Journal* 4 (1945-6), 50-2, p. 50.

³⁸ Cf. H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 555-6.

³⁹ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, p. 117.

⁴⁰ Powell, 'Gladstone's Marginalia', p. 6.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 13. Cf. also Keith Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 24.

Gladstone's annotations are of significant importance to this study of his reading, which is punctuated by several complementary case studies based on them. My conclusions have, as noted above, had the advantage of being supported by Gladstone's own written explanation of his annotation code, dating from February 1836, discovered towards the beginning of my research [fig. 0.2].⁴² Whereas previous scholars like Powell and Matthew were forced, through sheer lack of evidence, to admit that 'the scholar will frequently be baffled by a variety of cryptic markings, and that these are better left alone as evidence',⁴³ this code has provided me (and future scholars) with the means to be more certain in assigning meaning to Gladstone's succinct and apparently inscrutable marginalia.

The key itself is laid out very much in the manner Gladstone was later to describe his method of making book abstracts:

Do not write them in lines continuously – but begin a fresh line and mark the place with at the left hand thus.

/,

if you please, either at each new fact or wherever the subject takes a turn, or any very observable circumstance is recorded.⁴⁴

The definitions attached to the marks are not surprising, but it was both pleasing and helpful to have scholarly guesswork corroborated and specified by Gladstone himself. For example, Colin Matthew listed amongst abbreviations used by the diarist 'X' and '+'.⁴⁵ He translated these as 'rescue work done this day' and 'prayer, usually when on a charitable visit or plus' respectively. The marks are the same as those used for annotation and the general positive/negative connotations accord with Gladstone's definitions. Gladstone's key is not complete; for example he does not define a mark he frequently used which resembles a 'v' but which is likely to be a tick of approbation. Other known annotation marks that are not covered include obvious elaborations, such as a double line beside text, as well as more obscure marks. For example, a back to front question mark is occasionally used but I remain unsure as to its precise meaning. However, his extant classifications provide solid points of reference on which to pin further interpretation and, in addition, Gladstone's memorandum 'On Keeping Books and Papers' (25 November 1837) offers further gleanings as to the purpose of his annotations. He occasionally, for

⁴² For a full description and dating of the key, see Ruth Clayton, 'W. E. Gladstone: An Annotation Key', *Notes & Queries* 246 (New Series, Vol. 48) (June 2001), 140-3.

⁴³ Powell, 'Gladstone's Marginalia', p. 4.

⁴⁴ 'Of Keeping Books and Papers', 25 November 1837, BL GP Add MS 44727, fol. 258. Cf. *GD* at this date.

⁴⁵ Listed under 'Signs used by the diarist' in the abbreviation section of the diary volumes edited by HCGM.

example, used slight underlining. This he noted, in the context of abstracts, ‘very much assists the eye if bold, and further, if proportioned to the prominence of the fact or expression underlined...assists the eye’. In addition, his practice of having a ‘line of dates down the lefthand side’ of abstracts, to ‘further aid the eye and the mind likewise’, suggests a practical parallel with his regular provision of a handwritten index at the back of books.⁴⁶

Another characteristic of Gladstone’s book annotation, which again he only sometimes employed, was to provide a (very helpful) summary or mini-review of the book on its flyleaf. There appear to have been a variety of reasons for this practice. Firstly, a spontaneous and frequently humorous response to the material read, usually specifically dated, and envisaged to serve both as an immediate outlet for frustration or admiration inspired by the text. This can be seen in the case of Gladstone’s note in the front of William Carlisle’s *An Essay on Evil Spirits* (1827):

The author has a title to the credit of sincerity[,] labour and self denial (p. 175): but is too much given to anathema and to rambling, and might have given the entire gist of his argument on evil spirits in the compass of a few pages. WEG S. 27. 85.⁴⁷

Flyleaf summaries also clearly served as *aides memoire* for Gladstone both for his private use and also as a tool in his writing and reviewing. For example, one of the most extensive and eclectic of these annotations, preserved in the first volume of Gladstone’s copy of William Cobbett’s *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* (1829),⁴⁸ appears both to relate to Gladstone’s growing interest in English Reformation history, which resulted in several periodical articles during 1888-9, and to provide an opportunity

⁴⁶ BL GP Add MS 44727, fol. 258.

⁴⁷ William Carlisle, *An Essay on Evil Spirits* (London: The Author, 1827). Carlisle had written: ‘The author hopes it will be a sufficient apology for his long delay of publishing, to say, that when he had got the work ready for the press, and a certain portion printed, he found that he had more written than two volumes would contain; consequently, he was obliged to take it home and abridge it: and be it remembered, that his family depends upon his hard labour for its support; consequently, his time was limited, and he had to write the work over again, at a time when he should have been asleep...and likewise he hopes, that the candid and impartial reader will bear in mind, that the author has not had the advantages of a liberal education’. Ibid., pp. 174-5.

⁴⁸ William Cobbett, *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland; Showing How That Event Has Impoverished the Main Body of the People in Those Countries; and Containing a List of the Abbeys, Priories, Nunneries, Hospitals, and Other Religious Foundations in England, and Wales, and Ireland, Confiscated, Seized on, or Alienated, by the Protestant "Reformation", Sovereign and Parliaments. In a Series of Letters Addressed to All Sensible and Just Englishmen*, 2 vols (London: The Author, 1829). I am very grateful to Professor Michael Wheeler for bringing this reference to my attention.

for personal reminiscence.⁴⁹ Again Gladstone clearly was inspired to (if did not quite achieve) high-flown rhetoric when composing the following review.

A 'rollicking'[,] impudent, mendacious book; most readable; with great art and felicity of narrative, the author spontaneously exalting, as he wrote, in his command. Here truly is a man master of his work, not servant of it. Take the description of Bishops North and Tomline in Parr. [paragraph] 124, b: a masterpiece.⁵⁰

After all, considering the sugared optimising tone, and the enormity of abuses, which had prevailed, a book of this kind had its uses.

Query compare Cobbett with Defoe: and in some respects with Bunyan. Carlyle calls him healthy: the least appropriate surely of epithets. I have personal recollections of him in his very last days: the most grandfatherly of men, with singularly gentle and pleasing manners. The Tussaud figure (say 20 years back) was excellent. WEG N. 29. 87

It has often occurred to me, when working in St Deiniol's Library, that very few historians have had the chance to get inside their sources in quite such a literal way; it is easy to go to any shelf, select a book and find that it comes from Gladstone's collection. However, the gleaning of more significant information, about that book's original owner and about the historical importance of the Library itself, is much more problematic. For example, not all of Gladstone's books have visible ownership signs such as bookplates and immediately recognisable annotations. There is also the question of the completeness of the collection. Some books, which were part of Gladstone's private Library, remain at Hawarden Castle. Duplicates and different editions also pose problems, for St Deiniol's did not necessarily get the copy listed in the Diary. And Gladstone did not always own the books he read or read the books he owned, as is the case with many book collections. However, how he supplemented the work of his own Library through practices of borrowing, or reading without buying, is important for our wider appreciation of nineteenth-century reading practices. Given recent scholarly interest in exploring histories of reading and amid calls for the reinvigoration of Library history,⁵¹ the Gladstone Library at Hawarden offers a stimulating opportunity for new research. The historian can investigate the record of one

⁴⁹ G read Cobbett in November 1887, cf. *GD* 27/11/87ff. Over the next two years he produced three Reformation articles: 'The English Church under Henry VIII', *Nineteenth Century* 26 (November 1889), 882-896; 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion', *Nineteenth Century* 24 (July 1888), 1-13; 'Queen Elizabeth and the Church of England', *Nineteenth Century* 24 (November 1888), 764-784.

⁵⁰ In this section Cobbett attacks nepotism in the Church of England, suggesting that had these clerics not been married like their Roman Catholic predecessors, much corruption would have been avoided!

⁵¹ Cf. Black, 'Lost Worlds'; Alistair Black, *A New History of the English Public Library: Social and Intellectual Contexts, 1850-1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996).

man's intellectual and cultural development, and trace his engagement with what was, in practical terms, the collected sum of human intellectual endeavour, amassed and organised in his Library. The evidence of the collection and its annotations does not stand alone, of course, any more than does that of the *Gladstone Diaries*. But in order to build a fully rounded and integrated picture of Gladstone, the evidence offered by his book-collection and Library cannot be ignored.

4 Structure

The following study is organised along broadly chronological lines. The chronologies of Gladstone's life and the development of his Library form the backbone on which the work's thematic and interdisciplinary analysis is hung. However, this relationship necessarily operates flexibly. For example, although Chapters One and Seven deal, respectively, with the beginning and end of Gladstone's life, other sections – principally Chapters Two and Five – cover the whole of his life purely because the evidence they present and the points they make would be diminished if bound by any shorter time span. The thesis and its constituent chapters are split into three sections. The first, 'Making the reader', comprising Chapters One to Three, deals broadly with the formation of Gladstone's collection and Library and how this related to the development of his own identity.

Chapter One seeks to introduce Gladstone's early book collecting and reading within the contexts of his family life and the bibliophilic and educational practices of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Here we see William growing up, searching for knowledge and identity through (self) education, consuming and ordering texts in a pre-Victorian world dominated by romanticism, evangelicalism and one family's vital and determined understanding of book-culture.

Chapter Two is a follow-up to Chapter One but greatly exceeds its chronological reach. As the first chapter makes clear, the works and influence of Sir Walter Scott were integral to the family's reading experience and this chapter presents a case study of Gladstone's reading and reception of Scott. No other body of work in English, with the exception the Bible, was so consistently and repeatedly read by Gladstone over his long life and, as this chapter argues, no writer of English literature was so profoundly and diversely influential upon him. It was an influence that began when Gladstone was little more than a child and continued until he could no longer see to read. The formative quality of Gladstone's

textual relationship with Scott and the longevity of its influence require that this study appears early in the thesis and spans Gladstone's whole life. It presents an analysis of Gladstone's personal reception of Scott and discusses, not only his literary estimation of the works, but also how his engagement influenced, among other things, his personal life and relationships, his conception of selfhood, identity and nationality and his understanding of political vocation.

In Chapter Three the chronology of Gladstone's life and Library is further advanced through a study which centres on the development and function of Gladstone's private Library. Whereas in Chapter One we encountered Gladstone's book collecting in the context of his family, Chapter Three focuses on his personal collection and its development. It opens with a general discussion of the way Gladstone collected and his developing identity as a collector. This is followed by an overview of the way he organised and housed his collection, which in turn leads into an examination of the 'Temple of Peace' in Hawarden Castle, the most significant location for Gladstone's private collection, detailing its character, layout, use, function and its overall importance to its owner. This chapter, and indeed the thesis as a whole, is importantly concerned with issues of privacy and publicity in relation to Gladstone's reading and book collecting. Hence it concludes with discussion of Gladstone's reading and collecting outside the Temple of Peace.

The public/private dichotomy attains even more prominence in the second section of this study: 'Transforming the Reader'. This part constitutes a revisitation and reinterpretation of those crucial years between c. 1874 and 1880 when Gladstone and his identity became both popular and public in the most astounding and successful of ways. Chapters Four and Five offer a reinterpretation based on an analysis of this period and its events from a fresh perspective. Firstly they focus the changing reception of Gladstone as intellectual rather than as politician during this period. Secondly, they focus primarily on the interplay of perception and representation between Gladstone and his publics – based on extensive analysis, in Chapter Five, of visual imagery. And thirdly, they seek to integrate the public image of Gladstone's Library into our broader understanding of the development of his popular appeal.

Chapter Four deals directly and chronologically with the events surrounding Gladstone's first retirement in 1874-5 and the sale of books and art treasures that accompanied it.

Taking as its starting point Gladstone's admission that he intended to devote his retirement to theology and scholarship, it examines how intellectuals in general and the scholarly Gladstone in particular were viewed in the nineteenth century. It looks in detail at the circumstances and meaning of Gladstone's retirement before seeking to show and explain how the statesman/scholar paradox was successfully resolved in the years leading up to Gladstone's election to the constituency of Midlothian in 1880.

Chapter Five presents and illustrates, across a broader chronological span, further evidence for the arguments set out in Chapter Four. The nature of this project as a whole and its sources are very much weighted towards an interior view of Gladstone. However it is necessary to balance the use of private, interior-focused sources such as journals, marginalia and private memoranda. The perspective of this chapter, which explores the outsider's view of Gladstone the reader, counters this. How was Gladstone received by Victorian culture as a scholar and book collector? I have engaged with this question through a detailed study of the way iconographical representations of Gladstone functioned both as independent images and also within broader traditions of popular political iconography. Through this extensive study this chapter shows how the representation of Gladstone the reader and intellectual changed over his lifetime. Represented books and readers have operated as important cultural signs and symbols throughout history. Their representational potential and presence in the nineteenth-century context was both compelling and multifaceted. Books were 'symbols both of status and of economic transaction', implying information about character, class, gender and personal quality.⁵² Gladstone's library ownership and reading were subject to the same multiplicity of 'outside' readings, which are explored here. It also incorporates important analysis of and exhibits the important influence Gladstone himself developed and exercised over the creation and dissemination of his public image, increasingly from within the library space.

The final section of the thesis, 'Enlarging the Text', fully contextualises and explains the last great transformation in the life of Gladstone's Library: its re-birth as St Deiniol's Residential Library. A good part of the rationale for and viability of my project are due to Gladstone's late-in-life decision to found St Deiniol's, without which it is unlikely his collection, honed as it was by his personal preoccupations with history and theology,

⁵² Kate Flint, 'Women, Men and the Reading of *Vanity Fair*', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 246-262, p. 254.

would have remained entire. The books containing his marginalia, which have proved so definitive and startling, might have been scattered far and wide, dispersing the record of Gladstone's intense reflections on his books and the knowledge they enshrined. The fact of St Deiniol's signals the importance and unique character of Gladstone's relationship with books. It has provided both the inspiration and the means to study that relationship as it evolved over his life. And its foundation, as a specific historical event, has provided a unique opportunity to study Gladstone when, at the very end of his life, his understanding of the needs of the late nineteenth century produced a startling bibliographic solution for too long overlooked.

Chapter Six begins by reviewing the problems scholars have encountered when dealing with Gladstone and religion. Chapter Four introduced the problems inherent in understanding Gladstone's perception of the relationship between theology and politics. This section extends this discussion by showing how historians' misconceptions about Gladstone's later theological outlook have not only made Gladstone's religious thinking difficult to explain but have also made elucidating the rationale behind St Deiniol's increasingly problematic. Chapter Six questions previous characterisations of Gladstone as an ultra-orthodox dogmatist, proffering the view that he should be described in his later years, not as a High Churchman but as a Liberal Catholic. The second part of the chapter provides new evidence for this by exploring an important aspect of the St Deiniol's foundation which has, up until now, been almost completely overlooked: the impact of Gladstone's relationship with the Liberal Catholic Anglican *Lux Mundi* group, active in the Oxford of the 1880s. This discussion provides the context for the final chapter, which discusses the circumstances and motivations behind Gladstone's decision to found a residential library in rural North Wales. Issues such as location, function and the question of community are all addressed, as are questions of privacy and publicity in the case of Gladstone's 'public' Library. The chapter concludes by reflecting on how the Library represented the ultimate expression of Gladstone's lifelong commitment to contribute to the extension of human knowledge: to enlarge the text.

In conclusion then, this investigation provides the first in-depth chronological and thematic study of Gladstone's lifetime of book collecting and library building. It revises and fully contextualises the history and significance of St Deiniol's Library, integrating it within the broader context of Gladstone's intellectual and religious life whilst simultaneously offering a significant new interpretation of Gladstone's later theology and

ecclesiastical relationships. By studying Gladstone in the context of his Library, this study presents a fresh perspective on the Gladstone 'myth' through study of visual representation and analysis of his intellectual and scholarly persona.

In addition, this project seeks firstly to reinstate this important body of evidence to a prominent place in the Gladstonian archival canon, from which it has too long been missing, showing how scholars working on Gladstone cannot ignore it and suggesting ways forward for further research. It also fulfils a bridging function between the evidence of the books Gladstone owned (his organisation, reading, annotation and opinions of them) and the wider circumstances and character of his life and career. This is an ambitious but an unavoidable aim. As no other in-depth study of Gladstone's Library and reading exists, this project is required to be both wide-ranging and detailed; simultaneously to display to its readers both the breadth and potential offered by studying Gladstone from this perspective as well as providing a body of firm, new conclusions based on the library evidence. Hence the following thesis is a highly selective history with substantial limitations and omissions. However, the creative tension it maintains between chronology and case study; introduction and detailed analysis; historical and non-historical methodologies, proved the most efficient and exciting way of encapsulating something of the sheer diversity and unfathomable complexity of this vital relationship.

SECTION ONE: MAKING THE READER

CHAPTER ONE ❖ THE GENTLEMAN'S INHERITANCE 1809-1839

Introduction: Gladstone's Library in Context

Visitors to an impressive exhibition of portrait miniatures at the South Kensington Museum in 1865 might have noticed Liverpool artist Thomas Hargreaves' representation of a young girl and boy, loosely embracing in a leafy glade. The image, part of an eight-piece loan, is not exceptional in its composition or technique: the bodily proportions of the girl in particular are crudely represented. And yet the compelling pensiveness of the faces might have attracted even those tiring of such minute imagery by number 1028 in the catalogue.

The large dark eyes the children share, and their attitude of simple affection suggest a sibling relationship. The boy appears the elder; he stares directly at the viewer whilst his sister's unfocused gaze drifts to her left. Most arrestingly, the boy points didactically to the text of a small book lying open on his sister's lap. With her attention diverted from the book (presumably chosen for her edification) her teacher-brother has assumed the task of educating the observer; drawing our attention both to his own proficiency in reading and his precocious desire to share that knowledge with others.

It should be unsurprising that the miniature exhibits this educational and bibliographic emphasis. The end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth was 'a period of intensive and widespread educational debate'; a period which saw the beginnings of mass education, the Sunday School Movement, legislation for the education of lower class children, an increase in the amount of instructive children's literature and didactic popular fiction, popularity for John Locke's educational methods and the educational theories of Rousseau as well as their radical and feminist critiques.¹

The miniature [fig. 1.1] represents one of the earliest known authenticated likenesses of William Ewart Gladstone;² the girl is his younger sister, Helen Jane (1814-1880). The image represents a stage of his reading and book-ownership that is both largely uncharted but also potentially important. It references those formative years which he spent living,

¹ Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. xv, 3.

² Cf. GG 1476. According to Checkland, the portrait dates from c. 1816.

learning and reading with his family in Liverpool and Scotland; constructing his individual identity in the context of a well-to-do merchant household, largely in a pre-Victorian world; a world which in part pre-dates his own diary record.

Gladstone's Library was collected as the ever-growing, treasured possession of a well-to-do gentleman but in attempting to trace the history of that collection, its motivations and mutations, it is essential not to conceptualise the relationship between collector and collected as exclusive or entirely self-sufficient. Nor is it appropriate to presuppose it was fundamentally a 'Victorian' relationship. Gladstone was brought up, educated and lived as a gentleman thanks to his father's mercantile fortune. His home, exclusively to the age of twenty-three and in practice for many years afterwards, was his father's house, in which he was the second youngest of six children. Gladstone was twenty-seven and a seasoned MP of almost five years when the eighteen-year-old Victoria became Queen. Thus we should seriously question how far it is appropriate to characterise Gladstone's intellectual habits and textual knowledge as 'Victorian' when his formative years were those of the Romantic era.

As this project focuses on Gladstone's attitudes to and engagement in the education of the intellect and the organisation of knowledge, it provides an open opportunity to rethink such assumptions and hoary classifications. As Alan Richardson has written: 'As a thematic site for rethinking Romantic-era culture apart from conventional disciplinary boundaries, education is particularly promising: it forms a conceptual space where politics, social history, ideology, and literary representations of all kinds meet, inter-penetrate, and collide'.³ With this in mind, this chapter aims to introduce Gladstone's private reading, book collecting and library building within a two-fold context: of reading and education in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the immediate family environment in which he first experienced books and reading. Part One concentrates on Gladstone's family context: his relatives, friends and staff, as well as the houses and Societies they inhabited. Part Two focuses on the way Gladstone began to develop and educate his individual intellectual identity through both prescribed and private reading. It introduces insights that are primarily gained from studying Gladstone's practice of book annotation, and leads on to the in-depth exploration (in Chapter Two) of his engagement with the most influential writer of the Romantic generation, Sir Walter Scott.

³ Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 2.

1 Bibliomania in the Family

William Gladstone (1809-1898) was the fifth child and fourth son of two émigré Scots, John Gladstone, a lowlander from Leith, and his second wife Anne Mackenzie Robertson, a highland woman from Dingwall.⁴

1.1 Sir John Gladstone, ‘the Founder’⁵

We know that John Gladstone (1764-1851) owned and added to a sizeable book collection, with which he furnished the libraries of successive family homes. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century context in which he amassed his collection was the site of a library revolution in both the public and private spheres. ‘Public’ libraries for the wealthy grew out of debating clubs and gentlemen’s societies, for example, John’s adopted home of Liverpool opened a library for ‘Gentlemen and Ladies who wish to promote the Advantage of knowledge’ in 1758, which claimed to be the first of its kind in Great Britain.⁶ In the mid-eighteenth-century private sphere, the library was ‘a focal living and entertaining room for much of the English nobility and upper gentry’. It formed the ‘communal centre of the house. Stocked with chairs and busts and books, it...[was] a perfect blend of comfort, civilization and choice taste’.⁷ And during the last two-thirds of the century, ‘private’, domestic libraries of this sort were being built on an unprecedented scale by the propertied classes.⁸ There was a clear connection between the library-building projects of the rich and their ostensible desire to display wealth, status, cultivation and gentility.⁹ Books, especially of reference, were not only sources of information but ‘symbols both of status and of economic transaction’.¹⁰ Elegant library furniture and accoutrements further signalled the ‘social elevation of books and reading’.¹¹ Guides to good (and acceptable) reading were freely available to fledgling library collectors in order to ensure the social currency of their new and burgeoning collections.¹² Such library

⁴ For detailed information on G’s ancestry and family, cf. Penelope Gladstone, *Portrait of a Family: The Gladstones 1839-1889* (Kendal: Titus Wilson & Son Ltd., 1989); S. G. Checkland, *The Gladstones: A Family Biography 1764-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); S. G. Checkland, ‘Mr Gladstone, His Parents and His Siblings’, in *Gladstone: Politics and Religion*, ed. by P.J. Jagger (London: Macmillan, 1985), 40-48.

⁵ JG is still referred to in the family as ‘the founder’.

⁶ James Raven, ‘From Promotion to Proscription: Arrangements for Reading and Eighteenth-Century Libraries’, in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 175-201, p. 175.

⁷ Ibid., p. 188.

⁸ Ibid., p. 176.

⁹ Ibid., p. 178.

¹⁰ Kate Flint, ‘Women, Men and the Reading of *Vanity Fair*’, Ibid. (CUP), 246-262, p. 254.

¹¹ James Raven, ‘From Promotion to Proscription: Arrangements for Reading and Eighteenth-Century Libraries’, Ibid. (CUP), 175-201, p. 191.

¹² Cf. e.g. John Whiston, James Dodsley, and J. Robson, *Directions for a Proper Choice of Authors to Form a Library...Intended for Those Readers Who Are Only Acquainted with the English Language* (London: J. Whiston, 1766).

builders were encouraged to learn from sale catalogues of great libraries, which had largely been built up over centuries by aristocratic families.¹³

Wealthy book-collectors were not without their critics: Benjamin Disraeli's father Isaac sharply satirised their 'Bibliomania' in his *Curiosities of Literature* (1791-1834).

The collecting of an enormous heap of literature without intelligent curiosity, has, since libraries have existed, infected weak minds, who imagine that they themselves acquire knowledge when they keep it on their shelves. Their motley libraries have been called the madhouses of the human mind; and again, the tombs of books, when the possessor will not communicate them, and coffins them up in the cases of his library.¹⁴

John Gladstone's enthusiasm for books was undoubtedly as in keeping with his increasingly genteel existence as were his art purchases, essays in church patronage and progressively grand houses. He clearly understood that his increasingly important social position in life necessitated the provision of a library. He also recognised his need for assistance in developing such an enterprise and turned to his Eton-educated son William for help in amassing a worthy collection.¹⁵ But his attitude to books and libraries, and that of his family, cannot be solely attributed to social aspiration and fashion. His gentleman's Library was not like that described by D'Israeli – purely for show and not used. As his son's Library was to do during the succeeding years of the nineteenth century, it straddled public and private boundaries; both represented status and embodied working knowledges. For, as Mark Girouard has persuasively argued:

To the English merchant...disciplining and denying himself, fighting for survival in the commercial jungle, there was increasingly present the vision of...an estate in the country, a glistening new country house with thick carpets and plate-glass windows, the grateful villagers at the doors of their picturesque cottages, touching their caps to their new landlord...*with his sons at Eton and Christ Church and his...daughters teaching in the Sunday school.*¹⁶

For such ostentatious collection and display had a tangible and practical end: the next generation was to be firmly integrated not only into the moneyed but also the social and educated élite, and by the most seamless of means. As Pierre Bourdieu has observed:

¹³ Raven, 'From Promotion to Proscription', pp. 191-2.

¹⁴ Quoted in Alan Taylor, ed., *Long Overdue: A Library Reader* (London: Library Association, 1993), pp. 40-1.

¹⁵ Cf. e.g. *GD* 7/10/29. G attended a Liverpool booksale with his father and complained 'there long – a very bad day'.

¹⁶ My emphasis. Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, Revised and Enlarged edn (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 6.

Among all the solutions put forward throughout history to the problem of the transmission of power and privileges, there surely does not exist one that is better concealed...than the solution which the educational system provides by contributing to the reproduction of the structure of class relations.¹⁷

John Gladstone's Library had not only to look good, but also to exist as an important educational resource for his children (principally his four sons). And he had a very clear idea of the characteristics that should mark out his sons' education and reading and how their future position in society could be secured. Between 1820 and 1822 he unfolded his views to his eldest son, Tom, with all the zealous passion of one to whom formal education has been denied, beginning with a defence of his choice of school.

A greater proportion of eminent and distinguished men have been sent forth into the World from Eton than any other Seminary in the Kingdom, we therefore did not hesitate in selecting for you this School, tho' the most expensive, but the most distinguished.

It is our anxious wish to give you a right direction to your mind...I wish I were more competent to the Task, but *none* such fell to my Lot when at your time of Life, I can therefore only speak from information and observation, not actual experience...

Education is now so general that everything is expected from a Gentleman. He is expected to possess every acquirement, to speak Modern Languages, to have a knowledge of Science generally, to know something of the Fine Arts, with a well cultivated mind and a deep sense of the Duties he owes to his Creator and his fellow Creatures...

In Classical acquirements you should become acquainted with the nature and composition of those languages...and...the style and manner of the most intelligent and accomplished Scholars and Orators of the Ancient Schools of Greece and Rome. On these your taste ought to be formed and from them your mind should be stored with useful and important knowledge, the pursuits of [which] in these objects you ought to acquire the habits of application, of close thinking and investigation of subject, and that of tracing every effect to its cause...Your Studies (Classical) ought also to give you a taste for reading, and a desire for general knowledge, which you will be at no loss for time to gratify.

When you have leisure for general reading, I would recommend History in preference...If either at the Bar or Public Life, it is absolutely necessary to possess and intimate acquaintance with not only the history and constitution of your own Country, but every other if [at] all prominent whether ancient or modern...

¹⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction' in *Power and Ideology in Education*, ed. by Jerome Karabel and A. H. Halsey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 87-8, quoted in Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 26.

At Eton you have abundant proof in the conduct of others what may be done there. Look to Mr Canning who, whilst storing his mind with Classical and General Knowledge, was distinguishing himself by literary composition.¹⁸

Part of the essential preparation for a political life, in John Gladstone's view, was 'general reading'.¹⁹ This, again, can be fully integrated into our understanding of the educational theories of the day and their diffused influence over popular literature for both children and adults. The impression here is that, although his son is being given every advantage by being sent to Eton, he will need to self-direct his learning and reading in order to achieve that level of working knowledge that his father sees as desirable for a career in public life. As Mary Wollstonecraft's heroine in *Mary, A Fiction* (1788), who was 'left to the operations of her own mind' considering 'everything that came under her inspection, and [thus] learned to think',²⁰ it was assumed that Tom needed self-discipline and natural curiosity in order to learn. However, whilst it is clear that Tom found it hard to live up to his father's expectations it is evident that this challenge was something enthusiastically embraced by John's youngest son. As we shall see, William's enthusiasm for education and library building clearly accorded with John's priorities. And it will become increasingly clear how far a conception of learning as a self-directed discipline and duty moulded William Gladstone's conceptualisation of education and library use.

1.2 Anne Robertson Gladstone (1773-1835)

Gladstone's mother's role in the literary interests and education of her family were, as might be expected, more privately than publicly orientated. Her activities were both important and influential but also less straightforwardly recognised or represented than those of her husband. Numerous scholars have shown that Anne was the driving force behind the family's evangelical-Christian character, with its strong emphasis on the textualities of the Bible, religious literature and personal journalising. It has also been made clear elsewhere how influential she was over William's religiosity and practice.²¹ Her own private reading habits were, as her son's were to be, dominated by her religious interests; Checkland records, 'Her favourite reading was religious literature like *Daily*

¹⁸ JG to TG, 21 April, 5 May 1820 and 9 October 1822. Quoted in Checkland, *The Gladstones*, pp. 410-12.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 130.

²⁰ Mary Wollstonecraft, *Mary, A Fiction* and *The Wrongs of Women*, ed. by Gary Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 4, quoted in Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 7.

²¹ Cf. e.g. David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 23; Peter J. Jagger, *Gladstone: The Making of a Christian Politician: The Personal Religious Life and Development of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1832* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1991), pp. 5-15; H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 6-8.

Bread.²² He also notes her affection for ‘nostalgic works like *The Scotch Gael*,²² which would indicate that her nationality as well as her religion featured strongly in her own sense of identity (a combination which, as we shall see in Chapter Two, also displayed itself in her youngest son). But Anne’s influence was not completely restricted to the private sphere. She knew members of the Clapham Sect including William Wilberforce and was the means by which her son William was personally introduced to the popular author and evangelical educator Hannah More in 1815. Gladstone described his mother’s involvement as follows.

My mother took me in 181- to Barley Wood Cottage, near Bristol. Here lived Miss Hannah More, with some of her coeval sisters. I am sure they loved my mother, who was love-worthy indeed. And I cannot help here deviating for a moment into the later portion of the story to record that in 1833 I had the honour of breakfasting with Mr. Wilberforce a few days before his death, and when I entered the house, immediately after the salutation, he said to me in his silvery tones, ‘How is your sweet mother?’²³

Thus Anne was instrumental in acquainting her son with a group influential, evangelical and educationally minded. More, who noted that children ‘bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil dispositions which it should be the great end of education to rectify’, was in the vanguard, with Maria Edgeworth and others, producing popular didactic literature which aimed to compete with the unregulated moralities of chapbooks and broadsheet tales.²⁴ William was an obvious target for such didacticism and More duly presented him with a copy of her *Sacred Dramas* during his visit, an act (as we shall see later) that was both significant and memorable for Gladstone. There is no doubt More made an impression on him (he recorded reading nine works by her between 1825 and 1840)²⁵ but what is equally clear is that his mother was instrumental in perpetuating her circle’s influence in the domestic environment, for example by casting William in the role of the child evangelist so commonly represented in evangelical texts, and by encouraging the introspective and self-examinatory aspects of his learning techniques.²⁶ Yet again, there was a prominent self-educatory aspect to the evangelical model which Anne Gladstone was advocating. The most important element was Gladstone keeping a diary to aid spiritual self-examination – a very common feature of evangelical/nonconformist

²² Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 230.

²³ G’s autobiographica quoted in John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, New edn, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1905), I, p. 12.

²⁴ Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 6th edn, 2 vols (London, 1799), I, p. 64, quoted in Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 14. Ibid., p. 31.

²⁵ Cf. *GD* vol. 14.

²⁶ Cf. Jagger, *Christian Politician*, pp. 13-14.

households to encourage ‘habits of close reading, interpretive analysis, and intellectual self-improvement’.²⁷ By combining the reading of moral stories (such as the works of More and Edgeworth) with introspection and journalising, children like the young Gladstone, Princess Victoria, John Henry Newman and scores of others, were all encouraged ‘to discipline their own hearts though constructing moral tales out of their lives’.²⁸ The relationship between reading and autobiography is a prominent theme to which we will return in Chapter Two but it is the role of gender within the spheres of education and libraries, to which we now turn.

The circle with which Anne Gladstone had contact and which clearly influenced her son’s reading was feminised in important ways; many of their texts were addressed specifically to women and girls. Of the nine texts by More Gladstone recorded reading in his Diary, two focused specifically on female education and behaviour: *Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess* (1840; read by Gladstone on 30 October 1840) and *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799; read 7 December 1834). Exemplary child-characters who described keeping diaries (in works such as M. M. Sherwood’s *The Fairchild Family* (1818)) and teaching in Sunday Schools (which Gladstone did)²⁹ were frequently women. Also, women writers were as aware as their male contemporaries of the social advantages of an Eton education.³⁰

If we look at the Gladstone family context, the way in which education and books were represented, certain gendered inconsistencies reveal themselves. Although William was later to describe his mother as ‘a woman of energy...beautiful and admirable’ who played an active part in the evangelical literary circles of her day,³¹ there are clear indications that when her family publicly represented itself, Anne’s role as both reader and religious figure, was subordinated to that of her husband. A fascinating commentary on this and the centrality of the Library in the Gladstone family’s consciousness, is provided by the series of drawings produced in 1854 by Alexander Munro (1825-1871) for John and Anne’s

²⁷ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 34.

²⁸ Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 136. Cf. also Jagger, *Christian Politician*, p. 12.

²⁹ Cf. GD 10&17/8/28, 26/7/29ff, 30/8/29ff, 11/7/30, 12/9/30, 31/7/31, 4/12/31.

³⁰ Edgeworth in *Practical Education* advised parents in the ‘middle ranks of life’ to consider the ‘large public schools’ as a way of expunging their (male) children’s ‘rusticity’ and ‘provincial dialects’. Equally, school holidays were to be monitored and not allowed to degenerate into ‘dissipation and idleness’. Quoted in Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 55.

³¹ G’s autobiographica quoted in Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, I, pp. 9-10.

memorial in St Andrew's Episcopal Church, Fasque.³² Commissioned and adapted by Sir Thomas Gladstone, the original sketches [figs 1.2 - 1.3] represent the couple praying in the family Library. John, with head resting on his right hand, occupies the dominant, central space whilst Anne's role, as both reader and supplicant, was increasingly subordinated during the memorial's design process. It was not John's position as religious patriarch that ensured this; in fact Anne was more easily integrated into the newly-emphasised religiosity of the final composition [fig. 1.4]. It was the context for which such a representation was designed. John Gladstone had to be the dominating presence and sole actor in the family's library *as it was to be publicly represented*, even though his wife's influence over her children's reading and education certainly equalled if not exceeded his. It is fascinating that it was this role of library-reader and educator, rather than of intercessor, which required a more overtly autonomous male representation. It is important at this stage to note the gendered iconography deemed to be required, by both son and artist, in the public representation of the domestic library space, which highlights the existence of inconsistency and tension between the public representation (male dominance and autonomy) and the private reality (feminised influences) of the library sphere. Equivalent ambiguities, of both gender and representation, will recur later in this study regarding the way in which William Gladstone used and sought to represent his Library.

1.3 The Gladstone Children

Of his brothers and sisters, William was closest to the eldest and youngest: Anne Mackenzie and Helen Jane – once again drawing our attention to the feminised context of his early life and education.

1.3.1 Anne Mackenzie

Anne Mackenzie Gladstone (1802-1828) was the eldest of John and Anne's children and is most frequently remembered for her religious influence on the young William.³³ It is clear that she was an intelligent young woman, reading French and studying Italian, as well as being keen to debate theology with her youngest brother.³⁴ She too was an enthusiastic reader, probably increasingly so as her health deteriorated and other activities became

³² Cf. Munro's correspondence with TG, GG 450.

³³ Cf. e.g. Jagger, *Christian Politician*, pp. 33-45; Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Peel's Inheritor 1809-1865* (London: Penguin, 1982), p. 7.

³⁴ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 166.

proscribed.³⁵ Her room at Seaforth House, to which she was increasingly confined, was apparently furnished by ‘heaps of books on the tables’.³⁶

It is clear that she and William had many literary, as well as religious, tastes in common. Checkland notes that ‘in spite of lingering misgivings by her parents she eagerly read Scott as the Waverley Novels appeared. *Ivanhoe* was a favourite; *Kenilworth* also she liked, but thought it ended “horribly”’. She also admired Byron.³⁷ She too was clearly aware of the educative power of the domestic environment over the public sphere. ‘The power to do well cometh from the home’, she told William (at Eton) in 1824.³⁸

William was devastated by her death at the age of twenty-six. He recorded his sorrowful return to Seaforth in 1829, where he ‘found all in great grief’ and ‘saw the pale remains of dearest Anne’. In a way that we shall see was characteristic, Gladstone responded to his emotional turmoil by resorting to his books and struggled to maintain continuity through his reading schedules. Thus later the same Sunday he ‘Began Sumner’s Apostolical teaching’ and, several days later, in a poignant bibliographic tribute to his dead sister, he and Helen ‘made...an inventory of dear Anne’s books’.³⁹

1.3.2 *Thomas*

Thomas (1804-1889), John and Anne’s eldest son and heir, clearly bore the brunt of his father’s substantial ambitions for his family. Like William, Tom progressed from Eton and Oxford to Westminster. Although the religio-textual culture of his upbringing remained ingrained in his conceptualisation of the domestic sphere (exemplified in his dealings with Munro), it is also clear that Tom did not share the heightened intellectual curiosity common to Anne, William and Helen. The following letter, written to William, wonderfully illustrates both his lack of interest and also the early evidence and remarkable level of the youngest male Gladstone’s fascination with books and their ordering.

³⁵ Cf. Ibid., p. 165.

³⁶ Mrs Bennett, ‘Memo’, 9, 10, quoted in Ibid., p. 169. On solitary childhood reading in the period, cf. Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 125.

³⁷ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 90.

³⁸ AMG to G, 4 December 1824, quoted in Ibid., p. 164.

³⁹ GD 22/2/29, 27/2/29.

Dear William,

I beg a thousand pardons for my neglecting to send you the list of my Library before now, but I really have had a good deal to do since the holydays. Robertson is writing to my Mother, who is I hope by this time better than she was when Ann (*sic*) wrote. Excuse brevity and with best love to Helen and Johnny. Believe me to be y^r very affec^t Brother

I shall write to Johnson

Tho^s Gladstone.⁴⁰

The first thing to note is how far the importunate William's desire for knowledge and order extended well beyond the sphere of his own book collection. He had clearly been pestering Thomas, preoccupied with his own affairs at Eton, for some time. In return Thomas mocked his nine-year old brother's bibliographic (and political) precocity by addressing his belated note to 'The Rt. Hon. W Gladstone, Librarian &c, &c, &c!' The list Thomas sent was neither extensive nor detailed, probably indicating both a lack of time and interest. It reflected the required classical reading of the student (Virgil, Homer, Ovid and Horace), the influence of an evangelical Christian home (the Bible, *Moral Tales* and Edward Young's poetical *Night Thoughts* (1777)) and the familiar English language 'classics' of the early nineteenth century (poetry by Scott, Southey and Cowper). Thomas, unlike William, did not see fit to arrange his list alphabetically or to group subjects together. The only similarity is that in each case, the number of volumes was listed.⁴¹

1.3.3 Robertson

Robertson (1805-1875) began studying at Eton, but was relocated by John to the family business.⁴² However, he did not go without further education: John Gladstone deemed appropriate, practically-based mental training as necessary for a merchant as the classics were for a lawyer or politician. Thus Robertson was sent to study at the College of Glasgow. In his second term of study there, he 'requested permission of his parents to learn to play the flageolet: this was agreed provided that the time taken did not exceed half an hour a day'. In addition, his parents' required that

His reading of novels was to be dropped. 'After you have finished *Peveir*l', wrote his father, 'I would wish you to give up the subscription to the circulating library. It is only calculated to tempt you into light reading.' He was also told to keep careful account of his spending and keep his handwriting plain.⁴³

⁴⁰ TG to G, 28 September 1819, GG MS 1359.

⁴¹ Cf. discussion of G's cataloguing in Chapter 3.

⁴² Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 5.

⁴³ JG to RG, 29 January 1823, quoted in Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 139.

Robertson was thus another Gladstonian Scott addict. It is interesting that his father did not seem to regard *Peperil of the Peak* as inappropriate reading (at least for his sons), even though he took a dim view of the advantages of circulating libraries.⁴⁴

1.3.4 John

John Neilson Gladstone (1807-1863) is quite a shadowy figure who refused to follow his father's predetermined plan, forging a successful naval career before settling into a parliamentary seat. John always got on with William, accompanying him on his 1832 Grand Tour, but they drifted apart in later years.⁴⁵ However, he clearly shared in his family's liking for and common exchange of books; in an early diary entry, William recorded receiving '10 little books from Dear John'.⁴⁶

1.3.5 Helen

The youngest sibling, Helen Jane, was an intelligent and independently-minded girl. She asked William to teach her Latin when only a little child (suggesting Hargreaves had indeed caught the true state of their relationship in his miniature).⁴⁷ Helen and William grew increasingly close, especially after Anne's illness began, and remained so into the early 1830s. William's relationship with Helen followed the one he had had with Anne very closely. They read and discussed together many of the same topics, including baptismal regeneration.⁴⁸ And after Anne's death they entered a pact to watch the conduct of the other.⁴⁹ In adulthood their relationship was stormy and one in which books and reading were both uniting and divisive factors. Helen's intense spirituality and lack of fulfilment in the family home drew her to Roman Catholicism, to which she converted in 1842.⁵⁰ Gladstone's reaction to her decision was periodically marked by intransigence and vindictiveness. On one occasion he lost his temper completely when he discovered that she had been using religious books from his father's Library as toilet paper!⁵¹ However, when they did get on, Helen and William's relationship continued to

⁴⁴ The questionable status of 'light literature' was a ubiquitous debating point. Cf. Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 131ff.

⁴⁵ Shannon, *Gladstone I*, p. 6; Checkland, *The Gladstones*, pp. 135-6, 240, 254.

⁴⁶ GD 11/10/25.

⁴⁷ AMG to TG, 13 September 1825, quoted in Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 165.

⁴⁸ G to HJG, 24 August 1828, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 221. Cf. also e.g. GD 23/8/33.

⁴⁹ G to HJG, 11 October 1829, quoted in Jagger, *Christian Politician*, p. 51.

⁵⁰ Bebbington, *Faith and Politics*, p. 73. It is also likely that personal unhappiness and the harsh, unsympathetic treatment she received at the hands of her male relatives drove her to seek relief in the drugs to which she increasingly became addicted. Little has so far been written on HJG; for a brief treatment cf. J. Gilliland, 'Helen Jane Gladstone (1814-1880) Sister of William', *Flintshire Historical Society Journal* 35 (1999), 177-189.

⁵¹ Cf. GD 24/11/48 and Philip Magnus, *Gladstone: A Biography* (London: John Murray, 1954), p. 84.

be dominated by books and reading.⁵² Following her death in 1880, part of Gladstone's process of grieving for her (as it had been for Anne) was to sort through and reflect upon the Library she had collected. On 17 January 1880 he recorded: 'walked awhile after dusk. Until then, and again after dinner to near midnight worked on the large mass of effects, especially the books, of which I arranged I think about 1200'. The following day he 'made an examination of all the books of devotion: it was very interesting & important & set forth the whole history of her mental transition since 1870. I packed all these Volumes apart. They show she died at one with us as before'.⁵³ However spurious was Gladstone's judgment that Helen had died an Anglican, his deduction based on her Library shows that Gladstone himself regarded a book collection as reflective of its owner's mind and development as well as a useful source for trying to understand it. Thus on the 19th he 'Read through the uncut Vol. on Morphia-Craving...& resumed work on Books & effects (which are a huge chaos) as also upon papers'. On the 20th and 21st Gladstone sold many of his sister's books.

2 'Rt. Hon. W. Gladstone, MP, Librarian': (Self) Knowledge and Identity

Thus it is clear that, when Gladstone was born in December 1809, he entered a family to which books, in their reading, ownership and display, were important commodities. What is more, a taste for bibliophily and serious reading were actively encouraged by both Gladstone's parents, with somewhat mixed results and differing frames of gendered reference. We know that William was, in terms of time and scale, to outstrip both parents and siblings in his love for, collection and reading of books. But when did his obsession begin?

2.1 Education, Obsession and the Beginnings of a Collection

2.1.1 *Beginnings*

There is plenty of evidence for Gladstone's addiction to books and reading dating from before his surviving Diary begins. 'Well before he was ten he knew that the reading of the Scriptures should be his continuous duty and pleasure', noted Checkland.⁵⁴ In Gladstone's fragmentary autobiography, early recollections of his reading and its influence loomed large and clearly displayed the influence of his mother. He wrote:

⁵² E.g. *GD* 17/10/45.

The Pilgrim's Progress undoubtedly took a great and fascinating hold upon me, so that anything which I wrote was insensibly moulded in its style; but it was by the force of the allegory addressing itself to the fancy, and was very like a strong impression received from the Arabian Nights, and from another work called Tales of the Genii.⁵⁵

It is worth noting here that first books owned or read are important emotional and historical markers to many readers of different class backgrounds. For example, many working-class autobiographers also made a point of dwelling on their early books.⁵⁶

Books, reading and education were amusements for William; favoured ways of escaping boredom or unhappiness. In 1821, staying at the Grafton Street house, Willy described London as "a dry nasty hole". "I am sick of it already", he wrote, "but I have managed to amuse myself with books (Latin and Greek)".⁵⁷ Nonetheless, they were also duties.

2.1.2 Education

2.1.2.1 Eton

Gladstone went to Eton in 1821, where he developed 'into a voracious reader'.⁵⁸ Although Gladstone was generally happy there, he was unimpressed by both the standard of religious practice and intellectual rigour of the College. He regularly complained about the poor quality of preaching and religious worship,⁵⁹ and on leaving, he informed his father that his Eton education had left him 'wretchedly deficient in the knowledge of modern languages, literature and history', the very subjects which John felt should supplement the classical education of a public man.⁶⁰ Gladstone's commentary was clearly not exaggerated. Christopher Hollis has described the Eton of Gladstone's day as follows:

⁵³ G noticed his sister's Roman Catholic devotional works were all pre 1870, save a few unused or unopened. J. Brooke and M Sorensen, eds., *The Prime Minister's Papers: W. E. Gladstone*, 4 vols (London: HMSO, 1971), 1: Autobiographica, iv, p. 41.

⁵⁴ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 96.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, I, p. 13.

⁵⁶ Cf. Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p. 3.

⁵⁷ G to RG, postmarked Grafton St, 1821, quoted in Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 95.

⁵⁸ Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 14.

⁵⁹ Cf. e.g., GD 16/10/25.

⁶⁰ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 244.

The...curriculum...was narrowly and monotonously classical – a constant recapitulation of the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid* and Horace and books of extracts known as *Scriptores Graeci* and *Scriptores Latini* – the endless composition of hack verses. Not until the foundation of the Newcastle Scholarship in 1829 was there any general examination either in classical scholarship or in religious knowledge...Although church-going and prayer-reading occupied a good deal of the boys' time, there was no religious instruction, properly so called, at all. Irreverence was tolerated.⁶¹

With such an intellectual climate it is not surprising that John Gladstone impressed on his boys the importance of self-discipline and motivation in learning and that William habitually read more widely and for much longer than either syllabus or school debates required. For example, he began Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in November 1825, picked it up again for a debate in 1827 and then continued the work to its conclusion, epitomising it as he went along. He liked the book, although he disliked Gibbon's scoffing at Christianity and on the whole preferred Hume's *History of England*, which Matthew regarded as important in 'conditioning Gladstone's youthful view of the lack of a correlation between liberty and democracy'.⁶² As well as filling in historical gaps, Gladstone kept up a formidable programme of private religious reading, thus maintaining the influence of his evangelical home. He read the Bible daily and extensively on Sundays, sometimes in Greek. In his last year he read the Gospels using the high church commentary by D'Oyly and Mant. This and Gladstone's independent reading of William Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* led Matthew not only to note Gladstone's 'considerable eclecticism and a curiosity to move well beyond the simplicities of Biblical evangelicalism' but also to suggest 'an embryonic High-Churchmanship...[in] his developing religious persona'.⁶³ Both he and Bebbington used this evidence of Gladstone's religious reading at Eton to point up his later clear departure from the strict limits of his family's evangelicalism. However, this should not, I think, be over-stressed at this point. It must be remembered, for example, that Gladstone's view of Newman when he subsequently went to Oxford was cautiously rather than wholeheartedly admiring.⁶⁴ And Gladstone's daily Bible reading and the private quality of his devotions were disciplines established within the family context, as was his sermon reading. Matthew observed Gladstone read

⁶¹ Christopher Hollis, *Eton: A History* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1960), p. 197. Hollis also corroborates G's comments on mumbled sermons. Ibid., p. 199.

⁶² Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 15. Matthew stressed the 'Whiggish' character of Eton's historical education and its concentration on politics, particularly constitutional. Ibid., p. 14. G read much modern British history, including Clarendon, Hume, Burnet, Coxe's *Walpole* and Tomline's *Pitt*, which was useful not only for school work but also for school debates, to which G was an enthusiastic contributor.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 16.

⁶⁴ E.g. *GD* 6/3/31: 'Newman preached in the afternoon – much singular not to say objectionable matter if one may so speak of so good a man'.

J.B. Sumner, a moderate evangelical, and Thomas Chalmers, the noted Scottish evangelical, who was a family friend. Both Matthew and Bebbington commented on Gladstone's reading of Hugh Blair, a moderate Presbyterian prominent in the Scottish Enlightenment. Bebbington described Blair as 'one of the Moderates in the Church of Scotland whose elegant teaching concentrated on classical themes of human dignity rather than on the biblical drama of salvation'. But he also drew equal attention to the fact that, at this stage of his life and religious development, Gladstone was clearly resisting such readings. Gladstone noted in May 1826 that Blair 'seems to have formed too high an estimate of our character as "men"'.⁶⁵ I think it is equally important to note that Blair was a staple text to be found in many a representative gentleman's library in the early nineteenth century; note that even Mr Osbourne (in *Vanity Fair*) possessed 'standard works in stout gilt bindings: *The Annual Register*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Blair's *Sermons*, and Hume and Smollett'.⁶⁶ At this stage it is perhaps better to hold onto the point well-made by Jonathan Rose that 'though autodidact culture was nurtured by the evangelical revival, it also presented a challenge to evangelical ideology' through its emphasis on self-education and analysis.⁶⁷

Despite the shortcomings of Eton's education, books, as collectable objects, were integral not only to the work but the ritual of Eton life. On leaving the College, Gladstone was given 'the traditional morocco-bound book',⁶⁸ plus various other 'leaving books' from school friends. On 27 November 1827, Gladstone 'Bid Canning goodbye' and 'received a leaving book from him with a very kind note'. The following day, Gladstone wrote in his Diary 'received leaving books, very handsome, from Moss, Rogers, Robertson – put up a good many books for packing, carefully'. On the 29th he 'Rec'd leaving books from Handley, Chisholm minor, Mansfield major & Mellish minor, White, Robinson, Buller major. I am now very well off...[and] put up a good many more books'. Gladstone was still occupied in this task the following day when he recorded 'Putting up books – packed one large box'. And still the leaving books came flooding in: 'Selwyn major and Nicholl major' contributed on the 29th whilst 'Leaving books from Jelf...and J. Bruce' arrived on 1 December. This bibliophilic ceremonial inspired Gladstone to a flurry of personal book-

⁶⁵ Quoted in Bebbington, *Faith and Politics*, p. 29.

⁶⁶ Kate Flint, 'Women, Men and the Reading of *Vanity Fair*', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 246-262, p. 256.

⁶⁷ Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p. 29.

⁶⁸ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 215.

buying and reading. For example, on his arrival in London from Eton on 4 December, Gladstone immediately 'bought books & read'.

Several of Gladstone's leaving books survive in or have been returned to the St Deiniol's Collection. English literature was clearly a popular choice, Samuel White's gift was Charles Symmons' biography of John Milton,⁶⁹ and the presentation from E. L. Robertson, Gladstone's cousin, was a volume of Alexander Pope's poetical works with a 'Life' and engraved portrait of the author. Both volumes are handsomely bound and neatly inscribed with the date and donor's name. On receipt, Gladstone further established his ownership of the books by adding his armorial bookplates (although this statement was somewhat undermined by his pasting one of them upside down)!

It is remarkable how much can be observed just from these two volumes in Gladstone's collection. We not only know their origin, but can also observe their later use and destination. Although intended, at the point of gift, to display the status of both giver and recipient and represent relationships, these volumes were far from being merely representational in Gladstone's eyes. When they entered his collection they became part of an organic system of organised knowledge. Both were read and annotated, in both cases at a later date than that of receipt. And, in the case of the Milton, Gladstone's reading and marginalia betoken reading driven by specific purpose and shaped by an unerring focus. He read and annotated the biography two decades after receiving it with particular reference to two of his absorbing passions at the time: the divorce question and Homer.⁷⁰ Gladstone recorded reading 'Symmons's Milton' in his Diary on 17 June 1857. The Diary editors suggested this was Symmons' *The Prose Works of J. Milton with a life of the author* (1806); however the focus of the annotations in the White volume (on Milton's relationship with his wife) clearly corresponds with Gladstone's research on marriage and divorce at the time of reading.⁷¹ One of the most intriguing annotations from a reading history point of view not only ties in Gladstone's reading to his work on Homer,⁷² but also indicates his awareness of the reading act itself as a subject for comment and analysis. Gladstone drew attention to Milton's reading and pronunciation of the dead languages. He placed an 'NB' by Symmons' comment that 'Milton was studious to form his reader's

⁶⁹ Samuel George Booth White (1812?-80), vicar of Boughton-under-Bean, Kent, 1854-1869, Chaplain to the duke of Marlborough. Charles Symmons, *The Life of John Milton*, 3rd edn (London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1822).

⁷⁰ GD 17/6/57.

⁷¹ Cf. GD 12/6/57ff and W. E. Gladstone, 'The Bill for Divorce', *Quarterly Review* 102 (July 1857), 251-288.

⁷² Cf. GD 22/6/57ff. G was revising his 'Ethnological Essay', which would form Part Two of William Ewart Gladstone, *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1858), vol. 2.

tongue to the pronunciation of the Latin, assigning, as a reason for his conduct, the impossibility of conversing with foreigners without this condescension to the habit of their ears'.⁷³

The edition of Pope's works contains marginalia (more in the first than the second volume) as well as three pages of endnotes, indicating Gladstone's full use of yet another presentation copy. This book is testimony to the mobility that to some degree affected Gladstone's collection, for the volumes contain the later bookplate of Frederick, Baron Wolverton, brother and heir to the Lord Wolverton to whom Gladstone sold a portion of his library in 1875 (see Chapter Four).⁷⁴

2.1.2.2 Oxford

Considering the shortcomings of his Eton education, Gladstone undertook a session of cramming before progressing to Oxford. During these preparations, overseen by the Revd Dr Turner, William clearly showed the strong influence of his father's educational priorities who in turn was following closely the educational advice of the day. (Richardson quotes one authority advising 'if children were too much underfoot at home, they could be sent to board and study with a neighbouring clergyman').⁷⁵ He commented in a letter to Tom that, 'though Mathematics are undoubtedly of great importance...their relative importance in the scale, compared with that of Classics, is most decidedly, and considerably, inferior'.⁷⁶ Gladstone spent the years 1828-1831 at Christ Church, Oxford, reading *Literae Humaniores*, Mathematics and Divinity. However, even these years, which were very successful academically, left Gladstone with considerable gaps in that knowledge-accurring project in which he constantly engaged. Gladstone's biographers, whilst noting the 'pre-industrial' quality of Gladstone's Oxford education (no account was taken, for example, of political economists like Adam Smith), have generally asserted the importance of this period for his later intellectual development. Colin Matthew argued that the 'grounding quality' of Gladstone's Oxford set texts proved 'unequalled by later reading'.⁷⁷ These included Homer, Plato's *Phaedo*, Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Rhetoric*, Joseph

⁷³ Symmons, *Life of John Milton*, p. 379.

⁷⁴ The book was restored to the collection by purchase in 2000.

⁷⁵ Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 78.

⁷⁶ G to TG, 5 March 1828, quoted in Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 216.

⁷⁷ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 20.

Butler's *Analogy* and 'Thucydides' *History* (with Hobbes' Summary).⁷⁸ However it is clear that it did not look like this to Gladstone, especially once he was thrown into the disorientating world of Westminster and London Society.

2.1.2.3 *Self Education*

The restrictions of Gladstone's schooling and university education were in reality considerable and increasingly irked the young man himself. The superficialities of the male education he had so far experienced did not measure up to the private, introspective and feminised ideal to which he had been encouraged to aspire. He thus found it necessary to educate himself, principally through private reading. 'The authentic value of a liberal education', noted Rose, 'lies not so much in acquiring facts or absorbing "eternal truths", but in discovering new ways to interpret the world'.⁷⁹ One thing Gladstone had been taught at Eton and Oxford was the mechanics of how to set about doing this. He employed the methods he had been taught, such as making epitomes of works read and relating texts to contemporary experience by the practice of analogy,⁸⁰ but largely allowed his interests, enthusiasms (and one suspects his father's priorities) to direct his pattern of reading. Checkland's summary of the resulting programme of self-motivated learning is a useful one.

Indeed in a real sense he was self-educated, for the teaching diet of Eton and Oxford, rooted in a highly formalised approach to the classics, took no account of the problems that troubled him so deeply. His incredible book-lists are not to be seen as a general example of the reading of a reflective youth growing up in the England of the 1820s, but were a highly personal affair. There was of course an element of randomness in what he encountered at the booksellers and elsewhere, but his reading was not that of the dilettante or magpie but of a searcher. He was trying to adjust the ideas he had received at home so that he might better relate himself to reality. The struggle to establish a view of himself and of the world at large went on simultaneously.⁸¹

More often than not, the physical context for this complex and rigorous pattern of reading and education was a library. From an early age William made extensive use of libraries both inside and outside the family home, partly again following in the footsteps of his father.

⁷⁸ Matthew claims Thucydides did not become a lifelong influence because it was studied through a commentary. I would dispute this. G, for example, referred enthusiastically to the imaginative power of Thucydides on his visit to Sicily in 1838, *GD* 26-7/10/38.

⁷⁹ Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 21.

⁸¹ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, pp. 389-90.

2.2 The Library as an Educational Resource

2.2.1 Other Libraries

Gladstone involved himself in the life and works of other libraries throughout his life. As well as making use of their collections, he was active in administering and running many of them.⁸² He visited libraries regularly as a tourist both at home and abroad,⁸³ took a dedicated interest in the libraries of his friends and social peers,⁸⁴ especially those which he considered somehow innovative or out of the common.⁸⁵ As well as publicly promoting the political cause of libraries,⁸⁶ Gladstone privately donated books to those that he thought in need.⁸⁷

The earliest diary reference to Gladstone using or visiting a library outside the family home dates from 1826 when he visited Liverpool's Athenaeum Library, of which his father was a prominent member.⁸⁸ Whilst at Oxford, William used both University and College libraries,⁸⁹ and was given some degree of responsibility over Christ Church Library.⁹⁰ When he was an MP, Gladstone regularly used the House of Commons Library,⁹¹ and additionally supplemented the resources of his own private collection by making use of those available at the British Museum⁹² and the London Library.⁹³

⁸² E.g. He was a committee member and bought books for the Carlton Club. Cf. *GD* 30/5/37, 14/6/37, 9/2/39, 12/2/39, 20/2/40, 16/5/40, 1&3/2/41. He was also instrumental in establishing the National Liberal Club Library, cf. *GD* 2/5/88, *The Times*, 3 May 1888, 10a; *GD* 17/11/88, David Williamson, *Gladstone: The Man: A Non-Political Biography*, 2nd edn (London: James Bowden, 1898), p. 54.

⁸³ E.g. The Vatican Library, cf. *GD* 4/4/32, 16/10/66, 26/11/66; The 'wonderful treasures' of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, cf. *GD* 15/10/79; The University Library, Pepys Library and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge: *GD* 27/11/41, 3/11/59; Corpus Christi, Oxford, cf. *GD* 24/4/78.

⁸⁴ E.g. Audley End, *GD* 24/9/54; Chatsworth House, *GD* 31/5/73, 3&4/6/73, 19/11/75, 20/12/80; Lord Acton's Library, *GD* 14/5/90, 9/6/90, 17/6/90.

⁸⁵ E.g. He visited Pusey House, Oxford, in 1885, cf. *GD* 5/7/85 and the lexicographer James Murray's 'scriptorium' in 1890, cf. *GD* 7/2/90.

⁸⁶ E.g. In 1865 he received an official deputation to discuss government policy to Scottish Libraries, *GD* 23/3/65; In 1869 made plans for a Civil Service Library, *GD* 5/6/69; He opened Swansea Town Library in 1887, cf. *GD* 6/6/87, and spoke on Free Libraries at the Free Public Library in St. Martin's Lane, London, in 1891. Cf. *GD* 12/2/91; *The Times*, 13 February 1891, 12a.

⁸⁷ E.g. he donated books to (what would become) St. Catherine's College, Oxford, in 1874, cf. *GD* 9/2/74 and to Mold Town Library (Flintshire) in 1891, cf. *GD* 15/11/91.

⁸⁸ *GD* 18/9/26.

⁸⁹ Cf. *GD* 4/10/28, 15/5/29. G maintained important links with the Bodleian throughout his life, for example, through his membership of the Radcliffe Trust: cf. *GD* 20/11/61 and *The Guardian*, 27 November 1861, 1089. G paid several visits to Bodley in the 1880s and 90s. Cf. *GD* 28/11/83, 5/4/88, 25/10/92. On the penultimate occasion G sketched out for the Librarian a design for wheeled bookcases, pulled endways instead of forwards which anticipated the 'rolling stack' method of book storage first used on a large scale below the Radcliffe Camera and subsequently in many modern libraries; cf. E. Craster, *History of the Bodleian Library 1845-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); Edward W. B. Nicholson, *Mr. Gladstone and the Bodleian* (Oxford: [n. pub.], 1898), p. 10.

⁹⁰ In 1831 he noted 'the Dean entrusted to me the keys of the Library for the Vacation', *GD* 11/7/31. G also recorded working there, *GD* 12/7/31, 15/7/31.

⁹¹ E.g. *GD* 15/6/88.

⁹² E.g. *GD* 8/4/53.

Nonetheless, as a child and young man, his principal bibliographical resources were the libraries of the Gladstone family's homes. Of particular importance, as we shall see below, both practically and emotionally, was the library of Fasque, his father's Scottish house.

2.2.2 *Family Libraries: Liverpool, Seaforth and Fasque*

2.2.2.1 *Rodney Street*

The first Library Gladstone would have known was that of his birthplace, 62, Rodney Street, Liverpool (then No. 1). This was the house John Gladstone had built during 1792-3 for his first wife, but which was really shaped by his family with Anne.⁹⁴ During the period when their children were being born, John purchased books, drawings and pictures to ornament the house, estimating in 1814 that his books alone were worth £400.⁹⁵

2.2.2.2 *Seaforth House*

Gladstone retained few memories of Rodney Street.⁹⁶ Far more significant was to be Seaforth House, an estate on the Mersey estuary to which John took his young family in 1815. C. R. Fay described John's house as 'the scene of many a famous gathering', quoting J. P. Neale's contemporary description of 'the broad estuary of Mersey, with numerous vessels which must all pass within from one to two miles of Seaforth House'.⁹⁷

There is no doubt that the young William found Seaforth a stimulating environment. It featured regularly in Gladstone's early diary record, from 1825, as the family home to which he returned, usually twice or three times a year, in school and university vacations.⁹⁸ After travelling via Birmingham on the coach, William usually took an hour to reach Seaforth from the centre of Liverpool by gig, or longer if he walked.

It was at Seaforth that William began purposefully to read and arrange his own and his father's books. In recognition of his obvious bibliographical enthusiasm, William was appointed Seaforth's nursery librarian in 1818. The post, despite Checkland's suggestion that he did not long hold it, was one, as we have seen from his importuning of Thomas,

⁹³ GD 7/1/41, 20/2/41, 6/5/57, 22/2/58, 27/10/65, 20/2/75, 2/7/79, 14/8/82, 31/3/87, 22/6/87, 18/2/88. Many other visits are listed referring to Trustees' meetings.

⁹⁴ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 33.

⁹⁵ Private Ledger, 1 November 1814. Quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 80.

⁹⁶ Cf. Brooke and Sorensen, eds., *PMP*, vol. 1, p. 13.

⁹⁷ J. P. Hunt, *Seats* (1819) quoted in C. R. Fay, *Huskisson and His Age* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1951), pp. 369-70.

⁹⁸ GD 2/8/25, 19/7/26, 6/12/26, 3/4/27, 31/7/27, 6/12/27, 10/6/28, 13/12/28, 22/9/29, 21/12/31.

he was certainly keenly fulfilling almost a year after being appointed.⁹⁹ In addition, William engaged in sustained and enthusiastic planning of the family library, which continued throughout the Gladstones' residence there.¹⁰⁰ Whenever he returned to the family home, Gladstone's priority was invariably to get into the Library. Thus on 7 December 1826, despite being 'Tired – having slept very little on the road', William set about 'getting the Library to rights' as well as reading 'part of the Confessions of Ireland &...Tomline's Life of Pitt'.¹⁰¹ He was not always able to engage in concentrated reading; for example on 2 August 1827 he only managed to 'read various books idly in the Library', but nonetheless found it necessary to spend time there. Like his sister Anne, William furnished his own room with books. On 11 June 1828, the first full day of a vacation to be spent at Seaforth, which he described affectionately as 'in its best dress', William was engaged in 'Unpacking, moving books &c. & endeavouring to get things in some degree arranged in the large upper wing room, which is now to be my domicile'.¹⁰² In addition, he was committed to arranging his papers as well as his books. Checkland notes that 'he kept his private papers in his personal closet in the room known as the Octagon, the predecessor of that he was to have specially built for the same purpose when he was a senior statesman'.¹⁰³

Gladstone was determined to exercise full bibliographic control over the entire household, including the servants. His project, to build up a small servants' library in 1829, was one that he planned and executed with the support of his mother and was clearly didactic in emphasis. On 29 September 1829 he recorded having been 'in Town, riding' and selecting 'books from the Christian Knowledge [Society's] List for a servants' Library, & arranged with my dear Mother about them'. The following month he 'made a list of the books for the servants'.¹⁰⁴ Even after the family had removed themselves to Scotland, Gladstone maintained his bibliographic and didactic commitment to the Seaforth estate, presenting books (probably for the Church's use) in 1834.¹⁰⁵

Looking back on his childhood experiences during a visit in 1834, Gladstone expressed powerful feelings about 'poor Seaforth'. He continued, 'I never come out here without a

⁹⁹ AMG to TG, 7 Oct 1818, quoted in Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 95.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹⁰¹ W. H. Ireland, literary forger, (1805).

¹⁰² GD 10-11/6/28.

¹⁰³ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁴ GD 29/9/29, 10/10/29.

¹⁰⁵ GD 11/1/34.

twinge: on this spot I feel, what is the power of a child's imagination: how the local associations of boyhood can neither be eradicated, nor replaced'.¹⁰⁶ Indeed Gladstone retained such affection for Seaforth, which he was left by his father, that he lost money on the estate; refusing to sell it even when it became impossible to let (due to the encroachment of the city).¹⁰⁷ On one occasion during valuation negotiations, he spent three or four hours at the empty house. Attending church the following day he again reflected on his childhood there: 'The memory of my ungodly childhood came thickly upon me. Others may look back upon that time as one of little strain: for me it offers nothing in retrospect but selfishness & sin'.¹⁰⁸ The pessimism of these musings was undoubtedly affected by the sorry state of the house itself, which became derelict, but also remind us of the strong association between Gladstone's evangelical upbringing and his introspectiveness. 'The desolation of Seaforth House is mournful' wrote Gladstone on another visit in 1874,¹⁰⁹ a gloomy feeling which only apparently abated when Gladstone was given the opportunity to reminisce about '*old* Bootle, Seaforth, & shore'.¹¹⁰

2.2.2.3 *Fasque*

John Gladstone began searching for a Scottish estate as early as 1820, a quest that intensified following his rejection as parliamentary candidate for Liverpool in 1823.¹¹¹ He eventually settled on Fasque House near the village of Fettercairn, Kincardineshire, in 1829. The house, which had been rebuilt in 1809, and estate cost him just under £80,000.¹¹² Between 1833 and 1851, William habitually spent the parliamentary recesses, between August to October, at Fasque when he often read aloud or acted as secretary to his father.¹¹³ It remained Gladstone's home until his father's death in 1851.

The Library at Fasque, unlike that of Seaforth, survives ostensibly as Gladstone would have known it.¹¹⁴ Located on the first floor of the west wing of the house, it is easily accessible from the house's central cantilever staircase. This and its adjacency to the

¹⁰⁶ GD 8/8/34.

¹⁰⁷ G lost some £12,000 on the eventual sale, for which he in part blamed RG. Cf. GD 15/1/52, 20/10/52, 5/11/53, 14/6/55, 27/10/56, 30/10/56, 9/4/74ff, 18/4/74, 26/7/74 and Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 379.

¹⁰⁸ GD 5-6/11/53.

¹⁰⁹ GD 26/7/74.

¹¹⁰ GD 9/10/83.

¹¹¹ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 162.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 281.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 282. Cf. also GD 2/12/33, 21/1/49, 8/9/50.

¹¹⁴ Fasque remains the property of the Gladstone family.

extensive drawing room ensured it served as one of the principal living rooms for the Gladstone family.

It consists of a main Library: a large and elegant apartment with elaborate scrollwork-bookshelves ranged against the walls [fig. 1.5], and a turret room where, in later years, Gladstone would retire to read when he and his brother Thomas were at odds over politics.¹¹⁵ Each bookcase is assigned a letter of the alphabet and each shelf is numbered from the top. A to S are in the main library; T to Z in the turret room. Most of the books contain the simple bookplate 'Fasque' but Thomas Gladstone's collection is also housed there. Busts are arranged on the tops of the bookshelves, in common with many large domestic libraries of the time.¹¹⁶ Politicians, philosophers, literary and historical figures make up the hall of fame and provide its punctuated historical chronology. They include Pitt, Fox, Pope, Dryden, King Alfred, Burke, Newton, Locke, Johnson, Molière, Homer and Virgil. In the principal room, comfortable chairs flank the fireplace, over which hangs a portrait of George Canning, John Gladstone's great political hero. Chaises longues provide seating in the first and third windows and the central light overlooks one of two desks; one appreciably more ornate than the other. There are photographs, objets d'art and stationery items on the shelves and desks.

2.2.2.3.1 *Gladstone and Fasque*

Gladstone's began his first visit to Fasque on 20 August 1833.¹¹⁷ He was 'much pleased with...the interior of the house' and continued enthusiastically the following day, which was 'employed chiefly in lionising, within and without'. He was clearly struck by the house's romantic setting and made the most of his opportunities to walk over Fasque's extensive estates (at the time second only to Balmoral in size); the Diary is scattered with such comments as 'walk in a Scotch mist'.¹¹⁸ Fasque was important, not only because it inspired him to rhetoric and squire-like pursuits, but also because it proved conducive to reading, study and, in particular, to that self-education and self-organisation he craved.¹¹⁹

In the Winter of 1835 Gladstone went to Fasque and, in Colin Matthew's words 'undertook what represented, in scope and intensity, almost a second education' - a move

¹¹⁵ I am grateful to Scott and Pauline Traynor of Fasque for this family anecdote.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Chapter 3 for further discussion of library furnishings.

¹¹⁷ It involved a journey of 660 miles from London. Cf. *GD* 13/8/34.

¹¹⁸ *GD* 15/8/46. Cf. also *GD* 10/9/36, when he 'started across the hills without a guide', 8/11/37 and 19/12/51.

¹¹⁹ G maintained the family tradition of education at Fasque with his own children; thus on 22 December 1851 he 'Worked on Latin &c. with Willy', who 'brought me his first original Latin verses', which showed 'promise'.

which he interpreted as Gladstone's response to the Tory defeat and his own disagreement with Aberdeen.¹²⁰ But it was clearly a project William had been planning for some time and which had as much to do with his sense of the inadequacies of his Eton and Oxford training and the priorities laid down by his parents. Thus the previous summer, in addition to continuing his habit of 'getting things...into order' in the household, principally by 'reducing my Father's books to order', Gladstone also set about systematically organising a programme of self-education.¹²¹ The regime on which Gladstone then embarked was punishing; for example, 14 August 1834 found him 'arranging...books & meditating great doings, to work 2 h. (at least) before breakf[ast] - & go to bed at 11'. David Bebbington noted that, taking full advantage of the increased leisure for study offered by Fasque, Gladstone extended his habitual reading period to cover the whole day, aiming to read and write for at least nine hours, sometimes working for eleven or more.¹²²

Not surprisingly, such efforts resulted in serious eyestrain and William's response to this was to 'warn himself against the self-indulgence of reading'. However, Gladstone (as both Bebbington and Matthew make clear) 'rarely took up a book without a specific end in view' and focused very clearly on theoretical texts.¹²³ Nonetheless, he still ranged extremely widely, reading history (Hume's *History* again), biography (reading and re-reading Boswell's *Life of Johnson*), politics (Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and Aristotle's *Politics*, which he found of 'immense value'),¹²⁴ law (Blackstone) and ancient literature (Plato). He read modern philosophy, including Francis Bacon and, Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. His theological reading, as voracious as ever, encompassed many of St Augustine's works and Thomas Chalmers's *Bridgewater Treatise*. And there was, of course, Dante. He finished the *Paradiso* for the first time in March 1836.

What was the significance of this period of intensive study both for Gladstone and for our understanding of his engagement with and learning from texts? One of the most important fruits of this period, in terms of helping to understand Gladstone's reading, was his setting down the key to his system of annotation in February 1836. Taking this and

¹²⁰ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 31.

¹²¹ *GD* 26/9/40, 26/9/48. For refs. to G organising his room cf. *GD* 7/7/47 and 13/9/48.

¹²² Bebbington, *Faith and Politics*, p. 46.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Quoted in Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 31.

the work in which it was found, Locke's *Essay*, I would like to suggest how this particular reading exemplifies the broad pattern and significance of Gladstone's self-education and reading in this early period.

2.3 Constructing an Epistemology: Gladstone's Concept of 'Study' and his Reading of Locke

2.3.1 *Gladstone's Concept of Study*

Gladstone held a very high idea of the purpose of study. It was not only a source of profound enjoyment and educational advancement to himself but also encapsulated a definite moral purpose. 'The idea of the fruits of study', he wrote, was that they should be 'intended in some way to reach others'.¹²⁵ This belief was one shared by many of the characters who we have so far come across: D'Israeli (who believed all bibliophiles should 'communicate'), John Gladstone (who stressed the 'Duties' of an educated man towards 'his Creator and his fellow Creatures') and Thomas Hargreaves (who represented the process in his miniature). As we shall see, this goal of the ongoing and ultimate transference of knowledge by learned individuals to their wider society, was one that continually underpinned William Gladstone's intellectual and bibliographic actions. However, although he felt his studies would benefit both himself and others, Gladstone expressed doubts about whether, in fact, too much absorption in his books prevented him from engaging with others and making available to the fruits of his study.

It has now become a very important part of my duty to take care that the absorption of my time in study, which is a great delight to me, do not also become a snare & an occasion for the unsuspected, & even therefore vigorous, action of selfishness. The remote idea of the fruits of study, as intended in some way to reach others, is not a sufficient remedy: and by flattery it has in itself the seeds of another disease. Let me by God's help therefore have this matter always before mine eyes! Today perhaps was my best with reference to this subject: I had but about 4 hours of reading against near 8 of what had direct reference to God or to my fellow creatures.¹²⁶

This was a conflict that would also afflict Gladstone throughout his life, particularly, as we shall see in Chapter Four, at the time of his first retirement. A further aspect of Gladstone's reading, highlighted by this quotation, was his concern for ordering his time. Scholars such as Travis Crosby have analysed this aspect of Gladstone's character but it is worth stressing how far it dominated Gladstone's concept of study and the reading

¹²⁵ *GD* 6/11/46.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

methods he adopted; Lord Rosebery recalled Gladstone was, “as a learner and as a reader, ever with his books, ever among his books; ever trying to learn something, as if he had...eternity before him in which to work.”¹²⁷ The amount of time devoted to study was clearly of immense importance as was the necessity of using this time well as Gladstone never, at any stage in his life, had unlimited time to devote to private study. Therefore it is unsurprising that Gladstone developed intricate and precisely-ordered reading methods to ensure the most profits were gained from study.

2.3.2 *Gladstone's Reading Methods*

Gladstone's Diary, books and marginalia, epitomes as well as contemporary descriptions, present a well-preserved record of Gladstone's 'textual processing system' by which he 'created a map to a huge body of material which could meet his, and others', present or future needs'.¹²⁸ In 1898, David Williamson was keen to establish how early Gladstone had both 'formed most regular habits of study, and not less regular habits of exercise'.¹²⁹ And George Potter noted 'from ten a.m. till two p.m., it seems to have been Mr. Gladstone's *long-settled habit* to be "locked up with his books"'.¹³⁰

These methods were clearly established at Eton and Oxford. When reading books, especially those on academic subjects, Gladstone would read regularly (rarely missing a day), take notes or make an epitome, and re-read to secure his knowledge and his opinion of the text. Thus in 1833 he mused, when analysing Henry Hallam's *History of England*: 'My method has usually been 1. to read over regularly - 2. to glance again over all I have read, and analyse'.¹³¹ Brinsley-Richards' description of Gladstone's reading practice at Oxford depicts a disciplined but not unrealistic regime. Gladstone's many irate annotations reveal this to be a largely inaccurate piece of writing,¹³² however, the following anecdote escapes unmarked.

¹²⁷ Quoted in Williamson, *Non-Political Biography*, p. 144.

¹²⁸ W. H. Sherman, 'The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance: John Dee Revisited', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 62-76, p. 66.

¹²⁹ Williamson, *Non-Political Biography*, p. 12.

¹³⁰ My emphasis. George Potter, *The People's Life of the Rt. Honourable William Ewart Gladstone* (London: G. Potter & Co., 1884), p. 36.

¹³¹ GD 2/12/33.

¹³² At one point he declared 'This page is fabulous WEG'. James Brinsley-Richards, 'Mr Gladstone's Oxford Days', *Temple Bar*, 68 (May 1883), 29-47, p. 33. G's annotated copy is at St Deiniol's Library, GX/D/14.

After his guests had dispersed, Gladstone was always ready to apply himself to a few hours of vigorous reading. One must use the word “vigour” in this connection because Gladstone never dawdled over his books. He set himself a task and toiled until he had finished it – though one of his rules was never to infringe on the seven hours which he allotted for sleep. The man who wreck their healths by hard reading are those who sit up half through the night with pots of strong tea at their elbows and wet towels round their heads. Gladstone worked regularly and never had to put himself on the *aeger* list, or to lie late a-bed in the morning snatching fitful eyefuls of sleep.¹³³

Gladstone was keen, when he read things, to remember them accurately. In light of his overall aim of being able to employ and transmit his knowledge, working knowledge of and an accurate memory for texts was essential. Thus he expressed some frustration when he had to read Quintilian ‘now afresh, as I have lost almost all recollection of my recent perusal. Book memory & life memory *non bene conveniunt*’.¹³⁴ Gladstone also liked to contextualise his reading; to know where, when and why he had read a book. This was one of the important functions of the book lists recorded in his Diary. He was clearly lost when he could no longer see to compile these. Thus he lamented in 1894:

While I enjoy the relief from the small grind of the Daily Journal, I think it may be well still to note certain dates: and also books read. For a main difficulty with me now is to know *where* I have read this and that: and a list will be a help.¹³⁵

Essential to Gladstone’s reading method was the system of annotation that he developed at an early stage and had codified by the mid-1830s. It provided a map by which he could return for those re-readings made to secure his understanding and opinion of texts and also provided a consistent framework by which to organise and record efficiently his lifelong reading.

2.3.3 *The Key Moment*

Gladstone’s decision to commit an annotation key to paper fits well conceptually into this period of self-education, organisation and reflection. Gladstone was taking stock of how far his mind had developed, not in a self-congratulatory manner, but in order to judge how much work still had to be done. It was an intimation both of methodical intention (this was how he planned to systematise his future reading) but it was also an admission of perceived ignorance: how much there was still to learn and discover from the many texts

¹³³ Ibid., p. 41.

¹³⁴ ‘Do not go well together’. GD 8/8/64. Although it is perhaps not surprising G found Quintilian’s worthy advice to orators difficult to memorise.

¹³⁵ GD 17/12/94.

with which he had yet to engage, and how much more ‘moral’ he could become in the process. Later in this study I make significant claims, based on evidence supplied by his working Library – his annotation, reading, book collection and its distribution – for Gladstone’s broad and open-minded, non-dogmatic approach to the accumulation and organisation of knowledge, which, particularly in a theological context, does not accord with what some other scholars have concluded. However, the circumstances of Gladstone’s reading of John Locke in 1836, as I shall now argue, provide early indications of the essential liberality of his epistemological thinking and establish the foundations by which it is possible to challenge existing conceptualisations of it.

2.3.4 *Gladstone’s Opinion of Locke*

Gladstone’s annotation key was inscribed in February 1836 in the back of the second volume of his set of John Locke’s *Works*.¹³⁶ Its presence in a volume which contains part of Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is suggestive and raises questions, not only about Gladstone’s decision to commit the explanation of his code to paper, but also about his attitude to Locke, a central intellectual influence on the years in which Gladstone grew up. Gladstone finished Locke’s *Essay* on 9 April 1836. His verdict was not enthusiastic, in line with his anti-utilitarian high toryism of the 1830s,¹³⁷ but the work was not dismissed out of hand. Gladstone wrote in his Diary entry for 9 April 1836, ‘it appears to me on the whole a much overrated tho in some respects a very useful book’.¹³⁸ The impression of a balanced interpretation is yet more clearly gained from studying Gladstone’s notes and observations made during his reading of the *Essay*. They contain much criticism of Locke’s ‘untrue or questionable principles’ but also frequently record points of agreement. Gladstone approvingly noted ‘a good deal of sound Butlerian spirit’ in Book IV, adding ‘here we have some good principles, showing that his own ethical belief was not what perhaps may be reasoned from some of his expressions’.¹³⁹

Gladstone was sufficiently interested in Locke and his philosophy to embark on Lord King’s biography in March 1839.¹⁴⁰ Gladstone’s copy is to be found at St Deiniol’s with sparse, but consistent annotation. His interest was most aroused (if we take levels of

¹³⁶ Cf. Ruth Clayton, ‘W. E. Gladstone: An Annotation Key’, *Notes & Queries* 246 (New Series, Vol. 48) (June 2001), 140-3.

¹³⁷ Matthew, *Gladstone*, pp. 34-5, 62-3.

¹³⁸ Note that Morley quotes this entry in the first volume of his biography but provides no further comment. Cf. Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, I, p. 135.

¹³⁹ BL GP Add MS 44723 fol. 349, 356.

annotation as a measure) by the ‘notes and dissertations on different subjects’ reproduced from Locke’s Journal.¹⁴¹ One, on the subject of ‘Study’, he found ‘exasperating’. But it was not dismissed with contempt. It was carefully annotated, indicating an essentially open, not closed-minded reading.¹⁴²

2.3.5 *Study in Theory*

It is clear from this open-minded reading that Gladstone did not conduct his personal search for knowledge through outright condemnation and contempt for the writings of others. One of Gladstone’s principal objections to Locke’s epistemology was to the thinker’s uncompromising depreciation of human attempts to transmit knowledge between generations via teaching or texts, which as we have established was the benchmark of Gladstone’s idea of study. Locke wrote in his memorandum on ‘Study’, ‘Truth needs no recommendation, and error is not mended by it; and in our inquiry after knowledge, it...little concerns us what other men have thought’. Gladstone placed a ‘X’ and the comment ‘Strangest doctrine!’ beside this saying.¹⁴³ And in one of his longest observations on the *Essay*, Gladstone condemned

A most pernicious and needless additional limitation upon the previous means of acquiring ideas. I had thought when he spoke of sensation and reflection, that he would still allow the mind might by verbal teaching be brought to know incorporeal ideas...but this he here appears too evidently to deny; how then do I learn of Truth, Virtue, Beauty? To say that it is from contemplating the operations of my own mind is a mockery: in this case our theory w^d. always be with in our practice, where as it is always or generally beyond it. X.¹⁴⁴

For Gladstone, attaining knowledge was a two-way process to be achieved by contending rationally with the views of others not through irrational condemnation. His attitude to the transmission of knowledge and culture was clearly closer to that of Matthew Arnold, who wrote in 1869: ‘The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for

¹⁴⁰ Lord King, *The Life of John Locke with Extracts from His Correspondence, Journals, and Common-Place Books*, 2 vols (London: H. Colburn & R. Bentley, 1830).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 160.

¹⁴² GD 20/3/39. M. R. D. Foot thought this reference was to a reading of *Some Thoughts Concerning Reading and Study for a Gentleman* (1720). In reality it was to this private memorandum written March to May 1677 and reproduced by King.

¹⁴³ King, *Life of John Locke*, I, p. 174.

¹⁴⁴ BL GP Add MS 44723 fol. 357.

diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time'.¹⁴⁵

In a short memorandum dated 3 April 1839 and written whilst he was reading King's *Life*, Gladstone reiterated his reservations concerning Locke's philosophy. However he also crucially stated that, intellectually, 'we are all his debtors' during the lifetime process of compiling 'the book of our knowledge'.¹⁴⁶ At this stage of his life, when it can be argued Gladstone was at his most conservative, he recognised Locke's intellectual and historical importance and asserted the need to engage with his philosophy directly.

2.3.6 *Study in Practice*

Gladstone's quest for self-knowledge was also characterised by this same method of enquiry. And by comparing Gladstone's Diary entries with his reading of Locke, one can see this process in action.

During his engagement with Locke's texts on human understanding and study, Gladstone can be seen evaluating his own merits and failings in the same fields, particularly reflecting a concern to invest his reading and scholarly pursuits with order and method. On 29 December 1834, not long after his commencement of Locke's *Essay*, he noted wearily 'my mind at least remains incoherent and disjointed: void of the power to realise its desires & thoughts... though I think its mechanical aptitude for labour may have grown'.¹⁴⁷

And in March 1839, when he was reading King's *Life*, he recorded

How often, how daily...do I ask inwardly of Him in whose lap is cast the lot of my destiny, 'shall I ever be a man of study and of prayer, a man of the cell and of the lamp, of the chair, of the altar, shall I ever cast the burden from my shoulder and flee away and be at rest?'¹⁴⁸

Gladstone's decision to inscribe his annotation code, for his own satisfaction, is intensely relevant to this question. The key is consistent with other surviving evidence of his highly ordered intellectual method: his scrupulously detailed and neat book abstracts and the carefully classified subject memoranda, which were the fruits of his reading and

¹⁴⁵ Matthew Arnold, *Culture & Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*, New Eversley Series edn (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd, 1938 [first published (1869)]), p. 42. Arnold sent G a copy of the book in March 1869, following their discussion of it (cf. GD 21/3/69; BL GP Add MS 44419, f. 281). G wrote to him saying 'If the body of it is as interesting as the Preface, I shall read it with much avidity. The questions which you handle...are of a constantly growing importance'. G to M. Arnold, 30 March 1869, BL GP Add MS 44536, fol. 137.

¹⁴⁶ BL GP Add MS 44728, fol. 232.

¹⁴⁷ GD 29/12/34.

meditations. And it is also clear that the desire to achieve order in intellectual terms was an absorbing ideal with a keen spiritual as well as practical motivation. This commitment verging on an obsession to order his mind might also have operated as a counter to the insecurity and lack of confidence obvious to any reader of his Diary. Travis Crosby has argued that the frustrations and disappointments Gladstone faced in the 1830s - the loss of his mother, failed marriage bids and stagnation in his political career - led him to be particularly preoccupied with the importance of ordering his time. This was, according to Crosby, to give him 'a measure of hope and a restored sense of coherence in his life'.¹⁴⁹ But it also indicates something more deep rooted than a series of responses to individual events; it reflects very much the sort of educational aspirations instilled in Gladstone in his formative years – those aspirations which promised (if sufficient self-education and examination were undertaken) an understanding of society and its history and the individual's place in it. It promised self-awareness and self-knowledge and also self-improvement and moral development. It also revealed the conflict, which will be further explored in later chapters, Gladstone felt between the ideal circumstances of study in a private, remote and isolated setting and the moral purpose of such study, which was public, relevant and engaged.

Conclusion

Throughout his early years Gladstone had been surrounded by texts and people who portrayed and valued 'the ability to read less as the key to worldly success' (although this was certainly not absent) 'than as the foundation of happiness and the underpinning of a moral character'.¹⁵⁰ As a result he had formulated a high ideal of study, which combined private (and to an extent feminised) religious introspection with a public (and masculine) duty and desire to share the fruits of education and knowledge with a wider society. This union was not, as we shall see later, an easy one to maintain but Gladstone adhered to and worked with it throughout his life. This conceptualisation of knowledge as the source of happiness and moral betterment, as we shall now see, underpinned Gladstone's lifelong engagement with the work of that most influential Romantic, Sir Walter Scott.

¹⁴⁸ GD 20/3/39.

¹⁴⁹ Travis L. Crosby, *The Two Mr Gladstones: A Study in Psychology and History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 28.

¹⁵⁰ Richardson, *Reading as Social Practice*, p. 134.

CHAPTER TWO ❖ GLADSTONE, SCOTT AND 'SCOTTISHNESS'

Introduction

Any survey of Gladstone's reading life must take account of his reception and appropriation of the works of Sir Walter Scott.¹ Scott's poems and novels were amongst the earliest texts Gladstone read. The novels in particular reappeared with phenomenal regularity throughout his reading life and Scott himself, although he died in 1832,² remained a constant point of reference and an ever-present influence on Gladstone's literary experience and values. Much of this influence was directly related to Gladstone's engagement with his Scottish heritage, his own developing sense of identity and nationality. Thus the significance of Gladstone's Scottian reading requires early attention in this study, as it is closely associated with the issues of formation and identity introduced in Chapter One. But also, because of the sheer length of Gladstone's chronological engagement with Scott (he read no other author's *oeuvre* or set of books, except the Bible, so consistently or completely over such a length of time) this exploration extends beyond Gladstone's early life to assess his later readings.

Gladstone scholars have consistently recognised the enormity of Scott's influence.³ Colin Matthew described the Waverley novels as the 'base-point of departure' for Gladstone's reading, grounding his consumption of Victorian fiction within 'the Scottian framework of reference' within which texts were written and read in the nineteenth century.⁴ But such scholarly recognition does not extend far enough and its conclusions may be questioned, especially in light of detailed, but so far unused, surviving evidence, especially

¹ Appropriation is defined by Roger Chartier as 'the power of an audience to transform received messages and render them "less than totally efficacious and radically acculturating"'. Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print* (1987) quoted in Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 6.

² G never met Scott. The nearest he came was in Rome in 1832. He wrote, with obvious disappointment, 'Sir W. Scott arrived – but we could not find him out'. *GD* 19/4/32. Morley recalled that G 'constantly regretted that he had never met or known Sir Walter Scott, as of course he might have done'. John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, New edn, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1905), II, p. 731.

³ Cf. David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 46, 50, 126, 127; Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, I, pp. 159, 337, 371, 387n, II, pp. 664, 731; Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Peel's Inheritor 1809-1865* (London: Penguin, 1982), pp. 44, 62, 89, 345, 424; Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister, 1865-1898* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), pp. 220, 511n; H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 14, 97, 528-9; Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 64, 434.

⁴ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 619. On Scott's tremendous influence cf. also Alexander Murdoch and Richard B. Sher, 'Literary and Learned Culture', in *People and Society in Scotland I 1760-1830*, ed. by T.M. Devine and R. Mitchison (Edinburgh: John Donald / Economic & Social History Society of Scotland, 1988), 127-142, p. 140.

Gladstone's annotated set of the Waverley novels preserved at St Deiniol's Library. For whilst the volume, consistency and overall significance of his reading of Scott has been noted, no detailed investigation has been essayed and the general commentaries pay little attention to the uniqueness and mutability of Gladstone's multitudinous readings. For example Colin Matthew suggested, with some justification, that Gladstone read Scott as an amusement to be absorbed and relished privately not written about or analysed.⁵ For example, on reading *Guy Mannering* in April 1880 Gladstone exclaimed 'what a treat!' and 'dear Guy Mannering'.⁶ However, one should not assume that such treats were uncomplicated, lacked specific purpose or were overtly representative. When Gladstone, after labouring over the details of his father's will at Fasque, gave 'Waverley: a fresh perusal by way of treat' he was clearly seeking an escape from work and frustration rather than mere recreation.⁷ Indeed, although Gladstone's reading of *Guy Mannering* was an indulgence in 1880, other readings of the text enabled deliberate withdrawal from political worries: his response to the 'very dark & uncertain' state of Irish affairs in 1890 was to read 'Guy Mannering'.⁸ And, as we shall see, he did write about and analyse Scott.

These few examples immediately indicate how intricate and variable was Gladstone's response to and appropriation of Scott. In order to do justice to such complexity, the following study aims to be an exercise in the 'history of audiences', a methodology which 'reverses the traditional perspective of intellectual history, focusing on readers...rather than authors'. Instead of trying 'to discern the messages a text transmits to an audience by examining the text', Scott's novels have been 'read' as far as possible through Gladstone's eyes – focussing only on those sections he annotated, noted, or made reference to elsewhere.⁹

The aims of this study are threefold. Firstly, it seeks to elucidate how Gladstone's consumption of this seminal Romantic literature influenced the formation of his private identity. Secondly, it aims to explain how Gladstone's readings of Scott fitted into the specific and serious character of his other reading and knowledge-gathering (at Fasque and elsewhere), and thirdly, how the details of Gladstone's response to Scott relate to the

⁵ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 14.

⁶ GD 9/4/80, 13/4/80.

⁷ GD 21/11/48.

⁸ GD 17/12/90.

⁹ Rose, *Intellectual Life*, pp. 3, 4, 322.

broader intellectual and cultural context of his public life. In essence, what was Gladstone's Scottian frame of reference and how was it constructed and used?¹⁰

1 Reconstructing the Scottian Frame of Reference

1.1 Gladstone's Reading of Scott: An Overview

In his Diary Gladstone listed reading almost fifty different titles by or about Scott, many several times. These included edited works, letters, journals, biography and memoirs, short stories, melodrama, history, poetry and novels. Of the Waverley Novels (including their constituent stories),¹¹ Gladstone recorded reading twenty six in seventy two different readings over his life; only *Redgauntlet* (1824) and *Count Robert of Paris* (1832) received no specific mention. Those most frequently read were *The Bride of Lammermoor* (six times), *The Antiquary* and *Waverley* (five times each).

The first recorded entry was at Seaforth on 2 August 1826 when Gladstone 'Began Woodstock'.¹² This began a veritable Scott *fest* during his summer holiday. He finished *Woodstock* on the 7th, pronouncing it 'very good'. On 8 August he began and 'Read [the] great part of the Bride of Lammermoor. A beautiful tale indeed'. So absorbed was he that he finished the novel the following day. After several days' respite, Gladstone devoured *A Legend of Montrose*, also in two days,¹³ before immediately commencing 'Waverley, for 2nd time' on the 14th clearly indicating that this period of frenetic reading was not Gladstone's first acquaintance with Scott. (A later entry indicates that his first reading of *Waverley* took place in 1823 when he was 13 or 14).¹⁴ Neither was it the only occasion on which Gladstone read several of Scott's novels in a concentrated period. For example, on 6 September 1871 he read *Ivanhoe*, the following day read *Waverley* and then returned to *Ivanhoe* on the 8th, finishing it on 23 September. On 18 August 1852 he was

¹⁰ 'Frame' analysis (Erving Goffman) looks at how readers use various rules of interpretation (frames) when they decode texts – a way of explaining how readers make sense of texts within broader personal, cultural and social experience. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹ There are twenty-two Waverley novels but *Tales of My Landlord* (1816) comprises *The Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality*; *Tales of My Landlord*, Third Series (1819) contains *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *A Legend of Montrose*; *Tales of the Crusaders* (1825) is made up of *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman*; *Chronicles of the Canongate* (1827) features *Two Drovers*, *The Highland Widow* and *The Surgeon's Daughter* and the Fourth Series of *Tales of My Landlord* (1832) consists of *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous* – making twenty eight novels and stories in all.

¹² Scott's latest novel, *Woodstock; or the Cavalier*, 3 vols, (1826). GD 2/8/26ff.

¹³ GD 12/8/26ff. G had been diverted by A. Arbuthnot's *Jenny Cameron* (1746), a picaresque anti-Jacobite tale which clearly fitted in thematically with his other Scottish reading, and John William's poem *Disappointment* (1814) recommended by his father. According to G this was well named; he noted it was 'very unequal in merit'.

¹⁴ GD 4/12/48. 'Waverley finished. As to the last I find the two chapters of the interviews at Carlisle as sublime as I thought them 25 years ago'.

reading *The Abbot* but dipped into its prequel *The Monastery* on 21st before finishing it.¹⁵ He also combined reading Scott's novels with the record of the author's own life; thus on 29 November 1890 he combined reading *The Bride of Lammermoor* with Scott's *Journal*. The way in which Gladstone read series of novels in quick succession, but also interchanged them gives the strong impression that he conceptualised a seamless Scottian world.

So fundamental was Scott to Gladstone's reading experience that, even in his almost blind old age, he remained determined to read him. Thus in 1893 he 'Made a trial of the good type of my old 8vo Waverley Novels. But with labour & some minutes to each page';¹⁶ a comment which indicates not only affection for this particular set of books but also that he was used to reading quickly. Indeed, despite the labour and difficulty, he managed to maintain his reading at an amazing level. His claim, made in September 1894, to have attempted 'little heavy reading' is belied by his following admission to having read 'A good deal of Walter Scott (7 novels in all)'.¹⁷ He noted subsequently, with obvious regret, that 'the last book I read with the natural eye was Sir W. Scott's *Pirate*; and I got through with difficulty'.¹⁸ When he was completely unable to read, he asked others to read Scott for him. Thus during September and October 1892 Helen Gladstone read *Waverley* to her father. He commented 'Ah dear Scott'.¹⁹ Two years later she was reading *Kenilworth* to him when once more incapacitated.²⁰

Gladstone read Scott under a variety of circumstances, which clearly problematises any simplistic understanding of his textual relationship with the author's work. However, on the basis of diary and library evidence, it is clear that it encompassed a number of significant categories. It has already been noted that Gladstone's reading of Scott was more than a simple treat or recreation. Scott's novels were comforters and stress relievers throughout Gladstone's life. For example, when at Trentham for the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland's funeral in 1868, Gladstone occupied himself by reading Scott's translation of Goethe's *Goetz of Berlichingen* (1799).²¹ And at times when he was ill himself, Gladstone

¹⁵ GD 25/8/52ff.

¹⁶ GD 29/9/93.

¹⁷ GD 1/9/94.

¹⁸ Holograph dated 13/8/94, BL GP Add MS 44790 fol. 166 quoted in GD at this date.

¹⁹ GD 5/10/92.

²⁰ GD 18/4/94. *Kenilworth* was one of G's favourites, cf. W. E. Gladstone, '[Sir Walter Scott] the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P. At Hawarden, February 3, 1868.' *The Chester Courant*, 3 February 1868, SP 16, 11-14, p. 14. It clearly provoked a very strong emotional response in him; in 1852 he called it 'a most enchanting book' and noted how finishing it 'makes my head reel again'. GD 2, 4/9/52. It is notable that G made no annotations in the volumes of *Kenilworth* in this set. It is possible therefore that he owned another copy of this novel.

²¹ GD 3/11/68. He finished the text on his return to Hawarden.

turned to Scott for comfort and amusement. For example, in 1873 when ‘my upper jaw...sent me to bed early’, he wrote with grim humour, ‘I took to reading “Old Mortality”’.²²

Gladstone’s reading of Scott was particularly important in his domestic life. During the last illness of his sister Anne, Gladstone was ‘solaced’ during an afternoon in Oxford ‘with a little copy of Legend of Montrose’ and several days before his mother’s death in 1835 occupied his mind with *Paul’s Letter to his Kinsfolke* (1816).²³ In 1847, during a dark time in his relationship with his sister Helen Jane, Gladstone ‘spent much of the later part of the day with H. She was in a sad state. However I read Marmion Intr[oduction]. & Canto I to her: on these she was generally rational. It is in a manner pleasing to be again discharging offices of brotherhood about her even as he is’.²⁴ The siblings, once so close, were thus able to recapture something of their former intimacy by the communication and discussion of texts. Scott also featured in Gladstone’s relationship with his wife. In the weeks prior to their wedding in 1839 Gladstone recorded ‘read...Kenilworth, aloud with dearest’. On their wedding night (and succeeding day) he ‘read Marmion to her’ and during their honeymoon ‘read Lady of the Lake (aloud)’.²⁵ The following year Gladstone recorded reading both *Rokeby* and *Lord of the Isles* to Catherine.²⁶

There is evidence to suggest that Gladstone confined his reading of Scott principally to the home. For example he began *Peveril of the Peak* (1822) on 1 October 1860 whilst at Hawarden, left it behind whilst on a short visit to London (where he read Wilkie Collins’ *The Woman in White*), resuming *Peveril* on his return.²⁷ Similarly he left *St Ronan’s Well* behind in Hawarden when returning to London on election business in 1857.²⁸ Several months later he repeated the same procedure with *The Heart of Midlothian*, reading almost every day, only breaking off when away from Hawarden.²⁹ He even found himself reminded of Hawarden whilst reading *The Monastery*, writing ‘Hawarden 18th Cent.’ by: ‘At

²² GD 13/1/73. Cf. also GD 15/11/27. Scott was also an insomnia cure: in 1883 G recorded ‘Sleep improved from 3 ½ to 4 ½ hours...Read The Antiquary (in the night)’. GD 3/1/83.

²³ GD 20/2/29, 18/9/35.

²⁴ GD 5/10/47.

²⁵ GD 18, 25, 26, 31/7/39. *The Lady of the Lake; a poem* (1810).

²⁶ GD 17, 27/6/40ff. *Rokeby. A Poem* (1813); *Lord of the Isles. A Poem* (1815).

²⁷ GD 1-27/20/60.

²⁸ GD 9/4/57.

²⁹ GD 9-30/10/57.

a small distance from the gate of the mansion, extended, as in those days was usual, a straggling hamlet, having a church in the centre'.³⁰

Nonetheless, Gladstone's reading of Scott did occasionally stray into that category of forbidden reading, which is discussed in Chapter Three. He both read Scott to prostitutes,³¹ and alone, after engaging in rescue work.³² In light of this, it is perhaps not difficult to make sense of Gladstone's placement of a firm 'v' by Rob Roy's observation that 'ye ken weel aneugh that women...are at the bottom of a' the mischief in the world' in his copy of the novel.³³ But Scott remained principally to be enjoyed within the official domestic environment in the company of family. This is unsurprising as Gladstone's Scottian reading was one of the most fundamental ways in which he received, analysed and expressed his national and familial identity.

1.2 Scott, Scottishness and the Formation of Identity

Ina Ferris has suggested that 'the question of what counts as history' is 'a question posed largely in terms of territory, legitimacy, and allegiance to the father'.³⁴ There is suggestive evidence that the Gladstones' reading of Scott assumed an important historical and biographical significance for the family as a whole, and for William in particular.

Considering the prominence of Scotland, both in Gladstone's personal and political life, it is remarkable that more has not been written exploring Gladstone's Scottishness. There is certainly little compared with the quantity of comment on his attitude towards Ireland or even his possession of a 'European sense'.³⁵ Checkland, when comparing the backgrounds of Disraeli and Gladstone, did briefly note that both had 'received the heritage of his peculiar people in such a way that though overlaid and amended it was

³⁰ Sir Walter Scott, *The Monastery*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1822), 15, p. 336. All references to this set refer to that in the St Deiniol's Collection at R34S/2.

³¹ E.g. GD 8/4/59, 9/11/75.

³² E.g. GD 22/1/84.

³³ Sir Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1822), 6, p. 395.

³⁴ Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 10.

³⁵ Cf. on G's European sense: J. L. Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation* (London, New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1938), Ch. 5 and p. 740; K. A. P. Sandiford, 'Gladstone and Europe', in *The Gladstonian Turn of Mind: Essays Presented to J. B. Conacher*, ed. by B.L. Kinzer (Toronto: UTP, 1985), 177-196; Richard Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1963), pp. 4-9. On G and Scotland, cf. e.g. Stewart J. Brown, 'Gladstone, Chalmers and the Disruption of the Church of Scotland', in *Gladstone Centenary Essays*, ed. by David Bebbington and Roger Swift (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 10-28.

never effaced'.³⁶ However it is questionable whether Gladstone, his family or contemporaries sought to overlay, amend or efface Gladstone's Scottishness.

1.2.1 *A Scottish Family*

Gladstone was brought up within a family strongly conscious of its national identity. There were clear attempts to integrate the Gladstones' family history directly into the frames of reference employed by Walter Scott as well as to construct Gladstonian biography according to Scottian models.³⁷ Note the following description of the family by Mary Drew:

Mr. Gladstone sprang from an old Scotch family, originally a race of Borderers (there is still an old Gledstanes Castle). One of his ancestors, Herbert de Gledstanes, appears in Sir Walter Scott as 'gude at need.' His mother was descended from Robert the Bruce. It was surely a sad lack of imagination that allowed his father and grandfather to anglicise the fine name of Gledstanes into Gladstone.³⁸

Such characterisation firmly anchored the family's identity to that 'retrospective invention' of 'a distinct Highland culture and tradition', which was largely created and publicised by Scott.³⁹

As Chapter One indicated, Gladstonian identity was predominantly patriarchal. There is no doubt John Gladstone remained fiercely loyal to his Scottish heritage; Checkland described him as 'a Highland chief' who 'regarded himself as the head of his clan (including his wife's kinsfolk)'.⁴⁰ John maintained links with his birthplace of Leith, building a church there and establishing a women's 'asylum' in 1840.⁴¹ Whilst in Liverpool he purposefully reminded himself of Scotland; the name 'Seaforth' was Scottish.⁴² And it was John's desire to re-establish himself and his family in Scotland that

³⁶ S. G. Checkland, *The Gladstones: A Family Biography 1764-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 3.

³⁷ This was not something restricted to the Gladstones. Scott jocularly acknowledged the 'research and ingenuity' of his readers 'for having discovered many persons and circumstances connected with my narratives, of which I myself never so much as dreamed'. Scott, *Rob Roy* (Vol 2), p. 96. G marked with 'v' and a single line. Cf. also James Kerr, *Fiction against History: Scott as Storyteller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 10.

³⁸ Mary Drew, *Catherine Gladstone* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1919), p. 25. G was also aware of such Anglicisation within Scott's narratives. When reading *Guy Mannering* on one occasion he scored with a double line: 'the heads of a numerous tribe, called Mac-Dingawaie, though they afterwards adopted the Norman surname of Bertram'. Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley / Guy Mannering; or, the Astrologer*, 3rd edn, *Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley* (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1821), 2, p. 277. G also added in the margin 'So the Clan Donachie'.

³⁹ Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), 15-41, p. 15.

⁴⁰ Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. xii. Note Ina Ferris' discussion of the importance of patriarchal loyalty in the Waverley novels in Ferris, *Literary Authority*, p. 174.

⁴¹ Leslie Stephen, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1890), vol. 21, 405-7, p. 406.

⁴² C. R. Fay, *Huskisson and His Age* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1951), p. 369.

prompted the purchase of Fasque, the ultimate expression of the family's genteel Scottish identity.

William's sense of a home in Scotland was significantly bound up with his feelings for Fasque. He represented Fasque as both a bucolic paradise and a romantic retreat.⁴³ On his wedding tour in 1839, Gladstone delighted in showing his new wife, as well as Mary and George Lyttelton, the glories of Fasque and the Scottish Highlands,⁴⁴ giving free rein to his feelings about his Scottish home and displaying the strength of his Romantic characterisation of it.

The spectacle from the rocks is indeed magnificent: they beetle over the black sleeping lake in everlasting horror...They do not reach round it: but form more than half a cradle: they are of very great height & extreme wildness. In 1836, I looked from their brow into mist which was almost more peaceful than the reality of the yawning chasm...The Garrawalt deserves its name: its channel is generally naked rock. The views from it are glorious.⁴⁵

At the end of the tour, he continued to wax lyrical about the scenery and wildlife as well as 'the absence of the herd of tourists is that which above all renders this a delightful trip';⁴⁶ a passage, reminiscent of Scott's description of the Highlands in *A Legend of Montrose*, which Gladstone marked with a 'v':

He therefore plodded patiently on through a waste and savage wilderness, treading paths which were only known to the shepherds and cattle-drivers, and passing with much more of discomfort than satisfaction many of those sublime combinations of mountainous scenery which now draw visitors from every corner of England to feast their eyes upon Highland grandeur.⁴⁷

Affection for Fasque, 'in its old and still dear details' was to stay with Gladstone all his life.⁴⁸ When Gladstone attended his brother Tom's funeral in 1889, he speculated it might well be his last sight of 'Dear Fasque', which he regarded as 'one of my three homes'.⁴⁹

⁴³ E.g. GD 11/8/36. 'Found all well – hay making, cherries & gooseberries ripening'.

⁴⁴ GD 20/8/39.

⁴⁵ GD 3/9/39. For further comment on romanticised perceptions of the Highlands during this period cf. Krisztina Fenyo, *Contempt, Sympathy and Romance: Lowland Perceptions of the Highlands and the Clearances During the Famine Years, 1845-1855* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 6-7, Ch. 4.

⁴⁶ GD 6/9/39.

⁴⁷ Sir Walter Scott, *Tales of My Landlord (Series 3: The Bride of Lammermoor and a Legend of Montrose)*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1822), 12, p. 294.

⁴⁸ GD 2/7/74.

⁴⁹ GD 25/3/89, 27/3/89. His last visit to Fasque actually began on 25/9/91; he was the guest of his nephew Sir J. R. Gladstone, 3rd Bart.

Gladstone's 'moving recollections' of Fasque in later years were closely associated with memories of his father.⁵⁰ Visits to Fasque had afforded Gladstone the valued opportunity to observe John at closer quarters and for longer periods than he had ever been able to do previously. On 23 August 1843 he wrote 'Found my Father & all well. Conversation with him occupied the evening. We ought to be thankful to Him who leads us hither for health & tranquillity as well as I trust to the discharge of filial duty to such a parent'.⁵¹ Gladstone's consistent respect and admiration for his father are summed up in the quotation attributed to him in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that 'No one, except those who have known him with the close intimacy of family connection, could properly appreciate the greatness of that truly remarkable man'.⁵²

Gladstone's feelings of love for Fasque intensified after his father's death in 1851 and Tom's succession to the estate and baronetcy. That December he expressed his attachment to the physical landscape and its dimensions:

Walked up the hills: mist on the top but I had the same pleasure as in seeing an old friend though soiled with a journey. I noted these distances & put them down that if I look back upon this page I may love the old hills as I see them.		
By West Garrol to last gate		20 min
	1 ½ mile	
Through to gorge to the stream,		
	¾ mile,	10 min
Shank of Cairdown to top		
	½ mile	24 min
Down, to point of East Garrol		
road.	1 ¾ mile	13 min
		(say 12 ½)
To Annie Croals	1 ¼ mile	14 ½ min
Back to Fasque	1 ¼ mile	12 ½ min
Total eight miles & 1 h. 36 min. ⁵³		

On a subsequent visit to Tom and Louisa Gladstone, Gladstone recorded 'much is changed, some very well, all in the spirit of love to the place: yet I miss some marks of my Father, our foundations [*sic*] stone'.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ GD 26/12/51.

⁵¹ Cf. also GD 31/3/47, 7/7/47.

⁵² Stephen, ed., *DNB*, vol. 21, p. 406. G supplied notes and probably rewrote this entry. Cf. GD 22/7/89, BL GP Add MS 44506, fols 91, 98.

⁵³ GD 17/12/51.

With the construction of St Andrew's Church at Fasque (opened 18 October 1846), John Gladstone had established a further and important tie between his family and Scotland: the creation of a permanent resting place for them in consecrated Scottish soil. In October 1848, Anne Mackenzie Gladstone's coffin was brought from Liverpool for interment.⁵⁵

A sense that the claims of this Scottish home outranked all others was shared by William. In April 1850, he travelled all the way from London to Scotland with the small coffin of his five-year-old daughter Catherine Jessie in order to bury her at Fasque, 'right under the spot where she used to kneel in infant prayer'.⁵⁶ He made many subsequent visits to the vault,⁵⁷ recording his feelings about the experience particularly vividly in 1851: 'Again about the house & place. Visited the Chapel: a very sacred place to me & mine. Read *Wuthering Heights*'.⁵⁸ This was a singularly appropriate text considering Gladstone's obvious feelings of *hiraeth* for a wild, romantic landscape in which loved ones lay buried and which offered him 'repose of mind & [the] opportunity for self[-]exam[ination]'.⁵⁹ Here and elsewhere, we see Gladstone associating books with individuals and places in Scotland, both as physical reminders of relationships and moments as well as drawing parallels between their contents and his experiences. On a return visit to Fasque in 1864 he recorded reading 'a book of prayer...my dear Mother's gift 42 years ago'.⁶⁰ And in 1885 he wrote, 'It is deeply interesting to me to be here. The house is still a home. I sleep in the room in which my mother died, sit in the room where my Father died. Dearest Jessie sleeps under the chapel. And my brother is in many ways an edifying sight'.⁶¹ Several days later, Gladstone noted 'stories of Sir J. G.' were told on a visit to the Burn in Fettercairn.⁶² The following day, he literally re-entered his childhood by reading the 'Arabian Nights', one of his 'first books'.⁶³

⁵⁴ After his brother's death he discussed 'a memoir of my Father' with Louisa, noting that it was 'perhaps *now* hardly possible'. GD 26/3/89. Samuel Smiles was earlier considered as a biographer cf. GD 19/4/60. G read *Self Help* (1859) in 1860-1, cf. GD 9/1/60, 10/10/61.

⁵⁵ GD 6/10/48, 2/11/48.

⁵⁶ GD 13/4/50.

⁵⁷ E.g. GD 13/9/50.

⁵⁸ GD 8/12/51. Cf. GD 25/1/80 for further comment on the importance of St Andrew's.

⁵⁹ GD 17/9/48.

⁶⁰ GD 8/10/64.

⁶¹ GD 2/9/85.

⁶² GD 4/9/85. Cf. also GD 10/11/36n, 17/10/46 and 30/10/90.

⁶³ GD 5/9/85. It is also surely worth noting that, in his fragmentary autobiography, G chose to record that it was 'Miss Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*, and especially the life and death of Wallace, [that] used to make me weep profusely' as a child. Quoted in Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, I, p. 13.

Supremely, Gladstone sought to accompany his experience of Scottish family life and identity with reading Scott.⁶⁴ In a striking way this parallels Scott's rendering of his protagonists' experiences. They are often sympathetic outsiders visiting a land with which they feel or develop an affinity, or exiles seeking knowledge of their lost national or familial history and identity. As Wilt writes, 'coming home' is always, for the hero, coming forward looking backward.⁶⁵ In the same way, on a journey home to Fasque in 1836, Gladstone occupied himself reading Scott's *Lady of the Lake* and noted family tale-telling in *The Bride of Lammermoor*,⁶⁶ and *Waverley*. He placed his '+' of approbation next to the following description of Edward Waverley listening to and appreciating tales of *his* family history.

The hours he spent with his uncle and aunt were exhausted in listening to the oft-repeated tale of narrative old age. Yet even there his imagination...was frequently excited. Family tradition and genealogical history...is the very reverse of amber, which itself a valuable substance, usually includes flies, straws, and other trifles; whereas these studies, being themselves very insignificant and trifling, do nevertheless serve to perpetuate a great deal of what is rare and valuable in ancient manners, and to record many curious and minute facts which could have been preserved and conveyed through no other medium.⁶⁷

Waverley 'finds in the landscape the images which he wishes to find, which he himself has placed there'; Gladstone's feelings about Scotland and Fasque were equally ideal, perfected and both reflected and contrasted with his own feelings, experiences and sense of identity and thus drew his attention to similar understandings in Scott.⁶⁸ Gladstone regularly recognised similarities between Scott's characters and members of his own family, especially in the case of his father. Whilst reading *Rob Roy* Gladstone wrote 'Sir J. G.' next to

⁶⁴ Matthew noted that it was the *Scottish* works of Scott that attracted G at Eton. Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 14.

⁶⁵ Judith Wilt, *Secret Leaves: The Novels of Walter Scott* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 16-7.

⁶⁶ GD 31/10/36 and Scott, *Lammermoor / Montrose*, p. 80.

⁶⁷ Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*, 3rd edn, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1821), 1, p. 36.

⁶⁸ Kerr, *Scott as Storyteller*, p. 25. For an example of contrast cf. GD 14/8/37: 'to Fasque...And here I have brought my uselessness again'.

You must remember my father well; for as your own was a member of the mercantile house, you knew him from infancy. Yet you hardly saw him in his best days, before age and infirmity had quenched his ardent spirit of enterprize and speculation. He would have been a poorer man indeed, but perhaps as happy, had he devoted to the extension of science those active energies, and acute powers of observation, for which commercial pursuits found occupation.⁶⁹

On the following page Gladstone noted with 'NB' an additional comment on the merchant: 'I shall never forget our first interview. You recollect the brief, abrupt, and somewhat stern mode, in which he was wont to communicate his pleasure to those around him'.⁷⁰

The 'man of business' is given a prominent role in *Rob Roy* in the person of Frank Osbaldistone's father but the novel's romantic preoccupation is with Frank himself. The story is dominated initially by the question of whether or not Frank will carry on his father's business; however, by the end, the wealth of commerce is employed in securing the son landed property and a gentleman's life.⁷¹ This, of course, is what Gladstone's father's money achieved for William, who, in his copy of *The Antiquary*, placed his own initials (reversed) opposite a description of a merchant's son.⁷² The 'dream of landed establishment' was not only 'the political fantasy that animates the Waverley novels' but was one which occupied the Gladstone family.⁷³ It is clear that much of William's sadness over Fasque derived from the fact that it was no longer *his*.

1.2.2 *A Scottish Autobiography*

Physical residence in Scotland, particularly at Fasque, as well as Scottish reading encouraged Gladstone's lifelong practice of self examination. Considering the tendency for this to be a self-denigrating process, the reflection on Scott's life may well have provided important affirmation for Gladstone in the face of his many self-established shortcomings. For, as Judith Wilt has noted, the importance of Lockhart's *Scott* in particular was that 'this was a tale of a crippled child in love with the great outlaw deeds of

⁶⁹ Scott, *Rob Roy*, p. 265.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 266. In his endnotes to *Rob Roy* G noted '265, 6. Sir J. G. 271'.

⁷¹ Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels with New Essays on Scott*, ed. by D. Bromwich, J. Chandler, and L. Gossman, New edn, Literature in History (Princeton, NJ and Chichester, West Sussex: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 123-5.

⁷² Sir Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, 3rd edn, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1822), 4, p. 26.

⁷³ Kerr, *Scott as Storyteller*, p. 10. Cf. also Christopher Harvie, 'Scott and the Image of Scotland', in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, ed. by R. Samuel (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 173-192, p. 180.

aristocratic forbears who did not grow up to be Byron'.⁷⁴ Scott, as numerous scholars have pointed out, was acutely aware of his own history and autobiography as both an important source of inspiration and also an art he consistently practised. As Ferris notes, he frequently interchanged history and biography whilst writing.⁷⁵ And James Kerr writes 'Scott wrote his own career over and over again in the careers of the Waverley heroes. In the process of transforming history, he revised the life of Scott, he altered his autobiography'.⁷⁶

There are striking concurrences between Gladstone's own idea of the status of autobiography and his engagement with Scott's (auto)biography. In 1868, whilst reading *Anne of Geierstein* for the second time, Gladstone also resumed Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 7 vols, (1837-8), which he had been reading a couple of months before in conjunction with *The Antiquary*.⁷⁷ In 1868 Gladstone wrote his own *A Chapter of Autobiography*, in which he discussed the question of his personal responsibility for Irish Church disestablishment.⁷⁸ It is striking to see how consistently this project went along with reading of, about and discoursing on Scott. In February 1868 he 'Worked on Scott – Lockhart's Life – Autobiogr[aphy]. and Q. R. &c.: and at 8.30 delivered in the...school a Lecture of 1h. 20m. on that great man' in which he mentioned 'the sketch which he [Scott] wrote of his own life'.⁷⁹ The simultaneous reading of Lockhart and *Geierstein* also accompanied more work on the *Chapter*. Lockhart and Scott's *Life of Jonathan Swift* (1814) also featured in his list of reading for the succeeding month.⁸⁰ At the beginning of *A Chapter*, Gladstone wrote:

One thing is clear: that if I am warranted in treating my own case as an exceptional case, I am bound so to treat it. It is only with a view to the promotion of some general interest, that the public can becomingly be invited to hear more, especially in personal history, about an individual, of whom they already hear too much.⁸¹

Scott had displayed the same admixture of depreciation and public spirit in a memoir (reproduced by Lockhart), expressing the hope that 'those who shall hereafter read this

⁷⁴ Wilt, *Secret Leaves*, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Ferris, *Literary Authority*, p. 120.

⁷⁶ Kerr, *Scott as Storyteller*, p. 9.

⁷⁷ GD 30/7/68, 15/9/68ff.

⁷⁸ W. E. Gladstone, 'A Chapter of Autobiography', in *Gleanings of Past Years* (London: John Murray, 1879), 97-151.

⁷⁹ GD 3/2/68. Gladstone, 'Sir Walter Scott', p. 11. His notes are at BL GP Add MS 44660, fol. 1. Note he read *The Bride of Lammermoor* on the 5th.

⁸⁰ E.g. GD 28/10/68 'Lockhart's Scott – finished – Scott's Life of Swift: began'.

⁸¹ Gladstone, 'Autobiography', p. 98.

little Memoir may find in it some hints to be improved, for the regulation of their own mind, or the training of others'.⁸² The way Gladstone used Scott as a point of reference whilst compiling his *Chapter of Autobiography* exemplifies his reliance of existing knowledge and experience also shown by that rigorous approach to study and methodological analysis of scholarly texts investigated in Chapter One. It has already been indicated quite how much time Gladstone devoted to reading Scott, but how far did these readings fit into his systematic framework of study?

2 Reception: The Meaning of Scott

David Bebbington expressed surprise, with reference to Gladstone's educational reading at Fasque, that 'there was more modern literature' included 'than might be expected', citing *Waverley* as an example.⁸³ This observation, and Matthew's assertion that Scott was not written about or analysed, imply Gladstone's reading of literature in general and of Scott in particular was neither serious nor analytical.⁸⁴ Such a characterisation is certainly questionable in the light of the surviving evidence.

2.1 Gladstone's Literary Estimation of Scott

In 1868 Gladstone described Scott as 'far away the greatest' man Scotland had ever produced.⁸⁵ Speaking of his work in general, Gladstone felt his feeling for nature, his knowledge of legend and myth, his skill in characterisation and 'his power of reviving antiquity' were its essential elements.⁸⁶

Usually, when he felt a passage to be particularly well composed, Gladstone would mark it with a 'v' or '+'. Many of these, like the following from *The Antiquary* which he marked 'v', were celebrations of Scotland's romantic landscape: 'By degrees, however, as this path descended, and winded round the hill-side, trees began to appear, at first singly, stunted and blighted'.⁸⁷ The Diary is also full of detailed references to Scott's descriptive and dramatic power. Thus Gladstone wrote of *Ivanhoe* on 11 September 1871, 'The tournament is a truly wonderful description' and of *The Abbot*, 'The Chapters where Mary

⁸² J. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 7 vols (Edinburgh and London: Robert Cadell and John Murray, 1837-8), I, p. 3.

⁸³ Bebbington, *Faith and Politics*, p. 46.

⁸⁴ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 14.

⁸⁵ Gladstone, 'Sir Walter Scott', p. 11.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁷ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p. 262.

[Stuart] appears cannot...be surpassed'.⁸⁸ In 1876 he recorded finishing *Waverley* (again) and observed 'The two Carlisle Chapters are *grand*'.⁸⁹ His judgement of *The Lady of the Lake* in 1884 was equally fastidious: 'Finished Lady of the Lake: a splendid poem especially in the earlier parts'.⁹⁰

Gladstone was keen to establish Scott's position in the history of literature.⁹¹ Of his poetry he judged that

If he does not stand in the first class in English poetry, he stands at any rate in the second class. Even in his verse writings, for which he is no less known than for his writings in prose, he showed from time to time...what extraordinary powers he possessed; because, while he produced delightful works, rich with every kind of beauty, he occasionally rose even to sublimity.⁹²

It is clear from this that Gladstone did not worship Scott to the point of idolatry; however there was no such reserve when Gladstone spoke of Scott as a novelist. He regarded the publication of *Waverley* as the beginning of 'a new era in British literature'.⁹³ Gladstone used Scott as a benchmark by which to judge other writers (of history as well as of fiction). Thus in 1832, when reading and analysing Louis de Bourienne's *Mémoire sur Napoléon* (1829), he decided, because 'I find so much the want of knowledge in detail of the French Revolution', to begin 'Scott's account of it, putting off Bourienne'.⁹⁴ And Scott did not disappoint him. On 19 November he noted: 'It is eloquent & the descriptions are most graphic'.⁹⁵ In 1868, on finishing Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, he again turned to Scott for historical verification writing: 'read Walter Scott's Scotch Hist[ory] Chh 34-6, to enable me better to appreciate the admirable judgement of Schiller both where he has adhered to history & where he has gone beyond it'.⁹⁶ Although Gladstone considered Scott's depiction of Mary Stuart amongst his best literary creations, he did not uncritically accept Scott's *historical* Mary. Gladstone acknowledged Scott 'has been upon

⁸⁸ GD 15/10/75. Cf. Sir Walter Scott, *The Abbot*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of *Waverley* (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1822), 16, p. 397. 'At this moment the door of the inner apartment opened, and Queen Mary presented herself, advancing with an air of peculiar grace and majesty, and seeming totally unruffled, either by the visit, or by the rude manner in which it had been enforced'. G marked with '+'. In his endnotes G also gave this mark to pp. 383, 390-2 and 'Ch XXI'.

⁸⁹ GD 21/12/76. Chapters 68-9 on executions of Fergus MacIvor and Evan Dhu Maccombich.

⁹⁰ GD 31/1/84.

⁹¹ Gladstone, 'Sir Walter Scott', p. 13.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁹⁴ GD 16/11/32ff. Walter Scott, *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, Emperor of the French. With a preliminary view of the French Revolution*, 9 vols (1827). G's analysis of both texts is at BL GP Add MS 44722, fols 75, 77.

⁹⁵ GD 19/11/32.

the whole a true representer of history' but added 'that in respect of [this] one character he has given a picture which was not true', a fact Gladstone attributed to Scott's early Jacobism.⁹⁷

Despite his enthusiasm for Scott's literary works, Gladstone sought to remain objective about them and he could be a tough critic, especially if he felt Scott was writing below his best. His estimation of *Castle Dangerous*, the second story in Scott's last book *Tales of my Landlord*, Fourth Series (1832), was that 'Though not devoid of interest, and exhibiting in parts the original & proper power of its author, it indicates...a waning light'.⁹⁸ It is likely he did not finish *Quentin Durward* in 1852. He began reading on 11 September, made sporadic mention of *Durward* during succeeding days, but replaced it without further comment with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on the 23rd. A sudden break-off in annotation at page sixty in his copy of the novel also indicates he abandoned the reading.⁹⁹ His criticism was as specific as his praise; he could approve of the beginning of a descriptive passage, yet find another part wanting. For example, in this passage from *A Legend of Montrose*, Gladstone marked the first half with a 'v' and the second with his questioning 'ma'.

[v:] On the bosom of Loch Fine...He might have marked, on the soft and gentle slope that ascends from the shores, the noble old Gothic castle, with its varied outline, embattled walls, towers, and outer and inner courts, which, so far as the picturesque is concerned, presented an aspect much more striking than the present massive and uniform mansion. He might have admired those dark woods which or many a mile surrounded this strong and princely dwelling, and his eye might have dwelt on the picturesque peak of Dunicoich, [ma:] starting abruptly from the lake, and raising its scathed brow into the mists of middle sky, while a solitary watch-tower, perched on its top like an eagle's nest, gave dignity to the scene by awakening a sense of possible danger.¹⁰⁰

Gladstone also frequently suggested improvements to Scott's texts. For example, in *Guy Mannering* he suggests 'replaced?' instead of Scott's 'supplied his travelling jockey-coat'.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ *The History of Scotland*, 2 vols (1830). GD 31/10/33.

⁹⁷ Gladstone, 'Sir Walter Scott', p. 13.

⁹⁸ GD 26/12/31.

⁹⁹ Sir Walter Scott, *Quentin Durward*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1824), 25, p. 60.

¹⁰⁰ Scott, *Lammermoor / Montrose*, p. 295. For another e.g. of G's noting where Scott's description falls below the mark, cf. Sir Walter Scott, *The Fortunes of Sir Nigel / Peveril of the Peak*, 3rd edn, 3 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1824), 22, p. 145, marked 'ma'.

¹⁰¹ Sir Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering; or, the Astrologer*, 3rd edn, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1821), 3, p. 37.

Throughout his readings Gladstone altered spellings (English and Latin) and corrected printing errors.¹⁰²

Gladstone was keen to establish rank order between the novels.¹⁰³ In his opinion the greatest was *Lammermoor*, followed by *Kenilworth*, then *Old Mortality*, *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering*.¹⁰⁴ Gladstone also rated his own different readings of the novels showing, amongst other things, an awareness of the changeability inherent in reading. Thus on 18 March 1828 he 'Finished [The] Talisman, wh[ic]h I like better than ever', in 1860 he read 'Scott's Highland Widow' (the first story in *Chronicles of the Canongate*), which he found 'quite as fine as when I read it 30 odd years back' and in 1882 he wrote glowingly about *The Bride of Lammermoor*, which 'on perusing after a long interval...seems to me even greater than my recollection figured it'.¹⁰⁵

As we have already established, Gladstone was from an early age concerned to organise and improve his reading performance and methods of accumulating of knowledge. His concern with ordering Scott's novels and his own readings obviously accords with this general concern; however there are more specific Scottian parallels to be drawn.

2.2 Scholarship, Self Education and Identification with the Scottian Hero

Ina Ferris, following Robert Colby, asserted 'that what Scott introduced into the novel was scholarship':

The details and documentation that 'cram' the pages of *Waverley*...establish the author 'as a man of learning as well as a man of letters.' The classics are featured prominently...in *Waverley*, notably through the figure of Baron Bradwardine; and a classical (specifically Latin) education...long functioned in the West as a central mechanism of gender and class definition.¹⁰⁶

An important aspect of Scott's establishment of himself as a man of learning was that he consistently made reference to the libraries and reading habits of his characters. Gladstone regularly noted these descriptions of scholarliness and textuality, particularly

¹⁰² Cf. e.g., Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1822), 13, pp. 130, 246, 303.

¹⁰³ Cf. *GD* 18/8/27.

¹⁰⁴ Gladstone, 'Sir Walter Scott', p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ *GD* 11/9/60, 4/10/82.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Colby, *Fiction with a Purpose* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), p. 30 quoted in Ferris, *Literary Authority*, p. 85. G., as will be made clear in Chapters 4 & 5, was increasingly bothered by the fraught distinction between the scholar and the man of letters. A similar dualism in Scott's own work and philosophy is nicely highlighted in Murdoch and Sher, 'Learned Culture', p. 140.

when they were related to his preoccupations with broad reading and techniques of gaining knowledge.¹⁰⁷ Thus he placed a 'v' next to this description of Cosmo Bradwardine in *Waverley*.

He was a ...scholar, according to the scholarship of Scotchmen, that is, his learning was more diffuse than accurate, and he was rather a reader than a grammarian. Of his zeal for the classic authors he is said to have to have given an uncommon instance.¹⁰⁸

And in *The Pirate* Gladstone noted Scott's description of Mordant Mertoun, whose 'course of reading more extensive than usual had, in some degree, fortified his mind against the attacks of superstition'.¹⁰⁹

As indicated in Chapter One, self-education (or auto-didacticism) was an important Gladstone family value. Scotland and Scottish culture was at the forefront of the British autodidact tradition in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,¹¹⁰ and Gladstone regularly drew attention to autodidactic references in Scott's life and work. Thus, in 1868 Gladstone emphasised Scott's opportunities (as an isolated, invalid child) of 'acquiring that unbounded lore in legendary knowledge of all kinds, particularly connected with the history of his own country, which gave him a literary character in subsequent life, with some features which probably have never been seen in any former case'.¹¹¹

The tendency for readers to identify with characters or scenes of which they read is well attested,¹¹² and there is compelling evidence that Gladstone both identified with and sought to improve on the literary character of Scott's first hero – Edward Waverley – specifically in terms of his own self-education. In Chapter Three of *Waverley*, entitled 'Education', we are given a summary of Edward's erratic reading and less than systematic learning. In his edition, Gladstone placed two lines and a 'v' next to the following description.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. e.g. Scott, *Rob Roy*, pp. 423-4; Scott, *Rob Roy (Vol 2)*, p. 444; Sir Walter Scott, *Tales of My Landlord (Series 2: The Heart of Midlothian)*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1822), 10, p. 87, 112; Scott, *The Antiquary*, p. 267.

¹⁰⁸ Scott, *Waverley*, p. 59.

¹⁰⁹ Sir Walter Scott, *The Pirate*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1824), 19, p. 190.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Rose, *Intellectual Life*, pp. 16-18ff, 59ff. On Scottish education and cultural achievement more generally cf. Murdoch and Sher, 'Learned Culture', pp. 127, 129, 137-8.

¹¹¹ Gladstone, 'Sir Walter Scott', p. 12.

¹¹² Cf. Rose, *Intellectual Life*, pp. 98, 412.

Alas! While he was thus permitted to read only for the gratification of his own amusement, he foresaw not that he was losing for ever the opportunity of acquiring habit of firm and incumbent application, of gaining the art of controlling, directing, and concentrating the powers of his own mind for earnest investigation, - an art far more essential than even that learning which is the primary object of study.¹¹³

Gladstone went on to place two ‘v’ s next to the following passage, which continues in the same critical vein.

With a desire of amusement...which better discipline might soon have converted into a thirst for knowledge, young Waverley drove through the sea of books, like a vessel without pilot or rudder. Nothing...increases by indulgence more than a desultory habit of reading, especially under such opportunities of gratifying it. I believe one reason why such numerous instances of erudition occur among the lower rank is, that, with the same powers of mind, the poor student is limited to a narrow circle for indulging his passion for books, and must necessarily make himself master of the few he possesses ere he can acquire more. Edward...read no volume a moment after it ceased to excite his curiosity or interest; and it necessarily happened, that the habit of seeking only this sort of gratification, rendered it daily more difficult of attainment, till the passion for reading, like other strong appetites, produced by indulgence a sort of satiety.¹¹⁴

Gladstone combined his reading of the novel with an attempt to sort out his own reading environment. Thus on 15 August 1826 he ‘read Waverley’ whilst also being ‘hard at work getting the Library into some kind of order’ and on the 18th recorded triumphantly ‘On these days finished Library – [and] finished Waverley’.¹¹⁵ This amazing association lasted throughout his life – in 1871 he recorded ‘A day of unpacking, rummaging, and arranging’ and reading *Waverley*.¹¹⁶

Remarkable as this association was, it was on the surface at least a private and personal one. But if Gladstone was truly to follow his father’s epistemological guidance, and obey his own conceptualisation of the aims of study, then knowledge was to be gained and used for practical, public ends. To what public use did Gladstone put his Scottish influences?

¹¹³ Scott, *Waverley*, pp. 28-9. The mark on this page is possibly an ‘?’.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 31-2. Cf. also Kerr, *Scott as Storyteller*, pp. 25, 27.

¹¹⁵ GD 18/8/26.

¹¹⁶ GD 7/9/71.

3 Appropriation: The Public Legacy of Scott

Gladstone's reading of Scott was largely a private affair with distinctly domestic and personal meanings and uses. However, at least two specific aspects of Gladstone's public life incorporated important Scottian influences: his attitude to scholarship and the prosecution of his later political career.

3.1 Communicating Cumulative Knowledge

In 1906, Mary Drew explained her father's enduring love for Scott in the following terms:

Bourget...said...it is easier to write fact than fiction. In the former there is no limit; nothing is too extraordinary...to be occasionally true in fact. But in fiction the writer is held fast in the bonds of the normal and the ordinary. The author who does not wish to court failure 'must trudge humbly along the old thoroughfares...worn by the feet of other pilgrims now gone to their Eternal City[']...A sense of harmony, of fitness in literature...is one of the rarest of Heaven's gifts. This was the secret of Mr. Gladstone's boundless enjoyment of Walter Scott: the presentation to mankind of, not the ugly, the unnatural, the cruel, the base, but the lofty, the beautiful, the ideal.¹¹⁷

Such a conceptualisation counters our mainstream characterisations of 'fact' and 'fiction' but it is important in securing our understanding of how Gladstone's epistemological preoccupations were met in his reception and appropriation of Scott. Firstly it underlines the Romanticism inherent in Gladstone's thought and, secondly, it associates Scott with his belief in the importance of an ameliorative, expanding base of human knowledge, which should be transmitted to the next generation.

Although Scott had created a new type of romance, the fact that he both grounded it in history and built on the work of previous literary 'pilgrims' ensured his work contributed to those stores of cumulative intellectual and moral knowledge, intended for the edification and betterment of society.¹¹⁸ Gladstone established Scott's place in the history of literature at considerable length, showing how his success was in large part built on an incomplete, but essentially progressive, foundation laid by others.

¹¹⁷ Mary Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library at 'St. Deiniol's Hawarden'', *Nineteenth Century* 59 (June 1906), 944-954, p. 950.

¹¹⁸ Gladstone, 'Sir Walter Scott', p. 13.

It was in the last century that, under the influence of Fielding and Smollet, romances became popular. But their tales or novels...although they...have many merits, are disfigured and depraved by...coarseness. After...came Richardson, a very excellent writer, of high moral aims...but he does not give that vividness of interest to his works which writers of greater original genius have been enabled to impart. After Richardson came the...‘sensational’ novelists, with a multitude of elements all thrown together to produce exciting effect. After that...there came a writer of the greatest merit, Miss Austin [*sic*]. But Scott took pen in hand, and formed a description of romance for himself.¹¹⁹

The desire both to transmit and popularise accumulated knowledge was, of course, a central Enlightenment project exemplified in the French *Encyclopédie* and the Scottish *Encyclopedia Britannica* (to which Scott contributed).¹²⁰ Education was, by such means, ‘widely regarded as the primary means by which Scottish society could maintain equilibrium in the face of social disjunction’.¹²¹ This was a belief that Gladstone shared, especially when it came to the educative power of history.

We have already observed how much respect Gladstone felt for Scott’s history writing. He particularly appreciated the author’s ability to communicate facts: in his 1868 speech Gladstone discoursed on Scott’s ‘remarkable...power of reviving antiquity’:

My belief is that in this extraordinary power of calling forth from the sepulchre the dry bones of former ages – clothing sinew and flesh – causing them to live and move before us, and us to live and move among them, as if we belonged to them and they belonged to us – I believe in...that very rare power, Scott has exceeded most of the literary men that the world has produced.¹²²

Gladstone also endorsed Scott’s aim to communicate a thirst for knowledge by teaching readers about their past. As Scott wrote, in the prefatory letter to *Pevensey of the Peak*:

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Murdoch and Sher, ‘Learned Culture’, p. 140.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 137-8.

¹²² Gladstone, ‘Sir Walter Scott’, p. 13.

The love of knowledge wants but a beginning – the least spark will give fire when the train is properly prepared; and having been interested in fictitious adventures, ascribed to an historical period and characters, the reader begins next to be anxious to learn what the facts really were, and how far the novelist has justly represented them. But even where the mind of the more careless reader remains satisfied with the light perusal he has afforded to a tale of fiction, he will still lay down the book with a degree of knowledge, not perhaps of the most accurate kind, but such as he might not otherwise have acquired.¹²³

Thus, through fictionalised history, the reader might be lead to deeper, more rigorous engagement with the past. Such appropriation was, for Gladstone, essential to the survival of individuals, societies and nations. As he wrote in 1885,

It is a degradation to man to be reduced to the life of the present; and never will he cast forth his hope, and his views, and his efforts towards the future with due effect and energy, unless at the same time he prizes and holds fondly clasped to his heart the recollections of the past.¹²⁴

Scott's utilisation of received knowledge and literary experience to develop his work accorded with Gladstone's opposition to the Lockean belief that it 'little concerns us what other men have thought'.¹²⁵ Equally important, in Gladstone's view, was what other men have *done*: hence his approval of Scott's fervent belief in the lessons of history.

These qualities, which Gladstone identified in Scott and his work, entailed that his message should continue to be communicated to succeeding generations. For Scott and Gladstone shared a belief that knowledge is only secured by the communication of information between people. Note, for example, that in his *The Fortunes of Nigel* Gladstone highlighted (with a single line) the importance of the following passage:

It is a fault [bashfulness in society] only to be cured by experience and knowledge of the world, which soon teaches every sensible and acute person the important lesson, that...information and increase of knowledge, is to be derived from the conversation of every individual whatsoever, with whom he is thrown into a natural train of communication.¹²⁶

And in his 1868 speech Gladstone underlined, directly and simply, the force of Scott's moral purpose as he understood it:

¹²³ Quoted in Kerr, *Scott as Storyteller*, pp. 15-16.

¹²⁴ W. E. Gladstone, 'The Cross of Edinburgh', *Daily News*, 24 November 1885, SP 32, 105-115, p. 112.

¹²⁵ John Locke, 'Memorandum on Study' in Lord King, *The Life of John Locke with Extracts from His Correspondence, Journals, and Common-Place Books*, 2 vols (London: H. Colburn & R. Bentley, 1830), I, p. 174.

¹²⁶ Sir Walter Scott, *The Fortunes of Sir Nigel*, 3rd edn, 3 vols, Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley (25 Volumes) (Edinburgh and London: Archibald Constable & Co., and Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1824), 21, p. 361.

He died a great man, and, what is more, a good man...The recollection of a character so noble, so simple, so generous as his, cannot pass away. All that was best and highest in the age of chivalry is brought down by him into the midst of an age of invention, of criticism, of movement, of increased command over the powers of external nature.¹²⁷

Thus Gladstone portrayed the example and works of Scott as potentially civilising and spiritualising influences on the next generation if it would but heed them. In the same speech, made to Welsh schoolchildren, Gladstone noted with some concern the following contemporary description of Scott's popularity (or lack of it) amongst the young:

My attention has been lately drawn to the subject of Sir Walter Scott's name and character by an admirably written article in the number of the *Quarterly Review* that has just appeared. In the first page of the article I find these words, which I am afraid have some truth in them:-

'For not Lockhart only, but Scott himself...seems to be in danger of passing...out of the knowledge of the rising generation. Doubtless there will be found at most railway stations cheap copies of Scott's poems and of the *Waverley* novels...But the instances are rare...in which even among educated persons, young men or young women under four-and-twenty know anything at all either of what Scott wrote or of what he did. Now we look upon this fact, if it be a fact, as a great public misfortune.'

I hope the writer of this article has taken a darker view of the case than the truth requires; yet I am afraid there is a great deal of truth in what he has said, that...that Scott is less in fashion than he was during his lifetime. I cordially concur in what the writer has said – that this fact...is to be looked upon as a great public misfortune.¹²⁸

For Scott to lie unread was to Gladstone a tragedy almost akin to that inaugurated by the destruction of Scott's strongest characters (like Lucy Ashton and Amy Robsart) who possessed both moral principles and the courage to act on them. And the fact that Gladstone characterised this a *public* misfortune underlines his characterisation of Scott's work as knowledge that had direct relevance to the public as well as the private domain. This was not a new idea; *Waverley* had long been seen as a text which dealt with the 'serious political concerns of the age'.¹²⁹ The *New Monthly Magazine* in 1820 observed that 'He [the author of *Waverley*] has enriched history to us' by making it 'loftier' and 'more public'.¹³⁰ And fifty-eight years later R. H. Hutton wrote 'the most striking feature' of the *Waverley* novels was that

¹²⁷ Gladstone, 'Sir Walter Scott', p. 14.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

¹²⁹ Ferris, *Literary Authority*, p. 84. For discussion of the links between history and politics in Scott cf. Ibid., pp. 196, 236.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Ibid., p. 207.

They are pivoted on public rather than mere private interests and passions...And this it is which gives his books so large an interest for young and old, soldiers and statesmen, the world of society and the recluse, alike. You can hardly read any novel of Scott's and not become better aware what public life and political issues mean...no man can read Scott without being more of a public man, whereas the ordinary novel tends to make its readers rather less of one than before.¹³¹

So far, we have seen how Gladstone's reading of Scott in particular reflected, and potentially informed, his own personal sense of nationality. In the final section we will explore the impact of Scott on Gladstone's public life as a politician.

3.2 Nationality, Politics and Public Association with Scott

Gladstone spent the last fourteen years of his political life as a Scottish MP.¹³² There is no doubt of Midlothian's importance in Gladstone's later political development (as we shall further explore in Chapter Four); what needs to be made clear here is how Gladstone's political understanding of Scotland in general and his tenure of the Midlothian seat in particular related to his early-established Scottishness and his reading of Scott.

In Gladstone's mind, Scott and the public image of Scotland were inextricably intertwined.¹³³ The association underpinned his understanding of the author's standing. In 1868 told his Hawarden audience that 'although Scotland has produced many distinguished men...Sir Walter Scott was far away the greatest', adding 'it is impossible to describe in proper terms the nature of the feelings with which Scotchmen...regard Sir Walter Scott'.¹³⁴ As his father before him, Gladstone felt 'it a great honour to be marked out in the public view...as a loyal admirer of Scott'.¹³⁵ He positively encouraged such association by making reference to Scott in the course of public engagements. For example, even though he could not attend the Scott centenary celebrations in 1871 due to a number of 'extraordinary obstructions which have been offered to public business',¹³⁶ Gladstone sent a tribute to Scott to be read out during the festivities.¹³⁷ And in 1885, at the dedication of the newly-restored town cross of Edinburgh (for which Gladstone had paid) he emphasised

¹³¹ Richard H. Hutton, *Sir Walter Scott* (New York, 1878), pp. 101-2 quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 98-9.

¹³² He was elected for Midlothian in April 1880 and, as he told Rosebery in 1885, 'Midlothian has the first claim upon me'. G to Lord Rosebery, 27 June 1885, quoted in *GD* at this date.

¹³³ In this he echoed Theodor Fontane (1819-98) who observed: 'What would we know of Scotland without Scott?' Quoted in Harvie, 'Scott and the Image of Scotland', p. 173.

¹³⁴ Gladstone, 'Sir Walter Scott', p. 11.

¹³⁵ G to J. R. Hope Scott, 25 March 1871, BL GP Add MS 44539, fol. 183.

¹³⁶ G to Dean Ramsay, 25 July 1871, BL GP Add MS 44540 fol. 76, quoted in *GD* at this date.

¹³⁷ Cf. *GD* 8/8/71n, BL GP Add MS 44540 fol. 84 and *The Times*, 10 August 1871, 12d.

That there is no conceivable occurrence in the course of human life which conveys to me a more lively pleasure than to have had any share, great or small, in fulfilling a wish that lay near the heart of Sir Walter Scott; for though I am not able to subscribe to every article of the creed of that great man in relation to modern occurrences, there is no man, be his political complexion what it may, who entertains a more living and more profound sense of the enormous work done by him for Scotland, of his splendid literary eminence, and of the immeasurable debt which he has laid upon every Scotsman to cherish his name and memory.¹³⁸

Gladstone conceptualised Scottish nationalism as complex and multifaceted. His understanding closely matched the following characterisation of Scottish patriotism Scott included in *Rob Roy*, which Gladstone marked with a single vertical line.

‘You do not know the genius of that man’s country, sir,’ answered Rashleigh; ‘discretion, prudence, and foresight...modified by...ardent patriotism, which forms...the outmost of the concentric bulwarks with which a Scotchman fortifies himself...Surmount this mound, you find an inner and still dearer barrier – the love of his province, his village, or, most probably, his clan; storm this second obstacle, you have a third – his attachment to his own family...It is within these limits that a Scotchman’s social affectation expands itself, never reaching those which are outermost, till all means of discharging itself in the interior circles have been exhausted’.¹³⁹

Gladstone’s personal national feeling was similarly shaped by his family’s value for their Scottish heritage. In 1886 he told Sir Robert Peel, 3rd Bart.: ‘I learn that you are about to contest the Boroughs of the County of Inverness, a County to which my mother’s family belonged, & in which account, being myself half a Highlander, I have always felt a special interest’.¹⁴⁰ It was also enriched by his reading of Scott.

When reading Scott, Gladstone was drawn those characters who exhibited peculiarly Scottish characteristics (according to fashionable nineteenth-century ideas) either in physiognomy, dress, language or behaviour. For example he marked (with lines) this description of an old man in *Waverley*:

¹³⁸ Gladstone, ‘Cross of Edinburgh’, pp. 110-11.

¹³⁹ Scott, *Rob Roy*, p. 435.

¹⁴⁰ G to Sir R. Peel, 23 June 1886, BL GP Add MS 44548 fol. 103, quoted in *GD* at this date.

In this person, an old man about seventy, Edward admired a relic of primitive simplicity. He wore no dress but what his estate afforded; the cloth was the fleece of his own sheep, woven by his own servants, and stained into tartan by the dyes produced from the herbs and lichens of the hills around him. His linen was spun by his daughters and maid-servants, from his own flax, nor did his table, though plentiful, and varied with game and fish, offer an article but what was of native produce.¹⁴¹

But he was particularly attracted by those characters who exhibited a strong nationalistic brand of politics. Thus Scott's description of Fergus MacIvor in *Waverley* as a 'bold, ambitious, and ardent, yet artful and politic character' elicited special notice and comment from Gladstone. At the end of the Chapter he wrote admiringly 'Could this Chapter have been written better in point of historical effect, if it had been about Charlemagne? What a power'.¹⁴² Fergus and his sister Flora are the archetypal highland rebels who have inherited, both genetically and historically, a passionate love of their country – something with which Gladstone clearly identified. He placed an acute dash-mark against the following description of them:

Her love of her clan, an attachment which was almost hereditary in her bosom, was, like her loyalty, a more pure passion than that of her brother. He was too thorough a politician, regarded his patriarchal influence too much as the means of accomplishing his own aggrandizement, that we should term him the model of a Highland Chieftan.¹⁴³

(We should be unsurprised that this description is reminiscent of Sir John Gladstone).

Specific contemporary political concerns were also closely integrated into and influenced by Gladstone's Scottish reading. When reading *The Heart of Midlothian*, a novel centrally concerned with justice, Gladstone simultaneously studied works such as 'Blackie on Land Laws' and 'L[or]d Selkirk on the Highlands',¹⁴⁴ which resonated with Gladstone's then current preoccupation with Scottish Land Reform. He wrote to William Harcourt about the extension of the Land Act to Scotland and the problems of achieving a just settlement for the Scottish people, who 'are a people united by tradition, by neighbourhood, often by blood; by agitation, as it may now be added, and always by common interest':

¹⁴¹ Scott, *Waverley*, pp. 270-1. Cf. also the endnotes to this volume where G draws attention to four references to national dress. For information on the 'revival' / 'creation' of Scottish national dress cf. Trevor-Roper, 'Highland Tradition', pp. 18-27.

¹⁴² Scott, *Waverley*, pp. 206, 216, 219.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 233. The acute dash-mark is another sign not included in G's annotation key but which appears several times in this copy. It is usually small and between '˘' and '/' in angle.

¹⁴⁴ GD 12, 17/1/85. On 19th, G finished reading 'Ld Selkirk on the Highlands' and 'Read Heart of Midlothian'. Note that Selkirk was one of Scott's sources; he quoted his *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland* in the postscript to *Waverley*.

The Highland proprietors of these parishes were the Chiefs of the clans, and the produce which they sought to raise from their lands was not rent but men. From time immemorial these men had been upon the ground with them, recognised in general as kinsmen, and fed from the yield of the land as they were, and in a manner not very different...Many excellent people may be among those who have bought out the vanished Chiefs, and they may suffer hardship from not having adverted to the specialities of the case, but I take it to be clear that they have acquired the land with its engagements. A vast mass of money-values has been created, in lieu of the flesh and blood values which were formerly in vogue; and the representatives of the old flesh and blood, still largely on the ground, cannot I think be ousted from their title to some legislative consideration.¹⁴⁵

This somewhat Marxian analysis is reminiscent of a section of *Rob Roy*, which Gladstone marked (with 'v's and lines), discussing the volatile (and corrupted) nature of Highland society.¹⁴⁶ Again, in *A Legend of Montrose*, Gladstone wrote 'NB' by an account of the Glen of More M'Alpin: 'One southland farmer, three grey-plaided shepherds, and six dogs, now tenanted the whole glen, which in his youth had maintained...upwards of two hundred inhabitants' and an acute dash-line by a description of the Highlanders' 'constant system of aggression'.¹⁴⁷ All this underlines clearly what a well-established, predominant and passionate force Gladstone understood Scottish nationalism to be. He regarded Scotland as an ancient nation. For example, in 1874, Gladstone told the Lord Advocate, 'It is refreshing to see that old Scotland stands to her colours'.¹⁴⁸ In 1885 he expressed similar sentiments to Lord Richard Grosvenor: 'I have been doing all I can to cure some of the worst difficulties on this side of the Border. But how splendidly old Scotland votes! What bottom it shows!'¹⁴⁹ The emphasis here is reminiscent of Wilt's comments about the centrality in the Waverley novels of 'the changeling protagonist and his fight with the fathers of his vanishing or corrupted home'.¹⁵⁰ And Gladstone was keen to fight anyone who sought to belittle or underestimate the strength of Scottish nationalism. Thus on 2 September 1885, in conversation with a reporter for *The Scotsman*, Gladstone criticised Charles Stewart Parnell's 'statement...that Scotland had lost her nationality' remarking 'that Mr Parnell "is a very thoughtful man...but he never said a sillier thing than that"'.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ G to W. V. Harcourt, 19 January 1885, MS Harcourt dep. 9, fols 120-31, letter two, quoted in *GD* at this date.

¹⁴⁶ Scott, *Rob Roy* (*Vol* 2), p. 202ff, 476.

¹⁴⁷ Scott, *Lammermoor / Montrose*, p. 107 and ff, 372. Cf. Fenyo, *Perceptions of the Highlands*, pp. 1-3, 181, Ch. 1-2.

¹⁴⁸ G to G. Young, 9 February 1874, BL GP Add MS 44543, fol. 64 quoted in *GD* at this date.

¹⁴⁹ G to R. Grosvenor, 27 November 1885, BL GP Add MS 44316, fol. 117 quoted in *GD* at this date.

¹⁵⁰ Wilt, *Secret Leaves*, p. 16.

¹⁵¹ *The Scotsman*, 3 September 1885, 4a, quoted in *GD* 2/9/85n.

Gladstone made a further oblique reference to Parnell's comment several months later when re-opening the restored Edinburgh cross.

No more gross or stupid mistake could possibly be made than to have the idea that Scotland has ceased to value her own nationality...She is conscious of it, and is ready to assert it on every proper occasion, and to any length circumstances may require.¹⁵²

Gladstone's annoyance with Parnell can be easily explained. Gladstone saw the role of historic and contemporary nationalism as equally important to both Scotland *and* Ireland. In a similar way to Gladstone's analysis of Irish political problems, his approach to Scottish questions was firmly grounded in his understanding of the nation's history. Macaulay (by ancestry also a Highlander) had written in his *History of England* that 'An intimate knowledge of the domestic history of nations, is...absolutely necessary for the prognosis of political events' – a belief which Gladstone fully shared.¹⁵³ Gladstone was acutely aware of the way in which past wrongs and injustices could become part of a nation's historical consciousness and inflict the present with fresh troubles bolstered by established tradition and supported by the 'evidence' of history. When attempting to explain the neglect of Edinburgh's old town cross in 1885, Gladstone, after recalling the symbolic connection the monument had with the Stuart cause, told his audience 'the authorities of that day, may have thought that they were removing a memory of mischief from the eyes of men, and in so far tending to prevent its possible recurrence' whereas in fact they were depriving the population of an important memory and link with their past.¹⁵⁴ It is no surprise that he endorsed the words given to Mr Oldbuck in *The Antiquary*:

But to put our ancient chronicles, our noble histories, our learned commentaries, and national muniments, to such offices of contempt and subjection, has greatly degraded our nation, and shewed ourselves dishonoured in the eyes of posterity to the utmost stretch of time – O negligence, most unfriendly to our land!¹⁵⁵

In the light of this, it is unsurprising that the strength and unpredictability of Scottish nationalism, especially amongst Highlanders, was a subject to which Gladstone frequently returned. 'The Scotch are a dangerous people' he observed in 1889, who need to be 'treated with prudence and consideration' in a political context.¹⁵⁶ He had elaborated the

¹⁵² Gladstone, 'Cross of Edinburgh', p. 114.

¹⁵³ Quoted in Ferris, *Literary Authority*, p. 236.

¹⁵⁴ Gladstone, 'Cross of Edinburgh', p. 112.

¹⁵⁵ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p. 268. G marked 'NB'.

¹⁵⁶ *Hansard* 336 1510 quoted at GD 30/5/89n. Scott had felt similarly: 'Their lowering and grounding down all those peculiarities which distinguished us as Scotsmen will throw the country into a state in which...they will have a very

same point to Lord Carlingford several years before, following a reading of ‘the Analysis of the Report on Highland Crofters’, which he described as ‘a very formidable subject’.¹⁵⁷

In surveying the situation, regard must be had to the several parts of the United Kingdom. Scotland has felt, if not a little resented, the lack of any one in the Cabinet who could be at all addicted to her special interests, since the Duke of Argyll quitted it: and it is of real importance...that we should take every means of keeping our phalanx complete, and, if we can, of enlarging it.¹⁵⁸

Considering Gladstone’s acute consciousness of Scottish nationality and nationalism, encouraged and cemented by his family background and reading of Scott, it is understandable that his campaigns for and tenure of the Midlothian seat should have been so national in emphasis and given such a high public profile, a point well made by Richard Shannon.

A new departure pointed also to a new constituency to replace unsatisfactory Greenwich; one from which the implications of Gladstone’s appeal to the ‘nation’ could assume an explicitly advantageous shape...Given his new public vocation, what Gladstone was in need of was a conspicuous single-member seat, preferably held by a conspicuous Conservative, who could be conspicuously challenged in an electoral tournament, a kind of proxy-battle on behalf of the masses against the classes; with prospects not too far short of guaranteed victory...Midlothian...was tempting. There were the resonances of Sir Walter Scott. There were resonances of the origins of the Gladstones.¹⁵⁹

The Midlothian campaigns themselves can be read explicitly within a Scottish frame of reference. Not only were they rhetorically an attempt to save the nation from corrupting influences but structurally, as a punishing schedule of tours and political rallies, were in a striking way like the picaresque journeyings of so many of Scott’s protagonists. As Kerr observed, ‘Touring is not a politically innocent activity in *Waverley*’ and it certainly was not for Gladstone in Midlothian.¹⁶⁰ The passion of Gladstone’s Midlothian Speeches was also Scottish. Considering the evidence already shown for the autobiographical parallels Gladstone made with Scott’s works, it is reasonable to suggest that he saw a parallel with his own situation, as an increasingly radical politician, in the following passage from *Peveril* (which he marked with ‘v’ and a single line):

dangerous North British neighbourhood’. Sir Walter Scott’s *Journal*, 14 March 1826, quoted in Harvie, ‘Scott and the Image of Scotland’, p. 190.

¹⁵⁷ Report of Napier’s Royal Commission on crofters, *Parliamentary Papers*, xxxii, (1884) quoted at *GD* 5/9/84.

¹⁵⁸ G to Lord Carlingford, 7 September 1884, Carlingford MSS CP1/227, quoted in *GD* at this date.

¹⁵⁹ Shannon, *Gladstone II*, p. 220.

¹⁶⁰ Kerr, *Scott as Storyteller*, p. 24.

It is hard to expect that mere compassion for a persecuted sect – or, what is yet more rare, an abstract love of justice – should be powerful enough to en-gage men to expose themselves to the awakened fury of a whole people.¹⁶¹

Gladstone's eagerness to be associated with the sort of Scottishness that the name of Scott conjured up and his blatant flaunting of his 'Scottishness' during his Midlothian campaigns was not lost on contemporary commentators, especially political caricaturists. Gladstone's own Scottian frame of reference was sufficiently incorporated into his public image to ensure he was represented as an heroic Highlander by numerous cartoonists [fig. 2.1]. In 1890 Harry Furniss even went to the lengths of picturing him in 'a Ravenswood costume' supposedly lent to him by Henry Irving [fig. 2.2]. The role of illustration was important in Scott's novels, too – especially in *Waverley*. At the conclusion of the novel, Edward commissions a romantic, heroic portrait of himself and Fergus in full highland costume. Kerr noted how such political portraiture can fulfil a domesticating function: 'the preferred method of dealing with disruptive political desire is to frame it within the boundaries of a sentimental portrait'.¹⁶² Scott's Highland rebels, the Gladstone of Midlothian and the very process of reading or hearing about them could be dangerous and unpredictable.¹⁶³ The way in which Gladstone was represented and marketed in Midlothian, by emphasising his Scottishness and representing him as a tartan-clad romantic rebel, may have served the equally useful purpose of domesticating his increasingly radical politics by romanticising and sentimentalising them.

¹⁶¹ Scott, *Sir Nigel (2) / Peveril*, p. 499.

¹⁶² Kerr, *Scott as Storyteller*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁶³ Note Lockhart's observation about the vitality of the Edinburgh book market in *Peter's Letters to His Kinsfolke* (1819): 'I do not know of any other instance...of such a mart existing and flourishing in a place not the...centre of any very great political unrest'. Quoted in Murdoch and Sher, 'Learned Culture', p. 135.

Conclusion

Gladstone's public association with Scott continued after his death. John Morley drew a direct comparison between the composition of his biography of Gladstone and the story of Scott's life:

I must here pause for material affairs of money and business, with which, as a rule, in the case of its heroes the public is considered to have little concern. They can no more be altogether omitted here than the bills, acceptances, renewals, notes of hand, and all the other financial apparatus of his printers and publishers can be left out of the story of Sir Walter Scott.¹⁶⁴

Equally, as this chapter has shown, neither can the fascinating engagement between Gladstone and the works of Scott be omitted from a consideration of his life and reading. Gladstone's engagement with Scott was long-lasting, complex and absolutely integral to his sense of identity. Moreover, it was conducted within an extremely rich familial and national context. Reading and reflection on Scott impinged significantly on Gladstone's response to his ancestral home, his estimation of and dealings with the principal members of his family and had a role to play in his own conception of autobiography. In addition, the impact of Scott extended well outside the sphere of Gladstone's private life. It bolstered his commitment to the transmission and popularisation of knowledge and, equally importantly, influenced his political understanding of the Scottish nation and its people and his conception of how he could, acting and represented as a fellow countryman, best serve their political interests.

At the end of *A Legend of Montrose*, Scott addressed his reader as follows:

He cannot be more sensible than I am, that sufficient varieties have now been exhibited of the Scottish character, to exhaust one individual's powers of observation, and that to persist would be useless and tedious. I have the vanity to suppose, that the popularity of these Novels has shewn my countrymen, and their peculiarities, in lights which were new to the Southern reader; and that many, hitherto indifferent upon the subject, have been induced to read Scottish history, from the allusions in these works of fiction.¹⁶⁵

This examination, although not exhaustive, casts new light on an important and influential relationship in Gladstone's life, establishing that it was far from the superficial and recreational association some have described. By placing Gladstone within his 'Scottish'

¹⁶⁴ Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, I, p. 337.

context we see again how frequently and significantly his private and public worlds intersected; how ‘allusions in...works of fiction’ read in the privacy of a library underpinned so much of import in a public life.

The key factor in all of this is history: its moral value, representative power and civilising potential. Scott’s ability to produce, through historical fiction, ‘a sensation of knowing the past, of resurrecting the body of the past intact so that it might be experienced in the present’ was undoubtedly the aspect of his work for which Gladstone felt most admiration and deemed supremely relevant to his contemporary society. But Scott not only wrote about history, he also collected it. In his study at Abbotsford, he gathered together many relics of Scottish history which ‘prefigured the shape of things to come and altered for ever ideas about what history is’.¹⁶⁶ Gladstone too collected: books, ornaments and pictures. Appropriately enough it is a small engraving of Raeburn’s *Sir Walter Scott* [fig. 2.3] that is the first object to meet the eye on entering Gladstone’s study in Hawarden Castle. How strong Scott’s influence was on Gladstone’s epistemological, historical and decorative scheme in the Temple of Peace, remains to be seen, but it is to an examination of the layout and significance of this room, the principal location of Gladstone’s private Library, that we now turn.

¹⁶⁵ Scott, *Lammermoor / Montrose*, p. 505. Gladstone marked this with a ‘v’.

¹⁶⁶ Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 131.

CHAPTER THREE ❖ GLADSTONE'S PRIVATE LIBRARY

Introduction: The Search for Peace

In 1998, Robert Runcie described a 'deceptively tranquil' library 'set in a small village amidst quiet countryside...deceptive, because to stand amidst its books is an...encounter with the restless, brooding intelligence that was William Ewart Gladstone'.¹ He described the 'decorous Gothic architecture' of St Deiniol's but his words depict with more accuracy the experience of visiting Gladstone's study in Hawarden Castle. This spacious room, on the west-wing ground floor of the house, is preserved very much as Gladstone left it. The site of over forty years of reading, work and relaxation, it remains the clearest physical trace of Gladstone's private gentleman's Library, still furnished by a significant number of his books, library accoutrements, ornaments and pictures. Letters, pens, ink-stained wipes, desk toys and untidily-stacked books removed from their habitual places litter the desks: the visitor, trespassing in an eerie silence, endlessly expects the return of the Library's owner, who appears only temporarily absent. Only the pungency of decaying calf-skin, dust and old polish betrays the age of the room's contents.

The sense of personality and of contemporaneity that one feels in the Temple of Peace urges the value and importance of considering Gladstone's books *in situ* in this particular library space – the one in which he spent the most time and with which he was most associated by contemporaries. Colin Matthew used to observe that a visit to Gladstone's Temple of Peace was equal to reading several biographies of him. This observation has important implications for our approach to and understanding of Gladstone and the significance of his Library. If a momentary visit to one room can yield such startling insight, how much more might an in-depth study reveal?

Library historians have argued for the serious study of 'artifactual traces' – sites of reading, marginalia and library catalogues – in order to create a rounded picture of historical reading experiences,² indicating that

¹ Robert Runcie, 'God's Politician', in *The Grand Old Man: Sermons & Speeches in Honour of W. E. Gladstone (1809 - 1898)*, ed. by P.B. Francis (Hawarden: Monad Press, 2000), 27-31, p. 27.

² E.g. W. H. Sherman, 'The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance: John Dee Revisited', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 62-76, p. 62.

Information about the ways in which people read can...be derived from...the spaces, the furniture and the aids designed for reading. Reconstructing the way in which books were physically organized tells us much about the kinds of reading that were possible and that were held desirable.³

Building on this observation, there is also a need to study the broader contexts in which such readings took place. As well as attending to the layout, classification and practical equipment of a library, we must also consider questions such as a library's location and its owner's relationship with that place and its inhabitants. It is important to consider the ways in which libraries changed and developed: when and why annexes and additions were provided, how the numbers of other users fluctuated and what else happened in the Library. As has already been observed, libraries, by their nature straddle public and private boundaries in interesting and often provoking ways. The importance of display and representation in relation to domestic library space and function problematises the extent to which domestic libraries were ever 'private' in the fullest sense of the word.⁴ Whereas many 'public' libraries charged entry fees and were housed in rooms suggesting privacy and domesticity, in James Raven's words, 'many...private libraries were designed for display and for use by friends and neighbours'. Areas were available for the individual silent reader but space was also allotted for 'the social celebration of books and the communal reading performance'. A variety of reading practices took place, including silent and public reading, browsing, selective as well as concentrated reading. Furthermore, occupants of the Library undertook activities apparently unrelated to texts: conversation, business, teaching, needlework, painting, drama and music, gaming, dancing and drinking.⁵ It must be assessed how far Gladstone's private Library was the site of such multiplicity. There is also the question of what visitors expected of and judged they had received in the Library and from its owner.

The following observation by William Sherman holds particular relevance for understanding the Temple of Peace as an artifactual source for Gladstonian biography. Study of library spaces, he writes, 'means attending to two interconnecting spaces: the physical place in which readings are carried out, and the cultural place of readers within

³ James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor, eds., *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 11.

⁴ Cf. Jennifer Ciro, 'Country House Libraries in the Nineteenth Century', *Library History* 18 (July 2002), 89-98, p. 91.

⁵ James Raven, 'From Promotion to Proscription: Arrangements for Reading and Eighteenth-Century Libraries', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 175-201, p. 176.

their particular social and professional matrices'.⁶ The relationship between a 'private' room and its 'public' significance is a central consideration when studying the personal Library and reading of a public figure. Collected objects, including books, attract 'different notions of value and significance: some "public" or generally accepted, and others private and subjective'.⁷ As has already been seen in the case of Gladstone's reading of Walter Scott, private reading, undertaken ostensibly for personal pleasure, served definite public functions, which Gladstone himself promoted. This (often uneasy) dialogue between Gladstone and various 'publics' is something of which we must remain aware throughout this exploration of his private Library.

Chapter One examined Gladstone's experience of his family's library and book culture and the ways in which this influenced his maturing identity. His youthful keenness to organise and run family libraries was observed; attention now turns to the collection over which he had personal control. The following examination begins with an overview of the chronological development of Gladstone's private collection. This section serves both to ground our understanding of the place which the Temple of Peace occupied within Gladstone's (reading) life and also to explore fully the ways in which and reasons why he collected books. Part Two deals with the transition of Gladstone's books from objects of desire and purchase to their status as a collection – examining Gladstone's attitudes to and practice of organisation, classification and cataloguing. Part Three focuses on the Temple of Peace itself, specifically its layout and use. It importantly identifies and discusses the significant use of Gladstone's Library by other readers, the scale and character of which has not previously been documented. It also investigates Gladstone's textual relationships with immediate family, friends and neighbours, paying particular attention to issues of gender and class.

The consideration of Gladstone's private Library's impact on and importance to other people and contexts leads to a consideration of Gladstone's reading and textual relationships beyond the Temple of Peace. This name, which Gladstone bestowed on his Library, provides a useful conceptual fulcrum on which to balance our investigation. It is also a context in which Runcie's sense of 'deceptive' tranquillity attains particular significance. As has been made clear by other biographers, the years during which he was establishing the Temple (from c. 1851 onwards) included ones of severe crisis for

⁶ W. H. Sherman, 'The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance: John Dee Revisited', *Ibid.*, 62-76, p. 62.

Gladstone – both politically and personally.⁸ They saw the escalation of his rescue work amongst prostitutes and his consistent, albeit tortured, reading of pornography. Attention is given here to Gladstone's relationships with prostitutes because of the significant part reading played in them: an aspect not usually given any prominence. The readings that took place between Gladstone and fallen women are both intrinsically significant but also throw into relief, along with his reading of pornography, what kinds of reading were possible and held desirable for the private library space and which were not. If Gladstone's Library in Hawarden was a haven of peace, how far were other reading contexts regarded as unpeaceful or even dangerous; needing to be kept strictly separate? How far were both the public *and* private aspects of Gladstone's Library governed by notions of what behaviour would be *publicly* acceptable? It is these questions which occupy the final part of this chapter.

1 The 'Inexorable Spirit of Collection'

1.1 The Collection of Gladstone's Private Library

Chapter One introduced Gladstone's enthusiasm for collecting and reading books within familial and educational contexts. In focusing on his personal collection and in particular on its location in the Temple of Peace, we are first behoved to examine the processes and circumstances by which this mature collection developed. For whereas

In the past, the study of collecting has concentrated upon the content of collections...New work...has opened up new and fruitful ideas which are concerned with collecting as a process in itself, and with the nature of collecting as part of our effort to construct an intelligible world-view.⁹

1.2 The Process of Collecting

Gladstone dated his book collecting to the years between c. 1815 and 1896. In 1896, he told Bernard Quaritch¹⁰

⁷ Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 27.

⁸ Cf. e.g. H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), Ch. 3 & 4.

⁹ Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. vii.

¹⁰ G's correspondence with Bernard Quaritch (1819-1895; prominent London bookseller) between 1858-1896 is preserved in the British Library.

The...book...longest in my possession, was presented to me...in 1815...My purchases commenced a few years after that time, and I have a variety of books acquired at Eton. Among them is a copy of Mr. Hallam's Constitutional History in quarto, presented to me by his son, Arthur...Restricted visual power now imposes upon me a serious amount of disability: and, speaking generally, I have retired from the list of purchasers.¹¹

Gladstone closely associated the beginnings of his own collecting with the gifts of others, including the evangelical author Hannah More and his Eton contemporaries encountered in Chapter One. This bears out Pearce's assertion that 'the link between gift-giving and the collecting process is extremely close' and, as will be seen again in the discussion of the foundation of St Deiniol's Library in Chapter Seven, Gladstone maintained this association in the management of his own collection.¹²

St Deiniol's contains a book entitled *The Library Companion; or, The Young Man's Guide, and The Old Man's Comfort, in the Choice of a Library* (1824).¹³ If William acquired it soon after its publication, which seems likely as it is not listed in his Diary, he was deliberately planning an extensive collection at an early stage. He was also following appropriate 'gentlemanly' advice, which, as noted in Chapter One, all new collectors were encouraged to do. Gladstone's early diary entries abound with references to book purchases. On Saturday 3 September 1825, the fifteen-year-old Eton boy recorded: 'Bought at a book sale Goldsmith's Works, and Breton's China. Much pleased with purchases'. A month later, he unsuccessfully bid for 'Bibliotheca Gloucesteriensis' at a sale and paid off his (no doubt considerable) bill at T. Ingaltan's, the Eton bookseller.¹⁴ Everywhere he went, Gladstone bought books: he 'went to Cheltenham' and 'bought books'; 'bought two or 3 books in L[iver]pool'; was 'out in booksellers' shops [in Edinburgh]'. He was endlessly 'out – looking over a stock of books' frequently making 'a considerable purchase', then 'Out again – shopping'.¹⁵

¹¹ 'The Gladstone Papers', *The Times*, 30 May 1930, Newspaper Cuttings Book, St Deiniol's Library Collection, M34.9G/210.

¹² Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 229.

¹³ By the Revd T. F. Dibdin. I am grateful to Bill Pritchard for this reference.

¹⁴ GD 17/10/25.

¹⁵ GD 17/1/26, 23/8/26, 28-9/4/28. Cf also GD 29/5/26, 30/4/28, 29-30/5/28, 7-8/10/29, 27-8/10/29. G patronised many booksellers, including William and Charles Tait, Manners and Miller – both of Princes Street, Edinburgh; John Leslie, theological bookseller in Great Queen Street, and Westall's & Co., off Tottenham Court Road, in London, and Parker's in Oxford.

When Gladstone went abroad, a priority was again the purchase of books. Over the years he was 'busy on the book stalls' of Paris,¹⁶ Milan, Florence, Rome, Naples, Turin, Cologne and Cannes both buying for himself and others. For example, in July 1837 he was out in Cologne 'bookbuying for Mr G[ladstone]., R[obertson].G[ladstone]., & [the] Carlton Club'.¹⁷ Such forays were not always straightforwardly pleasurable; on the 8 January 1839 he recorded

Hunting for books: in Rome: what a labour! For example: for the Statutes of the Sapienza, Petrucci (bookseller) referred me to the Propaganda: the Propaganda to the Stamperia Camerale: and the Stamperia to the printing office: the printing office back to an upper floor of the Stamperia: where I went at one, & it was closed for dinner: again at five, & it was shut for the night.¹⁸

Whilst Gladstone clearly was a speculative and sometimes compulsive buyer – devoting much time to browsing in shops and catalogues – he was not wholly indiscriminate. Many references mention searches for specific works, for example, when in Athens in 1879 he 'went to S.P.C.K.s Office and hunted up the Sikes Tracts'.¹⁹ However, such discrimination must be balanced against the fact that his collecting was increasingly supplemented by gifts from publishers, admiring authors (often seeking reviews) and the general public. A reporter for *The Sketch* (posthumously) explained

Publishers were astute enough to recognise the value of a post-card of commendation from 'your faithful servant, W. E. Gladstone,' and accordingly despatched numberless new books to the indefatigable statesman. Authors of high repute and otherwise – especially otherwise – would present Mr. Gladstone with autographed copies of their books, and usually he replied graciously.²⁰

(But not always. In 1888 an exasperated Gladstone fumed: 'Acton framed for me a sentiment for the Grand Duchess's Book! A Plague on all such books!')²¹ Such unsolicited gifts raise the question of whether or not, as Gladstone's collection matured, it fully reflected his personal tastes. It is certainly safe to question the exclusive status of any collection's relationship with its owner. But considering Gladstone's own admission that his collecting began with gifts, it is a question which should not overly concern us. From

¹⁶ GD 29/1/39.

¹⁷ GD 11/7/37.

¹⁸ GD 8/1/39.

¹⁹ GD 29/5/79. Thomas Sykes, 'Dialogues between a Minister of the Church and his Parishioner' (1823 edn), discussed in W. E. Gladstone, *Gleanings of Past Years* (London: John Murray, 1879), vol. 7, p. 216.

²⁰ 'Mr. Gladstone as a Bookman', *The Sketch*, 25 May 1898, 6-7, p. 6.

²¹ GD 6/2/88.

a researcher's perspective, gifts to the collection are usually identifiable by fine bindings and inscribed dedications and the ample evidence of Gladstone's personal collecting habits can be used to assess the status of individual volumes within the collection. Gladstone's policy on the preservation of personal gift books clearly varied. Some, including those from Hannah More, Arthur Henry Hallam and Tennyson, remained in Gladstone's private collection after his death; others, for example a number of Eton gift books, were translated to St Deiniol's but at least one of these was amongst books sold off in 1875. One might infer from this that the identity of the giver was more important than an individual book's status as a gift. Gladstone's attitude to review books or books from authors with whom he was not personally acquainted was, if anything, more selective and apparently motivated by practical rather than emotional motives. As David Williamson observed, 'Many of these volumes he did not preserve in his own select library after reading, for they would have soon swamped even the capacious shelves arranged on Mr. Gladstone's own adroit plan of accommodation'.²²

1.3 The Meaning of Collecting

In terms of what the collecting process signified for Gladstone, it must first be noted that bookshops were not simply a location for purchase. They were sites of extensive reading and browsing (for example, Gladstone recorded 'killed time reading sundries at Parker's' in 1829).²³ Bookshops were also for socialising, exchanging gossip and gleaned local information. Gladstone was keen to learn about books in their social context and to form his opinion of social contexts from within the world of book culture. Pearce has written that collected objects are 'essentially cultural' in significance, 'capable of engaging in a cultural dialogue with human individuals from which social changes will emerge'.²⁴ This should be extended to recognise that books, as collected objects, also promote cultural dialogue *between* human individuals, evidence for which can be observed in abundance in this case. Gladstone's travel journals, being more loquacious than his daily record, provide extended commentary on the motivation and process of his book collecting. Thus he was assiduous in conversing with as well as purchasing from a Milanese bookseller in 1832:

²² David Williamson, *Gladstone: The Man: A Non-Political Biography*, 2nd edn (London: James Bowden, 1898), pp. 60-1.

²³ GD 21/10/29.

²⁴ Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 10.

Went out and completed a purchase of Italian books...I asked a bookseller with whom I was dealing the price of Martini's Bible (with notes) when complete.²⁵ He named a sum between one & two hundred francs. 'Nothing cheaper?' 'The cheapest Bible with notes costs 45 to 50 francs'. 'And is there no cheaper Bible to be had?' 'Yes, Diodati's: for 18 or 20.' 'Can this be easily procured?' 'No: for it has no notes and is prohibited'.

The Protestant Gladstone smugly concluded, 'I think when no Bible is purchasable under 45 or 50 francs, we may without breach of charity say, that the Bible is, virtually, kept from the poor'.²⁶ He investigated the same theme on a visit to Naples in 1838:

Among others I found an author in a bookseller's shop whom I greatly pleased by telling him he was like Manzoni in countenance...& he very goodnatureedly corrected some blunders in my Italian as we spoke. He said prohibited books were all easily to be had, & were more sought & sold than any others. That not long ago a bookseller in Rome was about to fail...He went to the Pope & said he...had printed a book &...wished it to be prohibited...[for] when once it was prohibited, it would be sure to sell: the Pope according to my informant entered into the spirit of the request, prohibited the book, & the bookseller saved his affairs!²⁷

Gladstone clearly had a conscious understanding of these social and cultural opportunities associated with book collecting and continued to seek them out. In 1850, when in Turin, he 'bought some books in various shops: in moderation'. The activity 'has the advantage', he wrote, 'of giving one the means of intercourse with an intelligent class', adding that, of five intelligent conversations he had had on Piedmontese affairs, 'two were [with] booksellers'.²⁸ (Libraries, like booksellers, were also important repositories of social, cultural and historical information and practice. Thus, when he visited the Vatican Library in 1832, he observed humorously that the Custodian 'declared there were no Protestant books there! And when I found in the room with open shelves the name of Calvin, [he] said it must be another')²⁹

Gladstone interpreted the role of book collector as a moral one. This was principally because he regarded books as agents of moral power and change: 'They are first and foremost among the *compages*, the bonds and rivets of the race...the history of books cannot...be separated from the history of souls', he wrote in 1890,³⁰ adding six years later,

²⁵ Archbishop Martini's Italian translation of the Bible (1769-77).

²⁶ GD 9/7/32.

²⁷ GD 16/11/38.

²⁸ GD 2/11/50.

²⁹ GD 4/4/32.

³⁰ W. E. Gladstone, 'On Books and the Housing of Them', *Nineteenth Century* 27 (March 1890), 384-396, p. 386.

'book collecting...is a vitalizing element in a society honeycombed by several sources of corruption'.³¹ Secondly, he believed, like Scott, in the educative potential of human engagement, ample opportunities for which, in the form of conversation and reading, were offered by the collecting process.

Gladstone was characteristically self-deprecating about the quality of his collection and his status as a book collector. In 1896 he wrote:

The regiment of Book Collectors stand in no need of recruits, and even if its ranks were thin, I doubt if I am qualified to enlist. I have in my time been a purchaser to the extent of about thirty-five thousand volumes, and I might therefore abide a quantitative test: but, as I fear, no other. A book collector ought, as I conceive, to possess the following six qualifications: appetite, leisure, wealth, knowledge, discrimination, and perseverance. Of these I have only had two, the first and the last, and these are not the most important.³²

It is noticeable here that Gladstone viewed book collection as, ideally, an élitist and leisured activity; he was clearly proud of his 'few specialities'. Although he was anxious to point out that he was himself 'a beggarly collector'. His public comments on book collecting were frankly utilitarian in their conceptualisation of the collector's position and responsibilities. In 'On Books and the Housing of Them', *Nineteenth Century* (March 1890), Gladstone's fullest exposition on the subject, he criticised 'when bindings of a profuse costliness are imposed...upon letterpress which is respectable journeyman's work and nothing more...The paper, type, and ink...and habiliment...ought to be adjusted to one another by the laws of harmony and good sense'.³³ In addition, his attitude to the proliferation of printed matter at the *fin de siècle* was patently Malthusian:

In every two years nearly a mile of new shelving will be required to meet the wants of a single library. But, whatever may be the present rate of growth, it is small in comparison with what it is likely to become. The key of the question lies in the hands of the United Kingdom and the United States jointly. In this matter there rests upon these two Powers no small responsibility.³⁴

Such rhetoric should be interpreted, principally, as evidence of Gladstone's attempts to maintain control over his own collecting. There was, for Gladstone, undeniable tension

³¹ 'The Gladstone Papers', *The Times*, 30 May 1930, Newspaper Cuttings Book, St Deiniol's Library Collection, M34.9G/210.

³² 'The Gladstone Papers', *The Times*, 30 May 1930.

³³ Gladstone, 'On Books', pp. 384-5.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 385. Cf. also Ibid., p. 389.

between the 'ardour' and 'inexorable spirit of collection' and the 'considerations springing from the balance-sheet'.³⁵ He endeavoured to be a prudent collector with an eye for a bargain and for the most part succeeded in being so.³⁶ It was often observed by the Press (in later years), when discussing Gladstone's book-collecting and reading habits, that he always insisted on a ten per cent discount for cash on second-hand books.³⁷ His private papers are littered with annotated book catalogues and accounts calculating the cost and value of books. Some of these clearly indicate that he sold off or exchanged books to make way for new ones: for example, in one rough note he added in '11 vols in exchange' to balance his proposed purchases.³⁸ He recorded when he thought himself extravagant: on one occasion in Florence he was 'Again at the Booksellers', flying (for me) rather high'.³⁹ And he wrote at length on the economics of building up a collection:

Book-buyers of the present day have immense advantages in the extended accessibility and cheapness of books...The enormous development of the second-hand book trade and the public spirit of many publishers, have also been greatly in favour of book-buyers. In one respect only they have lost ground, and that is in regard to book-binding.⁴⁰

The practical and rational side to Gladstone's book collecting, then, ensured that he was concerned with what happened to a book once it had been purchased. He revisited the theme at length in his 'On Books' article.

The purchase of a book is commonly supposed to end, even for the most scrupulous customer, with the payment of the bookseller's bill. But this is a mere popular superstition. Such payment is not the last, but the first term in a series of goodly length. If we wish to give to the book a lease of life equal to that of the pages, the first condition is that it should be bound...then...the book must of necessity be put into a bookcase. And the bookcase must be housed. And the house must be kept. And the Library must be dusted, must be arranged, should be catalogued. What a vista of toil, yet not unhappy toil!⁴¹

Purchase is only the beginning of the true collection.⁴² Arrangement, organisation, maintenance and use are of equal value and importance to the bibliophile. It was to these

³⁵ Ibid., p. 388.

³⁶ Cf. e.g. *GD* 28/11/50.

³⁷ 'Mr. Gladstone as a Bookman', p. 6; Mary Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library at 'St. Deiniol's Hawarden', *Nineteenth Century* 59 (June 1906), 944-954, p. 947.

³⁸ Rough Draft of Book Order, GG 1560.

³⁹ *GD* 26/1/88.

⁴⁰ 'The Gladstone Papers', *The Times*, 30 May 1930.

⁴¹ Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 388.

⁴² Cf. Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 235ff.

matters that Gladstone devoted the rest of his paper on book management and to which we now turn.

2 Collecting becomes Collection

2.1 Housing, Organising and Cataloguing

For as long as Gladstone collected books he simultaneously organised them with, what Richard Shannon called, a ‘taxonomic passion for systematising, classifying, ordering, arranging and allocating that was one of the abiding characteristics of both the private and public spheres of his life’.⁴³ It is clear that Gladstone’s advice to book collectors in 1890 mirrored his own practices very closely. Gladstone was always keen to get his books bound as quickly as possible; for example, in Naples in 1850 he ‘Sent the little library I have gathered off for binding which is done here well and cheaply’.⁴⁴ Such precipitateness was not always possible but Gladstone regularly combed his collection ‘for the binder’, shipping off the resulting volumes ‘with all directions’.⁴⁵ Once a book was bound, it ‘must...be put into a bookcase’, wrote Gladstone in 1890, reflecting a belief he had held since childhood that the proper furnishing of his book rooms ought to be prioritised. For, as Mary Drew later recalled:

So human and personal did a book seem to Mr. Gladstone that it gave him real pain to see it carelessly used, or illtreated – laid open on its face, untidily marked, dog’s-eared, thumbled. And in arranging his friends on the shelf, no squeezing or even coaxing was allowed; they must fit in nicely, not wasting space, but in no way uncomfortably housed.⁴⁶

2.1.1 Housing

The earliest diary entry on the subject of housing dates from 10 October 1825, when he recorded ordering ‘another book-case’ for his Eton lodgings. Expenditure of this sort was initially funded within the context of Gladstone’s close and mutually-supportive bibliophilic relationship with his father, which was explored in Chapter One. It is important to note that this relationship continued up until his father’s death. When Gladstone became an MP, Sir John generously provided him with money to purchase specifically-named gentlemanly essentials including books.⁴⁷ For his part, Gladstone simultaneously managed his father’s library arrangements at 6 Carlton House Gardens as

⁴³ Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Peel's Inheritor 1809-1865* (London: Penguin, 1982), p. 10.

⁴⁴ *GD* 24/12/50.

⁴⁵ *GD* 3, 6/3/52. Cf. also *GD* 28/2/52.

⁴⁶ Drew, ‘Mr. Gladstone’s Library’, p. 947.

⁴⁷ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 53.

well as his own. Thus in 1847 he noted ‘Worked much upon the No 6 arrangements & made [a] memorandum with the particulars of the bookcases for Henderson’.⁴⁸ However it is clear that he spent most time and effort in developing the library spaces in his own homes. In 1840 for example, he expressed obvious pride, both in his collection and in his new status as a family man, when ‘*our* first bookcase [was] put up’ at 13 Carlton House Terrace, William and Catherine’s first marital home.⁴⁹

The Gladstones occupied several London homes during their marriage but the death of William’s father in 1851 enforced the most consequential upheaval in the family’s life: a permanent move to Hawarden Castle, one of the most significant moments in the development of Gladstone’s Library.

2.1.2 *Consecrating the Temple of Peace*

Following Thomas Gladstone’s inheritance of Fasque, William (and several thousand books) had to leave it. Hence the bulk of Gladstone’s Library was transferred to Wales and, really for the first time, the majority of his books were brought together in his own principal private residence.

Gladstone was used to spending whole days busied with his book collection,⁵⁰ but the move to Hawarden presented a challenge of librarianship greater than any he had experienced. Gladstone’s study was initially located on the first floor of the Castle and work began in earnest there in October 1854. Once again the priority was erecting ‘bookcases or rather bookholders’ to receive ‘the first fruits of the 5000 vols that are to come here’.⁵¹ Book-sorting and stowing then commenced seriously over Christmas: Gladstone, ‘in a chaos of some 2000’ volumes, enlisted the help of sons Willy and Stephen, until finally, ‘a third bout carried me through most of the work of arranging books...The number I have here must be over 5000’. He then arranged ‘with Bailie [*sic*] for more book-room’ and his ‘evening closed with a short retrospect & exam[inatio]n’.⁵² The work proved both strenuous and exhausting; on the following day Gladstone

⁴⁸ GD 3/6/47.

⁴⁹ My emphasis. GD 28/4/40.

⁵⁰ Cf. e.g. GD 31/5/52, 1/6/52.

⁵¹ GD 3/10/54. G employed David Bailey (member of a Hawarden family of carpenters/builders) for the work. The Baileys were to do similar work for G for the rest of his life.

⁵² GD 26, 28/12/54.

recorded 'Resumed work on my books *more moderately*'.⁵³ He eventually 'finished the whole affair' on 3 January 1855 and 'found them...5185 Vols' in total.

The contents of the 'Temple of Peace', as Gladstone came to call his Library,⁵⁴ were moved again, in the 1860s, to their final location on the ground floor of the Castle's west wing [fig. 3.1]. In August 1864 Gladstone was 'Examining the new rooms: especially with a view to the vast undertaking of moving' for which he spent two months preparing: 'a critical business for the lower room is *run*'.⁵⁵ 'The beginning of moving effects & books from above occupied most of the 19 October. He had '2000 [volumes]...down, & placed in the new "Temple of Peace"' on the 22nd but still faced the formidable task of 'importing all the bookcases from above'.⁵⁶ In its new location Gladstone's Library continued to expand. In 1866, whilst he was in London, Gladstone 'Worked at packing books' to ferry to Hawarden and in 1872 was again 'Unpacking books...in the Temple of Peace'.⁵⁷ Expansion necessitated both more space and more bookcases. In 1869 Gladstone considered the construction of 'a *crypt* under my Library'.⁵⁸ This gothic scheme was never realised but five years later he and Bailey were engaged in 'much busy measurements & arrangements for more stowage of papers & for an addition of 1100 volumes'.⁵⁹ A year later lack of space had become so critical that Gladstone was commandeering space beyond the confines of the Temple of Peace.⁶⁰ Thus on 18 May 1875 he was 'Examining rooms with a view to the planting out of my Library' and three days later was working 'hard on setting up bookcases in the supplemental T[emple of] P[ea]ce], unpacking bookboxes, & placing books'.⁶¹ Mary Drew later reminisced, with 'an affectionately ironic eye'⁶² about the extent to which her father's collecting habit invaded the life and space of the rest of the family:

⁵³ My emphasis. GD 29/12/54.

⁵⁴ The earliest reference to the name is from 1860, cf. GD 27/10/60.

⁵⁵ GD 3/8/64, 17/10/64.

⁵⁶ GD 22, 24/10/64. Cf. also 25/10/64, 3, 5/11/64.

⁵⁷ GD 28/7/66, 10/8/72.

⁵⁸ GD 18/5/69.

⁵⁹ GD 17/4/74.

⁶⁰ Extra pressure was placed upon the Temple of Peace in 1875. Following his resignation from the Liberal leadership and 'retirement' from public life, the remnants of G's London collection (cf. Chapter 4) were shipped to Wales.

⁶¹ GD 18, 21/5/75.

⁶² Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 214.

Quickly the room filled; one by one each piece of extraneous furniture disappeared to make way for low bookcases suited to serve as tables and to hold volumes of abnormal size...They overflowed into the vestibule, they ran along the passage into the billiard-room; this involved the disappearance of the billiard table. Prizes were offered for the discovery of possible new spaces for bookcases.⁶³

This nicely highlights the way in which Gladstone's collecting could veer towards the eccentric or obsessional.

Equally it is clear that there was nothing leisured about the way Gladstone worked in his Library. But such activity did afford him relaxation: 'A snug evening...in the Temple of Peace' and 'Worked on my room to bring it into order, which was tranquillising'.⁶⁴ Stimulation: 'Arranged the remainder of my theology 4toes, to prevent sleep after the ill-omened early dinner!'⁶⁵ Achievement: 'Three good hours...finished in the main the business of arranging my library wh[ic]h is now in better order than for many years'.⁶⁶ And peace: 'Worked on arranging books: after (I guess) 30 hours my library is now in a passable state and I enjoy, in Ruskin's words "the complacency of possession, & the pleasantness of order"'.⁶⁷ But, as is both the joy and frustration of collecting, such complacency did not last. In 1887 Gladstone could be heard exclaiming 'my chaos is beyond all precedent' and two years later things had got so bad that his Library had to be 'sventrato as they say at Naples' – cleaned out or, literally, disembowelled.⁶⁸

2.2 Organisation

As Gladstone made clear in his 1890 article, the successful maintenance of a library and book collection depended on efficient and methodical organisation. Essential to this were the twin challenges of classification and cataloguing.

2.2.1 Classification

The process of classification is, for the Librarian, one of the most imaginative of tasks. Whilst cataloguing focuses on recording the known, classification offers opportunities to create maps of knowledge based on the known but fundamentally personal and poetic as well as practical.⁶⁹ Gladstone certainly sensed the poetics of classification, especially when

⁶³ Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 947.

⁶⁴ GD 30/18/76, 29/12/79.

⁶⁵ GD 16/9/77.

⁶⁶ GD 17/9/77.

⁶⁷ GD 29/8/78.

⁶⁸ GD 30/12/89.

⁶⁹ Cf. Pearce, *On Collecting*, pp. 50-1, 269.

its harmonies were ignored, such 'as they now are in at least one princely mansion of this country, where books, in thousands upon thousands, are jumbled together with no more arrangement than a sack of coals'.⁷⁰ He believed that 'the arrangement of a library ought...in some degree to correspond with and represent the mind of the man who forms it'. And admitted himself 'guilty...of favouritism in classification', being 'sensible that sympathy and its reverse have something to do with determining in what company a book shall stand'. Nonetheless, his approach to classification was also very practical. 'Economy, good arrangement, and accessibility with the smallest possible expenditure of time' were his watchwords regarding classification as well as other aspects of librarianship.⁷¹

The arrangement of material in classes or categories was, for Gladstone, a two-fold exercise. Texts were to be classified both according to their format and their subject matter. Firstly, Gladstone was rigorous in keeping different categories of reading matter separate, for example in 1837 he 'indexed all my Vols of Pamphlets'.⁷² He identified books, pamphlets, letters, newspapers, accounts, original memoranda (by himself and others), abstracts, and manuscript books as all needing different treatment in terms of organisation, preservation and storage.⁷³ The accumulation of pamphlets and papers, the latter frequently relating to his private reading and study as well as to his political work, was especially rapid. In 1834 he wrote 'they grow bulky upon me & henceforward I must adopt a new mode and discriminate'.⁷⁴ However his attempts to maintain order often met with indifferent success: he complained of a 'horrid confusion of papers', in 1836, adding 'what a science it requires to keep them in manageable order!'⁷⁵ And this was not an idle comment. Not long after, when 'labouring to reduce my papers into order', he 'wrote a paper thereon'.⁷⁶ This elaborate memorandum reveals the exquisite lengths to which Gladstone's mania for order extended. It deals principally with the collector's dilemma: what to keep to hand and what to store away. It is equally valuable for showing how Gladstone defined a book. This was anything which had been permanently bound. Thus pamphlets and parliamentary papers could both 'pass into the second state by becoming

⁷⁰ Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 388.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 390.

⁷² *GD* 6/4/37.

⁷³ 'Of Keeping Books and Papers', BL GP Add MS 44727, fol. 256.

⁷⁴ *GD* 1/3/34.

⁷⁵ *GD* 2/2/36. This sorting left G with serious eyestrain, which prevented further reading.

⁷⁶ BL GP Add MS 44727, fols. 256-7.

books'.⁷⁷ 'The book was the least troublesome of all the categories; volumes 'being easily classified and found' and able 'almost to find their own way from tables to shelves'.⁷⁸ The memorandum also suggests what Gladstone's early (and perhaps somewhat idealised) Library might have contained by way of storage compartments and furniture: tables and bookshelves, boxes, compartments, labelled 'bookcase closets divided perpendicularly as well as horizontally & with mobile divisions', portfolios, bundles, pigeon holes and 'niches of box or shelves shut with doors'.⁷⁹

As with his book sorting, Gladstone was constantly occupied with arranging and organising his papers and was forever formulating new ways of keeping control of them. One day in 1868 he wrote 'Spent much of the forenoon in making a list I hope complete of my publications & corrected speeches, and in putting them all together' and in 1875 – 'Resumed moving & arranging papers: I must give to this business, & my library, 2 to 3 hours per diem'.⁸⁰ Gladstone's determination to keep papers and memoranda both secure and separate motivated the planning and construction of the Octagon in the 1880s. Built at the North west corner of the Temple of Peace, and named after a room at Seaforth, this fire (but not *damp*) proof annexe housed all Gladstone's papers until their final dispersal.⁸¹ The construction of a muniment room eased pressure on space in the Temple of Peace but provided Gladstone with yet more work. 'It will seem small in my journal', he wrote in 1888, 'but [it] must take much of my time for many weeks' and as late as 1893 he despaired: 'Worked in the Octagon. But my papers overwhelm me. I am like a little mole, who has cast up an enormous hill'.⁸²

The second and most important aspect of Gladstone's schema of classification was categorisation by subject. Gladstone wrote in 1890:

⁷⁷ BL GP Add MS 44727, fol. 256 verso.

⁷⁸ BL GP Add MS 44727 fol. 256 verso.

⁷⁹ BL GP Add MS 44727 fols 256-7.

⁸⁰ *GD* 15/4/68, 12/8/75.

⁸¹ Cf. *GD* 15, 30/8/87, 1, 6, 29/10/87, 8, 21/11/87, 16/12/87, 24/5/88, 1, 4/6/88, 7, 10-11/8/88, 17-18/9/88, 1/5/89, 15/8/89, 9/11/89, 6, 10, 12, 15-16/9/90. John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, New edn, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1905), II, pp. 134-6. Williamson, *Non-Political Biography*, p. 87.

⁸² *GD* 13/8/88, 23/10/93.

In a private library...books...ought to be assorted and distributed according to subject...It is an immense advantage to bring the eye in aid of the mind; to see within a limited compass all the works that are accessible, in a given library, on a given subject; and to have the power of dealing with them collectively at a given spot, instead of hunting them up through an entire accumulation.⁸³

The earliest surviving document relating to the classification scheme of the Library at Hawarden Castle and its layout, is an undated manuscript in the Glynne-Gladstone Collection. Its title 'Temporary Arrangement of Library at Hawarden' and the copperplate hand suggest reference to the main library at the Castle at a time antedating Gladstone's residence.⁸⁴ However, the lettering used for the bookcase designations, which is the same as Gladstone used in his book catalogues, and the predominance of divinity mean his involvement and ownership cannot be conclusively ruled out. No later classification and layout scheme survives for the Temple of Peace. And, whilst Gladstone's study still contains many of his own books, the bulk removal to St Deiniol's in the 1880s and the posthumous introduction of other volumes by Henry Gladstone, make it almost impossible to deduce with any accuracy the original classificatory layout of the Temple of Peace.

At present, shelves A-F contain Gladstonian writings, biography and English Literature; shelves G-O theology; Q-S literature; S-BB history; CC-JJ Classics and Foreign literature. The free-standing shelves contain over- and undersized books on various subjects. This certainly reflects Gladstone's attitude 'that distribution of subjects ought in some degree to be controlled by sizes'.⁸⁵ But again reference to 1890 paper is required to establish Gladstone's basic approach to subject classification. 'Classification', he wrote, is a question 'more easy to open than to close'. He went on to elaborate on the difficulties of achieving 'uniformity' in the task:

⁸³ Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 389.

⁸⁴ 'Notes on the Arrangement of Books in the Library at Hawarden Castle, n.d., [early 19th c.]', GG 2206.

⁸⁵ Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 389.

I fear that arrangement, to be good, must be troublesome. Subjects are traversed by promiscuous assemblages of 'works,' both by sizes; and all by languages. On the whole I conclude as follows. The mechanical perfection of a library requires an alphabetical catalogue of the whole. But under the shadow of this catalogue let there be as many living integers as possible, for every well-chosen subdivision is a living integer and makes the library more and more an organism. Among others I plead for individual men as centres of subdivision: not only for Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, but for Johnson, Scott and Burns, and whatever represents a large and manifold humanity.⁸⁶

For Gladstone then, the catalogue was the central organising component of any library and its accurate compilation an essential task.

2.2.2 *Cataloguing*

The first diary references to Gladstone's cataloguing of his books occur in 1826. Gladstone, at Seaforth for the school holidays, occupied himself with assiduous reading punctuated, among other things, by errands for his parents, sketching and archery. On 5 September, perhaps seeking relief from worry about the latest illness of his sister Anne, Gladstone 'wrote [a] catalogue of books'. This is unlikely to have been the first such project. His letter to Thomas seven years before implied he had long been interested in cataloguing and his elaborated comment on Saturday 9 September 1826, 'Wrote Catalogue of books, alphabetical as I find no other way answers', is indicative of much previous experience. The following year, Gladstone, again at Seaforth, 'Made some additions to my book Catalogue'.⁸⁷

Gladstone's most sustained attempt to catalogue his Library began in 1845. William and Catherine were in London awaiting the birth of their second daughter.⁸⁸ On Saturday 26 July, Catherine went into labour. Gladstone, unable to concentrate on his usual regime, occupied himself firstly by 'sorting pamphlets' and then, 'recommenced a catalogue of my books', which he admitted was 'a formidable undertaking, but one that I can carry on when not enough settled for steady work'.⁸⁹ Gladstone's reaction to the birth (which occurred at 2.30am the following morning) was joy mixed with concern. 'The gift is great so is the responsibility; is it now enough if ever there is to be a release from the toils that now enclose?'⁹⁰ Gladstone continued the cataloguing project during the succeeding days,

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 390-1.

⁸⁷ *GD* 19/12/27.

⁸⁸ Catherine Jessy, d. 1850.

⁸⁹ *GD* 26/7/45.

⁹⁰ *GD* 27/7/45.

amidst lingering concerns about Catherine's health.⁹¹ His recourse to this activity, both in 1826 and 1845, strongly supports Crosby's thesis that 'arranging an extensive collection of books' importantly functioned as one of Gladstone's 'diverse means of coping' with and 'relieving stress'.⁹²

Gladstone's 1845 catalogue is particularly important by virtue of its survival. Divided into three sections headed 'Theology, Ecclesiastical History and Biography', 'Secular Literature; Division I; English Language', and 'Secular Literature, Division II; Foreign Languages, including Classics', it provides a snapshot of the core of Gladstone's early collection.⁹³ He recorded he 'Finished the Theological part of my Catalogue' (a clear priority) on 1 August 1845, transferring to the 'Sec[ular] Dept.' in subsequent days.⁹⁴ After two week's consistent attention, he 'Entered Part III' on 9 August and finally 'Finished my Catalogue' on 12 August 1845; it had taken him eighteen days. A few days later he recorded yet more 'bookbuying' and work 'on books'.⁹⁵ It is clear both from the surviving catalogue and Gladstone's Diary that he continued to make additions to it. Further entries were made on its left-hand pages and his Diary for 1847 recorded a further spate of cataloguing, again whilst in London.⁹⁶

In August 1865 Gladstone again took to the cataloguing task. On 16th he 'Began [a] catalogue of my Bibliotheca Homerica – after arranging it', an undertaking which he completed two days later.⁹⁷ He then 'Worked 2 or 3 hours on Catalogues which I am attempting of some minor branches of my Library'.⁹⁸ The longest of these, entitled 'Catalogi Στοιχεῖα quaedam', also survives at Hawarden Castle.⁹⁹ Gladstone's 'minor branches' included privately printed books,¹⁰⁰ incunabula, aldine books, bibliographical works, dictionaries and books of reference,¹⁰¹ grammars, ethnology and ethnological

⁹¹ GD 28/7/45ff.

⁹² Travis L. Crosby, *The Two Mr Gladstones: A Study in Psychology and History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 11.

⁹³ The catalogue remains, with 1865 addenda, in the possession of Sir William Gladstone at Hawarden Castle. I am grateful to him for its loan during the writing of this thesis. Currently only a photocopy of the 1865 section is in GG.

⁹⁴ GD 1/8/45, 4/8/45.

⁹⁵ GD 14/8/45; 16/8/45.

⁹⁶ GD 7/3/49ff.

⁹⁷ GD 18/8/65.

⁹⁸ GD 22/8/65.

⁹⁹ 'Certain elementary principles/basics of a/the catalogue'. A photocopy can be seen at GG 1471.

¹⁰⁰ GD 23/8/65.

¹⁰¹ GD 24/8/65.

philology, works relating to universities and public schools, works connected with Shakespeare (a sizeable collection),¹⁰² epitaphs and county histories.

Thus Gladstone's Library was housed, organised and catalogued (at least to some basic level of satisfaction). All that remained was for the room and its collection to be used. The bulk of diary references so far quoted have represented Gladstone working on the organisation of his library; few have actually shown him reading, studying or working within it. As the Introduction made clear, the aim of this project is not to reconstruct Gladstone's collection (hence the relatively small space given to description of the catalogues) but, in as broad and imaginative way as possible, to assess its significance. How did he make use of this Temple of Peace that he had created for himself? What sort of a room had he created? And who else was permitted access to it and for what reasons? The next section seeks to offer answers to these and other questions, based on diary and artifactual evidence as well as in-depth analysis of surviving borrowing registers.

3 The Temple of Peace

3.1 Inside the Temple

3.1.1 *Layout*

The interior of Gladstone's Temple of Peace has been preserved very much as he left it [figs 3.2, 3.3].¹⁰³ Not only a repository for Gladstone's books, it is also home to a collection of objets d'art and other furnishings with independent as well as complementary significance. The apartment is almost completely lined with bust and plaster relief-topped bookcases, many of which jut out into the central space. There are free-standing cupboards and bookcases occupying the centre of the room. Towards the west end are two desks; another rests against the east wall. Every available space is covered with books, accoutrements and ornaments – it is difficult to imagine how this, relatively small, room ever contained another 32,000 books and Gladstone's papers.

Literary scholar James Raven described the interior of a typical library at the height of eighteenth-century bibliomania, 'stocked with chairs and busts and books', as 'a perfect blend of comfort, civilisation and choice taste'.¹⁰⁴ On the surface, Gladstone's Temple of

¹⁰² GD 18/10/70. This separate pamphlet survives in the Temple of Peace.

¹⁰³ Whilst the following discussion is based on a study of the present layout (closely compared with contemporary photographs and descriptions of G's Temple of Peace), it is recognised that changes to the study will have occurred over the past 100 years.

¹⁰⁴ Raven, 'From Promotion to Proscription', p. 188.

Peace was a typical gentleman's library. Busts, of which the Library has a good number, were tremendously popular. Library manuals consistently recommended them as bookcase decorations and those of political and social celebrities were very common.¹⁰⁵ Their prominence in the decoration scheme at Fasque has already been noted and the busts that adorn the Temple of Peace's bookcases likewise form a pantheon of scholars and politicians, ancient and modern, including Canning, Wellington, Dante, Homer and Socrates. However a particularly striking divergence (apparently both from the norm and certainly from the Fasque scheme) is the prominence of close friends, contemporaries and family members in the group. These included the fifth Duke of Newcastle and Charles Canning. Gladstone's father is placed between Wellington and Canning senior, and his eldest son Willy stands close by. A florid Earl of Beaconsfield (moulded in terracotta by Moynihan), keeping an ever-vigilant watch over Gladstone's political desk, is by far the most surprising personage in this category [fig. 3.4].¹⁰⁶ Women are also well represented. As well as mythological figures like Athena, Gladstone's wife and eldest daughter Agnes, Queen Victoria, Charlotte Stuart (wife of Charles Canning) and Gladstone's confidante, Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland, are included.¹⁰⁷ Unlike the busts at Fasque – clearly a matching set – this is a very personal collection.

As Gladstone knew and articulated, the collection and arrangement of a library was an opportunity to acknowledge a particular heritage and follow a distinct plan. 'Books are the voices of the dead', he wrote. 'They are a main instrument of communion with the vast human procession of the other world. They are the allies of the thoughts of man'.¹⁰⁸ A library was the repository of the knowledge and civilisation Gladstone wished to see disseminated throughout society; 'A shrine requiring the recognition and appreciation of a particular tradition and visual vocabulary'.¹⁰⁹ The Temple of Peace's visual vocabulary pays homage to established conventions in library decoration and includes characteristic multiple references to classical civilisation and the early Italian renaissance centred on Dante (according to Gladstone 'unquestionably master of all the knowledge that was

¹⁰⁵ Cf. P. S. Morrish, 'Domestic Libraries: Victorian and Edwardian Ideas and Practice', *Library History* 10 (1994), 27-44; David Piper, *The English Face*, ed. by M. Rogers (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1978), p. 187.

¹⁰⁶ Supplementary information on the busts in the Temple of Peace can be found in Bryan Keith-Lucas and Henry Neville Lord Gladstone of Hawarden, *The Gladstone-Glynne Collection: A Catalogue of the Oil-Paintings, Water-Colours, Sculptures and Miniatures and a Supplementary List of Prints and Drawings at Hawarden Castle* (Hawarden: Hawarden Castle, 1934).

¹⁰⁷ There is one female figure in the Fasque bust collection.

¹⁰⁸ Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 386.

¹⁰⁹ Raven, 'From Promotion to Proscription', pp. 194-5.

within the compass of his age').¹¹⁰ However the scheme is dominated by personal references; in a sense even the prominence of Homer and Dante represents Gladstone's 'favouritism' at work rather than a more generalised representation of inherited knowledge. The politicians included are ones Gladstone knew and family members almost outnumber them. Gladstone was here continuing, in the layout, arrangement and decoration of his own Library, to interpret ideas about knowledge, inheritance and identity through the lens of familial and personal experience, practices that were revealed at work in Chapters One and Two. In other words, as Scott had done, Gladstone took history and made it personal. If Fasque Library is compared with the Temple of Peace further evidence emerges of how much it came to represent Gladstone's personalised vision. In the Scottish library, the furniture is more fashionable and elegant. The bookcases, which all lie against the wall, comprise shelves (lit by scalloped lamps) and base cupboards (the normal arrangement recommended by manuals and found in practice).¹¹¹ The two desks are elegantly shaped and decorated and there are a number of comfortable places in which to sit. In contrast, Gladstone's study contains one chair unconnected with a desk and the latter are sturdy, square and sacrifice grace for storage space.¹¹² The bookshelves in Hawarden are largely undecorated and protrude unaesthetically. Their plainness and design reflected deliberate decisions by Gladstone. In 1890 he wrote:

It has been a fashion to make bookcases highly ornamental. Now books want for and in themselves no ornament at all. They are themselves the ornament...The man, who looks for society in his books, will readily perceive that, in proportion as the face of his bookcase is occupied by ornament, he loses that society; and conversely, the more that face approximates to a sheet of book-backs, the more of that society he will enjoy.¹¹³

This was a direct repudiation not only of current fashionable trends but also of the arrangements at Fasque and Hawarden Castle, whose main Library contains highly ornate shelving and was clearly designed first and foremost to impress. Gladstone's furnishing of the Temple of Peace was vastly more economic than he had undertaken for his various London residences, implying a less pressing need to conform to fashion or to impress visitors by show.¹¹⁴ For his buttress-style bookcases, which were constructed by the local

¹¹⁰ Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 387.

¹¹¹ Cf. Morrish, 'Domestic Libraries', pp. 29-30, 35, 37, 40-1.

¹¹² Up until recently the room contained a very battered chaise longue, which featured in one of Sydney Prior Hall's portraits of Gladstone (cf. Chapter 5).

¹¹³ Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 391. Note Thomas Horne's declaration that that best ornament to a library was the orderly disposition of its books in *Introduction to the Study of Bibliography* (1814). Morrish, 'Domestic Libraries', p. 29.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 393.

carpenter, Gladstone drew, not on the domestic library tradition, but on the academic. He cited a 'great example of it...in the noble library of Trinity College, Cambridge'.¹¹⁵ This model Gladstone adapted with the inclusion of 'an end-piece...that is a shallow and extremely light adhering bookcase...which both increases the accommodation, and makes one short side as well as the two long ones...present simply a face of books'.¹¹⁶ However, the formality and seriousness of this tradition was undermined by the family's practice of carving the heights of its members into the wood of the bookcases. Furthermore, Gladstone's insistence on fixed shelving, which flew in the face of the bulk of contemporary bibliographical advice, was very much a statement of personal opposition to the gentlemanly tradition. In 1890 he reiterated several times that for this arrangement to be successful, it 'requires that each person owning and arranging a library should have a pretty accurate general knowledge of the sizes of his books'. This statement clearly disassociated Gladstone and his Library from those moneyed bibliomaniacs who did not know, or use the books they collected.¹¹⁷

All this suggests that Gladstone's Temple of Peace was designed to function in quite a different way from the gentleman's library that privileged appearance over content; the public image over private use. However, the difficulties of separating the private and public spheres, however desirable in theory, were all too real (as we shall see in Chapter Four). Even though Gladstone sought to keep them physically separate by the maintenance of separate 'literary' and 'political' desks in his Library, domestic and familial activities necessarily continued simultaneously with literary and political work within the one space, which questions any assumption about the Library's privacy.¹¹⁸ And furthermore, as Sherman makes clear, the 'interface between library and world, self and society, reading and politics, is complicated and blurred'.¹¹⁹

3.1.2 *Using the Temple: Private or Public acts?*

It goes without saying that the principal user of the Temple of Peace was Gladstone himself; the bulk of the texts he recorded reading were undoubtedly in his collection. In addition, the majority of diary entries showing him at work in his study suggest he was

¹¹⁵ Designed by Wren. Ibid., p. 391.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 392.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Cf. Ibid., p. 394 for G's reiteration of the point.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Sherman, 'The Place of Reading', p. 69; Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 234.

¹¹⁹ Sherman, 'The Place of Reading', pp. 74, 75.

working alone. This image of separateness is one encouraged by Mary Drew's later description of the Temple of Peace:

As a kind of pledge of sanctity, the 'Temple of Peace' was the name chosen for the room set apart for his books. Conversation in the ordinary sense of the word – though many an important consultation and interview took place there – was strictly prohibited, but members of the family, or friends staying in the house, were at liberty to make use of the room for purposes of study or reading, and so absorbed was its owner that he was usually quite unaware of their presence.¹²⁰

Mary suggests her father allowed others to enter his private space but denied their presence, or certainly resisted their influence. However his relationship with visitors was not quite this one-sided. Although Gladstone clearly lacked a conventional desire to exhibit a grand or ornate library, and could adopt the rhetoric and behaviour of the reclusive scholar,¹²¹ the desire to show off his treasured book collection and impress those of a like mind was strong. Thus he recorded in 1860 that 'The Company visited the "temple of peace"...& inspected my Library'. (This is the first recorded use of the name, and note, in a *public* context). The following year his friend 'Sir J[ames] L[acaita] paid a Bibliographical visit to me in the Temple of Peace: & some good things were discovered'.¹²² He was also willing to give over his Library, when necessary, for practical domestic use. Thus in 1874 he recorded 'Tidying room: which tonight officiates as drawing-room'.¹²³

3.1.3 *Borrowing and Lending*

The most striking evidence of the public character of Gladstone's private Library is offered by two borrowing registers that survive in Hawarden Castle. Together they cover the years 1860 to 1896, from the institution of the 'Temple of Peace' to the years when Gladstone himself was unable to read. This chronological span, and the fact that very few entries were made in the second register after 1894, immediately indicate that Gladstone required and maintained a powerful level of control over the borrowing in his Library (or at least the proper recording of it) whilst ever physically capable of doing so. The fact that Gladstone instituted borrowing registers at all is in all ways remarkable and poses questions about whom he encouraged and permitted to use his Library. Domestic

¹²⁰ Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 946. Such self-isolating behaviour was also described in Williamson, *Non-Political Biography*, pp. 70-1.

¹²¹ For further discussion of this cf. Chapters 4 & 5.

¹²² GD 27/10/60, 28/9/61.

¹²³ GD 8/12/74. Note his need to make the room *publicly* presentable.

librarians were advised to provide means by which to monitor borrowing, for example the anonymous *Practical Economy* (2nd edn, 1822) suggested tickets be left on shelves in place of consulted or borrowed volumes.¹²⁴ But the Temple of Peace scheme bespoke a far higher level of surveillance.

The first register, with a light-coloured hardback cover, spans the years 1860-69. It is inscribed on the front, in Gladstone's hand: 'Register of Books taken out from W. E. G's Library'. On the first page, Gladstone established the following categories for borrowers: 'Name of Person', 'Date of taking out', 'Name of Work' and (most importantly) 'Date of return'. The second volume (1870-1896) is also hard-backed. Apparently untitled for many years, Gladstone wrote on the front in 1894, clearly in some frustration, 'NB All entries to be made in Ink'. This may have been provoked by borrowers ignoring long-standing instructions, but it seems more likely that Gladstone, who was losing his sight, was unable to read entries made in pencil by this date. If this is the correct interpretation, it indicates Gladstone was used to making regular checks on borrowing right up until his last years.

Analysis shows that between 1860 and 1896, 201 individuals borrowed books from the Temple of Peace. They made 1,992 separate entries and borrowed 2,306 volumes with an average rate of between 60-70 volumes per year.¹²⁵ Out of the 201 individual borrowers, 52 remain so far unidentified by sex and 43 by category (either family/household, friends/colleagues or neighbours). The largest group of users was, as might be expected, drawn from Gladstone's family and household (59/201). In that grouping Gladstone's children were the heaviest borrowers. This supplements other evidence of Gladstone's keenness to educate his children and encourage in them the love of books. Contemporaries commented on Gladstone's status within the family as 'leader and *teacher* and loved one'.¹²⁶ And not only does his Diary record him acting as tutor to them when small, but also welcoming them into his Library as adults. Thus the 'snug evening' he enjoyed in the study in 1876 was one shared by 'M[ary] and H[elen]'.¹²⁷ Mary Drew was by far the Library's most frequent borrower with 252 separate entries, 13 per cent of total

¹²⁴ Morrish, 'Domestic Libraries', p. 29.

¹²⁵ These figures remain approximate. Whilst every effort has been made to eliminate duplicate names, in a few cases this has not been possible. The 'individuals' figure also includes borrowings for the 'schoolroom'. Wherever possible separate volumes have been counted, but these were not always consistently listed by borrowers. It must be understood that some entries are illegible.

¹²⁶ My emphasis. Williamson, *Non-Political Biography*, pp. 132-3.

¹²⁷ GD 30/8/76. Cf. e.g. GD 12/12/44, 23/1/47, 18/12/49 for G as tutor.

borrowings.¹²⁸ This is unsurprising. She was known to contemporaries as ‘an alert reader’ and assistant to her father in his ‘literary labours’ and she herself clearly displayed her passion both for books and for her father’s Library, both privately and in public.¹²⁹ She shared Gladstone’s opinion that books were important household possessions being, for example, critical of Ferdinand de Rothschild’s Waddesdon Manor, in which she found herself ‘much oppressed with the extreme gorgeousness and luxury’, principally because ‘there is not a book in the house save 20 improper French novels’.¹³⁰ Other significant family borrowers were Catherine Gladstone’s nephews and nieces from both the Lyttelton and Glynne families. As Gladstone’s children, nephews and nieces married, they in turn introduced their husbands and children to the borrowing habit, especially in the cases of Agnes Gladstone and Lavinia Lyttelton.

The family/household category is closely followed by those deemed to be neighbours of the Gladstones (57/201), many of whom borrowed as families. Thus we have William Jacobson (1803-1884), bishop of Chester and his family, the Burlinghams (family of a Hawarden physician) and the Wades. Visiting friends and colleagues were not far behind (42/201) but, as usually only visiting for short periods, they generally borrowed fewer books.

It is thus already clear that the Temple of Peace played a significant role as a lending library in a sphere that extended well beyond the private and familial. However, some of the most interesting and startling insights offered by this evidence are on the subject of the gender and class character of Gladstone’s Library.

3.1.4 *Gentlemanly Space? The Influence of Class and Gender on Gladstone’s Library*

Kate Flint has described the Library and the bedroom as the most contested areas in the Victorian and Edwardian house. She quoted Robert Kerr’s description of the Library as

Primarily a sort of morning-room for gentlemen rather than anything else. Their correspondence is done there, their reading, and, in some measure, their lounging...the Billiard-room...is not unfrequently attached to it. At the same time the ladies are not exactly excluded.

¹²⁸ Of the other children Agnes made 80 entries, William 89, Helen 138, Henry 36, Herbert 76, Stephen 25, which, with Mary’s total, accounts for 35 per cent of the total.

¹²⁹ Williamson, *Non-Political Biography*, p. 24. Cf. Susan K. Harris, *The Cultural Work of the Late Nineteenth-Century Hostess: Annie Adams Fields and Mary Gladstone Drew* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), esp. Ch. 4.

¹³⁰ Lucy Masterman, ed., *Mary Gladstone (Mrs. Drew) Her Diaries and Letters* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1930), p. 361.

As Flint rightly observed, ‘Kerr’s grudging vocabulary suggest that they are not exactly welcome, either’.¹³¹ Such representation of the Library as an overwhelmingly male preserve was commonplace within the advice literature of the period when Gladstone was establishing and using his Library. Books like Charles Eastlake’s *Hints on Household Taste* (1869) and Mary Haweis’ *The Art of Decoration* (1889) both engaged with and reinforced long-established ideas about the gendering of household space.¹³² And Kerr made the ideal gender-character of the Library even more explicit. He described how “‘for a man of learning”, one must either constitute the library itself as a study, or add one, with a secluded position, no door of intercommunication with any other room “(except possibly the Gentleman’s-room)”, so that it becomes “now essentially a private retreat”’.¹³³ In his analysis of the Victorian country house, Mark Girouard followed such contemporary distinctions: ‘The mistress of the house had her boudoir to work in’ and ‘the master, his study or business room. The drawing room (or rooms) was considered the ladies’ territory, but the gentlemen were allowed in; *the opposite was the case with the library*’.¹³⁴ This goes beyond even Kerr’s description and clearly overgeneralises. Not only were women allowed into the Temple of Peace, at least one possessed a part of it: the third desk in the study was the preserve of Catherine Gladstone. Girouard went on to illustrate the prevalence of a clear ‘male preserve’ in the Victorian country house, consisting of consecutive ground floor rooms: library, billiard room, gentleman’s business room, lavatories, smoking and gun rooms etc. But whereas Girouard asserted that the billiard room was ‘the nucleus’ of the male domain, it has already been shown that, at Hawarden Castle, the development of the study was significantly privileged over that of the billiard room, which lost its table and hence its function.¹³⁵

Evidence from the Temple of Peace borrowing registers shows clearly how integral women were to the life of the Library and how important such a resource was to them. Of the borrowers whose sex we can identify, 82 were women compared to 65 men. Six out of the top ten borrowers were women and there were more female borrowers than

¹³¹ Robert Kerr, *The Gentleman’s House; or How to Plan English Residences, from the Parsonage to the Palace* (3rd edn, 1871), p. 116 quoted in Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 103.

¹³² Colin Cunningham, ‘Gender and Design in the Victorian Period’, in *Gender and Art*, ed. by G. Perry, Art and Its Histories (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 175-192, p. 191.

¹³³ Quoted in Flint, *The Woman Reader*, p. 103.

¹³⁴ My emphasis. Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, Revised and Enlarged edn (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 28-9. Cf. also Morrish, ‘Domestic Libraries’, pp. 40-1.

¹³⁵ Girouard, *Victorian Country House*, p. 35. Cf. Ciro’s evidence for extensive female use of country house libraries in the nineteenth century. Ciro, ‘Country House Libraries’, p. 91ff.

male in the family/household and neighbour categories.¹³⁶ Where members of the same family borrowed, the women frequently borrowed more. Two good example are, firstly, the Jacobsons. Both wife Eleanor (18 entries) and daughter Katherine (a massive 59 entries) outborrowed the Bishop (14 entries). Secondly, Miss Caroline Smith of Hawarden Rectory outborrowed the Revd E. Smith almost ten to one. Although the largest female borrowers were of an equivalent class to Gladstone there was a significant number of lower class women who regularly borrowed from the Library. From amongst the household, Miss W. R. Syfret, the governess, (29 entries),¹³⁷ Miss Auguste Schlüter, Catherine Gladstone's maid, (16 entries) and Lucy Phillimore, Gladstone's nurse, (5 entries) regularly borrowed books. From the village Mary Burnett (wife of the Hawarden Land Agent) appears 20 times and Elizabeth Potter, wife of a local farmer, twice. Members of the family also frequently took out books on the behalf of others. Many of these 'others' were women (like Mrs Bagshawe, Mrs Chamberlain and Mrs Isaac) and, one may surmise, were locals who were ill, elderly or otherwise incapacitated. They may even have been rescue cases.

The reasons behind women's use of the Temple of Peace are likely to have varied significantly between individuals and classes. One obvious suggestion, particularly for Gladstone's daughters, was the lack of public educational facilities. Beyond the often-limited instruction offered by governesses or private tutors, educational opportunities for upper-class girls were uncertain. The wealth of potential knowledge offered by a well-stocked library must have been irresistible to intelligent and diligent women like Mary and Helen Gladstone. However, even with such a resource, women could not always make the best use of it. Not only had families and individuals to resist contemporary gendered assumptions about the library space, but about reading itself. Gendered debates about reading simmered throughout the nineteenth century and characterisations of women's reading were often derogatory. As Kate Flint explains, 'to read actively, rather than to absorb sentiment passively like a sponge, was popularly considered, in the 1840s, to be adopting a masculine rather than a feminine style of reading'. And in 1880, W. H. Davenport Adams pronounced 'it is said that a...woman may be known by the

¹³⁶ In only one category (friends/colleagues) do men outnumber women (26:14 [2 unknown]). Considering the fact almost all G's colleagues were men, this is not surprising.

¹³⁷ These were her personal borrowings; those she took out for the schoolroom are listed under that designation.

company...she keeps; a truer index to character is the books' she reads.¹³⁸ However Mary and her sisters were lucky. Not only did they have unlimited access to their father's Library, they also received his guidance. Lucy Masterman suggested that Gladstone, worried that Mary's reading was too diffuse, more emotional than intellectual, 'tried to press for a male University standard of study'.¹³⁹

Having shown conclusively that women were not only allowed but positively encouraged to use Gladstone's Library and that they enthusiastically made use of its resources, it remains to discuss an important aspect of the Library's use which was almost exclusively male. At least 23 of the total number of individual borrowers (over 10 per cent) were clergy and encompassed the entire Anglican hierarchy from Bishops to curates.¹⁴⁰ There were a substantial number of clergy amongst Gladstone's close family and household who also borrowed from his Library: his son Stephen, brother-in-law Henry, two sons-in-law, three Lytteltons, his chaplain H. G. Henderson and, perhaps most significant of all, Lavinia Lyttelton's husband Edward Stuart Talbot. Talbot, who will feature prominently in Chapters Six and Seven, became the most prolific male borrower from the Temple of Peace (102 entries). Local clergy were also well represented in the registers. For example, the Revd Edward Austin (1824-1870), priest at nearby Broughton, made 18 entries; Edward Bickersteth Ottley (1853-1910) of Hawarden (39 entries); Hawarden curates the Revds G. Hockley and William West are also listed. Clergy wives and families borrowed too, but it is clear from other supporting evidence that clergymen, especially local incumbents and curates, enjoyed privileged access both to the Temple of Peace and to its owner. Some years after Gladstone's death, the Revd J. Drew Roberts (who does not appear in the registers; he was in Hawarden in 1896) described this relationship in *T. P.'s & Cassell's Weekly*.

¹³⁸ Kate Flint, 'Women, Men and the Reading of *Vanity Fair*', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 246-262, pp. 247, 251. W. H. Davenport Adams, *Women's Work and Worth* (London, 1880), pp. 140-1 quoted in Flint, '*Vanity Fair*', p. 253.

¹³⁹ Masterman, ed., *Mary Gladstone*, p. 12 [Introduction to 1864 section].

¹⁴⁰ It is likely all were Anglicans. Four bishops borrowed.

At Hawarden, when I was a young curate, in 1896, both Gladstone and Mrs. Gladstone were extraordinarily kind to me and my colleagues...We curates at Hawarden were not expected to speak of politics at the Castle; but we could not be wrong in talking theology. I well remember how one of us presumed to know the facts about some question concerned with the Trent Council, and an argument began with Gladstone, who disagreed. Gladstone rushed the young man out of the room and into his 'Temple of Peace,' where he kept his 30,000 books. They returned together, roaring with laughter, after looking up the authorities. It appeared that the curate was right and Gladstone wrong; by no means a usual conclusion to a disagreement.¹⁴¹

Although this story relates to the year in which recorded borrowing ceased from the Temple of Peace, it usefully illustrates Gladstone sharing his resources with others and wonderfully depicts the sort of male bonding in which he clearly engaged with clergy-friends and neighbours. The fact that the Temple of Peace consistently operated as an important educational resource for clergy during these years is important new information in itself. However, as Chapter Seven will demonstrate, awareness of such a function is fundamental to a proper and revised understanding of the motivation for Gladstone's foundation of St Deiniol's Library.

All the clergy who borrowed books from Gladstone's Library would have been drawn from a class roughly equivalent to Gladstone's own. Passing reference has been made to individuals from lower classes, both within Gladstone's household and outside, borrowing books from the Temple of Peace and before proceeding further it is important to say more about them.

As Chapter One showed Gladstone and his mother set up a separate, servants' library at Seaforth, bought exclusively from S.P.C.K. and clearly intended to be didactic. Gladstone established a similar collection in his own first household. On 24 April 1840 he once again went to 'S.P.C.K. to choose [a] servants' Library'. He clearly took his time over it; the next entry on the subject dates from over a year later when he 'made inventory of & arranged the little library for the servants: about 60 vols'.¹⁴² The establishment of a separate household library accorded with other efforts Gladstone made to monitor and control the morality of his servants. He regularly read religious texts (often of his own composition) with and to the servants.¹⁴³ He 'wrote servants' rules' and frequently noted

¹⁴¹ Revd J. Drew Roberts, 'Gladstone and His Curates: Young Preachers' Terrifying Ordeals', *T. P.'s & Cassell's Weekly* ([n.d.; post 1898]), p. 474, in GG 1561.

¹⁴² GD 24/4/40, 23/5/40.

¹⁴³ Cf. e.g. 17/4/40, 3/5/40, 28/2/41.

with sadness when premarital sex or unbelief was practised in his household.¹⁴⁴ With regard to an instance of the latter, he wrote (at Hawarden) in 1857 ‘We conversed on the case of T. Turner [a servant]: it appearing that one of the servants in the house is an unbeliever: Eli, the reading youth’.¹⁴⁵ Jonathan Rose quoted a similar example (of an employer expressing surprise at a servant’s ability and propensity for reading). He also observed that the desire to control servants’ reading was widespread and long-lasting. ‘As late as 1935’, he wrote ‘some employers were still trying to control their servants’ reading – for example, banning newspapers with the wrong political slant’ but went on to add: ‘This was never a universal practice: one could produce many counterexamples of employers who gave servants theater tickets and allowed them the run of their libraries’.¹⁴⁶ Gladstone’s description of Eli as ‘the reading youth’ may be read in several different ways, not all negative. Although he clearly sought to control the morality and religious conduct of his household through reading, there is no evidence that Gladstone objected to his servants improving themselves (for example he himself taught one French in 1834).¹⁴⁷ There is no surviving sign of a separate servants’ library in later years but the evidence of the Temple of Peace borrowing registers shows that servants were allowed to borrow freely (not just religious works) from amongst Gladstone’s own books from 1860 onwards. Thus F. Hampton (presumably a relative of William Hampton the butler) borrowed *Pickwick Papers* on 26 October 1861; a governess, Miss Scott, borrowed *The Female Jesuit*, *Life among the Madocs* and *Kidnapped* and nurse Lucy Phillimore took out *Ernestine*, *History of St James’ Square*, *Robert Frampton* as well as *Footprints of the Apostles*. This suggests either that Gladstone’s attitude to his servants’ reading relaxed considerably over the years, or indicates that the morality monitoring we see displayed in the Diary was only one aspect of a multifarious approach to household management.

Ample evidence survives as to Gladstone’s encouragement of learning and ‘mental culture’ amongst Hawarden residents, but most of it is related to his support of separate institutions such as the Hawarden Institute.¹⁴⁸ Evidence from the Temple of Peace registers adds substantially to this picture (despite obvious difficulties of identification) by showing that some ordinary local residents were borrowers in their own right. Some

¹⁴⁴ GD 14, 17/2/40, 28/3/43. Cf. re. premarital sex GD 31/8/47.

¹⁴⁵ GD 14/11/57.

¹⁴⁶ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 25 and n.

¹⁴⁷ GD 7/11/34ff.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. A. Geoffrey Veysey, *The History of Hawarden Institute* (Hawarden: Clwyd Record Office, 1993).

clearly became so after the family had borrowed for them. For example, after Catherine Gladstone borrowed 'Hirell' in '3 vols' for a Mrs Chamberlain in December 1872, she signed out a further six books herself. Others were apparently fully independent borrowers like Elizabeth Potter and Samuel Mason of Hawarden. The implications of Gladstone's decision to open his Library in this way are profound. On the one hand they add credibility to some later and popular anecdotes about Gladstone's attitudes to working people, which are frequently now dismissed as hyperbolic fruits of the Gladstone 'myth'. The following is a particularly good bibliographic example:

Hence he prayed, with the prodigal son brought to him by his sorrowing mother, and in his own "Temple of Peace", saw him restored, and witnessed him afterwards reformed. He visited the cross street sweeper, who told to the vicar concerned and interested, that Mr Gladstone had been to see him, and had read a bit of Bible to him, and afterwards had knelt down and prayed with him.¹⁴⁹

In addition, as Chapter Seven shows, it also adds a further dimension to our understanding of St Deiniol's Library, which was clearly not designed for use by the village residents.

So far this investigation has traced the development and organisation of the Temple of Peace from its beginnings. The method and meaning of Gladstone's collecting has been explored and some of the diverse ways in which he used his collection and allowed others to do so have been investigated. As an introduction to the final part of this chapter, we will examine the only other person who maintained a permanent presence in the Temple of Peace, Catherine Gladstone, and her relationship with Gladstone's reading and Library. Pearce asserts that marital relationships have an important influence on collectors and their collecting.¹⁵⁰ We have already seen how Gladstone responded to developments in his family life such as the birth of his children by working in his Library. How did Gladstone's book collecting impact on his wife?

His book *writing* had already affected Catherine Glynne before her marriage; she had steeled herself to read (and attempted to memorise parts of) his *State in its Relations with the Church* (1838), although, as Jenkins indicated, this was more likely due to her 'growing

¹⁴⁹ John G. Smith, *A Non-Political Treatise of and Tribute to the Late William Ewart Gladstone (Four Times Premier of the United Kingdom); or, an Enquiry into the Factors and Principles of His Noble Life* (Newport: [n. pub.], 1898), p. 32.

¹⁵⁰ Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 228.

absorption' in Gladstone than youthful intellectualism.¹⁵¹ Mary Drew, who was somewhat in favour of the latter explanation,¹⁵² nonetheless suggested that Gladstone's extreme bookishness proved something of a rude awakening to Catherine immediately after their marriage:

She used to tell us, long afterwards, that it was something of a shock to both sisters [Catherine and Mary] when, after marriage, any little waiting time, as at the railway station, which during their engagement would have been spent in love-making, was now spent in reading – both husbands [Gladstone and Lord Lyttelton] carrying the inevitable little classics in their pockets. Out it would come and quickly engross the owner.¹⁵³

On examining the Temple of Peace registers, it can be noted that Catherine made the fewest entries (25) of the nuclear family and began with her husband's translation of Farini's *Roman State*.¹⁵⁴ Although it could be argued that having a desk in the Temple of Peace Catherine had less need to borrow than the others, Mary Drew's observation that Catherine 'read little later on in life' suggests that this was an accurate reflection of her limited use of her husband's Library. Biographies of Catherine Gladstone frequently stress her complementary role as helpmeet to her husband; the enabler of an independent intellectual no less than political life.

His health and his happiness were for Mrs. Gladstone a sacred trust, and whether he was the Prime Minister of England or only a scholar in his library was a matter of detail which made no difference either in her profound devotion to him or in her watchful care.¹⁵⁵

This indicates it was her work and wifely devotion that facilitated Gladstone's time-consuming reading by, effectively, denying herself an intellectual life. 'Her function', as described here, 'was to manage the details' and relieve 'him of any of those troubles or worries' and leave 'him perfectly free to make his speeches, *to read his books*, or to take his rest as he felt inclined'.¹⁵⁶ Whilst it is unlikely Catherine consciously denied herself intellectual stimulation for the sake of her husband, such a conceptualisation of the Gladstones' marriage does reinforce the impression given by other evidence that Catherine did not fully share in William's intellectual or collecting life. However, as Mary made clear, Catherine 'was in the habit of reading aloud to her children in later years'

¹⁵¹ Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 54.

¹⁵² Mary Drew, *Catherine Gladstone* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1919), pp. 7-8.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁵⁴ Register 1, 18 Sept 1860. This figure does not include books she borrowed on others' behalf.

¹⁵⁵ Edwin A. Pratt, *Catherine Gladstone: Life, Good Works, and Political Efforts* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd., 1898), pp. 30-1.

noting in particular that ‘Scott’s novels were read in that way’.¹⁵⁷ And as Chapter Two demonstrated, Gladstone’s reading Scott to Catherine was an important feature of their early relationship. So was Bible reading. On their honeymoon Gladstone recorded he had read the ‘Bible *with* my Catherine: this daily practice will I trust last as long as our joint lives’.¹⁵⁸ Indeed there are numerous references to joint Bible-reading between 1839 and 1874. Other reading, by Gladstone to his wife,¹⁵⁹ did occur but intermittently until it became necessary, because of Gladstone’s blindness, for Catherine to read to him.¹⁶⁰ Even then these acts of reading occurred in the domestic sphere and retained a distinctly religious flavour. ‘Many kind friends have read books to me’, Gladstone wrote, but ‘Dearest C has been my chaplain’.¹⁶¹ Gladstone had, soon after his marriage ‘ruminated on plans of reading for C. & myself which now at least ought to take form. It is high time to recommence application’ but such joint readings never matched the intensity of Gladstone’s own programmatic reading schedule.¹⁶²

Reading aloud has been described as ‘the most pervasive form of mutual education’,¹⁶³ and was an activity in which Gladstone delighted to participate in a variety of different contexts.¹⁶⁴ Reading aloud was a common after-dinner entertainment in Society and a favourite domestic pursuit. However, texts are rarely restricted to such respectable contexts. Reading and reception can both be altered by ‘the places in which reading happens, and the company the reader may keep’¹⁶⁵ and there were for Gladstone significant reading experiences that were neither polite, religious nor domestic, and, when reading aloud was involved, ones which were shared with women other than his wife.

3.2 Outside the Temple

3.2.1 *Forbidden Reading: Prostitutes and Pornography*

Reading and his library space influenced Gladstone’s choice and arrangement of his art collection and his relationships with artists.¹⁶⁶ During Alexander Munro’s execution of

¹⁵⁶ My emphasis. Ibid., pp. 37-8.

¹⁵⁷ Drew, *Catherine Gladstone*, p. 32.

¹⁵⁸ GD 26/7/39.

¹⁵⁹ E.g. GD 2/1/70.

¹⁶⁰ E.g. GD 30/7/92, 10/10/92, 19/11/93.

¹⁶¹ Holograph, 25 July 1894, quoted in GD at this date.

¹⁶² GD 9/9/39.

¹⁶³ Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p. 84.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. e.g. GD 30/7/59, 28/7/66, 20/11/79.

¹⁶⁵ Raven, Small, and Tadmor, eds., *Reading in England*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Marcia Pointon, ‘W. E. Gladstone as Art Patron and Collector’, *Victorian Studies* (September 1975), 73-98, p. 85.

Paolo and Francesca da Rimini in marble for him [fig. 3.5], Gladstone lent Munro his 'Dante criticism' for him to refer to whilst working.¹⁶⁷ The finished piece was, as the artist knew, destined for the Library at 6 Carlton Gardens.¹⁶⁸ However he wished Gladstone to view the sculpture at his studio 'before it gets to your Library', undoubtedly in case he wished to make any last minute adjustments before its highly significant placing. The sculpture depicts the moment when Paolo and Francesca, who have been reading the tale of Lancelot and Guinevere, are finally overcome by their mutual passion; the line 'Quel giorno piu non vi leggemmo avanti' is carved round the base of the sculpture.¹⁶⁹ There was a striking correspondence between what John Gere called the 'restrained but intense eroticism' of the work and Gladstone's own textual relationship with fallen women.¹⁷⁰ As Matthew pointed out, the years surrounding the Munro commission (1850-53) were characterised by 'highly charged encounters' with prostitutes.¹⁷¹ And this meeting between reading, desire and art was one that was to recur.

3.2.2 *Gladstone and 'Fallen Women'*

Since the publication of the Gladstone Diaries, speculation about Gladstone's mission to 'fallen women' has increased significantly. Gladstone's tortured diary entries and associated memoranda, as well as his limited 'declaration' of faithfulness to the marriage bed given to Stephen Gladstone just before his death,¹⁷² have inspired repeated questioning of both the motives behind and the conduct of Gladstone's rescue work. There is no doubt that in seeking out prostitutes, Gladstone was inspired by a Christian desire to save both souls and bodies from the degradation and sin which prostitution signified to him and to most contemporaries.¹⁷³

William first recorded contact with prostitutes at Oxford and engaged in rescue work (with varying intensity) between 1828 and 1894.¹⁷⁴ One memorandum preserved with the diary manuscripts shows how Gladstone, in discoursing with such women, found himself in repeated danger of deviating from the immediate subject of rescue and, more

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Alexander Munro to G, 4 May 1852, GG 1475.

¹⁶⁸ JG's London house into which G first moved in 1849 and inherited on the former's death in 1851. Shannon, *Gladstone I*, pp. 216, 246.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Pointon, 'Art Patron', p. 90. And also John Gere, 'Alexander Munro's *Paolo and Francesca*', *Burlington Magazine* 105 (November 1963), 509-510.

¹⁷⁰ Gere, 'Munro's *Paolo*', pp. 509-510.

¹⁷¹ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 158.

¹⁷² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 543, 629-30.

¹⁷³ Cf. S. G. Checkland, *The Gladstones: A Family Biography 1764-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 246, 296.

ominously, becoming sexually excited. He also found it hard immediately to break off such encounters even when he perceived such dangers. Gladstone indicated that much of his excitement came from the consideration of rather than an engagement in the forbidden. However, following Matt. v. 28, Gladstone believed ‘that either of these is adultery in the heart’ and berated his inability to repel ‘with firmness, singleness’ and ‘entireness of purpose’ the solicitations with which some of his ‘cases’ clearly bombarded him.¹⁷⁵ Gladstone was deeply worried by the contradiction between his sexual fulfilment in marriage, which he described as ‘an ideal above the ordinary married state’, and his sexual fantasies about other, forbidden women, which ‘still beset me as snares and pitfalls among which I walk’.¹⁷⁶

There is one aspect of Gladstone’s relationship with his rescue cases, which, in the context of this study, merits further investigation: the incidence and significance of Gladstone’s reading with prostitutes. Understandably, there is less evidence on this aspect of his reading life, but it is a facet that should not be ignored.

3.2.3 *Gladstone’s Reading with Prostitutes.*

Reading and book giving had always constituted a regular part of Gladstone’s philanthropic activities. It is not therefore surprising that the reading and gifting, particularly of religious, books should have occurred in the context of Gladstone’s rescue work. Indeed, in 1852 he ‘took £2 with a copy of Jer[emy]. Taylor[’s] Holy Living to E. Watson’s - my promised aid’ noting, several months later of ‘A. L.’, another rescue case, that ‘The Jer. Taylor had proved most acceptable’ to her.¹⁷⁷ In 1856 he ‘Saw Milligan & gave [her a] Bible & Pr[ayer Book]’.¹⁷⁸ But Gladstone’s gifts were not restricted to religious works. He gave women works of literature, both classics and popular novels. For example, in 1852, he ‘In ev[en]ing saw E.C. & C. Morgan: with *better* conduct than heretofore. Gave each an Uncle Tom’.¹⁷⁹ Whether this was a reward for their good conduct, or had further moral purpose, is unclear. The motivation for the gift of an edition of Shakespeare in 1858 was made more explicit: ‘Saw Rigby - gave Shakespeare for a practical purpose: & advised [her] to think of emigration’.¹⁸⁰ What is apparent is that

¹⁷⁴ GD 5-6/8/28. Cf. also GD vol. 14.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. GD 22/4/49.

¹⁷⁶ GD 22/4/49.

¹⁷⁷ GD 29/6/52, 12/10/52.

¹⁷⁸ GD 27/4/56.

¹⁷⁹ GD 21/10/52. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852).

¹⁸⁰ GD 29/6/58.

Gladstone appeared to give books that he himself had read and liked. Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* had been known and profitably read by Gladstone from childhood and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a novel he admired. It is clear that Gladstone considered gift books could transmit practical advice to their recipients. Shakespeare may not superficially have anything to do with emigration, but the idea that reading Shakespeare might broaden a woman's mind and thus lead her to reassess her life is not too spurious a connection to assume Gladstone made.

The gift of books to prostitutes continued over many years. Thus in 1873 Gladstone went 'Shopping: & sent books to Mrs Heaphy' and as late as 1887 'Carried another book to...Clifton' who was, unfortunately, 'absent'.¹⁸¹ There was limited opportunity for extensive personal engagement between Gladstone and his rescue cases whilst he merely gave them books. However, when readings (in addition to conversations) occurred between Gladstone and these women, opportunities for 'mutual education' arose. The texts read varied; some mirrored those chosen by Gladstone as gifts. Thus in February 1876 Gladstone recorded 'readings' of 'Longfellow and Shakespeare' with 'Dalton'; three months later he 'Saw Phillips & read Hamlet'.¹⁸² It appears that, in the same way as with his gifts, Gladstone read aloud texts that he himself liked and enjoyed.

By far the most significant and potentially dangerous texts for Gladstone in his encounters with fallen women were by Tennyson. Up to about 1862, Gladstone knew Tennyson mainly through his poetry rather than through extensive personal contact.¹⁸³ Although their one-to-one relationship became increasingly uneasy, Gladstone remained fervently enthusiastic about Tennyson's poetry. In 1859 he was reading 'Tennyson, Tennyson, Tennyson' and acclaimed the author and his work in the *Quarterly Review* that October, having requested to be allowed to review 'his late work [which] has laid hold of me with a power that I have not felt...for many years'.¹⁸⁴ This 'late work' was the *Idylls of the King* (1859). As Bebbington made clear, Gladstone's attraction to these poems was undoubtedly because of the way Tennyson 'brilliantly blended the national with the

¹⁸¹ GD 6/10/73, 6/8/87.

¹⁸² GD 16/2/76, 13/5/76.

¹⁸³ For a useful summary of their relationship cf. Richard Shannon, 'Tennyson and Gladstone. From Courtship to Mutual Disenchantment', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 2 October 1992, 4-6.

¹⁸⁴ GD 13/8/59; W. E. Gladstone, 'Tennyson', *Quarterly Review* 106 (October 1859). G to Mr Elwin, 16 August 1859, quoted in GD 14/7/59.

universal, the human with the Christian'.¹⁸⁵ However, it is equally obvious that Gladstone's personal emotional response to the poems, especially to *Guinevere*, was just as important and certainly had implications for his use of these texts during his rescue work. In July 1859 Gladstone 'Read Guinevere – twice or thrice over & with much emotion' admitting the following day that 'Tennyson...has grasped me with a strong hand'.¹⁸⁶ Throughout the time when Gladstone was concentratedly reading Tennyson and composing his article on the poems, he was engaging in rescue work, which became intermeshed with his reading experiences. The day before he read *Guinevere* with 'much emotion' he had seen a prostitute called Stewart and indicated the encounter had been problematic for him, by inserting his 'X' of disapprobation in his diary entry. The succeeding days were again taken up with intense study of *Guinevere*, which of course relates the story of an archetypal and idealised 'fallen woman'.¹⁸⁷ The eroticisation of Gladstone's reading, and with it his attempts to rescue certain fallen women, intensified when he met a woman called Marion Summerhayes. It is clear from Gladstone's Diary that he was attracted to her as an individual, not merely as a 'case'. For example, on 30 July 1859 he 'Saw Somerhayes [*sic*]' whom he described as 'full in the highest degree both of interest and of beauty'. He continued to read Tennyson over the next week, before seeing Marion again to make quite a remarkable request: that she should sit for a portrait. On 6 August, Gladstone recorded he 'saw Summerhayes resp[ecting the] picture &c. That is a very peculiar case: & merits what I wrote of it to Mr Dyce' (the Pre-Raphaelite William Dyce whom he commissioned to paint the portrait).¹⁸⁸ The resulting picture, [fig. 3.6] entitled *Lady with the Coronet of Jasmine*, represented the model as Dante's Beatrice and expressed the fantasy-fusion of Gladstone's reading and his rescue work. Gladstone read to Marion as he had done to her predecessors. And during September 1859, when he was writing his Tennyson paper, their relationship became very emotionally charged. On the 14th and 15th September Gladstone 'Wrote on Tennyson'. On the following day, as well as writing, Gladstone recorded spending 4 ½ hours (from 11am to 3.30pm) reading Tennyson's *Princess* to 'M S[ummerhayes]', during which he noted he was 'much & variously moved'.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps unsurprisingly such intensity did not last. The following day

¹⁸⁵ David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 131.

¹⁸⁶ GD 17-18/7/59.

¹⁸⁷ GD 19, 24/7/59.

¹⁸⁸ Marcia Pointon speculated and Colin Matthew confirmed the model's identity. Pointon, 'Art Patron', p. 92; Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 158.

¹⁸⁹ GD 16/9/59.

Gladstone recorded: 'Saw M.S a scene of rebuke not to be easily forgotten'.¹⁹⁰ Nonetheless he continued with his work on Tennyson, reading parts of the *Idylls* on the 18th and *The Princess* on the 20th. On the 21st and 22nd he 'Wrote on Tennyson' and read 'Tennyson's In Memoriam', finally finishing the 'revision of my Tennyson MS' on the 23rd September. Despite the abrupt conclusion to his textual relationship with Marion Summerhayes, Gladstone continued his practice of reading Tennyson dangerously with fallen women. Thus in 1865 he 'Saw H. Hastings: & read the whole of Guinevere aloud. X' and in 1876 he 'Read Guinevere – aloud' in front of Mrs Thistlethwayte 'with undiminished admiration'. Whether this was of the poem or his hostess is unclear but he did repeat this reading in 1877. After dining with Laura, they 'went for an hour to the Alhambra where there was the prettiest & best ballet I ever saw. Then read Guinevere aloud'.¹⁹¹

Reading with fallen women was clearly another aspect of Gladstone's reading life that exhibited significant tension, similar to that observed above between the desire to possess books and yet exercise economic restraint. In this case Gladstone's understanding of reading as a purifying, educative and moral activity (witnessed in his encouragement of it amongst his servants) was tested when morality and immorality became confused.

In addition to Gladstone's longstanding habit of reading with fallen women, there was a further category of forbidden, and this time, solitary reading in which Gladstone engaged, the pornographic, which it is necessary to consider with reference to our broader themes of public/private, respectable/transgressive.

3.2.4 Pornography

There is no evidence to show that Gladstone collected pornography. His Diary indicates he read it outside the confines of his own Library; indeed he was anxious to note down that such books were 'library books' i.e. borrowed.¹⁹² There is certainly no extant collection either at St Deiniol's Library or Hawarden Castle. As outlined above, as Gladstone saw reading and book collection explicitly as *moral* endeavours, this would make the collection of pornography extremely problematic and undesirable.

¹⁹⁰ GD 17/9/59.

¹⁹¹ GD 16/3/65, 10/5/76, 25/9/77.

¹⁹² E.g. GD 12/5/59.

As Colin Matthew pointed out, many of the texts Gladstone regarded as pornographic would not appear so now. However, this does not diminish the anguish Gladstone clearly felt or lessen the impact of his self-loathing after engaging with such texts. The earliest reference to such reading and its impact was made in 1830 after Gladstone had read some pornography at a booksale. 'Self disgusted & with reason' he wrote. He then went on to record reading to his mother, clearly showing the firm demarcation between different categories of reading in place in his mind.¹⁹³ In common with his approach to other reading matter, Gladstone drew up rules by which he hoped to guard against reading unsuitable material. However, he clearly found it harder to abide by them. Thus in 1847 he recorded 'Reading Petronius. A clear offence ag[ains]t my rules of Oct. 26. 1845'. (He read Petronius's poetry again in 1850, but made no such observation).¹⁹⁴

When buying second-hand books, Gladstone clearly took it as a recommendation of the text if it had been previously owned by someone he knew. However, this practice did not serve him very well in 1848 when he bought a copy of French stories and poetic fables. Writing in his Diary, in Italian, Gladstone revealed:

I bought this book because it had within it the name of Mr. Greville, to whom it had belonged: and I began to read it, and found in some parts of it impure passages, concealed beneath the veil of a quite foreign idiom: so I drank the poison, sinfully, because understanding was thus hidden by a cloud - I have stained my memory and my soul - which may it please God to cleanse for me, as I have need. Have set down a black mark against this day.¹⁹⁵

Despite his resolve Gladstone undertook more reading on 15th May: 'I should have sheered off at the first hints of evil - may these be the last of such base explorations'. And the 18th: 'I read sinfully, although with disgust, under the pretext of hunting solely for what was innocent; but - criminal that I am - with a prurient curiosity against all the rules of pious prudence, and inflaming the war between the better qualities of man and the worse'.¹⁹⁶ In his own mind then, Gladstone's reading of pornography was rationalised in a similar way to his conceptualisation of his mission to fallen women. Gladstone told himself that he read with the intention to uncover and draw out whatever truth or goodness existed in a text (whether woman or book) but then was disappointed with

¹⁹³ GD 15/4/30.

¹⁹⁴ GD 15/1/47, 23/7/50.

¹⁹⁵ GD 13/5/48. *Fabliaux et contes des poètes françois des XI-XV^e siècles, publiés par Barbazan*, 4 vols (1808). This text was regarded by Victorians as pornographic.

¹⁹⁶ GD 22/2/49 saw further reading of *Fabliaux*: '(which I should have let alone)'.

himself when finding such simple rationalisation was often impossible to live up to in practice. In 1848 he 'Wrote...at night a separate Mem[orandum]. on a sad subject' in which he expressed his frustration with his inability to cope with these aspects of the pursuit of knowledge, which was, in general, so fundamental to his existence.

The pursuit of knowledge, the desire of estimating different periods & states of the moral and religious life of man, the hope of doing good to persons living in sin: of all these I had utterly failed to discern the proper bounds, and had sometimes perhaps often lost even these from view when once upon the train of thought on imagery of which they might have first effected the introduction.¹⁹⁷

As well as his own moral weakness, Gladstone blamed overwork as a factor in his inability to resist such books. He then revealed the immediate motivation behind this particular episode of tortuous memorandum-writing:

This very night...I saw a book...marked 'Rochester's poems' and looked at the contents then at some of the verses which were his, and in this I acted against my Resolution though I believe I did not actually read what was evil: but looking on through the rest of the book - which at first appeared more innocent - I found two vile poems, and of these with disgust I hope but certainly with a corrupt sympathy I read parts under that very pretext...of acquiring a knowledge of the facts of nature & manners of men.¹⁹⁸

There are references to reading (or trying to avoid) 'dangerous pages' well into the 1880s,¹⁹⁹ but always on the proviso of seeking for an elusive moral purpose. Thus in 1852 he 'saw the infamous work of (Pseudo) Meursius', and looked at it again the following day because 'the Preface professes a moral aim'.²⁰⁰ Whether we believe Gladstone's reasoning or not, in this case or in relationship to fallen women, is in a sense immaterial. This was how he rationalised his behaviour to himself and as such is important evidence of the way he engaged with and responded to texts.

¹⁹⁷ GD 19/7/48.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. GD 5/9/50, 13/5/52, 15/9/58, 11/5/59, 18-21/9/61, 25-6/11/61, 21, 24/8/66, 8/9/66, 25/3/69, 5/9/71, 6/7/83, 2/5/84. 'X's indicate disapproved reading of pornography.

²⁰⁰ GD 13-14/4/52. *Satyra sotadica de arcanis amoris et Veneris* (1680) by N. Chorier, passed off as J. Meursius, Dutch philologist & theologian.

Conclusion

This discussion of Gladstone's private Library and reading has underlined once again that its 'private' character is not to be taken at face value. There were distinctly public aspects to the institution and to the reading that went on there, but there were different levels of privacy – some relating to the private but respectable public sphere; others to other secret and transgressive domains. On a superficial level, Gladstone's collection and the place in which he housed the bulk of it were symbols of a gentlemanly tradition extending back centuries. However, Gladstone's Temple of Peace reflected history on a far more personal and consciously-engaged level. This did not involve a simplistic dismissal of tradition or the denigration of outward appearance; there were many occasions on which Gladstone's Library was made available to others to be the object of suitably well-informed admiration. And even though Gladstone clearly enjoyed the adoption and projection of a reclusive, unworldly scholarly persona (a characteristic to be explored further in the next section) one has the impression he was never as 'unaware' as he appeared of what was going on around him. This is made more than evident by the fascinating borrowing registers that survive. These documents not only testify to Gladstone's organising personality but also to the high level of surveillance he instituted and maintained over his books. This was not a totalitarian or narrow control however. The Temple of Peace as lending library boasted a very broad range of borrowers who read books from all categories in Gladstone's collection. The Library was not a space exclusively designed for and used by upper-class men. There were clearly identifiable male and female users / masculine and feminine uses of the Library as well as representatives from a variety of social classes amongst the list of borrowers. Bearing in mind what has been observed about Gladstone's collecting habits, it is not at all surprising that he should wish to maintain personal control over who used his Library and how they used it.

Important elements in our collecting relationship with others concern things like who can see the collection, who can touch it or parts of it, who knows exactly how extensive it is, who knows about the mistakes as well as the triumphs, and who know how much the individual pieces have cost.²⁰¹

The centrality of control in Gladstone's attitude to use of his Library is clearly in line with this and echoes Sherman's observation that the boundary between public and private was 'more...a permeable membrane than a rigid boundary: it let certain people, texts and ideas

²⁰¹ Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 227.

in, and kept others out'. A library is by nature thus 'less asocial and apolitical than selectively social and political'.²⁰²

Control and the transgression of boundaries are central concepts for understanding the readings that took place outside the Temple of Peace. As well as looking at what was allowed into Gladstone's Library, we have explored what was kept outside it. With reference to Catherine Gladstone, the case of someone close to Gladstone who all too often purposefully remained outside his Library and his collecting space has been highlighted. Jonathan Rose has noted with reference to working-class autodidacts that where men 'had access to education and women did not, communication between the two was likely to break down'.²⁰³ It may be a step too far, but the lack of intellectual engagement between William and Catherine may be worth considering as a factor behind Gladstone's institution of his forbidden reading relationships.

Despite the new information presented here of the high level of openness and inclusivity of Gladstone's Library there were clearly limitations to the kinds of reading that were possible and that were held desirable within the Temple of Peace. Even when reading alone in the Temple, one gets the sense that Gladstone was working within a tightly monitored and controlled domestic frame of reference, openly accountable to his wife, family and peers, joining in their dislike of 'improper French novels' and in their efforts to monitor the morality of servants' reading. However, as we have seen, Gladstone found it more difficult to control and monitor his own reading beyond the confines of his private Library. Beyond the Temple of Peace the boundaries of what was and was not acceptable became increasingly blurred. On one level it was (usually) straightforward to distinguish between forbidden (often pornographic) texts and those with moral purpose. However, Gladstone's problems were most severe when it was discovered that the *same text* could be read both in respectable and dangerous contexts. Thus reading Tennyson could both be a decent after dinner familial entertainment but also, in other contexts and with other readers, an activity which threatened such domestic respectability; disrupting all notions of control and moral certainty.

The images of Gladstone guiltily perusing illicit material in the bookshops of Europe or of reading Tennyson dangerously in prostitutes' garrets superficially seem as far from the

²⁰² Sherman, 'The Place of Reading', pp. 74, 75.

²⁰³ Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p. 76.

snug domesticity he enjoyed in the Temple of Peace as it is possible to get. However, even though his reading experiences inside and outside the Temple appear so divergent in content, motivation and impact, it is striking that in many ways they were the expression of the same overpowering impulse of collection which Gladstone, even in Hawarden, found both stimulating, frustrating and occasionally uncontrollable. His 'collection' of women was undertaken in similar ways to his collection of books – he sought them out and established distinct and regular patterns for the activity. In his own mind, the pursuits shared moral and epistemological functions – the revelation, discovery and learning of truths, the provision of opportunities to act upon them and the occasion to transmit them to others. It is this underlying connection that firmly establishes the status of the Temple of Peace and the mutating collection housed within it as indeed a place of very deceptive tranquillity.

SECTION TWO: TRANSFORMING THE READER

CHAPTER FOUR ❖ THE REAL MR GLADSTONE? 1874-80

Introduction

It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude. – EMERSON.¹

As Chapter Three showed, Gladstone's Library and reading were importantly characterised by the way they straddled a number of 'private' and 'public' boundaries. An intriguing aspect of this was Gladstone's ability to represent himself as a scholarly recluse whilst still maintaining an awareness of the world outside (hence Morley's apt quotation of Emerson). At no point did this characteristic prove more evident or more confusing than in 1874-75 when Gladstone not only lost the premiership, but also engaged in a protracted resignation from the Liberal Leadership and apparently also from public life, only to make a dramatic and emphatic return in 1879-80. The circumstances of this period raise several important questions: firstly about Gladstone himself, his motivations, priorities and insecurities; and secondly about the way he was perceived, crucially, not only as a politician but also as a library-owning intellectual. It is an analysis of the former that occupies this chapter.

1 'Recollection and Retirement'

Few British politicians, with the possible exception of 'The Iron Lady', could claim to have achieved the iconic status, manifested in both appellation and image, which Gladstone attained in the last third of the nineteenth century. Firstly and slightly uncertainly he was 'The People's William' and secondly and irrefutably 'The Grand Old Man'. Much has been written analysing the growth and function of Gladstone's popular image during the years c. 1860-1880.² Eugenio Biagini explained the theoretical genesis of

¹ Quoted in John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, New edn, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1905), II, p. 134.

² Cf. in particular Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848 - 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867 - 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); E. F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); D. A. Hamer, 'Gladstone: The Making of a Political Myth', *Victorian Studies* (Autumn 1978), 29-50; Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Richard Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876*, 2nd edn (Hassocks and Hamden, CT.: Harvester Press & Archon Books, 1975); Ann Pottinger Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria, and the Working Classes, 1856-1878* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

Gladstone's alliance with working-class radicalism, which he dated from 1862, in terms of disenchantment with the shortcomings of aristocratic moral paternalism and a belief in the 'humility and simplicity' of the working classes.³ Gladstone found in his growing relationship with large popular audiences (the generating forum for 'The People's William' cognomen) both an inspiration and self-confidence that he had previously lacked.⁴ There has been disagreement amongst scholars over the extent to which Gladstone shaped and encouraged the growing personality cult that surrounded him. Contemporaries certainly commented on what they saw as Gladstone's propensity to self-publicity, particularly in his public displays of tree felling. And both Hamer and Matthew considered Gladstone proactive in the cultivation of his own myth. Matthew convincingly showed how Gladstone's relationship with the Press contributed significantly to the creation and perpetuation of his popular image allowing Gladstone himself 'to appear uninterested in publicity' whilst he really possessed 'an acute and purposeful flair' for it.⁵ Biagini, on the other hand, played down reports of Gladstone's self-publicity, which he suggested were blown out of proportion by 'hostile observers'. He has argued that, instead of publicising himself, Gladstone 'was quite restive about satisfying his fans' expectations' and often deputed public relations to his sons.⁶

Biagini's analysis correctly identified an underlying ambivalence and tension in Gladstone's attitude to his popularity but he understated its complexity and shifting nature. He described Gladstone's resignation of the Liberal leadership in 1875 as 'the turning point in his career, anticipating the great change which took place between 1876 and 1879'.⁷ He followed Matthew in regarding the remarkable scope and energy of Gladstone's Midlothian campaigns, marked as they were by the central fact of Gladstone's being seen and heard by as many people as possible, as the crucial ingredient in the pullulation of the popular Gladstone cult.⁸ But he overlooked the role of Gladstone's retirement and the difficulties attendant on and persisting after his return to political activity, which in fact illuminate the tensions he identified.

³ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 380. I discuss G's attitude to the working-classes and its implications in 'Masses or Classes? The Question of Community in the Foundation of Gladstone's Library', *Library History* (November 2003).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

⁵ H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 135-37, 301.

⁶ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 398.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 405ff.

2 Becoming the Hermit of Hawarden: The First Retirement and the Sale of Books

Gladstone finally brought his first ministry to an end in February 1874. He had sought to resign the previous March, after the rejection of his Irish Universities Bill, only to be frustrated by Disraeli's refusal to take office. The Liberal administration limped on, beset by scandals and unable, in Gladstone's view, to present any coherent policy plans. Gladstone assumed control of the Exchequer in August 1873 and at the turn of the year went on the political offensive. He formulated a bold financial package, including income tax repeal, designed to drag his Party out of the doldrums and recapture the electorate's imagination and support. In January 1874 he put his Party and his propositions to the country for judgement. It has been argued that the dissolution's unseemly haste was a mistake, hampering the ability of Gladstone's new proposals to redress Government unpopularity.⁹ Whatever the reason, the Liberals were rejected in favour of Disraeli's lacklustre Conservatives who, in the end, emerged with a majority of about 50 seats. Gladstone was returned for Greenwich, but only in second place and promptly resigned as Prime Minister.¹⁰ But, in a move that astonished colleagues and upset his wife, he also informally announced his intention to give up the Liberal leadership. The reasons he had for this were in part political (the lack of a 'present public *cause*' and the fact that his views seemed 'irreconcilable' to the Party) but were also in part intellectual.¹¹ To spend a term in opposition even with the prospect of a following government was, Gladstone wrote, 'not consistent with my views for the close of my life'.¹² Following resignation letters written in December 1874, Gladstone's retirement was formally announced in January 1875 when he again laid before his colleagues his reasons for resigning the leadership.

My object is to labour for holding together the Church of England. This purpose has involved & probably will involve pleadings for sufferance as to what cannot be defended on its merits, & what is intensely unpopular with the constituents of Liberal members.¹³

It is hard to imagine that, even had Gladstone announced he was crossing the floor, any other explanation would have appeared more alienating and bizarre to colleagues than this one. Ostensibly Gladstone was abandoning his party and joining the ranks of another, the

⁹ Cf. e.g. Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister, 1865-1898* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), pp. 136-7.

¹⁰ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 659.

¹¹ For an in depth analysis of the religious differences that tore apart G's first government cf. J. P. Parry, *Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party, 1867-1875* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pt. 2.

¹² Holograph, 7 March [1874], BL GP Add MS 44762 fol. 37 quoted in *GD* at this date.

¹³ 'Memorandum read to late Colleagues', 14 January 1875, BL GP Add MS 44762, fol. 162.

Church. He starkly propounded his disengagement with both the philosophy and people of Liberalism, which, he concluded, could only be answered by his withdrawal from front-line politics. This withdrawal was, officially at least, to last until April 1880 when he was once again asked to form a government (despite not being Liberal leader at the time). The intervening years were ostensibly intended to be his 'retirement' from public life, the embracing of a private life of scholarship and 'labour' for the Church of England. His relinquishment of his London House, 11 Carlton House Terrace, and the sale of its contents including a sizeable portion of his art collection and substantial section of his Library marked Gladstone's withdrawal.¹⁴ Gladstone deemed the sale of the house, furniture and 'part of my collections' necessary in view of the loss of his official income but the move served to render his retirement even more eremitical.¹⁵

In early March 1875 Gladstone began sorting out his London books, packing those he wished to keep and sorting and arranging others prior to valuation.¹⁶ Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge valued 'the Library of the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone as now standing on the shelves at No 11 Carlton House Terrace at Six Hundred and Seventy Pounds (£670) (exclusive of the Hansard's Parliamentary Debates)'.¹⁷ The Library's purchaser was George Grenfell Glyn, second Baron Wolverton (1824-1887), who had been 'omnipresent' (as Matthew termed it) during the run-up to the 1874 election defeat and Gladstone's resignation.¹⁸ Wolverton, described by Matthew as one of Gladstone's 'old cronies', was a banker, Liberal Chief Whip 1868-73, paymaster general in Gladstone's second ministry and a staunch supporter of Home Rule.¹⁹ Their professional relationship had deepened after Glyn visited Hawarden in 1867 and Gladstone was left with the impression that 'he has...much improved on this closer acquaintance'.²⁰ A close confidant, Wolverton's advice was sought at the time of the foiled 1873 resignation and during the 1874-5 deliberations.²¹ Gladstone found Wolverton 'hearty...and refreshing in

¹⁴ The first diary ref. to the decision to sell 11 CHT is at *GD* 13/12/73. For further coverage cf. Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, II, pp. 130-1; Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 388-9; Shannon, *Gladstone II*, p. 155; Matthew, *Gladstone*, pp. 313-14. The sale of Gladstone's art collection was handled by Christie, Manson & Woods. It commenced 23 June 1875 and continued over the following three days. Cf. GG 1477; Marcia Pointon, 'W. E. Gladstone as Art Patron and Collector', *Victorian Studies* (September 1975), 73-98.

¹⁵ Memorandum, 1 June 1874, GG, printed in *GD* at this date.

¹⁶ *GD* 12/3/75ff.

¹⁷ Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge to G, 24 March 1875, GG 1479. Another receipt stated the full valuation of the Library was £820. G to Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 24 March 1875, Receipt for Valuation, GG 1479.

¹⁸ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 314.

¹⁹ Leslie Stephen, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1890), vol. 22, p. 9. Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 237.

²⁰ *GD* 10/10/67.

²¹ *GD* 4/3/73ff, 14/2/74, 11/3/74.

proportion'; clearly a calming and reassuring influence.²² (For example, during a stay at Hawarden during 1874, the two men engaged in 'harmonious conversation' despite the turbulent and stressful circumstances).²³ Wolverton continued to appear at moments of crisis including those relating to the Liberal leadership and retirement.²⁴

It was therefore a trusted aide and friend to whom Gladstone sold his books. They agreed the sale in principle at an early stage and on 24 March (the day the valuation took place) Gladstone 'saw Ld Wolverton & arranged finally with him for the transfer of my library to the satisfaction of both'.²⁵ In April 1875 Wolverton wrote to Gladstone concerning the purchase.

My Dear Mr Gladstone, Sotheby's valuation was £670 not £650 and I had the pleasure of paying that sum to your credit at Scott's on Monday.

I now with many thanks send a cheque for £8-7-8.

Stibbs seems a most satisfactory man & I hear the books are all in my house & next week I hope to arrange them with him. I am so glad, as you made up your mind to sell, to have had the good fortune of being the purchaser.²⁶

This suggests that Wolverton did not purchase Gladstone's Hansard's.²⁷ As a politician he would have owned a sizeable collection himself and perhaps found, as Gladstone did, that there was 'but little sociability in a huge wall of Hansards'.²⁸ Confusingly however, a rough note written by Gladstone and dated six days later lists the full £820 having been received from Wolverton. In addition Gladstone recorded sending several locked boxes containing court dresses, papers and a collection of coins, medals and miniatures to his friend.²⁹ Whatever the full extent of Wolverton's purchase, Gladstone had certainly divested himself of what he later described to Lord Acton as a 'useful library' of 'political

²² *GD* 18/9/77.

²³ *GD* 4/9/74.

²⁴ Cf. for leadership question: *GD* 13/12/79, 10/4/80, G to Lord Wolverton, 13 April 1880, BL GP Add MS 44349 fol. 132. For discussion of retirement: *GD* 30/5/85, 16-17/6/85, G to Lord Wolverton, 7 June 1886, BL GP Add MS 44548, fol. 96.

²⁵ *GD* 24/3/75.

²⁶ Lord Wolverton to G, 12 April 1875. GG 1479.

²⁷ Matthew noted only that 'part of the library appears to have been sold to the omnipresent Lord Wolverton'. Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 314.

²⁸ W. E. Gladstone, 'On Books and the Housing of Them', *Nineteenth Century* 27 (March 1890), 384-396, p. 395.

²⁹ GG 1479.

and historical...volumes'.³⁰ But what did the sale mean in the context of Gladstone's political retirement?

As Gladstone himself later admitted, the collection was 'without articles of rarity or show' making it hard to interpret its sale as dictated principally by the financial concerns that clearly governed the sale of his house and art collection.³¹ And there were many books that he had not sold. These he spent much of the 1875 recess integrating into his Hawarden collection before any further sustained intellectual work was undertaken.³² The 1875 sale thus represents just one enigmatic aspect of Gladstone's first retirement, the meaning of which remains uncertain.

3 The Meaning of Retirement

Gladstone considered the question of retirement from early in his political career. It was a strange preoccupation for a young and ambitious politician to have but it was to persist throughout his life. It was rooted in Gladstone's understanding of a disjunction, constitutionally irresolvable, between the political opportunities that came before him and his own 'desires & designs in public life [that] lie along another line'.³³ Thus, when Peel offered him the vice-presidency of the Board of Trade in 1841, Gladstone accepted only 'to give himself to pursuits alien to his wishes & habits'.³⁴ It is vital to realise that there was substantially more to this reaction than the mock humility habitual with professional politicians. Gladstone's reluctance grew not only from his consciousness of inexperience and inadequacy but also from a genuine feeling that 'his sense of right' might prove irreconcilable with party politics, a fact which should yet again warn us against trying to make him fit too readily the high political schemer's paradigm. In response Peel pragmatically 'thought I had better leave the question suspended, & said that in the event of my finding the Govt. policy incompatible with my convictions of duty, my retirement upon such a ground, as being collateral and peculiar, would not be attended with the mischief of a retirement on account of general want of confidence'.³⁵ In his birthday reminiscence of 1843 Gladstone wrote

³⁰ 'Memorandum prepared for Mr. Carnegie', 9 June 1890, BL GP Add MS 44773 printed in *GD* at this date.

³¹ 'Memorandum prepared for Mr. Carnegie'. Cf. Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 247.

³² Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p. 392. The stowage of books in Hawarden was also going on in 1874. Cf. *GD* 9/6/74ff.

³³ *GD* 31/8/41.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Memorandum, 31 August 1841, BL GP Add MS 44819 fol. 69v, printed in *GD* at this date.

Of public life I...must say every year shows me...that the idea of Christian politics can not be realised in the State according to its present conditions of existence. For purposes sufficient, I believe, but partial & finite, I am more than content to be where I am. But the perfect freedom of the new covenant can only, it seems to me, be breathed in other air.³⁶

Here again Gladstone was straining against what he considered the constraints imposed by political life and its allegiances and conceptualising retirement as withdrawal.³⁷ The prospect of retirement on such grounds arose in 1844 over Irish education. Gladstone told Peel that he 'could not be an *author* of such a measure, &...expect to be taken for an honest man' and proposed the following Easter as a date 'to retire'.³⁸

Gladstone's biographers have long queried what exactly retirement meant to Gladstone and how a nominally-retired statesman could have inaugurated the groundbreaking Midlothian campaigns of 1879 and 1880.³⁹ Many different conclusions have been reached. Travis Crosby and Roy Jenkins emphasised Gladstone's sense of rejection following the 1874 defeat as the immediate cause.⁴⁰ And Crosby argued that Gladstone's gradual return to politics over the late 1870s was driven by his desire to be in control of events.⁴¹ These interpretations make a certain amount of sense in the context of Gladstone's Library. Firstly, the desire for control and order was always paramount and Gladstone seemed particularly preoccupied with the question in 1874. That February he 'set seriously to work upon my books & papers wh[ich] will find me much to do before I establish Cosmos & get rid of superfluities' and several days later 'set aside ab[out]. 3000 vols of pamphlets of the shambles!'⁴² On 17 March 1874 he again referred to work 'on *Chaos* for Kosmos'. Secondly, there is a case to be made for interpreting Gladstone's sale of a 'historical and political library' as a temporary rejection of the principal source of his political knowledge and decision-making. Early in 1874, when Gladstone was facing up to the reality of electoral defeat and resignation, he not only tidied his Library but also began divesting himself of books; at least three boxes were sent to Oxford's non-collegiate

³⁶ GD 29/12/43.

³⁷ Travis Crosby first drew attention to the key role of withdrawal in G's psychological response to stress in Travis L. Crosby, *The Two Mr Gladstones: A Study in Psychology and History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), Chapter 4, pp. 5-6, 43, 44, 81, 91, 114, 126-7, 145, 150-2, 168, 202-3, 220-1.

³⁸ GD 8/7/44 and Memorandum, 16 July 1844, BL GP Add MS 44777 fol. 199.

³⁹ Cf. e.g. Agatha Ramm, '[Review of the Gladstone Diaries, Vol IX, 1875-1880, ed. H. C. G. Matthew]', *English Historical Review* (April 1987), 439-442, pp. 439-41.

⁴⁰ Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p. 379; Crosby, *The Two Mr Gladstones*, p. 145.

⁴¹ Crosby, *The Two Mr Gladstones*, pp. 153-4.

⁴² GD 24, 28/2/74. Cosmos means 'order'.

students, which collection formed the basis of St Catherine's College Library.⁴³ Gladstone's politics and speech-making were always rooted as much in textual reference and historical analogy as in immediate observation of political situations and in 1874 the results of this deductive and scholarly process had proved unacceptable to the electorate. Gladstone's text-sources, especially in the case of Hansard, physically represented the sum of his political life, learning and its recent failure. Thirdly, his political comeback was also crucially text based, beginning with the launch of his 'Bulgarian Horrors' pamphlet and characterised by renewed attention to his surviving political and historical books.⁴⁴

Throughout much of 1875-6 Gladstone concentrated on and produced a series of articles about religious concerns and by the summer of 1876 was projecting a book on future punishment.⁴⁵ It was from this undertaking that he 'was called away to write on Bulgaria'.⁴⁶ Gladstone's willingness to thus abandon his theological writing as well as a general sense of incredulity have led some biographers to doubt whether such work was an 'essential part' of Gladstone's decision to retire. Richard Shannon viewed Gladstone's justifications with scepticism, unable to believe that he ever intended to abandon politics for theology and Crosby, whilst recognising 'Matthew...made a strong case for the significance of Gladstone's theological preoccupations during his retirement', contended

It is important not to overplay his religious motivation. One can plausibly argue that his religious concerns, attaining dominance in his thought at this time of his career, acted as the most efficacious means of mastering uncomfortable political and personal problems. When the time was once again propitious, he would again step forward, refreshed by his absences from the stresses of political life.⁴⁷

In some ways Ramm shared this view, albeit less trenchantly, noting 'if retirement did not mean full political retirement, it yet meant that he pursued the literary subplot of his life with great energy'.⁴⁸

All these interpretations are based on negative conceptualisations of Gladstone's decision to retire and imply that he did not regard his literary and scholarly endeavours as highly as

⁴³ GD 9-10/2/74. No indication of subject is given.

⁴⁴ Although I have found no evidence to suggest that he sought to buy back the original collection from Wolverton.

⁴⁵ W. E. Gladstone, *The Vatican Decrees in Their Bearing on Civil Allegiance: A Political Expostulation* (London: J. Murray, 1874); *Vaticanism: An Answer to Replies and Reproofs* (London: John Murray, 1875); 'Is the Church of England Worth Preserving?' *Contemporary Review* 26 (July 1875), 193-220.

⁴⁶ GD 13/8/76n.

⁴⁷ Crosby, *The Two Mr Gladstones*, pp. 152-3.

⁴⁸ Ramm, '[Review GD IX]', p. 440.

politics. Both are questionable assumptions. Gladstone's overall articulation of his motives, as far as they relate to his intellectual plans for retirement, does not support entirely negative explanations.⁴⁹ He wrote to Catherine Gladstone in April 1874:

There is one thing I should like you to understand clearly as to my view of things, for it is an essential part of that view. I am convinced that the welfare of mankind does not now depend on the state or the world of politics; the real battle is being fought in the world of thought, where a deadly attack is made with great tenacity of purpose and over a wide field, upon the greatest treasure of mankind, the belief in God and the gospel of Christ.⁵⁰

This clearly establishes the positive intellectual motivation behind the resignation announcement made to colleagues nine months later. It was Gladstone's intention to contribute to the 'battle' from within his Library and with the assistance of its theological books. And this was no snap decision. Gladstone had always made clear the pre-eminence of the religious motivation for his political vocation. In 1840 he had written

The time and circumstances are difficult in which I have to steer my little boat: but the pole-star is clear. Reflection shows me that a political position is mainly valuable as instrumental for the good of the Church: & under this rule every question becomes one of detail only.⁵¹

And he increasingly recognised the difficulty of living out such a vocation in practice. In 1847, for example, he intimated that 'it is truly & only the Church that holds me' in Parliament, adding 'though she may seem to some to draw me from it'.⁵² In 1857 he reflected that he still did not know '*where* to work out the purpose of my life'.⁵³ And during his first Premiership he complained that politics left not 'the smallest stock of moral energy unexhausted and available for other purposes'.⁵⁴ One must not underestimate the seriousness with which Gladstone regarded his Christian vocation and the extent to which, if he felt himself unable to prosecute it in parliament, he might feel compelled to jettison political responsibility. As he wrote in 1873 'I cannot desist from a sacred task'.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ His political reasons were far more negative. Cf. Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 207.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, II, p. 108.

⁵¹ *GD* 16/8/40.

⁵² *GD* 16/12/47.

⁵³ *GD* 29/12/57.

⁵⁴ *GD* 31/12/68.

⁵⁵ *GD* 14/9/73.

Central to the problems biographers have encountered when seeking to explain Gladstone's retirement and subsequent return to politics is an over-rigid conceptualisation of the publicness of Gladstone's politics and the privateness of his scholarship. There is undoubtedly significant evidence to suggest Gladstone was trying to escape from a public to a private existence in 1874-5. Indeed, there were already signs in the first years of the 1870s that Gladstone was not only talking about,⁵⁶ but also literally withdrawing from, a popular, public stage. Matthew noted that the 'new style of popular executive politician which Gladstone had so carefully developed in the 1860s was...to some considerable extent set aside' in the early seventies and 'of "The People's William" there was little sign'.⁵⁷ As Chapter Three suggested, in his layout of the Temple of Peace, Gladstone rejected prevailing fashion; Matthew judged that the attraction of Hawarden for Gladstone 'was that it was literally a "Temple of Peace", removed from London and...remote from fashion' where he could engage in scholarship in a completely separate and private sphere.⁵⁸ Shannon presented evidence of Gladstone's frustration when politics interfered with his Homeric work just prior to his retirement,⁵⁹ and Matthew observed the retired Gladstone's dissatisfaction that his MP status ensured 'his activities were necessarily subject to persistent scrutiny' and hampered his 'life of "mental repose"'.⁶⁰ The sale of Gladstone's political and historical Library can also be interpreted as an outright rejection of public life and the establishment of an entirely new and separate existence, which could re-legitimise his battered scholarly persona. (Note William Sherman's observation that a "rhetoric of solitude" flourishes particularly during "crises of legitimation" in the professional relations of the scholar").⁶¹

Susan Pearce posited the intriguing idea that collected items progress from secular to sacred status within a collection attaining a 'quality of separateness'. Collected items 'are made to withdraw from everyday life in order to enable another order of life to come about'.⁶² There is no doubt that Gladstone conceptualised his retirement in such terms, describing his post-resignation feeling as 'one who has passed through a death, but

⁵⁶ Cf. *GD* 24/12/72, 13/3/73 and Shannon, *Gladstone II*, p. 115, 117.

⁵⁷ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 230. Cf. also Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p. 377.

⁵⁸ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 259.

⁵⁹ Shannon, *Gladstone II*, p. 133. Cf. also *GD* 29, 31/12/73.

⁶⁰ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 247.

⁶¹ W. H. Sherman, 'The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance: John Dee Revisited', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 62-76, p. 71.

⁶² Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 24-5.

emerged into a better life' and taking leave of Carlton House Terrace as 'a *little* death'.⁶³ Equally the progression of part of his London Library to the sacred space of the Temple of Peace and the jettisoning of its politically 'useful' section, if it was no longer going to be of use to a private Gladstone, appears to make sense. As does its transference to someone who would make use of it, Wolverton being the ideal candidate as he was to continue in public life in Gladstone's stead.

But none of this means Gladstone was seeking to emulate Montaigne, who in 1571, 'long since bored with the slavery of parlement and public office but still vigorous, withdrew' from public life, established a library and wrote his *Essais*.⁶⁴ To construe from such evidence that Gladstone regarded public politics and private scholarship as mutually exclusive spheres of activity is completely to misinterpret his understanding both of theology and of his own intellectual role. It is true that his explanations were not always easy to understand; they certainly did not convince his wife, to whom he wrote again in March 1875 trying to explain his position.

There is much to be done with the pen, all bearing much on high & sacred ends, for even Homeric study as I view...it is in this very sense of high importance: and what lies beyond this is concerned directly with the great subject of belief. By thought good or evil on these matters the destinies of mankind are at this time affected infinitely more than by the work of any man in Parliament.⁶⁵

But surely the point was that Gladstone's withdrawal to Hawarden was done with a specific *public* intention. He was determined to contribute to the universal battle of belief, which was waging on an international not just a national stage. However much this jars with our contemporary assumption of theology's marginalisation we should not underestimate, in Colin Matthew's words, the significance of Gladstone's 'complex series of theological and ecclesiastical debates and discussions' because they are 'far removed...from modern expectations'.⁶⁶ Matthew took Gladstone's reasoning seriously, conceptualising the 'religious thoughts which Gladstone retired to Hawarden to contemplate' as 'far more dramatically national in implication' than even the 'national ideology' of Liberalism.⁶⁷ In addition, it is essential to realise that Gladstone's comprehension of his political role was dictated by the same conviction as his religious

⁶³ GD 16/1/75, 15/4/75.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Sherman, 'The Place of Reading', p. 70.

⁶⁵ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 259.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

vocation. Special necessities occurred in politics as well as in the spiritual life of humankind but Gladstone felt he needed a sense of personal identification in order to be involved. Thus in 1874 he described his plan to revitalise Liberal politics as ‘a very special responsibility’ and told Arthur Peel he did not see why ‘public men who have given their best years to the service of the country’ should be ‘bound, in the absence of any strong and special cause, to spend that old age...in the career of stress and contention’.⁶⁸ Central to Gladstone’s conception of both political and religious action was a growing sense of the need to maintain independence and autonomy, a development which is elucidated by the changes that occurred in his approach to politics in 1879-80.

4 Independence of Solitude in the Heart of Midlothian

Turkish massacre of Bulgarian Christians in 1876 proved to be the special political cause that Gladstone had theoretically anticipated. ‘My desire for the shade...has been since August rudely baffled: retirement & recollection seem more remote than ever’, he wrote despondently in December. ‘But’ he added, it ‘is in a noble cause, for the curtain rising in the East seems to open events that bear cardinally on our race’.⁶⁹ This conception of an opportunity to contribute through public politics to a universal moral cause was strengthened at the end of 1877 when Gladstone wrote ‘tho’ I have not been busied as I could have wished and schemed, the part assigned to me in the Eastern Question has been a part great and good far beyond my measure’.⁷⁰ At the end of 1879, on the eve of his triumphant return to the forefront of British political life, Gladstone wrote with uncharacteristic assurance:

For the last 3 ½ years I have been passing through a political experience which is I believe without example in our Parliamentary history. I...believe it has been an occasion, when the battle to be fought was a battle of justice humanity freedom law, all in their first element from the very root, and all on a gigantic scale. The word spoken was a word for millions, and for millions who themselves cannot speak. If I really believe this then I should regard my having been morally forced into this work as a great and high election of God. And certainly I cannot but believe that he has given me special gifts of strength, on the late occasion especially in Scotland.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Memorandum, 19 January 1874, BL GP Add MS 44762 fol. 4 quoted in *GD* at this date; G to A. W. Peel, 19 February 1874, BL GP Add MS 44762. fol. 29 quoted in *GD* at this date.

⁶⁹ *GD* 29/12/76.

⁷⁰ *GD* 31/12/77.

⁷¹ *GD* 28/12/79. This was reiterated on 31st.

By the end of 1879 Gladstone had been given, in his estimation, a clear mandate from the people to operate politically, publicly and more importantly *freely* according to his conscience, his religion and his intellect.

Central to understanding Gladstone's return to politics in 1880 was his maintenance of that Emersonian separateness and autonomy which had characterised his desire to resign from politics in the first place. Even at the beginning of his retirement Gladstone mapped out for himself a sphere of 'individual action' as far as politics was concerned and was clear that in intellectual matters also 'I must act mainly for myself'.⁷² Gladstone managed to carry over that 'separateness' and withdrawal into his political rebirth. Matthew observed how Gladstone began his Midlothian campaign 'emphasizing his separateness: "I am come among you as a stranger"' like one of the Judges of the Old Testament who arrive from nowhere when need arises and then disappear back into the wilderness.⁷³ In 1881 he could describe Midlothian as 'a special and temporary mission' and inform Newman that

I have a feeling that mankind is not now principally governed from within the walls of Cabinets and Parliaments – higher issues are broadly revived, and higher interests are in question, than those with which Ministers and Opposition mainly deal; and it is by subtler and less obtrusive instruments that the supreme wisdom acts upon them.⁷⁴

Even after his greatest popular success Gladstone kept his option on being able to withdraw again to his Library, just as he had left open the door to political action in 1874–5, if sufficient cause should be shown. He continued to articulate his desire for a period of 'retirement & recollection' before death.⁷⁵ And he continued to discuss the question of retirement with a variety of people including F. Leveson Gower, Lord Frederick Cavendish, Granville, Dr Andrew Clark, Sir R. Phillimore and of course Lord Wolverton.⁷⁶

On his return to politics Gladstone clearly felt he was better prepared to cope with the pressures which would inevitably follow. He had gone a long way towards forcing others

⁷² Unsigned holograph, 5 March 1874, BL GP Add MS 44762, fol. 37 quoted in *GD* at this date; *GD* 30/10/74.

⁷³ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 306.

⁷⁴ G to J. Bright, 29 September 1881, BL GP Add MS 43385 fol. 298, printed in *GD* at this date; G to J. H. Newman, 18 December 1881, BL GP Add MS 44473, fol. 185 printed in *GD* at this date.

⁷⁵ G to HNG, 21 April 1881, GG quoted in *GD* at this date; G to J. Bright, 29 September 1881, BL GP Add MS 43385 fol. 298, printed in *GD* at this date. Extensive summaries of G's feelings can be found in (a) G to Lord Spencer, 24 October 1882, Althorp MSS K5 printed in *GD* at this date (b) Holograph dated 29 December 1890, BL GP Add MS 56447 fol. 105, quoted in *GD* at this date.

⁷⁶ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 306, 331–2. Cf. *GD* 2/9/81, 31/10/81, 11/11/81, 26/11/82, 10/12/82.

to accept his conception of politics as ‘a second-order activity’ in comparison with the “higher” contemplation of religion and scholarship’.⁷⁷ Note the similarity between his rhetoric at Midlothian in November 1879 and his 1874 discourse on the impact a scholarly life in retirement might have on ‘the welfare of mankind’:

I am sustained and...almost...driven on in public life, by the sentiment...that the principles at issue are much broader than those of ordinary contention...I humbly ask for confidence when I state my own belief that the objects we have in view at the present time are objects connected with the welfare of mankind upon the widest scale...Whatever we may say amidst the clash of arms and amidst the din of preparation for warfare...yet there is going on a profound mysterious movement, that...is bringing the nations of the...world...morally as well as physically nearer to one another, and making them more and more responsible before God for one another’s welfare...I...thank you for having given me the credit of being actuated by the desire to consider in public transactions the wider interests of mankind, and I...assure you that...objects of that nature, and nothing meaner or narrower, will ever be taken as the pole-star of my life.⁷⁸

Once this congruence between political and intellectual concerns is understood, it makes sense that Gladstone’s Midlothian campaigning should have been characterised by such confidence. Whilst Gladstone’s political activities had frequently provoked uncomfortable questions of conscience to sap his confidence, his scholarly endeavours had not. In 1857 he had written ‘I am quite sound in conscience as to the work on Homer which now occupies so much of my mind & time’.⁷⁹ The realisation that the public at last seemed to be interpreting the fruits of his independent scholarly life not just as empty and unfathomable words but as words spoken from the heart – and that the heart of Midlothian – supplied Gladstone with terrific confidence.

However, there is a definite postscript to this story. Despite the fact that Gladstone had fully justified his return to politics in 1880 to himself and met with confidence-boosting acclaim, he found the old tensions persisted between political life and his other intellectual concerns. In 1882 he recorded ‘the sad ungovernable nausea with which I return to the performance of the offices which this life of contention imposes upon me as duties. It is not anything particular in the life, it is the life itself’.⁸⁰ And it is clear that Gladstone’s confidence in the rightness of his scholarly activity was not always strong. The final

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 331.

⁷⁸ ‘Speech at Edinburgh in reply to an address presented by the Corporation on Tuesday November 25, 1879’, W. E. Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches 1879*, Victorian Library edn (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1971), pp. 220-1.

⁷⁹ *GD* 31/12/57.

section of this chapter will thus examine the very real uncertainty which underlay not only Gladstone's attitude to political action but also his conceptualisation of scholarly retirement.

5 'The Spectacles of Books': Why was Gladstone jarred by *Middlemarch*?

His images and descriptions of the scenes or operations of Nature do not seem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freshness, raciness, and energy of immediate observation. He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it, through the spectacles of books; and on most occasions calls learning to his assistance.⁸¹

Part of Gladstone's sense of rejection in 1874 was a feeling of being at odds *intellectually* with political colleagues, the Liberal Party in general, the electorate and his wife. His 'views on the question of Education in particular' he considered to be 'irreconcilable with...a considerable portion' of his Party, riven as it was by 'serious & contentious divisions of opinion'.⁸² And, as he tried to explain to Catherine, he did not see his 'prospective work' as 'Parliamentary' because he was 'little in harmony at the present time' with the 'tendencies' of that 'Assembly'.⁸³ His felt his way of reasoning was not that recognised by 'the sense of the politicians'; 'All are against me', he wrote.⁸⁴ 'Nor can I flatter myself', he added 'that what is called the public...is more sympathetic'.⁸⁵ As indicated above, although Gladstone professed, for example to Manning in 1873, that 'the future of politics hardly exists for me' such statements were frequently qualified. Here he added 'unless some new phase arise and...a special call...appear' and later, to Catherine, he mentioned 'exceptional circumstances which would have to provide for themselves' and to the Speaker: 'I do not mean...to renounce any opportunity of effecting any great national good which time may bring about and in which it may be open to me to take a share'.⁸⁶ But it is important to realise that such qualifications did not suggest Gladstone was prepared to change his own intellectual position for the sake of politics (which is rather Crosby's implication in the excerpt quoted above). Rather he hoped the political scene might once more appreciate and need the brand of intellectualised politics in which he specialised. We have accounted for his ebullience in Midlothian partly in terms of his

⁸⁰ GD 6/2/82.

⁸¹ Samuel Johnson, *Life of Milton*, quoted in Michael Wheeler, *The Art of Allusion in Victorian Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 78.

⁸² Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 207. Cf. Parry, *Democracy*, pt. 2.

⁸³ G to CG, March 1875, quoted in Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 259.

⁸⁴ GD 7, 10/1/75.

⁸⁵ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 259.

⁸⁶ Shannon, *Gladstone II*, p. 125; Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 259. G to H. B. W. Brand, 23 February 1874, BL GP Add MS 44543 fol. 75 quoted in GD at this date.

confidence that this was the case. However that eventuality looked highly unlikely in 1874-5 and necessitated that Gladstone should find an alternative platform for his ideas. This meant he was both in an uncertain and tenuous position. He had been unable to convince either the political establishment or the public as to the validity of his conclusions; it was by no means certain that he would be able to achieve more through a dedicated life of scholarship. However, he set about trying to remain true to his own 'desires & designs', particularly reading on those subjects at which he felt at odds with the world. For example, on Sunday 22 February 1874 he was reading 'To Rome & Back – Greg's Creed of Christendom – First Principles of Religion – Wilkinson on Education [and]...Bennett's Defence of Faith'. And writing on those subjects where he felt certain of the integrity of his moral position: Homer and the defence of the Church of England. However, during this period there are indications that Gladstone did not feel certain that the position he had adopted was going to be any more satisfactory than the political/intellectual balancing-act he had relinquished. On his 65th birthday he wrote

I find myself in lieu of the mental repose [for which] I had hoped [and am] engaged in a controversy, which cannot be mild, & which presses upon both mind & body. But I do not regret anything...yet I would wish that the rest of my life were as worthy as my public life.⁸⁷

The controversy in which he was engaged had been inaugurated by the declaration of papal infallibility in 1870 and, although he claimed to have no regrets, a note of doubt certainly invaded his yearly review. On 30 December 1874, the day after writing the above and the day before revising his letters of resignation, Gladstone finished reading George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and commented 'It is an extraordinary, to me a very jarring, book'.⁸⁸ Numerous Gladstone biographers have quoted Gladstone's reaction,⁸⁹ but only Shannon conjectured Gladstone's meaning here, suggesting firstly that 'his reading of...*Middlemarch*...was no doubt...[a] resistant response to the Comtist implications of the translator of Strauss's deplorable *Leben Jesu*'. Later asserting it was 'that depiction of the wastes and futilities of lives and ambitions skewed and spoiled by muddled religion and misdirected science that Gladstone found "jarring"'.⁹⁰ This latter is, I think, nearer to the truth but a still more specific hypothesis can be made, considering the uncertain and isolated situation in which Gladstone found himself at the end of 1874.

⁸⁷ GD 29/12/74.

⁸⁸ He had begun it on 17 December 1874.

⁸⁹ Shannon, *Gladstone II*, pp. 118, 151; Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 250; Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p. 387.

⁹⁰ Shannon, *Gladstone II*, pp. 118, 151.

Gladstone was, in 1874-5 preparing to embark on a new phase of life centred on his Temple of Peace and focused on intellectual and spiritual concerns. But, unlike Montaigne, who described his Library as a retreat from public obligation,⁹¹ Gladstone's retirement was not envisaged as a withdrawal from the concerns of the world, but rather as an opportunity to engage with them from a different standpoint. This perspective was retrospective and historical, to be based on the knowledge of past generations, which could be harvested for information of contemporary relevance. Gladstone's epistemology, as we have seen, was not like Emerson's, which, in the Lockean tradition, counselled modern society to cut its ties with 'the old and the distant' and rely instead on the 'counsel in our breasts'.⁹² Conversely Gladstone believed society was rudderless without the aggregated knowledge of the past. What else could be relied upon in a rapidly-expanding and confusing world? Certainly not a 'counsel in our breasts', essentially a tumult produced by sin and human failing.

His central, guiding belief was that knowledge imposes an obligation upon the individual *to act* but only upon what they know; an absence of knowledge restrains the individual from acting until sufficient knowledge has been gained to support and validate action. Therefore for social or political action to justifiably occur, a bedrock of knowledge must first exist to inform and support it. Gladstone considered this test even more essential in the sphere of moral action where 'we must be still more conscious of our limitations'. Here 'we are continually required to pass judgement for practical purposes on actions' but as 'every right-minded person will incessantly feel...to form any perfect judgement on any action whatever is a task wholly beyond our power' when a substructure of appropriate and well-grounded knowledge is absent.⁹³ However, such a model proposed a potentially problematic co-operation between the forces of tradition and modernity, which, as Gladstone himself recognised, is difficult to achieve to any level of satisfaction. (In 1890 he admitted books are 'in a certain sense at enmity with the world').⁹⁴

⁹¹ Sherman, 'The Place of Reading', p. 70.

⁹² R. W. Emerson, 'Success' in *Society and Solitude* (1870) quoted in Wheeler, *Allusion*, p. 13.

⁹³ W. E. Gladstone, *Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 106-7. Unwillingness to pronounce judgement on the basis of insufficient knowledge was something G had perhaps learned from his reading of Montaigne's *Essais*, which he began 23 April 1845 (at the time of the Maynooth grant debate) and continued sporadically for about a month. On 24th he wrote 'read Montaigne...H. of C. 4 ¾ - 7 and 10 - 1. I was in many minds as to speaking; but I could not be content to speak only for the moment: & so it ended in silence'. In the first volume of Montaigne G read and annotated *Livre I Chapitre X* 'Du parler prompt, ou tardif', pp. 53-7, and in his end notes recorded '79. Reticence of Ambassadors'!

⁹⁴ Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 386.

The correct relationship between knowledge and action is a central concern of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. And in the character of Edward Casaubon we see someone whose preoccupation with intellectual endeavour is completely divorced from an understanding of any obligation to act upon knowledge obtained. Casaubon is eminently qualified to express other writers' opinions (based on his exhaustive summaries and epitomes) but he does not respond to them creatively or allow them to inform his own views. As a result his endless research, conducted amongst the 'dark book-shelves' of his Library, is rendered pointless and he makes no meaningful response to the social and moral world around him. In this he is unfavourably contrasted with his wife Dorothea, who regards scholarship as offering endless opportunities for informing life.⁹⁵ Sadly an annotated copy of *Middlemarch* does not exist in either the Temple of Peace or St Deiniol's. However, I would suggest that Gladstone's unsettled response to the book was rooted in the way he related the negative portrayal of Casaubon and his barren scholarship to his own residual uncertainty about the uncomfortable dualism in his own situation as a scholar-politician. Note Matthew's observation that 'the dualism of the retired gentleman scholar and the God-summoned statesman was at the least curious, even bizarre, as he himself from time to time sensed'.⁹⁶ In Gladstone's lengthy response to Mary Augusta Ward's *Robert Elsmere* (1888), which he reviewed for the *Nineteenth Century*, we are provided with some justification for such an interpretation.⁹⁷ A significant part of this later novel's exploration of faith and doubt is concerned with matters of epistemology: ways of knowing, varieties of knowledge, the diachronic processes of acquiring knowledge and the consequences of possessing it. Like Eliot, Ward was emphatic that the acquisition of knowledge should not be an end in itself and, in the characters of Edward Langham and Squire Wendover, the author presents the perils of pursuing great knowledge for no purpose other than for its own sake. Langham, immured in a world of scholarship, is without a sense of emotional responsibility to others and Wendover, although he possesses, like Casaubon, a fine library, is incapable of social or moral action. Just as Casaubon takes no interest in Dorothea's schemes for cottage building, Wendover knows and cares nothing for the sufferings of his tenants. It is in Wendover's Library that the eponymous hero finally rejects the comfortable but redundant security represented by its collection of inherited knowledge in favour of social action unshackled by traditional epistemology and ontology.

⁹⁵ Wheeler, *Allusion*, p. 14.

⁹⁶ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 333.

⁹⁷ W. E. Gladstone, 'Robert Elsmere and the Battle of Belief', *Nineteenth Century* 23 (May 1888), 766-788.

Gladstone had no sympathy for Wendover's lack of landlordly duty nor, as we have seen, would he have considered either his or Casaubon's use of knowledge appropriate or desirable. However, unlike the majority of the book's reviewers, Gladstone considered that Wendover, who he described as 'the supreme arbiter of destinies in the book', was 'somewhat unkindly treated' by his creator. Gladstone felt it unfair that the possessor of such a 'rich library' should end by losing his mind, echoing the book's hero's regret: 'What learning has perished with him! How vain seems all toil to acquire!' – and the words, as they passed through his mind, seemed to him to ring another death-knell'.⁹⁸ The deaths of Wendover and Casaubon do indeed ring another death-knell, that of inherited knowledge itself. For both represent wasted opportunities to continue the cumulative knowledge-project that libraries and collections ideally represent. As Susan Pearce has written:

Our collections, with all their potential for selections and dismissal, offer us the romantic chance to complete ourselves, to create significance and meaning out of nothing by the power of need and imagination and so to sustain a sense of dignity and purpose. They are both autobiography and monument.⁹⁹

It is not surprising that Gladstone, out of office and engaged in making his own contribution to the expanding scope of human knowledge when he read both novels, should have been disturbed by the personal and wider implications of the fates dealt out to these fictional intellectuals. For he was simultaneously concerned with whether his scholarly life would prove 'as worthy as my public life' in both his own estimation and that of the wider world.¹⁰⁰ Legitimation was necessary in a public context. For only then, in those words of Montaigne that Gladstone had noted with an 'NB' years before, 'nous verrons là si mes discours me partent de la bouche ou du coeur'.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 771, 769.

⁹⁹ Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 254.

¹⁰⁰ GD 29/12/74.

¹⁰¹ 'We will see then if my words come from my mouth or from my heart'. Michel de Montaigne, *Essays de Michel de Montaigne*, Nouvelle edn, 6 vols (Paris: Lefevre, 1818), vol. 1, p. 91.

Conclusion

Gladstone's much-discussed and much-publicised retirement in 1874-5 proved confusing to contemporaries and has troubled historians. This Chapter has sought to explain and emphasise the intellectual motivations that lay behind it and how they related to Gladstone's subsequent return to political life. It has been argued that Gladstone felt a persistent and ultimately irresolvable tension between his political and intellectual lives, with which he was only able to cope by operating an uneasy but crucially independently-directed dialectic between involvement on the public stage and withdrawal to his Library. 1874-5 was an important instance of the latter and, as has been shown, had significant implications for the use of the Library itself. It has been argued that it is confusing to identify Gladstone's political and scholarly activities respectively as rigidly public and private. Gladstone understood both to have great public utility and that both ultimately emanated from his fundamental and public-spirited concern for the welfare of humanity. He was aware however that his Party, electorate, family and friends frequently found the intellectual expression of this desire difficult to comprehend. Catherine Gladstone, well-known for her tolerance and supportiveness towards her husband, made no secret of the fact that she found his decision to retire and his intellectualised explanations of it baffling. Colleagues too were flummoxed; Harcourt for one regarded Gladstone as simply being in 'the sulks'.¹⁰² All of which made Gladstone feel isolated and undermined his otherwise firm confidence in the rightness of his intellectual preoccupations.

Gladstone's success or failure in retirement depended on his ability to communicate his ideas to others, which was not a certain thing in 1874-5. Michael Wheeler has described the practice of 'hoarding and sharing inherited and contemporary wisdom from which a sense of moral and psychological security could be gained' as a 'universal habit' in the Victorian period, but it is clear not everyone shared Gladstone's belief in the indispensability of book-knowledge.¹⁰³ However engaged Gladstone thought he was in his Temple of Peace, this was not always the impression given to outsiders looking in. There is no doubt that he was 'estranged' as he prepared to begin his retirement.¹⁰⁴ Even his position as 'The People's William' had brought him short-term popular success but 'had not led to real warmth or popular affection'.¹⁰⁵ So why was this the case and what

¹⁰² Shannon, *Gladstone II*, p. 142.

¹⁰³ Wheeler, *Allusion*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 250.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

implications would it have for the reception of Gladstone in retirement? What were contemporary expectations of a former PM and Chancellor and still-sitting MP and how far did Gladstone's decision accord or conflict with them? To answer these questions fully, and in order to further assess Gladstone and the politico-cultural significance of his first retirement it is necessary to look back at how Gladstone's intellectual and bibliographic interests had been viewed and represented *by others* over his public career and how far he succeeded in resolving tensions inherent in his position as a scholar-politician in their eyes. This will be the focus of the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE ❖ POLITICAL LOTUS EATER TO GRAND OLD BOOKMAN: THE CHANGING REPRESENTATION OF GLADSTONE THE READER

Introduction

As the previous chapter demonstrated, intellectual concerns were prominent in Gladstone's protracted discoursing on resignation and retirement. They also featured in the public reception of such discourse. Gladstone's scholarship and Library, far from being restricted to the private sphere, were widely represented and evaluated in public contexts. They were the subjects of written accounts, both academic and popular, and were made available to the gaze of the public through a variety of images. This chapter focuses on this public representation and reception. It argues not only that it changed over Gladstone's lifetime but also that it was instrumental in radically transforming the way in which his political persona was understood and evaluated.

1 The Political Lotus Eater: Young Gladstone and Romantic Interiority

Gladstone's intellectual isolation from colleagues and public in 1874-5 was neither imagined nor new. Observers had felt and represented such a disjunction from the earliest stage of his public career. The earliest portraits of Gladstone represented him as an intellectual. William Bradley (1801-57), a Manchester portraitist patronised by the Gladstones, painted Gladstone twice between 1838 and 1844. The first portrait [fig. 5.1], dated 1839, was commissioned by Gladstone's father and combines paternal pride, gentlemanly status and intellectual romanticism.¹

There is little to indicate Gladstone's parliamentary calling except the papers lying on the table, which are held down by an open book, its pages disturbed by the sitter's recent reading. The volume is unidentifiable but serves as a convenient symbol of Gladstone's active scholarship (Gladstone was a published author when the portrait was painted)² and establishes the painting's intellectual priorities. The eyes of the viewer are drawn from the book to the face of the pensive subject who gazes dreamily to his left. The pose, of crossed arm and finger raised in thought, is heavily charged with romanticism and reflects the complete introspection of the

¹ Cf. Bryan Keith-Lucas and Henry Neville Lord Gladstone of Hawarden, *The Gladstone-Glynne Collection: A Catalogue of the Oil-Paintings, Water-Colours, Sculptures and Miniatures and a Supplementary List of Prints and Drawings at Hawarden Castle* (Hawarden: Hawarden Castle, 1934).

sitter. Bradley had caught what Colin Matthew described as Gladstone's 'highly romantic, even Utopian' conservatism of the 1830s, fuelled by a Coleridgean '*cultivation* of the inward man' and expressed in his Church and State treatises.³

But Bradley's portrait sent mixed messages about the aspiring political thinker it represented. By 1839 romanticism of this sort was incongruous and Gladstone's pose problematic. In its self-contained timidity, reminiscent of Antonio Canova's *Venus Italica* [fig. 5.2], it differed from the classically-inspired poses generally used for early Victorian male portraits.⁴ Instead it cut a figure contemporaries would increasingly associate with the visual representation of women. Books and reading had long been associated with representations of femininity,⁵ and throughout the nineteenth century the pictured woman reader was an important icon in both painting and photography.⁶ Gendered poses were minutely described, as this example from a photographic magazine illustrates.

The pose of a lady should not have that boldness of action which you would give a man, but be modest and retiring, the arms describing gentle curves, and the feet never apart.⁷

Such associations problematised representing Gladstone as romantic reader and serious intellectual, especially for and in a non-domestic setting. Other early pictorial representations of Gladstone (for example W. H. Cubley's 1841 portrait for the Newark Conservatives [fig. 5.3]) exhibited the same tensions and caricaturists in particular made such gendered associations explicit. In one early cartoon, [fig. 5.4] Gladstone was represented as fully feminine.

The association of young Gladstone's literary interests and scholarly demeanour with unmanly passivity was also clear in written assessments of him. An anonymous author, writing for *London Society* in 1869, claimed the general opinion of Gladstone as a young Peelite had been that

² W. E. Gladstone, *The State in Its Relations with the Church* (London: John Murray, 1838).

³ H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 44-5. For G's early romanticism cf. also S. G. Checkland, *The Gladstones: A Family Biography 1764-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 392.

⁴ Cf. Robin Simon, *The Portrait in Britain and America: With a Biographical Dictionary of Portrait Painters 1680-1914* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1987), Ch. 2.

⁵ Cf. Catherine King, 'Made in Her Image: Women, Portraiture and Gender in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in *Gender and Art*, ed. by G. Perry, Art and Its Histories (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 32-85, p. 42.

⁶ Cf. Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Lene Østermark-Johansen, 'The Matchless Beauty of Widowhood: Vittoria Colonna's Reputation in Nineteenth-Century England', *Art History* 22 (June 1999), 270-294.

⁷ *The Photographic News*, 5, 8 March 1861, p. 110. Quoted in Audrey Linkman, *The Victorians: Photographic Portraits* (London and New York: Tauris Parke Books, 1993), p. 46.

There was a kind of gentle languor and melancholy about him. He seemed a recluse, of scholarly poetic temperament. He was a political lotus-eater. His voice was called 'the echo of a voice'; the voice of one in whose breast all human passions were lulled. It was thought that he lacked the 'combativity' necessary for parliamentary conflict. It was thought that both his physique and his morale were against him.⁸

By calling into question Gladstone's physical presence and vocal powers as well as mocking his intellectual proclivities the author directly challenged Gladstone's manliness. Walter Bagehot observed similar weaknesses in the Gladstone of the 1860s, writing 'Mr. Gladstone's energy seems to be strictly intellectual. Nothing in his outward appearance indicates the iron physique that often carries inferior men through heavy tasks'.⁹

Attempts were made to address this tendency. If Bradley's second portrait [fig. 5.5] (painted for Eton in 1841) is compared with the first, several differences are obvious. It maintains the same pose but a heavy cloak adds bulk to the slight frame and squareness to the curving stance. The face too is squarer and has less delicacy. It is notable that whilst the classical column is retained in the background, all references to books and reading have disappeared. Ostensibly the same portrait, these subtle changes tone down the scholarly emphasis. It is clear that whilst the intellectual tone of Bradley's original was suitable for a private, domestic setting, it was not viewed as appropriate for a commemorative portrait of a politician. Why were such changes thought necessary? What was the problem with representing Gladstone publicly as a scholar?

1.1 Men of Letters and Scholarship in Victorian Society

It was a question of integrating multiple and not necessarily compatible identities. Gladstone was a politician, but he was also a reader, scholar and author. His published work and his position in the public eye (which excited comment and ensured portraits were of interest) brought his scholarly activities into the public domain where they could be discussed and criticised. Any characterization of Gladstone as litterateur or scholar depended on (and continues to require) a reconciliation with his role as politician and Prime Minister. One would expect this to be more difficult for twenty-first century observers than for the Victorians. Scholar-politicians were common in the nineteenth century;¹⁰ the last modern Prime Minister to rival Gladstone's appetite for scholarship was Winston Churchill.¹¹ However it is evident

⁸ F. A., 'William Ewart Gladstone: A Study of Character', *London Society* 15 (February 1869), pp. 98-9.

⁹ Walter Bagehot, *Biographical Studies* (London: Longmans, 1914) [first published (1881)], p. 116.

¹⁰ E.g. Russell and Derby both published classical translations and Sir G. C. Lewis, Gladstone's rival as Chancellor in the late 1850s, was a distinguished scholar of ancient Greece.

¹¹ Cf. Roy Jenkins, 'Gladstone and Books', in *The Grand Old Man: Sermons & Speeches in Honour of W. E. Gladstone (1809-1898)*, ed. by P.B. Francis (Hawarden: Monad Press, 2000), 21-26, pp. 21-26.

that young Gladstone's contemporaries experienced discomfort encountering the combination as it manifested itself in him. This apparent anomaly is elucidated if the various identities assigned to intellectuals in the first half of the nineteenth century are considered and compared to Gladstone's profile.

1.1.1 *The Man of Letters*

Concepts of the 'man of letters'¹² and the 'scholar' generated significant debate during the Victorian period. Many, including Thomas Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, attempted to estimate the place of intellectual activity in society. Simultaneously, the same social critics were also preoccupied with properly defining 'manliness' in theory and as a code of conduct, laying emphasis on such things as moral courage, sexual purity, athleticism and stoicism.¹³ This conjunction is important for understanding the tensions inherent in Gladstone's represented intellectualism.

Thomas Carlyle articulated the most enduring concept of the nineteenth-century man of letters. In his lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London: 1841), published the year Bradley and Cubley painted Gladstone, Carlyle charted the influence of intellectual activity on human history. In 'The Hero as Man of Letters' Carlyle explored the power invested in communicators through the written word. Unlike the king, god or poet, who had existed throughout history:

The Hero as Man of Letters...is altogether a product of these new ages; and so long as the wondrous art of Writing, or of Ready-writing which we call Printing, subsists, he may be expected to continue, as one of the main forms of Heroism for all future ages.¹⁴

As the product of a new age, Carlyle situated the man of letters firmly within the market place, with the goal of improving society, suggesting he was the modern descendant of the priest.

He that can write a true Book, to persuade England, is not he the Bishop and Archbishop...of all England? I many a time say, the writers of Newspapers, Pamphlets, Poems, Books, these are the real working effective Church of a modern country.¹⁵

¹² A professional intellectual who earned both living and status by what he had to say in speech and writing. Cf. Norma Clarke, 'Strenuous Idleness: Thomas Carlyle and the Man of Letters as Hero', in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, ed. by M. Roper and J. Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), 25-43; Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background, 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), Chapter 3, pp. 69-93.

¹³ Michael Roper and John Tosh, 'Introduction: Historians and the Politics of Masculinity', in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, ed. by M. Roper and J. Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), 1-24, p. 2.

¹⁴ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (London: James Fraser, 1841), p. 249. All quotations are taken from G's annotated copy, which is preserved at St Deiniol's, R35C/4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

In his copy of Carlyle's lectures, Gladstone placed his 'NB' (special notice) by this section. His early years in parliament were dominated by a particularly rigid conception of himself as a Christian in politics; it is therefore unsurprising that he should have read Carlyle with approval here. However, it was essentially a misreading and gives a clue to the unpopularity of Gladstone's intellectual ideas. In Carlyle's view, the importance of the modern community of letters was epitomised by its functioning as a *secular replacement* for a Church that was neither real, working or effective.¹⁶ This was an opinion Gladstone would not have shared. His early intellectual motivation stemmed from the trenchantly ecclesiastical and academic values he had absorbed at Oxford, rather than in response to the needs and values of a modern and secularised society. As Colin Matthew noted, his 'almost wholly theoretical' preoccupation in the 1830s was with 'obligation in State and Church...with little or no reference to the circumstances of the day'.¹⁷ By representing himself as an abstract scholar rather than as a man of letters, Gladstone assumed a mantle that was already deeply unpopular.

1.1.2 *The Scholar*

In the first half of this period a clear distinction was made between men of letters and scholars:

Early and mid-Victorian writers often regarded scholars as amusingly eccentric or worse...With the onset of Victorian Values like hard work and productivity, many Victorians considered the 'useless' accomplishments of scholarship wanting. For instance, Frederic Harrison wrote in his Memoirs that scholars 'suppress spontaneous expression' and were often 'ignorant and mindless men'.¹⁸

J. R. Robertson, in an undated study of Gladstone published in *The Free Review*, articulated such prejudice by expressing the (substantially exaggerated) opinion that the Oxford of Gladstone's undergraduate days had been 'furthest from valid knowledge and sane science' than at any time 'since the Middle Ages'.¹⁹ But Gladstone was proud to be an intellectual product of Oxford. This was reflected not only in his primary literary interests, theology and classics, but also in his enthusiastic publicising of his intellectual debt to the University. He dedicated his first book to Oxford in fulsome terms, citing himself 'student of Christchurch' as well as MP for Newark. Oxford he described as 'providentially designed to be a fountain of blessings, spiritual, social, and intellectual, to this and to other countries to the present and future times'.²⁰ This concept of the University as an agent of the Christian Gospel differed radically from Carlyle's model for

¹⁶ Cf. Clarke, 'Strenuous Idleness', pp. 40-41.

¹⁷ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 32.

¹⁸ T. W. Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 74.

¹⁹ J. R. Robertson, 'Gladstone: A Study', *The Free Review* [n.d.], p. 92.

²⁰ Gladstone, *State in Its Relations*.

social and educational improvement by secular and non-institutional means. This dedication and more importantly the text itself provoked a host of negative reactions to Gladstone's literary endeavours; the effects of which were long lasting.

The State in its Relations with the Church was the culmination of Gladstone's theorising about the nature of Establishment during the 1830s. Heavily indebted to Coleridge, Plato and Aristotle, the book proposed a confessional state, administered by a clerisy,²¹ and defined by its exclusive relationship with the National Church.²² The book was a public relations' disaster for Gladstone. It received scathing reviews from the literati, the most famous of which being the savaging by Macaulay in the *Edinburgh Review*.²³ The damage done to Gladstone's reputation was serious. In 1860 Walter Bagehot still condemned Gladstone's arguments in poisonous terms, criticising him for deliberately placing himself outside the ecclesiastical and political mainstream.²⁴ By setting Gladstone the scholar and 'common Englishmen' at odds, Bagehot was drawing on a Carlylean model of opposition between the 'adroit' but ultimately ineffectual 'Man of Theory' and the apparently stupid but ultimately socially-successful 'Man of Practice', described in texts such as *Past and Present* (1843).²⁵ Such celebration of practical work implicitly questioned the image of the scholar/writer as a valid category of true masculinity. As is argued in more detail later, Carlyle adeptly integrated his man of letters into this model by re-defining the literary in material terms as 'brainwork', but this still left the 'light adroit Man of Theory' open to question as a worker and as a man.

Literary condemnation of Gladstone's book also ominously attracted the disapproval of parliamentary colleagues, which was potentially more serious in view of his junior political position. *State in its Relations* and its sequel *Church Principles considered in their Results* (1840) were idealistic and theoretical but, as Colin Matthew underlined, they were 'deliberately intended as a guide to Conservatives as they prepared for office'.²⁶ But Gladstone's vision was more far

²¹ An educated élite.

²² For discussion of *The State in Its Relations*, cf. John Keble, 'The State in Its Relations with the Church. By W. E. Gladstone, Esq.' *The British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review* 52 (October 1839), 355-397; T. H. S. Escott, 'Mr. Gladstone's Conception of a National Church', *The New Century Review* [(n.d.)], 74-79; Perry Butler, *Gladstone: Church, State and Tractarianism: A Study of His Religious Ideas and Attitudes, 1809-1859* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Sheridan Gilley, 'Gladstone on State and Church', in *The Gladstone Umbrella: Papers Delivered at the Gladstone Centenary Conference 1998*, ed. by P. B. Francis (Hawarden: Monad Press, 2001), 1-13; Alec Vidler, *The Orb and the Cross: A Normative Study in the Relations of Church and State with Reference to Gladstone's Early Writings* (London: SPCK, 1945).

²³ T. B. Macaulay, 'Church and State [by W. E. Gladstone]', *Edinburgh Review* 69 (April 1839), 231-280.

²⁴ Bagehot, *Biographical Studies*, p. 106.

²⁵ Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843), p. 214. Although G was always seen as energetic in the early 1830s, this does not necessarily equate with 'manliness'. Indeed Carlyle's description of his man of logic does not deny his energy.

²⁶ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 41.

reaching than anything his fellow conservatives, including Sir Robert Peel, intended. Peel was, as was clearly indicated in the discussions over Gladstone's threatened retirement cited in Chapter Four, as pragmatic as Gladstone was idealistic with a moderate but not high view of establishment.²⁷ Moreover Peel had committed himself and Conservatism to appeal to the middle classes. Thus in 1835 he denied

That we [the Conservative party] are separated by any fancied line of interest, or of pride, or of privilege, from the middling classes of this country...Why, who are we...that anyone should tell us that we have an interest separate, or feelings discordant from those of the middling classes of society?...We are bound to them by a thousand ramifications of direct personal connection, and common interests, and common feelings.²⁸

These inclusive sentiments were in direct opposition to Gladstone's endorsement of the higher abilities of an Anglican parliamentary clerisy to decide national religious matters over, for example, middle-class nonconformists.

Peel was so incensed by Gladstone's position that he is said to have thrown the book on the floor. For not only was Gladstone's approach naïve and foolish, but such behaviour threatened to undermine party cohesion at a critical time. Roy Jenkins suggested that had Peel been able to form a government when Melbourne offered his resignation in May 1839, Gladstone might have found himself excluded on the strength of his portentous academic theories.²⁹

Peel was keenly aware of the importance of image and concerned about political representation, visual as well as rhetorical. Before the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery and at a time when portraiture itself was suffering unpopularity,³⁰ Peel was notable for building up a collection of portraits of distinguished contemporaries.³¹ He commissioned a portrait of Gladstone in 1843 from John Lucas (1807-1874) [fig. 5.6], insisting on plain modern dress, at a time when classicism remained in vogue.³² The resulting three-quarter length portrait represents Gladstone dressed in black with a white necktie against a dark background. Crucially the portrait makes no reference to Gladstone's scholarly activities. His gaze is direct

²⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁸ Quoted in Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 342.

²⁹ Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 53.

³⁰ David Piper, *The English Face*, ed. by M. Rogers (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1978), p. 198. Cf. also, attacks on portraits in *Illustrated London News* 11 May 1844, p. 305, *Punch* Jan – June 1845, Vol. 8 pp. 233, 236.

³¹ H. C. G. Matthew, 'Portraits of Men: Millais and Victorian Public Life', in *Millais: Portraits*, ed. by P. Funnell and M. Warner (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1999), 137-161, p. 143.

³² Sir Robert Peel to John Lucas, 18 November 1843, BL GP Add MS 40, 536, fol. 138. Ibid.

and earnest, the pose more open than that used by Bradley or Cubley. His left hand holds a parliamentary paper, establishing his identity to observers as yet unfamiliar with his features and also stamping upon him the priorities of his political chief – a committed servant of the electorate, open, unostentatious and unromantic. It exemplifies what James Eli Adams suggested was becoming ‘a norm of “manliness”’ at mid-century. Whereas ‘early rhetorics of masculinity’ had incorporated ‘a rich interiority or “deep” subjectivity commonly associated with romantic selfhood’ masculinity was now ‘identified above all with honest, straightforward speech and action, shorn of any hint of subtlety or equivocation’.³³ Gladstone’s studied romantic interiority and mystical long-windedness in early writing and representation were clearly at odds with this model. This is not to say Gladstone’s public role as politician was incompatible with withdrawal to the privacy of his Library, but public display of that withdrawal in representational imagery (or indeed any public or official context) challenged both the primacy of his role as a public man, and its effectiveness. For a man in the public eye, activity in a private domain should essentially be defined and controlled by his public role, not vice versa.³⁴

The anonymity of Lucas’ painting and its reception serves to underline the precariousness of Gladstone’s junior status and the uncertainties surrounding his political reputation, which had not been helped by his (self) representations as a remote scholar and romantic reader. This was undoubtedly the beginning of those tensions and problems with which Gladstone battled in 1874-5; difficulties which were compounded in the intervening years. Bad opinion of Gladstone’s scholarship continued to influence assessments of his political, as well as literary, potential. Even in 1860 his identity and his future in politics remained in doubt. Bagehot wrote

Who can calculate his future course? Who can tell whether he will be the greatest orator of a great administration...whether he will be, as his gifts at first sight mark him out to be, our greatest statesman? Or whether, below the gangway, he will utter unintelligible discourses; will aid in destroying many ministries and share in none; will pour forth during many hopeless years a bitter, a splendid, and a vituperative eloquence?³⁵

‘We are all of us in doubt about him’, he added. For ‘if the country have not a true conception of a great statesman, his popularity will be capricious, his power irregular, and his usefulness

³³ James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 14.

³⁴ Cf. Jeff Hearn, *Men in the Public Eye: The Construction and Deconstruction of Public Men and Public Patriarchies*, ed. by J. Hearn (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 6.

insecure'.³⁶ Just as Carlyle's man of letters was required to transmit the fruits of his knowledge to society and so combat its 'disorganised condition',³⁷ so Bagehot's ideal politician should be able to communicate effectively with and influence the voters in a safe and controlling way: 'In a free country we must use the sort of argument which plain men understand – and plain men certainly do not appreciate or apprehend scholastic refinements'.³⁸ In 1860, Gladstone appeared to be falling well short of this ideal and seemed 'the last man to obtain' success in parliamentary life.³⁹ At the time Gladstone would have probably agreed. He had not yet emerged from the political doldrums of the mid 1850s when 'for a while he had the impression of being the most unpopular man in Britain'.⁴⁰ However, contrary to Bagehot's predictions and Gladstone's expectations he did succeed in politics and succeeded so far with the general public as to be elevated to the status of icon in his own lifetime.

2 From People's William to Grand Old Man

2.1 The People's William

As Chapter Four noted, most Gladstone scholars have accounted (in varying degrees) for the genesis of the 'People's William' in terms of three factors: the development of a new brand of mass politics characterised by large crowds and popular speechmaking, the influential role of the Press and Gladstone's personal agency. What has not yet been clarified is the place Gladstone's intellectuality had in either aiding or limiting the success of this particular representation. There is no doubt that whilst Gladstone's 'scholastic intellect and...laborious official training' proved confusing and unpopular in a traditional political context, in the context of mass oratory his scholarly mannerisms were more easily accommodated.⁴¹ In popular oratory Gladstone found a vehicle by which his vaporous style could be used to his own political advantage, a fact he clearly recognised:

³⁵ Bagehot, *Biographical Studies*, p. 92. Bagehot was not alone in his opinion: cf. also R. H. Hutton, 'Mr. Gladstone', *Contemporary Review* 65 (1894), p. 617.

³⁶ Bagehot, *Biographical Studies*, p. 124.

³⁷ Carlyle, *Heroes*, p. 256.

³⁸ Bagehot, *Biographical Studies*, p. 107.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁴⁰ E. F. Biagini, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), p. 37.

⁴¹ Hutton, 'Mr. Gladstone', p. 621.

The...orator[']s...work...is inextricably mixed up with practice. It is cast in the mould offered to him by the mind of his hearers. It is an influence principally received from his audience (so to speak) in vapour, which he pours back upon them in a flood. The sympathy and concurrence of his time is with his own mind joint parent of his work. He cannot follow nor frame ideals; his choice is, to be what his age will have him, what it requires in order to be moved by him, or else not to be at all.⁴²

This analysis of the politician's role is very different from the abstruse and theoretical thinker represented in Bradley's 1839 portrait. Here Gladstone recognised the need for the orator to be closely attuned to the world in which he operates and to engage symbiotically with his audience. Linguistic obscurantism could limit understanding but it could also facilitate the politician's ability to say one thing and mean another.

However, as was observed in Chapter Four, the early successes of the 'People's William' were to diminish even before the end of Gladstone's first ministry and were to be checked dramatically during the resignation and retirement crisis of 1874-5.⁴³ It is argued here that the reasons for this lay largely with the persistence of negative attitudes towards Gladstone's scholarliness in the public sphere, which were bolstered by Gladstone's continued tendency to retreat into this unpopular persona rather than positively develop a more palatable alternative. Gladstone's intellectual preoccupations were seen as isolating factors even before his retirement and withdrawal to Hawarden in 1874-5. The *Penny Illustrated Paper*, representing the various 'holiday occupations of the Gladstone Ministry' in 1873, announced that 'Mr Gladstone goes to Greece' [fig. 5.7]. However, in contrast to the action of title, he is shown at his desk studying classical texts. Of the twelve politicians represented he is the only one following intellectual pursuits; more than half are engaged in outdoor activities. Even though Gladstone did not conceptualise his 1874-5 retirement as an abandonment of public concerns this was not the interpretation favoured by observers. His withdrawal to a life of study and apparent rejection of the political establishment (so obviously reminiscent of his ambivalent attitude in the late 1830s)⁴⁴ unsurprisingly provoked negative reactions from the Press, who yet again lambasted his privileging of intellectual concerns. Shortly after the retirement's public announcement, *Judy* published a cartoon entitled 'Far From the Madding Crowd' [fig. 5.8] in which Gladstone sits in a cobwebby monastic cell surrounded by his theology books and pamphlets. That *Judy* judged Gladstone's scholarly obscurantism would ensure he became both

⁴² William Ewart Gladstone, *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1858), vol. 3, p. 107.

⁴³ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 287.

⁴⁴ Note G's reaction to the negative reception of his first book was to withdraw. 'He wished he had never dipped his feet "in the turbid stream" of political life. "Shall I ever", he asked, in contemplating the vision in which his mother had encouraged

irrelevant and weak as a political force is obvious from the caricature's tag line: 'The recluse of Hawarden, withdrawing from political strife, devoted himself to questions of theology and to pamphleteering. He did not do much harm at this time'.⁴⁵ *Punch's* commentary on the retirement by Tenniel was less vitriolic but equally dismissive, showing Disraeli bidding Gladstone a patronising goodbye with the words 'Sorry to lose you! I *began* with books; you're ending with them. Perhaps you're the wiser of the two' [fig. 5.9].⁴⁶

What is more, Gladstone's intellectual position and ideological intentions were viewed with continuing uncertainty even after the Bulgarian campaign had begun in earnest. *Punch*, for example, represented Gladstone as an Arcadian woodcutter completely out of step with public opinion [fig. 5.10]. And it is essential to note that this negative strand of commentary, which so diametrically opposed Gladstone's political and intellectual concerns, never completely disappeared (and indeed, as Chapter Four argued, persists in current scholarly assessments). Even after Gladstone had been re-committed to public politics for some years, criticism of him was still regularly articulated through visual references to his reading or scholarly retirement on occasions when he appeared reluctant actively to involve himself in matters of public interest. For example, during 1884, an unconcerned Gladstone was repeatedly shown being confronted *in his Library* by pressing political problems, on one occasion personified by the figure of a fearsome Boer [fig. 5.11].⁴⁷ The difference was, as will be shown below, that such negative representations were increasingly outweighed by new and more positive ones.

That even Gladstone's woodcutting could be tarred with negative associations shows how popular assumptions were firmly set against his scholastic character (and how radical was the review of them which eventually took shape). As Matthew noted 'it took some time, both for Gladstone and for others, before it became clear what was to be the nature of the process which the Bulgarian Atrocities campaign had begun'.⁴⁸ A crucial process of negotiation and adaptation to these swiftly changing political and cultural conditions lay at the heart of Gladstone's own involvement in his changing image. The 1860s were crucial in determining the future direction of both his political career and of his attitude to representation but it was

him, "be a man of study and prayer, of the cell and the lamp, of the chair and the altar, shall I ever cast the burden from my shoulder and flee away and be at rest?" Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p. 392.

⁴⁵ 'Far From the Madding Crowd', *Judy*, 27 January 1875, no. 53.

⁴⁶ 'Good-Bye!' *Punch*, 30 January 1875.

⁴⁷ 'A Terrible Threat!' *Punch*, 11 October 1884. Cf. also *Ibid.*, 10 November 1884 re. the Navy and 16 September 1893, when G has retreated to the hills with Homer.

⁴⁸ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 287.

the late 1870s when the real turnaround was made and the rehabilitation of Gladstone as scholar fully achieved.

2.2 The Heroism of Brain Work and the Rehabilitation of Scholarship

During the 1880s and 1890s popular tributes to Gladstone contained not only references to his political activity in the past, but also provided unprecedented evidence from his literary and scholarly life to confirm his Liberal credentials. A speaker at a Derby Primitive Methodist conference in 1886 actually cited Gladstone's scholarly contribution 'to the nation and to the cause of humanity at large' before mentioning his political contribution.⁴⁹ And belief that Gladstone's actions, both political and scholarly, were motivated by a political desire to benefit the common people was widespread and continued after his death. As W. T. Stead explained,

The great secret of Mr. Gladstone's hold upon the nation's heart was the belief...that he was animated by a supreme regard for the welfare of the common people...He was a man whose intellect they respected, even if they did not understand. 'He is a capable man, a practical man, a ripe scholar, and an experienced statesman; if it is good enough for him, it is good enough for us.' So reasoned many men more or less logically.⁵⁰

Whereas Macaulay and Bagehot *et al.* saw Gladstone's scholarship as a detraction from his political work and (by implication) inferior to the work of men of letters, these later commentators represented it as a laudable extension of Gladstone's abilities from the restrictive bounds of Westminster high politics into a wider field. Gladstone now 'represented a set of *normative ideals* that defined authentic intellectual, cultural, and moral leadership in the public sphere'.⁵¹

Such examples suggest Gladstone's intellect and scholarship were major factors in his capture and maintenance of the trust of his supporters and, as was suggested in Chapter Four, that he had ultimately succeeded in convincing the public of the value of his intellectual concerns. But how was this trust engendered and maintained?

Central to this change was the politicisation and visualisation of Gladstone's private life in the late 1870s, which involved a conscious reinterpretation in Carlyean terms of firstly Gladstone's

⁴⁹ *Primitive Methodist* 8 (24 June 1886), p. 419. Quoted in Graham D. Goodlad, 'Gladstone and His Rivals: Popular Liberal Perceptions of the Party Leadership in the Political Crisis of 1885-6', in *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914*, ed. by E. F. Biagini and A. J. Reid (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), p. 179.

⁵⁰ W. T. Stead, *Gladstone 1809-1898: A Character Sketch with Portraits and Other Illustrations*. (London: Review of Reviews, [n.d.]), pp. 27-8.

⁵¹ Christopher E. Mauriello, 'The Strange Death of the Public Intellectual: Liberal Intellectual Identity and the 'Field of Cultural Production' in England, 1880 - 1920', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 6 (Spring 2001), 1-26, p. 4.

physical leisure activity and then his private mental pursuits.⁵² Despite the unpopularity of his scholarliness, Gladstone, as Peter Bailey has argued, epitomised one important characteristic of Victorian masculinity, that of characterising leisure as a change of work, which was exemplified 'in his retreat from the toils of office to the arduous pleasures of tree felling on his estate at Hawarden'.⁵³ Gladstone's purposeful identification of leisure with work rather than idleness was lifelong and was widely recognised,⁵⁴ but Bailey is right to highlight Gladstone's tree felling and its iconic significance (which has been well documented) as central to understanding later constructions of his masculinity.⁵⁵

2.3 The Hero Woodcutter

Woodcutting imagery drew on a long tradition of radical discourse but had also been used specifically by Carlyle.⁵⁶ In 'The Hero as Divinity', he wrote

Among the Northland sovereigns...I find some who got the title *Wood-cutter*, Forest-felling Kings. Much lies in that...I suppose the right good fighter was oftenest also the right good forest-feller, - the right good improver, discernor, doer and worker in every kind; for true valour, different enough from ferocity, is the basis of all.⁵⁷

It is no surprise that Gladstone 'noticed' this passage in his copy of Carlyle's lectures.⁵⁸ By choosing tree felling as the form of recreational labour in which to engage, Gladstone was directly associating himself with the Carlylean idealisation of the worker. Crucially he was also involved in visualising this representation. For example, in 1877 Gladstone and his eldest son Willy 'were photographed' wood cutting. The resulting images explicitly reveal an important process of negotiation being played out between Gladstone and the image makers.⁵⁹

One of these photographs [fig. 5.12] was definitely taken by Bolton photographer William Currey, who may have been one of 1400 Bolton trippers who had visited Hawarden two days before.⁶⁰ Two other photographs [figs 5.13-5.14] were clearly taken on the same occasion (although Travis Crosby dates one to the 1870s and one to 1890s, when it is obviously the

⁵² Cf. Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 41.

⁵³ Peter Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 25.

⁵⁴ Cf. e.g. James Bryce, 'Gladstone the Man: Written on the Occasion of the Centenary of His Birth', *The Outlook*, 12 February 1910, 201-6, p. 205.

⁵⁵ All G's biographers have explored the symbolic importance of his wood felling. Cf. e.g. E. F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 397ff.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

⁵⁷ Carlyle, *Heroes*, pp. 52-3. My thanks to David Bebbington for this reference.

⁵⁸ Marked with a single line.

⁵⁹ GD 6/8/77.

same tree and Gladstone is wearing the same clothes).⁶¹ One of these [fig. 5.13] shows Gladstone and Willy either side of a huge tree. They have been caught off guard by the photographer: Willy's head is out of focus and Gladstone obviously displays the stump of his left index finger, which was invariably concealed; both stare accusingly at the camera. The balance of power is clearly in favour of the photographer here. However Gladstone permitted the photographer at least two more exposures, during which exchange control over the imagery shifted. Gladstone deliberately posed himself amongst the woodchips: displayed the axe prominently, hid his mutilation and averted his gaze. By such a negotiated compromise, Gladstone succeeded in wresting to himself a significant element of control over these images: an important realignment considering how such representations take 'power from the photograph *to the image*,' on commencing 'circulation in the public domains'.⁶² These and similar images ensured 'working-class readers' and viewers 'found a great statesman and popular leader in the plain clothes of the labourer: a most suggestive vision for democratic fantasy, pregnant with precise moral and political values and as eloquent as a long speech'.⁶³

Presentation of Gladstone as a woodsman had obvious political and topical resonances but what has been less well documented is the way in which the power and symbolism of the woodsman impacted on representation Gladstone's domestic and scholarly life. For by concentrating on the woodsman in isolation, we have been in danger of 'viewing [that representation of] masculinity in isolation from, or as the simple opposite of, subordinated identities' and ignoring the possibility that 'the former may well gain enhanced potency by taking on the guise of the "other"'.⁶⁴

Gladstone's woodcutting became emblematic of myriad political cartoons, but it was also incorporated into other aspects of Gladstone's domestic life. In another photograph [fig. 5.15] Gladstone leans on a felled tree, axe over shoulder but this time fully dressed in jacket and tie and surrounded by his wife and family, photographed against the backdrop of their home. Thus the politicised message of the woodsman invigorates a simple domestic scene. The propriety of Gladstone's family life however needed little boosting, unlike his scholarly identity, which remained associated with those early negative representations discussed above. However, by the time of Gladstone's final retirement in 1894, his literary pursuits were being

⁶⁰ GD 4/8/77.

⁶¹ Travis L. Crosby, *The Two Mr Gladstones: A Study in Psychology and History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), Figs 6 & 15 between pp. 112-3.

⁶² Hearn, *Men in the Public Eye*, p. 188.

⁶³ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 397.

marketed quite differently. For example, G. W. E. Russell wrote that 'no sooner was this [political] work out of hand than the indefatigable workman turned his attention to graver studies'.⁶⁵ The implication that Gladstone's literary employment was physically exhausting associated it with nineteenth-century idealisations of manual work, exemplified by Carlyle's *Past and Present* (1843) and Ford Madox Brown's painting *Work* (1852-65) [fig. 5.16].⁶⁶ This directly challenged identifications of Gladstone's scholarship with weakness and effeminacy interpreting them instead in a more positive, useful and manly light.

The woodcutter representation was a crucial catalyst in changing depictions of Gladstone's scholarship; a process which is explicit in the work of Sydney Prior Hall (1842-1922). Two of Hall's paintings depict Gladstone reading. The first, *Gladstone Reading the Lesson in Hawarden Church* (1892) [fig. 5.17], records another of Gladstone's well-publicised activities.⁶⁷ There are similarities between Gladstone's pose in this image and the one he habitually adopted in parliament: hands resting on the lectern/dispatch box, body rigid and expression combative; there is clearly no tension inherent in this type of 'public' reading. The second image represents Gladstone privately reading in the Temple of Peace [fig. 5.18]. He is shown reclining on a chaise longue framed by the tools of scholarship and completely engrossed in reading. A stray book, momentarily balanced on his legs, completes the outline. Nothing could seem farther from the active woodsman than this reclining figure. However, a fascinating watercolour study for this painting [fig. 5.19], reveals a remarkable linkage between the two personae. The central figure is still Gladstone reclining, but instead of the besuited gentleman we are presented with the labouring woodcutter in shirt sleeves, displaying a brawny forearm reminiscent of the labourers in Brown's *Work*. Something of this figure's litheness is also present in the finished portrait, especially in the impressionistic brushwork which defines the thighs, but it is the study which is the key to understanding how the changing interpretation of Gladstone the reader depended on a successful blending of two apparently distinct and incompatible iconographies. It only remains now to examine the means by which this rehabilitation was achieved.

⁶⁴ Roper and Tosh, 'Introduction', p. 14.

⁶⁵ G. W. E. Russell, *William Ewart Gladstone*, 4th edn (1898), p. 270.

⁶⁶ Note the inclusion by Brown, in the painting and his exhibition notes, of the 'brain workers [who] seeming to be idle work, and are the cause of well-ordained work and happiness in others'. Colin Trodd, 'The Labourer Vision and the Realm of Value: Articulation of Identity in Ford Madox Brown's *Work*', in *Re-Framing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays*, ed. by E. Harding (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 61-80, p. 65.

⁶⁷ Visitors would regularly attend Hawarden Church to hear G reading.

2.4 The Powerful Reader: Autonomy, Withdrawal and Innovation

Hall's portrait formed one of an increasing number of images (especially after 1879) that presented Gladstone reading in his Hawarden Library or Downing Street Study. The proliferation of this category of image was due to a clear alteration in Gladstone's treatment of artists, which built on his re-negotiation of the boundaries of artistic control with photographers like Currey during the 1870s.

Gladstone was increasingly irritated by the controlling conditions imposed on him by artists and, as he had done with photographers, set about deliberately changing the terms under which he allowed artists to paint him.⁶⁸ He increasingly only permitted informal sittings invariably located in his Library or Study.⁶⁹ Mary Drew asserted that this was a sudden decision dictated by his dissatisfaction with George Frederick Watts' final portrait but it is clear that Gladstone evolved his new technique gradually and explicitly to rehabilitate his scholarly persona.⁷⁰ Gladstone was aware of the pioneering and unconventional nature of what he was doing and how his relationship with artists was changing.⁷¹ Thus he described giving 'quasi sittings' to John McLure Hamilton, J. T. Thaddeus and noted in 1893 that 'Prince T[roubetskoi] came to paint' but not interfere.⁷² This mirrors his moderated language when referring to photographic sittings, for example 'Sat (a kind of sitting) to Mr Holland of Hull'.⁷³ The novelty of Gladstone's approach was also fully appreciated by the artists themselves and was especially well attested by John McLure Hamilton (1853-1936).⁷⁴

Gladstone had agreed Hamilton could paint in the Temple of Peace in the mornings if he did not ask for formal sittings. He thus represented Gladstone in natural poses, reading and writing, in a series of drawings and three portraits (1890, Musée d'Orsay; 1892, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and c. 1896, Hawarden Castle).⁷⁵ Hamilton's series is dominated by the Library setting and Gladstone's work within it and his description of painting such private and domestic scenes alerts us to the potential impact they may have had on contemporaries.

⁶⁸ Cf. e.g. GD 20/7/74, 17/2/75, 19/1/82.

⁶⁹ Cf. e.g. GD 10/9/77ff, 6/3/86 and Lucy Masterman, ed., *Mary Gladstone (Mrs. Drew) Her Diaries and Letters* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1930), p. 401.

⁷⁰ Cf. J. McClure Hamilton, *Men I Have Painted: With a Foreword by Mrs Drew* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1921), pp. 7-8.

⁷¹ Cf. Piper, *The English Face*, p. 216.

⁷² GD 3/9/90, 7/11/93, 10/11/93, 14/7/93.

⁷³ GD 16/11/86.

⁷⁴ Joseph Rowley's daughters introduced the American Hamilton to the Gladstones at Hawarden in 1890. Rooms were engaged for him at a Queensferry Inn where, he records, 'the most momentous month of my life, in some respects, was passed'. Hamilton, *Men I Have Painted*, p. 41. Cf. also R. J. Alperin, *Art's Anglo-American Paper Lion: John McLure Hamilton's Untold Story* (Philadelphia: Junius Inc, 1993). Please note all references to information in this book require corroboration. It contains much information only some of which is useful or reliable.

Hamilton described himself ‘inspired and invigorated’ by the experience and overwhelmed by ‘a tumult of ideas’ inspired by the sight of Gladstone reading.

The man I was painting, what he stood for in the Empire, his picturesqueness, his surroundings, the contrast of great power and extreme simplicity, and above all, to me, the ease and comfort of working before one who seemed to be absolutely unconscious of my presence.⁷⁶

Hamilton’s iconic interpretation of Gladstone reading affirms the way in which such domestic and scholarly imagery could effectively be politicised. The contrast they offered to mainstream political representation ensured they could both challenge and surprise the viewer [fig. 5.20]. By 1890 Gladstone’s reputation was gigantic and yet Hamilton stressed none of his familiar political characteristics. The power of his representations lies in the opportunity they afford the viewer to gaze on the apparently unconscious, private behaviour of a public man. There was great demand for such visualised access.⁷⁷ As the photography pioneer, William Fox Talbot observed ‘what a dénouement we should have if we could suppose the secrets of the darkened chamber to be revealed by the testimony of the imprinted paper’.⁷⁸ Hamilton himself encouraged this appetite for privileged insight by underlining the fact that Gladstone lived ‘in two spheres, a public and a private, the former for and with the people, the other in and for his family’.⁷⁹ His representations gained much potency by consciously straddling the boundaries between these spheres and offering a wider public exclusive access to a private, family world. Hamilton’s vision was endorsed by Mary Drew, who confirmed his work’s naturalness and truth to life.

The very first glance at the famous portrait (now in the Luxembourg) was arresting and delightful. For there was the man exactly as we knew him – exactly as day after day we saw him...Here was no fancy picture, but one of familiar everyday use. Precious for all time, for us and for those that come after us, the man as he actually was – intent – unconscious.⁸⁰

Mary identifies the representation of the private family man as the main reason for her approbation. However, her prediction of its relevance to ‘all time’ and ‘for those that come

⁷⁵ Hamilton, *Men I Have Painted*, p. 44.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 47-8.

⁷⁷ Note Peter Funnell’s reference to the popularity of “‘artist at home literature” of the period’. Peter Funnell, ‘Millais’s Reputation and the Practice of Portraiture’, in *Millais: Portraits*, ed. by P. Funnell and M. Warner (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1999), 11-35, p. 20.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 145.

⁷⁹ Hamilton, *Men I Have Painted*, p. 60.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Ibid., pp. 7-8.

after' confirms the reading figure is to be understood as a universal and politically engaged image.

But how unconscious was Gladstone of the artist? The activities of reading and writing depicted in these representations clearly signal Gladstone's detachment and withdrawal. In all Hamilton's images, as well as those by Hall, A. E. Emslie and Troubetskoi, and also in contemporary photographs depicting similar scenes [fig. 5.21], Gladstone is completely absorbed in his own work, apparently unaware of artist and viewer. But Hamilton, unlike Mary Drew, suspected Gladstone was 'always conscious of what transpired around him without in the least appearing to be'.⁸¹ And in this he was supported by Frank Hill, editor of the *Daily News* who was certain Gladstone's 'demeanour[.]...his gestures and changes of his posture and play of countenance, though not addressed to the lookers-on...are yet shaped, and informed and controlled by the consciousness of hundreds of watchful eyes and commenting tongues'.⁸²

A telling example of this consciousness dates from 1896 when Gladstone was photographed for the *Westminster Gazette's* account of St Deiniol's Library.

The G.O.M., with face as ruddy from the crisp air as an apple...with eagle-eyes, taking in everything around...walks erect, and looks in better health than he has done for some years past.

Has he promised to be specially photographed for the Westminster account of the Library scheme? Very well, then it must be so. Stand here, at the door? Hat off or on? Look at those yellow leaves? And there he stands, hat in hand, motionless; the Octogenarian, to whom to be photographed is anything but a pleasure, but who subjects his own wishes to those of others.⁸³

Initially, allusion is clearly made to the popular image of the political Gladstone – eagle-eyed and vigorous. The account then given of Gladstone's behaviour is remarkable. He immediately distances himself from the implications of the publicity exercise in which he is involved and adopts a passive attitude to the photographer. But immediately following the photo opportunity, he unilaterally withdraws into the Library where he settles down to read in full view of the Press outside, who subsequently describe him as having 'an expression of perfect repose and peace about him, [as] he sits quite absorbed'.⁸⁴ Gladstone thus successfully withdrew, through an act of reading, from participation in an obviously staged episode into a

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 47.

⁸² [Frank Hill], 'Mr. Gladstone – Actor and Orator' in Harry Furniss, *Some Victorian Men* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1924), p. 225.

⁸³ Hulda Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days: A Study of Mr. Gladstone in Retirement, with Some Account of St. Deiniol's Library and Hostel*, Westminster Gazette Library (London: Westminster Gazette, 1896), p. 129.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 130.

more ambiguous and powerful position. By observing him supposedly unawares through the Library window, the Press claimed greater accuracy of representation and privileged access. In turn Gladstone demonstrated non-involvement in publicity whilst in fact maintaining significant control over his representation.

Gladstone's withdrawal into his study and his reading shows him exercising that autonomy, which Carlyle and others celebrated in male writers and thinkers in the nineteenth century,⁸⁵ and which was identified in Chapter Four as fundamental to Gladstone's understanding of how successfully to combine his political and intellectual lives from the time of his political return. Gladstone was no longer the Oxford stooge nor even a Party man. He was an autonomous individual living and working to an extent outside institutions – a fact made explicit by representations of him in his *own Library*.

Links were made between the work Gladstone did in Downing Street and at home. Hamilton represented Gladstone similarly in both Hawarden and London and Prince Troubetskoi represented the scholar in Downing Street [fig. 5. 22]. Hulda Friederichs emphasised that the 'brain-work' in which Gladstone engaged was inspired by the same qualities that, when expressed in a public sphere, made Gladstone the object of popular veneration. His Library was represented as a place of useful work rather than as a symbol of privilege or a scholar's ivory tower. The 'People's William' was continuing the work of popular liberalism albeit from inside a Castle and/or a Library and ultimately the St Deiniol's foundation was also represented as the fruit of his popular Liberal agenda. This Library, Friederichs stated, had been founded 'on the broadest and most liberal lines' providing an explicit political impetus to a largely private action.⁸⁶ She stressed that even the books remaining at the castle stayed publicly available.⁸⁷ Gladstone is presented throughout as a moderate, preferring simplicity to ostentation and by implication, political moderation to extremism.

Although this account was written following Gladstone's final retirement, the same message was being widely disseminated whilst Gladstone was still in office. A photograph of Gladstone, circa 1885, in the 'Temple of Peace' [fig. 5.23] shows him busily writing at his

⁸⁵ Cf. Martin A. Danahay, *A Community of One: Masculine Autobiography and Autonomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

⁸⁶ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, pp. 109-10. The use of 'liberal' here could be read as signifying merely G's generosity. However, taken in the context of the rest of Friederich's account, it seems clear reference to G's political cast of mind is also fully intended.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 37. Mary Drew described the motivation behind St. Deiniol's in similar terms, stating that it was Gladstone's intention 'to benefit his fellow creatures...to bring together readers who had no books and books who had no readers'. Mary Drew, *Acton, Gladstone, and Others* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd, 1924), p. 39.

political desk. The cluttered desk and full wastepaper basket testify to the intensity of his work. This concentrated activity contrasts with the stillness of the surrounding space and supplies its dynamic focus. Some photographs of the Temple of Peace included the figure of Gladstone as an imposed drawing, for example in the photograph by Catherall and Pritchard of Chester reproduced in *Black and White's* 'Gladstone Memorial Number' [fig. 5.24].⁸⁸ Such simulation was thought necessary because it was important that Gladstone's scholarly activity undertaken in 'retirement' should be represented as active and beneficial to the public interest, an end which would not be served by illustrating the Library as an empty and unused room. This above all indicated the importance of the Library space itself as a defining environment for later representations of Gladstone, giving it both contemporary relevance and an indomitable individuality. The book as representative image of knowledge was generally recognised throughout society; books, scrolls and the ephemera of scholarship were the stock in trade of the portraitist and studio photographer. But its sheer universality threatened ultimately to render it meaningless, displaying subjects in thrall to the vagaries of convention and mere fashion. There are plenty of such images of Gladstone, using the book merely as a prop and little different to equivalent photographs of his contemporaries.⁸⁹ There was however a marked difference between these and the photographs and portraits showing Gladstone among his own books. It is true that the books themselves usually remain unnamed and still function as representations of universal knowledge and scholarship. But these images strongly emphasise Gladstone's individuality and autonomy.⁹⁰ The interiors of the Temple of Peace and Downing Street were being used 'as personal expression of the soul, private mirror, and public expression of the owner's personality'. The interior and contents operate 'as the representation of its owner to the outside world'.⁹¹ They were also clearly 'addressed to a public', establishing Gladstone's status as collector, reader and scholar by the utilisation of an identifiable environment.⁹²

Images representing Gladstone actively reading or engaging in study undergirded two other specific aspects of Gladstone's later political life. The first, which developed during the

⁸⁸ 'Gladstone Memorial Number', *Black and White*, May 1898, p. 35. The untouched photograph was used in T. Archer and A. T. Story, *William Ewart Gladstone and His Contemporaries: Seventy Years of Social and Political Progress*, Revised and Extended Memorial edn, 4 vols (London: Gresham Publishing Co., 1899), 4, vol. 2, p. 50.

⁸⁹ This superficiality was noted by *Punch*, 11 May 1889, p. 226. A portrait's subject comments on his book "This is a stupid book! There's nothing in it!"

⁹⁰ Hearn draws an important distinction between 'the *general* category of the "public self" of men in the public domains; and the *particular* "public selves" of particular men. Cf. Hearn, *Men in the Public Eye*, p. 210.

⁹¹ Tag Gronberg, 'The Inner Man: Interiors and Masculinity in Early Twentieth-Century Vienna', *Oxford Art Journal* 24 (2001), 67-88, p. 78. Cf. also *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Midlothian campaign and which was introduced in Chapter Four, was the expectation that the people would engage intellectually with the theories which legitimised politics. As Colin Matthew ably demonstrated, popular veneration of Gladstone as a leader was significantly supported by and existed side by side with serious study of his speeches. And as Biagini confirms 'the latter was a matter of real study, which took place *after* the meetings, in the workers' homes or in other social centres, where the printed version of the speeches became the subject of long conversations and discussions'.⁹³ It was such a culture, 'encouraging a new and high standard of political awareness, discussion, and citizenship' that Gladstone was deliberately fostering at Midlothian and also in his persistent promulgation of a reading persona.⁹⁴ As well as printed images, Gladstone bookmarks were also produced, which were clearly designed to encourage a direct and intimate association between the matter read and Gladstone's person and politics.⁹⁵ Such bookmarks were produced during Gladstone's campaign for Home Rule, which introduces the related second aspect. It was during the 1880s, when Gladstone was presenting himself increasingly with the universal book, that his intellectual efforts were dominated by an intensifying belief in the need to rediscover for society the importance of universal humanistic and religious truth. In the early twentieth century, New Liberal commentators attributed the successful authority and intellectual leadership of Victorian representative men to 'their ability to appeal to a universal human subject through common humanistic truths'.⁹⁶ Gladstone in particular was preoccupied by a belief that English society was at worst ignorant of and at best misunderstood its history and tirelessly encouraged its study, in both its totality and in its particular relationship with the Irish problem.⁹⁷

The role of time was more generally significant. It has been noted that 'one of the most precarious moments in the reproduction of masculinity is the transference of power to the succeeding generation'.⁹⁸ At this point in Gladstone's career, when he saw himself as one 'who must shortly quit the scene of life', he felt an increased need to avoid the fate of those limited by sterile intellectualism, such as Casaubon and Wendover. As Chapters One and Three showed, Gladstone had always conceptualised book collecting and ownership in terms of

⁹³ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 393.

⁹⁴ Colin Matthew in M. R. D. Foot and H. C. G. Matthew, eds., *The Gladstone Diaries: With Prime Ministerial Correspondence*, 14 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968-96), vol. 9, p. lxi.

⁹⁵ One came up for auction at Bonham's in July 1987. Lot 137. 'A rare 'Gladstone' Bookmark, the stamped-out silver figure engraved with the likeness of Gladstone delivering a speech, engraved to reverse with W. E. Gladstone, M. P., London 1889'. NPG (Heinz Archive).

⁹⁶ Mauriello, 'Death of the Public Intellectual', p. 7.

⁹⁷ Cf. e.g. G to J. H. Bridges, 3 July 1886, BL GP Add MS 44548 fol. 108.

human interaction and the generational transmission of knowledge. Thus when Hannah More gave him her *Sacred Dramas* she 'graciously accompanied it with a little speech...which...began: "As you have just come into the world, and I am just going out of it"'.⁹⁹ And Gladstone replicated the action by bequeathing his books to St Deiniol's Library. This was the ultimate expression of his aim to 'promote thrift and obviate waste in the...mental effort' of society by promoting a union of practical work and intellectual endeavour in each autonomous individual for the achievement of a morally renewed polity.¹⁰⁰ In *Universitas Hominum* (1887) he wrote

It seems to me that what we *must* do in the world of action, we at least *may* do in the world of thought; those of us, I mean, whose branch of labour belongs to or includes that world. Take any branch of mental effort, be it ...educative, creative, inquisitive, or materially productive, none should be pursued without a purpose, and all real purpose, though it may be atomic, is permanent and indestructible. All bear upon human relations and the conditions of life, and each...should have its place in the great design. The farmer, said Mr. Emerson, is man upon the farm. Each writer is bettering (if he be not worsening) the thought, the frame, or the experience of man, upon the subject on which he writes, works, or teaches; he is enlarging the text; he is extending the bounds of the common inheritance.¹⁰¹

Gladstone was at last writing, albeit in an explicitly Christian way, like Carlyle had done forty years before when he had described the function of the man of letters and his interaction with society. Gladstone's reference to Emerson allows us to integrate fully his later management of visual representation and his understanding of its potential with arguments offered in Chapter Four. Gladstone believed that autonomy was of prime importance in both his later political and scholarly endeavours. Both had a public moral agenda, the central aim of which was to advance human knowledge and communicate the results to the following generation.

In this way he shared a purpose with Hannah More, whose gift of *Sacred Dramas* to the young William was a gesture towards extending the bounds of the common inheritance akin to that he was to make at the end of his life by the 'publication' of most of his Library. Ironically perhaps, the *Sacred Dramas* did not make the transition from Castle to St Deiniol's; however they were among the remaining books in Gladstone's Temple at his death and so formed part of the last, and in many ways ultimate, politicised representation of Gladstone, for it was there that his body was first laid after his death, robed in academic dress and surrounded by his Library. This

⁹⁸ Roper and Tosh, 'Introduction', p. 17.

⁹⁹ J. Brooke and M Sorensen, eds., *The Prime Minister's Papers: W. E. Gladstone*, 4 vols (London: HMSO, 1971), 1: Autobiographica, p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ W. E. Gladstone, 'Universitas Hominum. Or, the Unity of History', *North American Review* 373 (December 1887), 589-602, p. 589.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 602.

survey of the history of the changing representations of Gladstone's scholarship ends by looking at Gladstone's death and the significant role the Library and the politicised image of the scholar played in the theatre surrounding the event.

3 The Body in the Library: Death and the Transference of Knowledge

Following Gladstone's death in the early hours of 19 May 1898, his body was taken on a lengthy and elaborate progress from deathbed to burial. This journey included three periods of lying in state and was visually recorded throughout. This imaging spanned the multifarious public/private representational categories that had been established during his life and confirmed Gladstone's Library as the ultimate site of his public and private identity.

3.1 Private Post Mortems?

The first representations of Gladstone after death [figs 5.25 – 5.27] were produced by William Blake Richmond, an artist who had painted Gladstone twice in life. His was a private tribute commissioned by Gladstone's family,¹⁰² which followed well-established conventions in post mortem representation.¹⁰³ They concentrate on the head, shoulders and hands and feature no accessories. The bedclothes, represented cobweb-like in one of the chalk drawings, are drawn up closely towards the neck. They do not shy away from representing the altered, sunken features, but lay them on a flat plane with minimal background, equivalent to the vignette technique common in post-mortem photography. There are no known photographs of this scene; one was published of the bed in which Gladstone died but after the body had been removed to its lying in state [fig. 5.28].¹⁰⁴ Richmond does not seem to have drawn the body at this second stage; his role, as a trusted friend, was to produce these intimate images in order to capture the truly private and familial Gladstone before his body was displayed to the public.

Several days after death, Gladstone's remains were removed to Hawarden Church and from thence to Westminster Hall in London. But before either of these displays, Gladstone's body underwent a lying in state in the Temple of Peace, an event which constituted the most elaborate, iconic and revealing stage of his journey to the grave and underlines the triumphant rehabilitation of Gladstone the scholar.

¹⁰² Cf. Simon Reynolds, *William Blake Richmond: An Artist's Life 1842 - 1921* (Norwich: Michael Russell, 1995), p. 271.

¹⁰³ Cf. Audrey Linkman, 'Passing Trade: Death and the Family Album in Britain 1860-1900', *The Photohistorian* 123 (September 1998), pp. 18-27.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. also J. Ewing Ritchie, *The Life and Times of William Ewart Gladstone*, 5 vols (London: W. Mackenzie, 1898), vol 5, p. 1436.

3.2 Rest in (the Temple of) Peace

A series of photographs was taken of Gladstone's body in the 'Temple of Peace' by J. H. Spencer of Chester and show the corpse reposing on a couch-like bier with its head towards the west [figs 5.29-5.30]. These are clearly not private or personal images. In contrast with Richmond's drawings, the trappings and background of the scene dominate at least half the available image space, exemplifying an important distinction between post-mortem and lying in state portraits, the category into which these images most closely fit. The public display of the body at a lying in state presented the opportunity for political statement. This was usually conveyed by the dress that covered the corpse, the furnishings on and around the bier and the decoration of the room where both went on display.¹⁰⁵

Three important characteristics of this scene stand out. Firstly, these images lack explicit political (or religious) iconography. Secondly, their political messages are mediated through the iconography of Gladstone as reader and scholar; in explicit contrast to the scene Richmond drew, Spencer's subject forcefully exhibited this by then familiar iconography. Gladstone is dressed in his doctoral robes recalling J. E. Millais's powerful images of him in the same dress, which privileged Gladstone's vital and animalistic qualities and the dominance of his political persona.¹⁰⁶ However, the reclining figure is also reminiscent of S. P. Hall's Gladstone reading on his chaise longue. Gladstone's continued presence in his own Library with all its associations of scholarship, retirement and serious work bolster the honorary status of the D. C. L. whilst the robes are a potent reminder that Gladstone's identity as a scholar has been fully recognised and publicly acclaimed.¹⁰⁷ Thirdly, this tableau establishes an insistent harmony between the body and its location: for example, the study's name is reflected in the Latin text supporting Gladstone's head: 'REQUIESCIT IN PACE': Rest in (the Temple of) Peace. Gladstone is represented reposing in a room that had become popularly synonymous with his position as autonomous Liberal sage, a point made by the following description of the scene:

¹⁰⁵ Linkman, 'Passing Trade', p. 22.

¹⁰⁶ The two versions of this portrait plus a studio photograph are reproduced in Funnell, 'Millais's Reputation', pp. 176-7.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. John Wolffe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion, and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 186, 288.

Before his remains were handed over to the authorities to lie in state so near to the scene of his many triumphs, a humbler but perhaps more beautiful lying in state took place at Hawarden, in the room which had been so closely identified with his home-life, and so much written and spoken about as the Temple of Peace, now surely the temple of his peace. There he lay on an extemporized bier, with his scarlet doctoral robes about him, his noble face, spiritualized by suffering nobly borne, so calm and beautiful in the tender spring light, the thin hands clasped upon his breast in token that his work was done: there he lay while the people of the village and the neighbourhood, rich and poor, people who had known and looked up to him so long, entered and gazed and passed reverently out; 'the rough labourer coming in with heavy boots and a stout cudgel in his hand, and going away with a tear trickling down his brown cheek; the bent old man holding his hat in his hands, and tottering up with infirm step; the little children, clinging to their mothers' garments; the lads and lasses, - rosy-cheeked and solemn - they were all there to take a last farewell'.

Nor were these all. Many came long distances, especially from the north, to get a glimpse of the face of him of whom they had heard so much and by whom they had been so greatly benefited. So all day long the crowd surged in and out, silent and awe-struck, until the shades of evening fell, when the last group passed lingeringly away, casting a final farewell look at the white, still face...None who saw that lying in state will ever forget it.¹⁰⁸

This description indicates the subtle, but insistent political iconography in the arrangement of the Library space and the body's place within it. The room is cast as a potent symbol of the people's perceived knowledge of Gladstone the man. It signifies the pervasive belief in a personal relationship with Gladstone, fostered by myriad images and descriptions of the place where he spent much of his time.¹⁰⁹ The fact that the mourners had a privileged opportunity to view the body itself, not the closed coffin, is highlighted. Many would not have seen Gladstone at such close range and this again allows the author to underline his status as ultimate man of the people. 'Everyman' comes to view the body and Liberal progress is represented and endorsed by the procession of ages from the child to the old man. But above all it is the figure of the weeping labourer who both attests Gladstone's support for the working man and asserts the validity of heroic manual labour, paying respectful tribute not only to Gladstone the hero-woodcutter but also to Gladstone the independently-minded 'brainworker', the personification accepted and favoured, crucially, by a popular audience. It is testimony to the ultimate success and significance of 'Gladstone as scholar', problematic and unpopular for

¹⁰⁸ Archer and Story, *Gladstone and His Contemporaries*, pp. 461-2.

¹⁰⁹ Note how David Williamson testified that 'most people know the systematic arrangement of the room, with its well-filled shelves and its tables, devoted either to correspondence, to politics, or to literature'. David Williamson, *Gladstone: The Man: A Non-Political Biography*, 2nd edn (London: James Bowden, 1898), p. 81. This was as evident in Welsh as well as English literature. Griffith Ellis wrote 'Nid oes un ystafell un Nghymru yn fwy adnabyddus na'r ystafell hon' (There's no room in Wales as well known as this one). Griffith Ellis, *William Ewart Gladstone: Eifynydd A'i Waith [His Life and Work]* (Gwrecsam: Cyhoeddiedig Gan Hughes A'i Fab, Heol Estyn, 1898), p. 434. For further comment on British national responses to G's death, cf. Wolfe, *Great Deaths*, pp. 6, 113, 121, 176, 284.

so many years, that this image was used as the most appropriate summary representation of his identity and his achievements the last time his body was presented to the public.

Conclusion

Gladstone's frequently opaque intellectualism and its unpopular associations with outmoded views of church and state had the potential to alienate the masses as well as his own contemporaries and intellectual equals. And yet the above reactions to his death underline how ultimately potent were images of his learning. The body of the active Gladstone situated within his Library had proved a convenient and effective symbol of his intellectual stature and his consequent heightened political credentials. The image of the (dead) body in the Library served as an equally powerful and self-reflexive image. Gladstone's presence in the place the public had come to associate with him in his last years provided an important continuity with their perceptions of his persona. Their trust in him had been well placed and was now cemented in the changelessness of death. It was a powerful legacy to those who would claim his political mantle.

The Library can thus be seen ultimately as the central locus for Gladstone's whole existence, shorthand symbol for his liberal, democratic and above all autonomous activity in later life and the appropriate resting-place for a period of stasis between the struggle of death and the final leave taking. Prominent and fashionable men of letters like Bagehot and Macaulay had concentrated their attacks on ridiculing Gladstone's verbose literary style. They had predicted that this, above all, would prevent Gladstone succeeding in politics despite his other obvious accomplishments and might even make him dangerous if his oratory were misinterpreted by the masses. However, Gladstone came clearly to appreciate the political value of being able, in Rosebery's words, 'to say very cautious things in a very bold manner' and to turn this apparent shortcoming to his political advantage.¹¹⁰ As for the masses, although he maintained his private devotion to the Oxford ideal to the end of his life, Gladstone and Liberal publicists increasingly saw the political advantage of re-casting his public image in a Carlylean mould. This involved not only images of Gladstone involved in manual labour and homely pursuits, but also of his scholarly activities. It is clear that these literary images had great popular impact. These changes in attitude and representation were clearly spearheaded by Gladstone himself; it was not an official propaganda campaign orchestrated and managed by the Liberal Party *per se*. Gladstone took control of and managed his public image; his diverse champions only later

¹¹⁰ Hutton, 'Mr. Gladstone', p. 619.

rushed in to work with the grain of Gladstone's own self-(re)making. As a result, by the end of his life, Gladstone's scholarship and his frequent periods of seclusion in the study at Hawarden featured regularly in published material both celebrating his life and career and actively promoting the policies he supported. As we have seen, anti-Gladstone forces continued to try and make capital from his other-worldly intellectualism. However, these attempts proved less and less effective, especially when Gladstone's supporters ceased to be on the defensive about this aspect of his persona and, following his lead, integrated it fully into a representation of a different, 'truer' kind of political figure who transcended ordinary party politics.

For the first three-quarters of his professional life, Gladstone's scholarly persona was regarded as weakening his political impact and credibility. In the last quarter of his life, Gladstone's scholarship, his reading habits and his Library were given an unprecedented amount of popular coverage, in the press, in popular biography and in iconography. After his death, the hallmarks of his Oxford education, which had been ridiculed by witty men of letters, were the objects of veneration by respectful Hawardeners who viewed Gladstone's body in the 'Temple of Peace. There his body remained, soliciting universal recognition for his autonomous and 'manly task of expanding scientific knowledge'.¹¹¹ That he could be described after his death as 'eminently a man of practice, always occupied in grappling with the problems of the moment' even though he was 'active-minded and fond of study' represented a remarkable rehabilitation of image.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities*, p. 41.

¹¹² Bryce, 'Gladstone the Man', p. 202.

SECTION THREE: ENLARGING THE TEXT

CHAPTER SIX ❖ GLADSTONE, LIBERAL THOUGHT AND *LUX MUNDI*

Introduction

We turn now to investigate Gladstone's reading and library building during the final years of his life. This final section offers a sustained explanation of the place of St Deiniol's Library within the wider context of Gladstone's life and thought. It is rooted in a revised understanding of his later religious attitudes and takes, as its frame of reference, his expressed commitment to 'enlarging the text' of human knowledge, both religious and historical.

Richard Shannon described St Deiniol's Library as Gladstone's 'bastion of defence' against contemporary attacks on orthodox Christianity,¹ expanding Philip Magnus's claim that the Library's 'purpose was to promote "divine learning" *and to combat unbelief*'.² As such, Shannon argued, St Deiniol's was 'a concept quite characteristic of and conformable to Gladstone's long-held prepossessions'. Whilst rightly emphasising the link between St Deiniol's and Gladstone's Christianity, Shannon erroneously represented Gladstone's religiosity as aggressively conservative and the Library as its defensive outgrowth. This chapter challenges this characterisation in the light of Gladstone's reading, annotation and writings. It emphasises and explores a fundamental but oft ignored aspect of Gladstone's religious attitudes: his increasing sympathy with Broad Church and Liberal Anglican thought and, as a result, is able to offer a new and more coherent explanation of the Library's intellectual and theological context.

1 Gladstone and Religion

1.1 The Great Christian Statesman?

Gladstone's religiosity excited much comment during his life and has been the focus of extensive scholarly analysis since his death but has proved a perennial problem to biographers and historians. It so complicated negotiations over Gladstone's official biography that his family instructed the agnostic Morley to avoid religion, a prohibition he

¹ Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister, 1865-1898* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), p. 477.

² My emphasis. Philip Magnus, *Gladstone: A Biography* (London: John Murray, 1954), p. 429.

broadly but not entirely observed.³ And the topic remains problematic; one recent commentator has even suggested it is unfathomable.⁴ The question of why this should be is both an interesting and important one.

Gladstone always forthrightly declared his Christian faith and this openness provoked varying reactions from his contemporaries. Many admired his conviction; on his death his political rival Lord Salisbury chose to describe Gladstone as ‘a great Christian statesman’.⁵ But, as Chapter Four demonstrated, others were not so understanding. Gladstone’s faith was an easy target for political attacks. He was often mercilessly ribbed and referred to by epithets such as ‘Holy Willie’.⁶ Clearly many contemporaries were profoundly uncomfortable with Gladstone’s open-hearted religiosity and reacted by exaggerating and mocking it.

The fact that analysis of Gladstone’s Christianity has proved both less popular and, with notable exceptions, less penetrating than analysis of his politics suggests a degree of this discomfort has survived. Several detailed studies, each covering sections of Gladstone’s life, have made substantial contributions to our understanding,⁷ but general summaries have proved less satisfying and a sustained analysis of the role of Gladstone’s faith from 1875 has not yet been published.⁸ One important historiographical consequence of this is our limited understanding of the motives behind Gladstone’s St Deiniol’s foundation.

1.2 The Problems of Analysis

Biographers have never seriously questioned that Christianity formed the touchstone of Gladstone’s world-view: his own writings and contemporary opinion leave no doubt. However, as Chapter Four showed, there has been reluctance amongst commentators to take such rhetoric seriously or to analysis it confidently, both reflecting the conspicuous

³ Peter J. Jagger, *Gladstone: The Making of a Christian Politician: The Personal Religious Life and Development of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1832* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1991), p. xiii.

⁴ Michael Lynch, '[Review of Jagger (ed.) (1985)]', *Victorian Studies* (Spring 1986), p. 489.

⁵ The *Guardian*, 25 May 1898, 53.1, p. 800.

⁶ Cf. for example *New Gleanings from Gladstone*, (Edinburgh: Blackwood & Sons, [1880]), pp. [15-16].

⁷ Cf. Jagger, *Christian Politician*. Perry Butler, *Gladstone: Church, State and Tractarianism: A Study of His Religious Ideas and Attitudes, 1809-1859* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). J. P. Parry, *Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party, 1867-1875* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Alec Vidler, *The Orb and the Cross: A Normative Study in the Relations of Church and State with Reference to Gladstone's Early Writings* (London: SPCK, 1945).

⁸ David Bebbington’s 1993 biography is the only general survey that really accords G’s religious opinions the same weight as his political ideology.

disjunction between our religio-cultural milieu and that inhabited by the Victorians and an unwillingness to acknowledge tension in Gladstone's religious persona.⁹

Efforts to trace and interpret the pattern of Gladstone's theological views and alliances in the late 1880s, when he was formulating his library project, have proved equally difficult. Even Colin Matthew, whose understanding of Gladstone was deep and intricate, provided an inadequate exposition of his religion during this period. For instance, of Gladstone's attitude to the doctrine of hell,¹⁰ he concluded 'both the arguments of the secularists and the defences of the Broad-Churchmen were instinctively upsetting to Gladstone, whose theological inclinations (if not his eventual intellectual position) were always profoundly conservative'. This argument is profoundly contradictory. Matthew perceived incompatibility between Gladstone's 'theological inclinations', which he identified as High Church and dogmatic, and an 'eventual intellectual position' coloured by a liberal tendency 'to stress points of agreement rather than of fault'.¹¹ By suggesting incompatibility between High and Broad Church perspectives Matthew implied Gladstone was guilty of theological false consciousness.

It is important to position Gladstone clearly within the late Victorian theological scene but not force him into an inflexible academic model. Matthew himself warned of 'the danger of trying to extrapolate from a fundamentally religious mind those features of Gladstone's opinions, writings, and actions which fit the categories of twentieth-century secularism'.¹² Many sources indicate Gladstone was an orthodox theologian of a broadly High Church type, who held ecclesiastical tradition and structures in high regard. But such generalisations do not substantially advance our knowledge and, if applied too rigidly, can prove seriously misleading. For example, A. N. Wilson's recent description of Gladstone's 'Tractarian narrowness' in intellectual outlook is completely wrong-headed.¹³ The High Church party was not homogeneous; individuals with very different casts of mind were involved in perpetuating and adapting the Tractarian inheritance, which produced both variety (and not a little confusion, as we shall see in Chapter Seven).

⁹ For an example of this discomfort cf. Peter Hinchliff, *God and History: Aspects of British Theology 1875-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 20-1.

¹⁰ For further commentary on Victorian attitudes to the afterlife cf. Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians: A Study of the Nineteenth Century Theological Controversies Concerning Eternal Punishment and the Future Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974). Michael Wheeler, *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

¹¹ H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 260.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 265.

¹³ A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Hutchinson, 2002), p. 348.

Whilst Pusey and Liddon promoted narrow and exclusive interpretations, Keble did not. Gladstone was far more liberal than many of his High Church contemporaries - his understanding of 'orthodoxy' and 'unorthodoxy' were definitely not clear cut - and liberalising tendencies were not exclusively Broad Church traits: not all theologians with High Church credentials reacted negatively to the implications of social and cultural change. Evidently, existing scholarly uncertainty requires further exploration of the nature and implications of what one early biographer called Gladstone's 'broad and tolerant sympathy' in religion.¹⁴

1.3 Gladstone and Broad Church Ideas

Roy Jenkins described the Broad Church/Liberal party in the Anglican Church, somewhat flippantly, as 'the religious beneficiaries of the Glorious Revolution' whose 'cool rationalism', fanned by the philosophy of John Locke and Bishop Butler, encouraged them to view religion as 'an affair of sense, morals (within reason) and good behaviour'. He concluded categorically that such an approach

never held much appeal for Gladstone. It was too cool and detached for him, and it was not religious liberalism but the rival enthusiasms of the Apostolic and the Evangelical Churches which... 'ceased not fighting, east and west, on the marches of [his] breast'.¹⁵

Whilst it is difficult to generalise about nineteenth-century Anglican Broad Church opinion, those associated with it shared a central (essentially Platonic) epistemological belief that 'all truth', whether empirical or metaphysical, scientific or theological, 'originated in God and had a divine character'.¹⁶ All types of truth had to be engaged with and no truth was better or more certain than any other. And, despite Jenkins' assuredness, surviving evidence of Gladstone's religious reading reflects an identical understanding of truth (from an early stage) and reveals the extent to which his theological outlook was intellectually based and justified. Both aspects are usefully revealed in his engagement with J. H. Newman's first novel *Loss and Gain* (London 1848), a work preoccupied with the need to achieve certain religious truth, which Newman's hero, Charles Reding, ultimately decides can only be attained through a non-intellectual faith within the Roman Catholic Church. Broad-Church Anglicans' preoccupations with intellectual engagement are ridiculed:

¹⁴ David Williamson, *Gladstone: The Man: A Non-Political Biography*, 2nd edn (London: James Bowden, 1898), p. 95.

¹⁵ Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 31-2.

¹⁶ Hinchliff, *God and History*, pp. 50-1.

They take refuge in the idea that all this is a proof that they are unfettered, moderate, dispassionate, that they observe the mean, that they are no 'party-men'; when they are, in fact, the most helpless of slaves; for our strength in this world is, to be subjects of the reason, and our liberty, to be captives of the truth.¹⁷

Gladstone placed his questioning 'ma' by this dismissal and reacted negatively to similar passages. Gladstone did not believe that religious truth could ever be straightforward: truth was never simple and was inherently held in tension. Hence his 'ma' by the description of believers for whom 'revelation...instead of being the broad shadows, was a flat sunny plain, laid out with straight macadamised roads' and his unequivocal 'x' by Reding's comment 'I'd give twopence, if some one, whom I could trust, would say to me: "This is true; this is not true...[and] what a comfort it would be to know, beyond all doubt, what to believe about God, and how to worship and please him!"¹⁸ For Gladstone it was neither possible nor desirable 'merely to explain ambiguities, and harmonise discrepancies' and faith was certainly not automatically 'rewarded with certainty'.¹⁹ This attitude, and his privileging of an intellectual approach to religion, clearly locates him within a recognisable Broad-Church tradition.²⁰

Gladstone valued the principle of intellectual liberty associated with Anglicanism, a facet even Newman admitted 'was a great principle in the English Church'. (One character described it as the state when each believer could be 'in his place, with his own heart, with his own wants, with his own thoughts, with his own intention, with his own prayers, separate but concordant'). Both acknowledgements Gladstone marked with his approbatory '+'.²¹ Later, in his article on 'Ritual and Ritualism' (1874), Gladstone criticised the Roman Catholic Church for demanding converts renounce 'moral and mental freedom' and for repudiating both 'modern thought and ancient history'.²² The sort of faith that Reding (and Newman) embraced was 'not knowledge...not assent of the

¹⁷ John Henry Newman, *Loss and Gain* (London: James Burns, 1848), p. 16. G read in 1848, cf. *GD* 5/5/48. His copy is at St Deiniol's, I 56.6/1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 107. Marked 'NB' and 'ma'.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 306. 'x' and 'ma'.

²⁰ For more on the Broad-Church context, cf. Peter Hinchliff, *Benjamin Jowett and the Christian Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Hinchliff, *God and History*; Duncan Nimmo, 'Learning against Religion, Learning as Religion: Mark Pattison and the Victorian Crisis of Faith', in *Religion and Humanism*, *Studies in Church History*, 17 (Oxford: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1981), 311-324; W. M. Spellman, *The Latitudinarians and the Church of England, 1660-1700* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993); Bernard M. G. Reardon, ed., *Liberal Protestantism* (London: A & C Black, 1968); Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism: Studies in Early Nineteenth Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age: A Survey from Coleridge to Gore*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Longman, 1995).

²¹ Newman, *Loss and Gain*, pp. 76, 292.

²² Gladstone, 'Ritual and Ritualism' quoted in G. W. E. Russell, 'Mr. Gladstone's Theology', *Contemporary Review* 73 (June 1898), 778-794, p. 791.

intellect...not historical faith...but faith, simple faith, which justifies'.²³ Gladstone, with his evangelical background, would not have opposed justification by faith but he did oppose subjecting the intellect to a non-thinking faith, hence his 'x' by:

The principle of religious faith or obedience, should be the master principle...To this both intellect and body are subservient...What is faith but the submission of the intellect: and as 'every high thought is brought into captivity,' so are we expressly told to bring the body into subjection too.²⁴

Gladstone clearly believed that faith should harmonise with reason; he disagreed ('x') with Newman's assertion that 'faith in its very notion [is] but an acceptance of the word of God, when reason seems to oppose it'.²⁵ He was even more vehemently opposed ('xx NB') to the suggestion that 'there was no "more or less" in faith; that either we believed the whole revealed message, or really we believed no part of it' or that Christians 'ought to believe what the Church proposed to us on the *word* of the Church'.²⁶ Allegiance to state or church was, for Gladstone, something that should be 'from the heart, rooted in the mind, governing the conduct, famous in history'.²⁷ Gladstone was in many ways an intellectual inheritor of Richard Hooker, the originator of the Anglican 'middle' way, who conceptualised ecclesiastical authority as a fruitful and balanced interaction between scripture, tradition and reason.²⁸

In a useful essay on Gladstone's theology, G. W. E. Russell highlighted points of sympathy between Gladstone and Broad-Church views supported by concrete examples:

²³ Newman, *Loss and Gain*, p. 128. 'x'.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 177. 'x' and underlining.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 116.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 338. 'xx NB'.

²⁷ 'Speech at Liverpool, Monday June 28 1886', W. E. Gladstone, *Speeches on the Irish Question in 1886*, Revised edn (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1886), p. 289.

²⁸ Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, and Hugh Pyper, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 309.

With the Broad Church school it would be...assumed that Mr. Gladstone had...no sympathy; and yet an intellect so prone to theorization, and so steeped in the religious philosophy of Butler and Coleridge, could scarcely fail to make...excursions into theological speculation beyond the rigid limits of the High Church school. Instances of this tendency may be seen in his championship of Maurice when the Council of King's College condemned him, and his emphatic protest against the elevation of private opinions on eternal punishment to the rank of Catholic dogmas; his eulogy of 'Ecce Homo'; in his resolute determination to secure the advancement of Dr. Temple (which cost him Dr. Pusey's friendship); in his imperfect sympathy with the public use of the Athanasian Creed; and, more recently, in his disparagement of the doctrine of natural immortality.²⁹

It is therefore clear that Gladstone entertained, throughout most of his life, a more favourable opinion of Broad Church than commentators such as Matthew, Jenkins and Shannon allowed.³⁰ Russell's article listed several specific examples of this propensity's practical application, but, in order to explain St Deiniol's origins, it is necessary to look in more detail at how it was manifested in Gladstone's later life and thought.

1.4 Liberalism and Catholicism

A useful starting point is Perry Butler's excellent study of Gladstone's religious ideas and attitudes up to 1859.³¹ Significantly, the most recent biographical studies do not engage with its implications in their assessment of Gladstone's religion *after* 1859. At that stage Butler saw his religious, intellectual *and political* being dominated by an uneasy alliance between the forces of catholicism and of liberalism, which effected a transformation of his public religious position.

By accepting the principle of religious liberty and treading the path towards political liberalism Gladstone showed that High-Churchmanship need no longer be synonymous with defence of the Establishment and allegiance to the Tory party, or that it was necessarily hostile to the movement for political and social change. In so doing he forced many churchmen to reappraise their position and...helped create a High-churchmanship different from that which had existed before.

Butler concluded that 'by the late 1850s, Gladstone's position could be described as a Liberal Catholicism', which he saw as 'a result of a profound political and ecclesiastical readjustment accompanied by not inconsiderable emotional upheaval'. Unlike other

²⁹ Russell, 'Gladstone's Theology', p. 793.

³⁰ David Bebbington on the other hand has consistently stressed G's increasingly positive attitude to Broad Church views. Cf. e.g. David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 17-18, 144-5, 153, 234.

³¹ Butler, *Tractarianism*.

commentators, who have largely tried to neutralise tensions and inconsistencies in Gladstone's religion, Butler embraced a model combining 'liberalism and catholicism', asserting that 'for Gladstone such a combination was not merely intellectually desirable, it was a personal necessity; on it hinged his vocation as a politician committed to serving the Church'.³²

Descriptions of Gladstone as a Liberal Catholic have not been overused; commentators have preferred the tried and tested label 'High Churchman'. But use of the 'Liberal Catholic' soubriquet has the advantage of recasting the tension and complexity, which clearly characterised Gladstone's private and public faith, as essential qualities to be analysed rather than irresolvable problems to be ignored.

Butler presented a persuasive and sensitive portrait of Gladstone's religious persona during his first fifty years but his focus was essentially on how this persona impacted on politics. He speculated how the remainder of Gladstone's political career might look, if viewed through the critical lens of Liberal Catholicism.³³ However, we need to broaden the scope and ask how far Gladstone's theology could be described as Liberal Catholic in the years after 1859.

1.5 Gladstone: A Liberal Catholic?

Gladstone was one of the most vigorous Christian apologists of late nineteenth-century Britain. He believed, like many of his contemporaries, that religion was in grave danger of being discredited, not by any fatal intrinsic deficiency, but by the advancement of an aggressively marketed scientific-agnostic world-view. Thus, in 1872, he told Liverpool College

This disposition is boldly proclaimed to deal alike with root and branch, and to snap utterly the ties which, under the still venerable name of Religion, unite man with the unseen world, and lighten the struggles and the woes of life by the hope of a better land.³⁴

On such evidence, Gladstone's most radical contemporary opponents could characterise him as the patron of a backward-thinking, vitriolic but ultimately ineffectual religious crusade. And there is plenty of material, not least from Gladstone's own writings, to

³² Ibid., pp. 234-5.

³³ Ibid., p. 234.

³⁴ W. E Gladstone, *Address Delivered at the Distribution of Prizes in the Liverpool College, December 21, 1872*, 5th edn (London: John Murray, 1873).

support historians' claims that he was deeply conservative, resistant to change and reactionary in his religious thinking. The rationale of some of Gladstone's attempts to defend the value and veracity of religion not only appear inadequate to the modern mind but, more importantly, they lagged behind work being done by his theological contemporaries. Above all, his edition of Bishop Butler's works was largely out of date by late Victorian standards.³⁵ This has been taken as proof of Gladstone's unremitting theological conservatism late in life.³⁶ However, this conclusion is highly questionable when we consider the provenance of Gladstone's two-volume edition published in 1896. As Jane Garnett pointed out, in her excellent 1992 article on Butler and the nineteenth-century *zeitgeist*, Gladstone's edition was based on detailed work on Butler, but work 'done half a century before'.³⁷ This being the case we are very safe in questioning whether it was a true reflection of his theological outlook in the late 1880s and 1890s. Moreover the edition is not necessarily the best and certainly not the only place to look in order to estimate how important Butler's philosophy was in shaping Gladstone's religious consciousness.

On the whole greater attention has been paid to the details of Gladstone's apologetics, rather than to their broader tendencies and practical applications. Criticism of his work on Butler has concentrated on specific points Gladstone chose to defend, rather than on his overall estimation of Butler's significance as a religious thinker and his relevance to contemporary debates. It is essential to look more broadly at the motivation, characteristics and context of Gladstone's apologetics produced in the 1870s, 80s and 90s, especially when seeking to elucidate the frame of reference in which St Deiniol's Library was conceived.

1.5.1 *Gladstone, Butler and Late Victorian Apologetics*

The declining importance of a moral philosophical agenda and the growth of materialism were significant preoccupations for Gladstone in these late years, as expressed in his speeches and writings. These concerns can be clearly situated within wider contemporary debates about the moral dimension of the search for knowledge and its application to the

³⁵ Joseph Butler (1692-1752), Bishop of Durham. W. E. Gladstone, ed., *The Works of Joseph Butler, D.C.L. Sometime Lord Bishop of Durham: Divided into Sections; with Sectional Headings, an Index to Each Volume; and Some Occasional Notes, Also Prefatory Matter*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896). Cf. also W. E. Gladstone, *Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896).

³⁶ Cf. Jane Garnett, 'Bishop Butler and the Zeitgeist: Butler and the Development of Christian Moral Philosophy in Victorian Britain', in *Joseph Butler's Moral and Religious Thought: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. by C. Cunliffe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 63-96.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

contemporary world; debates in which late-Victorian apologists took a leading part. It is essential to understand that such dialogue between religion and modern life was characteristically a *liberal* project: 'From its outset, liberalism was committed to bridging the gap between Christian faith and modern knowledge'³⁸ - a reconciliation and engagement to which Gladstone was increasingly drawn.

Garnett's 1992 article charted the significant growth during this period of a determination amongst apologists to enlist the categories of moral philosophy in their attempt to revalidate the intellectual warranty of theological knowledge. She identified the work of Broad Churchman Joseph Butler as one of the most crucial resources for this late nineteenth-century exercise, arguing that late-Victorian students of Butler approached his philosophy in new and broader ways than had been the case the generation before, adopting his general inductive and probabilistic approach to counter the overreaching claims of scientific rationalism.

Butler was building on the important observation that every extension of our knowledge is an extension of our ignorance. Developments in scientific understanding had...reinforced this emphasis, and had served to undermine positivistic confidence...Ironically...many scientific agnostics...failed to follow through the epistemological implications for scientific knowledge...

Butler's illustration of the cumulative nature of argument by probability is pertinent to Darwin's method, where the weight of numerous individual cases carries conviction even though no single one would...Whilst specific arguments of Butler's for immortality or the chronology of the Old Testament could seem to be untenable, it became less possible to attack his overall approach and his practical methodology for dealing with conditions of uncertain knowledge...Although this was inadequate to give force to the particularity of Christian apologetics, it was a significant line of thinking which exposed some of the limitations of scientific agnosticism.³⁹

Gladstone is a significant omission from this picture. The broad thrust of both his later apologetics and his epistemology had a great deal in common with the contemporaries Garnett quoted, showing exactly this interpretation of the general significance of Butler and providing further evidence that Gladstone had sought 'to seek a *modus vivendi* between

³⁸ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 92.

³⁹ Garnett, 'Butler and the Zeitgeist', pp. 76-79.

the catholic tradition and the liberal principles of the nineteenth century' after 1859.⁴⁰ For example, in his comments on Butler's sermon on human ignorance Gladstone observed:

Every extension of our knowledge is an extension, often a far wider extension, of our ignorance...When Butler pronounced his severe sentence on the claims of the Popes, his horror was not the result of theological bigotry, but, without doubt he was shocked (with his strong, just and humble sense of our limitations in capacity) at the daring and presumption of the claims set up by some on his behalf. Yet he keenly saw the obligation that knowledge imposes to act when we know, not less than to abstain when we do not.⁴¹

With regard to the relative positions of science and religion in society, Gladstone proposed a liberal *via media* inspired by Butlerian principles, not a recalcitrant denunciation. His 1872 Liverpool College address is a central text in this regard. This programmatic speech, which questioned materialism and a secular approach to education, constituted a remarkably controversial statement for a serving Prime Minister to make (as Gladstone was aware) and provoked a public exchange with Herbert Spencer.⁴² It questioned scientists' right to claim a superior level of authenticity for their work and queried assumptions that science was a pre-eminent system of knowledge. Instead Gladstone defended the validity of reasoning and thinking theologically and crucially argued for a reconciliation between Christianity and modernity, which was to be achieved through ecumenical co-operation and the application of Butler's methodology. Gladstone conceded that previously

⁴⁰ Butler, *Tractarianism*, p. 234.

⁴¹ Gladstone, *Studies Subsidiary*, pp. 106-7.

⁴² Shannon, *Gladstone II*, p. 118; Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 238.

Much wrong was done to the natural sciences. But that wrong is not to be redressed by giving them prospectively more than their due. Such...has been indicated by a practice of claiming for them, in a pre-eminent or even an exclusive sense, the name of science. So that a man who observes and reasons upon plants or animals, the constituent parts of the globe, or of the celestial system, is a man of science; but to observe and reason upon history, upon philosophy...or upon theology, establishes no such title, though the very same process of collecting and digesting facts, and of drawing inferences from them, is pursued in the one case and in the other; and though it seems sufficiently absurd to hold that there is a science of the human body, but that there can be no science of the mind or soul. This can surely be no better than a mere fashion of the hour...It is the incidental excess of a reforming movement, and we may hope that while the excess will disappear the reform will remain. Were it...to harden into an accepted doctrine, I see not in what it could end, except in a pure materialism.⁴³

The most arresting section of this passage is Gladstone's subtle and sophisticated acknowledgement of modernity's fascination with and manipulation of the 'fact'. He recognised that all types of knowledge, and in particular hierarchies of knowledge, are created by a common 'process of collecting and digesting facts, and of drawing inferences from them'.⁴⁴ Crucially Gladstone observed that not only was this process, which had privileged science at the expense of theology, symptomatic of all epistemological projects; it also undermined and problematised them. How could a dogmatic assumption of the hierarchical superiority of one variety of systematic knowledge over another be sustained when, in essence, both were based on the same human interpretation of data about observed particulars? Here Gladstone's stress on reason is further evidence of his debt to Enlightenment thought.⁴⁵ He was building on the epistemological debates surrounding David Hume's appraisal of the role theory, belief, and conjecture play in the creation of systematic knowledge and his claim that all such knowledge incorporates fictional elements, and Butler's arguments for probability.⁴⁶ In his 1879 article on this subject Gladstone reiterated

⁴³ Gladstone, *Liverpool College*, pp. 11-12.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁵ G's privileging of reason is a thread which runs through his apologetic, cf. especially W. E. Gladstone, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, Revised edn (London: Isbister, 1892). I am grateful to David Bebbington for this reference.

⁴⁶ Cf. Mary Poovey, *The History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1998), pp. 14, 198-204, 230-1.

If we consider subjectively the reasons, upon which our judgements rest, and the motives of our practical intentions, it may in strictness be said that absolutely in no case have we more than probable evidence to proceed upon; since there is always room for the entrance of error in that last operation of the percipient faculties of men, by which the objective becomes subjective.⁴⁷

This understanding underpinned Gladstone's openness to liberal approaches to Christian life and faith and was a preoccupation clearly reflected in his reading during the 1870s, the lists of which Colin Matthew noted 'show a curious blend of modernity and religiosity'.⁴⁸ Note, for example, his approval (v) of these words written to the young Friedrich Schleiermacher, read in 1873.

Beware of the writings of authors who reveal the petty, selfish, and intolerant spirit...in their endeavours to spread their own fame only and to force their systems upon others, under pretence of working in the venerable cause of enlightenment. The truly wise have never thought and acted in this way, but, on the contrary, the further they have penetrated in their investigations of truth, the more modest they have become and the more distrustful of themselves, holding ever in mind the deeply-rooted pride and conceit of the heart, which nourish prejudices, and thus blind the understanding. Such wholesome distrust, combined with constant and ardent enquiry and unceasing watchfulness of oneself, lead at last to that noble freedom of thought which submits to no law but that of truth.⁴⁹

Likewise, Gladstone had counselled his Liverpool audience in Butlerian terms to adopt a reforming attitude tempered with restraint.

Be slow to stir inquiries, which you do not mean patiently to pursue to their proper end. Be not afraid oftentimes to suspend your judgement; or to feel and admit to yourselves how narrow are the bounds of knowledge. Do not too readily assume that to us have been opened royal roads to truth.⁵⁰

This echoed the central understanding held by Broad Church Liberals that 'all truth was the result of human enquiry', which was, 'perceived, formulated, and expressed by human minds' and 'felt to have a tentative, provisional nature, as well as an imprecise and

⁴⁷ W. E. Gladstone, 'Probability as the Guide of Conduct', *Nineteenth Century* 5 (May 1879), 908-934, reprinted in Gladstone, *Studies Subsidiary*, p. 335. Cf. also *Ibid.*, pp. 340-1.

⁴⁸ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 315.

⁴⁹ Stubenrauch to Schleiermacher, 19 November, 1785 in *The Life of Schleiermacher, as Unfolded in His Autobiography and Letters.*, trans. by F. Rowan, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1860), I, p. 76. (G read during September-October 1873). F. D. E. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) was a pioneering German Protestant theologian whose primary importance lies in his attempt to set theological study on a new footing at a time when the modern world seemed alienated from the Christian tradition. Hastings, Mason, and Pyper, eds., *Christian Thought*, pp. 644-6.

⁵⁰ Gladstone, *Liverpool College*, p. 29.

speculative one'.⁵¹ By adopting such an approach to truth, Gladstone was publicly allying himself with liberal not conservative opinion.

The objective so far has not been to replace one interpretation of Gladstone's religious mind-set with one even more doctrinaire. On the contrary, it has been to suggest the benefits of an increasingly nuanced view more open to Gladstone's long-term Broad Church Liberal tendencies and more alive to the creative potential existent in a model that retains a degree of ideological tension. Evidence such as that presented above indicates Gladstone's increasing awareness of new modes of Christian apologetic, drawing on the general rather than the specific lessons Butler and others had to offer Victorian successors. In addition, his determination to effect a reconciliation between theology and modernity tied him directly to Liberal religious developments.

It is in his Liverpool speech that we begin to discern a connective thread that linked Gladstone and his Library specifically to late nineteenth-century Anglican Liberal Catholic theology.

You will hear...that the divisions among Christians render it impossible to say what Christianity is, and so destroy all certainty as to what is the true religion. But if the divisions among Christians are remarkable, not less so is their unity in the greatest doctrines that they hold. Well-nigh fifteen hundred years...have passed away, since the great controversies concerning the Deity and the Person of the Redeemer were...determined...Ever since that time...more...that ninety-nine in every hundred Christians have with one voice confessed the Deity and Incarnation of our Lord as the cardinal and central truths of our Religion. Surely there is some comfort here, some sense of brotherhood; some glory due to the past, some hope for the times that are to come.⁵²

This makes clear Gladstone's endorsement of catholicity in Christian doctrine and his understanding of Christian history.⁵³ But two additional ingredients of his argument are supremely important: his recognition of the independent workings of historical change

⁵¹ Hinchliff, *God and History*, p. 51.

⁵² Gladstone, *Liverpool College*, pp. 27-8.

⁵³ The catholicity embraced by the late G embraced all Christians professing belief in the incarnation, not just those upholding a 'proper' churchmanship. Hence his Anglicanism could make room for Nonconformists and Presbyterians in 'the catholic church' alongside Orthodox and Catholics. Cf. W. E. Gladstone, 'The Place of Heresy and Schism in the Modern Church', *Nineteenth Century* 36 (August 1894), 157-174. This was recognised by contemporaries. Soon after G's death T. H. S. Escott wrote, 'Catholicity to Mr. Gladstone was an extraordinary comprehensive word'. T. H. S. Escott, 'Mr. Gladstone's Conception of a National Church', *The New Century Review* [(n.d.)], 74-79, p. 79. And later scholars: Cf. Peter Erb, 'Gladstone and German Liberal Catholicism', *Recusant History* 23 (May 1997), 450-469, pp. 453, 461-2.

and his stress on the importance of the doctrine of the incarnation.⁵⁴ Both elements are crucial in linking him, intellectually, with the leading proponents of late Victorian Liberal Catholicism: the Oxford *Lux Mundi* group, an association which was, as the following section will demonstrate, practical as well as intellectual.

2 Gladstone and the *Lux Mundi* Group

The *Lux Mundi* group was a party of Oxford clerical friends who met regularly to discuss theology.⁵⁵ They became known by the title of the famous collection of theological essays they published in 1889,⁵⁶ and have been categorised as pioneers of Liberal Anglicanism, for two major reasons. The circumstances surrounding the publication of *Lux Mundi* created a well-documented rift between the contributors and the older Tractarian generation, represented by Henry Parry Liddon (1829-1890).⁵⁷ In addition, the impact of *Lux Mundi* on later theological thought has ensured it considerable historiographical significance.

The *Lux Mundi* group differed significantly in their theological approaches to Edward Pusey and Liddon *et al.*, but it is essential to stress that they remained fundamentally ‘catholic’ in a very real sense. Michael Ramsey was careful to categorise their era as one in which ‘conscious doctrinal reconstruction began’.⁵⁸ The *Lux Mundi* contributors, like Gladstone, upheld a traditional High Church theology and ecclesiology and regarded themselves as orthodox. In the words of Charles Gore’s biographer, G. L. Prestige,

⁵⁴ The doctrine of the incarnation basically propounds the belief that the eternal word of God (*logos*) was present in the human Jesus of Nazareth. It has been central to the majority of Christian traditions from an early stage in the religion’s history, based on scriptural interpretation and conciliar agreement. It was particularly important in the 19th and 20th centuries due to various serious attempts to make the truth of the incarnation a necessary truth of Christian doctrine, but in ways that acknowledged Jesus’ humanity as a working reality. Cf. Adrian Hastings, ‘Incarnation’, in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. by A. Hastings, A. Mason, and H. Pyper (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 321-324.

⁵⁵ Hinchliff, *God and History*, p. 109.

⁵⁶ Charles Gore, ed., *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation* (London: John Murray, 1889). Cf. R. Morgan, ed., *The Religion of the Incarnation: Anglican Essays in Commemoration of Lux Mundi* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1989); Geoffrey Wainwright, ed., *Keeping the Faith: Essays to Mark the Centenary of ‘Lux Mundi’* (London: SPCK, 1989); Hinchliff, *God and History*, Ch. 5.

⁵⁷ Cf. G. L. Prestige, *The Life of Charles Gore: A Great Englishman* (London: Heinemann, 1935), pp. 105, 118-9; Hinchliff, *God and History*, pp. 104-5.

⁵⁸ Michael Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple. The Development of Anglican Theology between Lux Mundi and the Second World War, 1889 - 1939* (London: Longmans, 1960), pp. vii, 2.

The motive principles of *Lux Mundi* are widely misconceived by those who have not read the book, and Gore's own position has been frequently misrepresented. He has been taken for a pioneer of Liberalism, who subsequently recanted critical freedom and basely deserted the ark of intellectual progress...But it contains no truth.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, their interpretation of the Tractarian tradition was unmistakably Liberal in its impetus and emphasis; the aim in publishing their essays, in the words of Charles Gore, was 'to attempt to put the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems'.⁶⁰ This phrase, expressing nineteenth-century religious liberalism's central tenet, excited opposition from many who 'believed that theological and metaphysical truth *could* be stated with precision and *ought* to be assented to by everyone; for truth was that which was guaranteed by authority, and the most important authority was God's'.⁶¹ In the light of the preceding discussion, it should be unsurprising to find Gladstone on Gore's side in this debate. As early as 1869 Gladstone had told Henry Manning 'I profoundly believe in a reconciliation between Christianity and the conditions of modern thought, modern life, and modern society'.⁶²

Of the eleven *Lux Mundi* contributors, Gladstone had recorded contact with all but three and, with the exception of W. J. H. Campion, all those who had been at Keble College, Oxford. This interaction ranged from occasional meetings, such as that with Walter Lock (1846-1933) who, as sub-warden of Keble, met Gladstone there in 1883, to his familiar and regular dealings with his nephew Arthur Lyttelton (1852-1903).⁶³ Gladstone's comments on the group were universally positive. His diary remarks are characteristically brief, but they indicate not only personal admiration but also evidence of intellectual engagement.⁶⁴ Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918) later indicated how closely Gladstone's religious agenda had accorded with his own and that of his associates.

⁵⁹ Prestige, *Gore*, p. 124.

⁶⁰ Charles Gore, 'Preface', in *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*, ed. by C. Gore (London: John Murray, 1889), vii-x, p. vii.

⁶¹ Hinchliff, *God and History*, p. 51.

⁶² Quoted in Bebbington, *Faith and Politics*, p. 234.

⁶³ *GD* 27/11/83.

⁶⁴ Cf. *GD* 12/4/77.

If Mr. Gladstone had retained his rigid Evangelicalism, he might have contented himself with denouncing the facts as the work of the Devil. But he had read Bishop Butler. He had found the Fathers. He had absorbed the rich Creed of the Incarnation, in all its fullness, in its largeness of historical preparation, in its superb honour for flesh and blood. He was bound to respect man in his self-manifestation. Therefore, his new effort lay in reconciling his own intense belief in the Catholic Church according to the form in which it had come down to him in England, with his ever-growing sense of the sanctity of life, as it revealed itself in freedom.⁶⁵

Holland explicitly linked Gladstone with the *Lux Mundi* project by ascribing to him an incarnational theology. He also associated Gladstone's Liberal Catholicism with his reading of Butler maintaining that, in search of 'moral training' and 'spiritual schooling', Gladstone

Turned with...ardour to Bishop Butler...His profound seriousness, his intensity of moral passion, his solemn piety, spoke to Mr. Gladstone's very soul of souls. Beneath that sober reasoning...he detected the central fire – the fire of love and adoration for a GOD Incarnate to Whom his entire being was dedicated. And in the same way, beneath all that appears confused and inarticulate in the Church of England, Mr. Gladstone found his way to her deep secret – the secret that has held sway over the souls of men such as Andrewes, and Herbert, and Hooker, and Butler, and Keble and Church. He found in her that which tallied with GOD's voice as it spoke to him out of the abyss of nature, out of the tumult of history, out of the depths of experience, reason, imagination, knowledge, emotion.⁶⁶

It is important to note Holland's romantic Schleiermachean characterisation of Gladstone's response to eighteenth-century rationalism and moralism.⁶⁷ Garnett quoted Holland to illustrate contemporary criticism of Gladstone's reading of Butler but he clearly apprehended it operated on several different levels and fundamentally linked Gladstone with the Liberal Catholic movement.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Henry Scott Holland, *Personal Studies* (London: Wells, Gardner, Darlton, 1905), p. 44.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 53-4. In his writing on G, Holland insisted that he was not a philosopher: 'he had no metaphysical interests whatever. He was in no sense a speculative philosopher. That whole world was alien to him. Hence he felt no intellectual repugnance to the lack of a systematic completeness and logical perfection in Anglicanism'. Holland, *Personal Studies*, p. 53. But G's apparent unconcern about systematic and logical issues relating to Anglicanism appear to tie him closer to new modes of Christian apologetic. As Garnett points out, late nineteenth-century theologians were using Joseph Butler to inform their moral philosophy, not their systematic theology.

⁶⁷ Whilst Schleiermacher's theology was not classically incarnational, he believed religion was not 'the outward trappings of dogma...but...a universal, if elusive, element in every human consciousness...disclosed to the inward glance of introspection'. Hastings, Mason, and Pyper, eds., *Christian Thought*, p. 644.

⁶⁸ Henry Scott Holland, *Memoirs and Letters*, ed. by S. Paget (London: John Murray, 1921), p. 234. Quoted in Garnett, 'Butler and the Zeitgeist', p. 234.

Gladstone's most influential contacts by far amongst the *Lux Mundi* group were Charles Gore and Edward Talbot, something demonstrated by Gladstone's reception and response to their written theology as well as their personal interactions.

2.1 Charles Gore (1853-1932)⁶⁹

Gore was the driving force behind *Lux Mundi*, writing both the Preface and the eighth essay. In this, on 'The Holy Spirit and Inspiration', Gore addressed the question of scriptural inspiration and, controversially for one brought up a High Churchman, acknowledged the claims of radical biblical criticism. Although he maintained that scripture was inspired, he asserted inspiration was not miraculous communication of unknown facts and did not guarantee historical truth. Furthermore, the Old Testament was a product of its time and the Bible should be read in the spirit in which it was written.⁷⁰ In addition he incorporated a sketchy kenotic thesis into his essay, arguing the eternal word of God, or Christ, had deliberately limited the knowledge of his human incarnation, Jesus of Nazareth, to that of his time.⁷¹ Gore would develop this thesis in his later work but even hints at such a conclusion were controversial.⁷² It is important to note that Gladstone made no marginal comments next to this passage in his copy of *Lux Mundi*.

Gore had been an admirer of Gladstone since his Harrow days and Gladstone's recorded opinion of Gore was auspicious;⁷³ in January 1885 he described him as 'a person of very great promise'.⁷⁴ He repeated this opinion to Lord Acton, calling attention to the 'society of twenty Tutors formed for Theological study under or with him' at 'the Pusey Institute' in Oxford.⁷⁵

Oxford was the scene of Gladstone's first recorded reading of *Lux Mundi*. On 31 January 1890, Gladstone noted he had read 'Gore's Masterly paper' therein. (He read Gore's

⁶⁹ There have been several studies of Gore since Prestige, cf. James Carpenter, *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought* (London: Faith Press, 1960); Paul Avis, *Gore: Construction and Conflict* (Worthing: Churchman, 1988).

⁷⁰ Prestige, *Gore*, p. 102.

⁷¹ Kenosis, from the Greek *kenōsis* (an emptying) with specific reference to Philippians 2.7, *heauton ekenōse* ('emptied himself'). Although it is scarcely more than inference in this essay, a kenotic understanding of incarnation undergirds the whole of *Lux Mundi*. Hinchliff, *God and History*, p. 107. The suggestion by Gore and others of a kenotic theology of the incarnation would prove to be incredibly influential in twentieth-century theology.

⁷² If Christ could be ignorant, how could he be God?

⁷³ Prestige, *Gore*, p. 9.

⁷⁴ GD 12/1/85.

⁷⁵ G to Lord Acton, 27 January 1885, BL GP Add MS 44093, fol. 254, printed in GD 27/1/85.

Preface, probably that expanded for the 10th edition, in September 1890).⁷⁶ If there was one area in which Gladstone remained influenced by his early evangelicalism, it was his attitude to the Bible, which he defended, at length, in *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* (1890). Why and how then did he approve of Gore's position in *Lux Mundi*? In general terms, annotation evidence suggests Gladstone's position on the status of scripture was not completely intransigent. For example, in September 1885, he disagreed with William Carlisle who, in *An Essay on Evil Spirits* (1827) asserted that the Bible is 'infallible truth', (X|) written by 'full or complete inspiration' ('ma') and that those not accepting this 'have no resting place for thought' ('ma').⁷⁷ The broader context of Gladstone's 1890 Oxford visit is also important for understanding his position. Whilst there, he sought to prepare *The Impregnable Rock* by engaging directly with the biblical criticism that Gore welcomed.⁷⁸ For example, he read Liddon's condemnation of Gore's capitulation to biblical criticism.⁷⁹ When Gladstone reiterated Gore's position on scriptural inspiration in *The Impregnable Rock*, he indicated his high opinion was based, not merely on the circumstances of their social interaction, but rather on a balanced engagement with and evaluation of material from both sides of the debate.⁸⁰

And Gladstone maintained this intellectual respect for Gore. In March 1893 he read his *The Mission of the Church. Four Lectures* (1892), placing an '+' next to it in his Diary.⁸¹ This work confirmed for Gladstone how different Gore was from the original Tractarians and his strenuous endorsement strongly indicates how far his own views were, by this date, also distinguished from theirs. He wrote enthusiastically to his son Stephen, in 1893,

I have been reading with great delight Mr. Gore's 'Mission of the Church'. I do not know when I have seen so much matter in so small a book and in general so admirably stated...he ought to be advanced and I should be glad if he resigns his present employment [at Pusey House]. He is a much broader man than Dr. Pusey, with rather a different work to do – and the association with the name does him some injustice.⁸²

⁷⁶ GD 14/9/90.

⁷⁷ William Carlisle, *An Essay on Evil Spirits* (London: The Author, 1827), pp. ii, 25, 26. Cf. GD 23/4/82, 27/9/85. Flyleaf note is dated 27 September 1885.

⁷⁸ Hence his discussions with S. R. Driver and Cheyne. GD 2/2/90ff.

⁷⁹ H. P. Liddon, *The Worth of the Old Testament: a sermon preached in St Paul's Cathedral...December 8, 1889* (1890), GD 9/2/90.

⁸⁰ Gladstone, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, pp. 267-8.

⁸¹ Charles Gore, *The Mission of the Church: Four Lectures* (London: John Murray, 1892).

⁸² G to SEG, 20 March 1893, BL GP Add MS 44549, fol. 73 printed in GD 20/3/93. On 29 March 1893, Gladstone asked Murray, the publisher, for 20 copies to distribute. Cf. GD 12/3/93n, BL GP Add MS 44549 fol. 76.

In the light of Gladstone's affirmation, before proceeding further it will be helpful to summarise Gore's arguments. The book consists of four lectures given at St Asaph in June 1892. In them Gore expounded his vision of the Church's mission in theology and to society, and explored questions of Christian unity and Anglican responses to 'independent and hostile opinion'. He presented a traditional, High-Church interpretation of the Anglican Church as fully apostolic. As claims to apostolic status depend on a conception of unbroken tradition and reliance on scriptural authority, it is not surprising that Gore stressed the importance of upholding Anglican Church traditions and gave the Bible a prominent role.⁸³ (It should be noted that Gore would not have understood this to be incompatible with his stance on scriptural inspiration in *Lux Mundi*). Central to this understanding of church tradition was the system of doctrine, which summarised and defined belief. Gore identified the creeds as the primary source of belief instruction for Anglicans, with their stress on the incarnation, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection and judgement. But Gore also underlined the value of the catechism, ten commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the sacraments (principally baptism and the Eucharist), and in qualified terms, the thirty-nine articles.

Gladstone's estimation of the importance and character of Anglican doctrinal structure was very similar. He had defended the importance of doctrine in his review of *Robert Elsmere* (1888) typifying it as an important 'provision made through the Church of Christ for the perpetual conservation and application of its living powers'.⁸⁴ However, although he described himself as

One altogether attached to dogma, which I believe to be the skeleton that carries the flesh, the blood, the life of the blessed thing we call the Christian religion...I do not believe God's tender mercies are restricted to a small portion of the human family...I was myself brought up to believe that salvation depended absolutely on the reception of a particular and very narrow creed. But long, long have I cast those weeds behind me.⁸⁵

Gladstone's circumspect position on doctrine is supported by annotation evidence from his collection of spiritualist and theosophist texts. This important collection, preserved at St Deiniol's, provides an intriguing perspective on Gladstone's 'orthodoxy' by demonstrating how enthusiastically, consistently and open-mindedly he engaged with material widely regarded as unorthodox. Gladstone clearly agreed with spiritualist

⁸³ Gore, *Mission*, p. 26ff.

⁸⁴ W. E. Gladstone, 'Robert Elsmere and the Battle of Belief', *Nineteenth Century* 23 (May 1888), 766-788, p. 781.

criticism of excessive insistence on rigid doctrine by Christians. Thus he marked the following passage from Gerald Massey's *Concerning Spiritualism* with a 'v'.

There are people still extant who profess to believe in human nature's total depravity...Yet they also accept the words of Christ, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' And these little ones were born *totally depraved*, nothing being said of regeneration, or conversion, or grace! So that heaven must be a place or state of total depravity! The logic is bad enough, but the doctrine is damnable.

It has become absolutely necessary...that the world should be rescued from beliefs such as these, and from that ossification of the letter which kills the spirit of Christ...Human nature would have been crushed by the dreadful ideas respecting God which have been imposed upon it by ignorant men, if God himself had not taken his own part, and kept whispering in our souls, from childhood upwards, 'Don't believe it, don't believe it – that is not true,' and by such means saved many from madness through the blessedness of doubt, disbelief, and indifference.⁸⁶

Gladstone also placed a 'v' and underlined part of the following quotation cited by one 'Arcanus': 'The simple religion which was taught...on the hill-sides of Judea has been so overlain with...fables of man's invention, that it is difficult to recognise the original'.⁸⁷ He also ticked Hudson Tuttle's question: 'Why is it indisputably the case that the lawyer, physician and clergyman are generally striving with their united energies, and have ever striven, to keep the mass in mental darkness?'⁸⁸ In addition, the flow of these arguments is strongly supported by the closing comments of Gladstone's 1894 review of Annie Besant's autobiography.

It cannot be denied that upon...doctrines rash things have been said, with the intention of defending them, but with a great lack of wisdom in the choice of means for making that defence effectual...The heat of controversy, the intermittent negligence of the human understanding in the performance of its work, and the aptitude of selfish passions to clothe themselves in the garb of zeal for religion, are among the causes which may require the exercise of careful and constant criticism over the forms of language in which Christian doctrine has to be inculcated, and the application of a corrective and pruning process to retrench excesses unwittingly committed by believers.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ G 'to a member of the Unitarian body...in 1865', quoted in Mary Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library at 'St. Deiniol's Hawarden'', 59 (June 1906), 944-954, p. 953.

⁸⁶ Gerald Massey, *Concerning Spiritualism* (London: J. Burns, [1871]), pp. 62-3.

⁸⁷ "Arcanus", *Modern Christianity and Modern Spiritualism Judged by the Teachings of Jesus Christ* ([Cambridge]: The Author, 1890), p. 23.

⁸⁸ Hudson Tuttle, *Scenes in the Spirit World* (New York: Partridge & Brittan, 1866), p. 49.

⁸⁹ W. E. Gladstone, 'True and False Conceptions of the Atonement', *Nineteenth Century* 36 (September 1894), 317-331, p. 330.

Gladstone questioned one writer's literal belief in the Apostles' creed, writing 'ma' next to 'we believe that Christ descended into hell, and did not ascend into heaven until the *third day*'.⁹⁰ He also questioned aspects of the thirty-nine articles. In a memorandum, dated 31 December 1893, Gladstone expressed his belief that 'The Thirty-Nine Articles walk...at times along the edge of a precipice'.⁹¹

Gore had a traditional and conservative conception of Anglican structure and doctrine but there were significant qualifications. He did not see the Church's role as unchanging. He thought it should be capable of 'varied adaptation to the different needs of different ages'.⁹² He maintained a strong insistence on doctrinal conformity but disagreed with the proliferation of doctrine for its own sake. The more the Church limited its doctrinal structure to the essentials, the better equipped it would be to meet cultural change.⁹³ This mirrored Gladstone's belief that the potential for a continuing Christianity lay in adherence to its 'cardinal and central truths'.⁹⁴

Gore argued for greater inclusiveness in theology in all traditional parties of the Church. Exclusive 'views of truth' and concentration on favourite doctrines – sacramental grace for High Churchmen, atonement and justification by faith for Evangelicals and good moral living for Broad Churchmen – indicated 'foolish one-sidedness' and maintained divisions. Such conflicts limited the Church's ability to present a united message in times of crisis.⁹⁵ He argued education was the key to lessening Anglican divisiveness and aiding ecumenical understanding.⁹⁶ Following Gladstone's friend Ignaz von Döllinger (1799-1890), Gore argued 'common education, promoting friendliness among those who are to be clergy of the Church or ministers of different religious bodies, may do much good'.⁹⁷ He asserted that education, in the broadest sense of communication and association, was already softening party divisions, leading 'men of different schools...to know, understand and tolerate one another better'.⁹⁸ Gore advocated an interdisciplinary approach to study,

⁹⁰ "Fritz", *Where Are the Dead? Or, Spiritualism Explained*, 3rd edn (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1875), p. 5.

⁹¹ GG 2082 'Mem. D. 31.93.' § 1 [Memoranda on Religious Subjects; typescript copy]. G also questioned the thirty-nine articles' approach to sin (always quoted as his favourite doctrinal topic!) 'But may it not be very seriously questioned whether to stretch the notion of it [sin] beyond its time and exact conception, while it seems to aim at loftiness and dignity of tone, is the true way for those who desire to see the hatred of it made vigorous and intense'. §3.

⁹² Gore, *Mission*, p. 6.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-3.

⁹⁴ Gladstone, *Liverpool College*, p. 28.

⁹⁵ Gore, *Mission*, pp. 77, 69, 80ff.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-1.

which again would counter the ‘one-sided teaching, or the neglect of parts of the truth’ that so often aggravated party divisions. This then was what the ‘temper of theology ought to be’, he said, ‘the temper of appreciation’.

Gladstone shared Gore’s belief that the Anglican’s approach to other opinions should be to ‘endeavour to see as much good in them as possible’.⁹⁹ In 1888, when opening the Gladstone Library at the National Liberal Club, he gave the following advice:

I am recommending...that every man in his own measure and degree and according to his own opportunities...should endeavour to equip himself for the consideration of...politics...by reaping and garnering the knowledge which a study of other times and the study of other countries will afford him, and by making use of it in order to enlarge the scope of his judgements, to increase not to diminish, the allowances that he is disposed to make for what he may think the aberrations of opinions in others, and to give greater solidity and greater durability to his own conclusions.¹⁰⁰

Gladstone was here speaking specifically to politicians but his endorsement of open-mindedness and toleration in the pursuit of knowledge, in which he had for many years believed, had a much wider relevance. Taken together with Gladstone’s specific comments on theology and ecclesiastical organisation, it becomes increasingly difficult to envisage him as a curmudgeonly reactionary or to miss the affiliation he so obviously had with the broad sweep of Liberal Anglicanism. There are those who would argue, of both Gore and Gladstone, that their continued *moral* conservatism on social matters stood counter to their theological liberalism. Again, this is borne of an erroneous assumption that the two positions are mutually exclusive. In Gladstone’s case, his undoubted moral conservatism should not blind us to the pragmatic flexibility of his overall approach to Christian belief; something yet again amply illustrated by his reading of spiritualist literature. At a time when belief in individual bodily resurrection from the dead was still a common expectation amongst devout Christian believers, Gladstone questioned, placing a tick [‘v’] next to the instruction in *An Angel’s Message* (1858) that one should ‘relinquish all idea that the natural body will ever rise again from the tomb’.¹⁰¹ He bestowed his most auspicious mark, ‘+’, on the following passage from *Light beyond the Grave* (1876) in which the importance of living a Christian life in the present, as opposed to setting one’s sights on eternal glory, is stressed:

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Mr. Gladstone at the National Liberal Club’, *The Times*, 3 May 1888, SP, 35, 33-40, p. 38.

Those who lead such a life feel the meaning of the expression, ‘the Kingdom of Heaven is within you.’ For them, no need to wait until the grave close on the body in order to appreciate the happiness in store for them in the spirit world. It is already within and around them.¹⁰²

This passage, quoting Luke’s Gospel (17:20-21), is radical indeed and is reminiscent of major arguments made by F. D. Maurice in *The Kingdom of Christ*, which Gladstone read in 1837 and 1843.¹⁰³ Maurice is a prime example of a churchman whose beliefs combined sacramentalism, high moral standards and liberalism. We should not see these elements as mutually exclusive in Gladstone’s case either and his endorsement of such views again suggests his Broad Church tendencies were not reluctantly admitted, a state of affairs further borne out by a consideration of his relationship with another principal member of *Lux Mundi*, Edward Talbot.

2.2 Edward Stuart Talbot (1844-1934)

2.2.1 Gladstone and Talbot

Edward Talbot consistently regarded Gladstone as the greatest layman in the Church. He wrote to Herbert Gladstone in 1924, ‘I preserve quite unchanged the reverence for the great Christian statesman, and the gratitude for having been in a measure brought up at his feet’.¹⁰⁴ Gladstone was equally, if not more, admiring. In 1881 he described him as ‘a fine fellow’ and in 1884, ‘a model of dispassionate uprightness’.¹⁰⁵

Even before he was ordained, Edward saw himself as a Liberal: ‘Be free, be liberal, be courageous!’ he wrote to Meriel Lyttelton.¹⁰⁶ He argued for the efficacy of ‘the “broad” views of our own day’,¹⁰⁷ clearly articulating the difference he perceived between the Anglo Catholicism of the first-generation Tractarians and that of his own generation. In 1917 he wrote,

¹⁰¹ *An Angel's Message. Being a Series of Angelic and Holy Communications Received by a Lady*, (London: John Wesley & Co., 1858), p. 183.

¹⁰² *Life beyond the Grave, described by A SPIRIT, through a Writing Medium* (London: E. W. Allen, 1876), p. 86. Cf. also Tuttle, *Spirit World*, p. 100. ‘While he is a man he should not wish for a better abode’. G marked with line.

¹⁰³ G read both the first (1837) and second edition (1842) of Maurice’s *The Kingdom of Christ* soon after publication. In GD 5/3/37 he recorded ‘Maurice’s First Number: (rather a strain). It is admirable.’ In GD 16/4/43 he noted ‘Maurice’s Kingdom of Xt, 2d edn (he is too ethereal, I too gross, or both)? [Not an unusual response to Maurice’s prose!] For an example of Maurice’s interpretation of this passage of Luke cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven: A Course of Lectures on the Gospel of St Luke* (London: [n. pub.], 1893), pp. 240ff, 270-1.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Gwendolen Stephenson, *Edward Stuart Talbot 1844-1934* (London: SPCK, 1936), p. 33.

¹⁰⁵ GD 19/9/81; 30/9/84.

¹⁰⁶ Sheila Fletcher, *Victorian Girls: Lord Lyttelton's Daughters* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), p. 111.

¹⁰⁷ Stephenson, *Talbot*, p. 13.

There is a...difference between Keble's time and thought and our own. His seems so much the more solemn and searching. Yet we have gained so much by what we have learned since the Tractarians; and they seemed to gain their solemnity by the exclusion of much which is so genuinely a part of Christian truth and life in fruit and application that...we should try to retain some of the Tractarian severity (I am afraid I don't) while opening one's heart to the value of freer, larger, more instinctive things from which they shrank.¹⁰⁸

Gladstone held a high opinion of Talbot as a priest (in his view 'the first of callings')¹⁰⁹ and had no doubt that he would go far in the Church.¹¹⁰ 'He is excellent: & will make a mark'.¹¹¹ Gladstone increasingly relied on Edward's judgment regarding Church matters, especially disestablishment. In 1877, after discussing the 'pending crisis in the Church', Gladstone recorded, 'He can hardly be too much prized'.¹¹² And in 1881 Gladstone declared himself 'strongly confirmed' in his opinions 'by E. Talbot'.¹¹³ When it came to discussing his plans for St Deiniol's Library, Gladstone made sure to consult Edward. This was a logical progression from their discussions on the Church's future for, as the succeeding chapter will show, the Library's immediate foundation was partly motivated by Gladstone's conviction that the Anglican Church in Wales would soon be disestablished.

2.2.2 *History and Christology*

All the essayists who contributed to *Lux Mundi* were, and still are in critical terms, overshadowed by Charles Gore. However, Edward Talbot was of equal importance to Gladstone's intellectual involvement with late nineteenth-century Liberal Catholicism. Talbot's contribution to *Lux Mundi* was 'Preparation in History for Christ'. Although Gladstone did not record it in his Diary, he read and annotated Edward's essay in his own copy of the book.¹¹⁴

Talbot's essay aimed to show how the incarnation exemplified the universal nature of religion.¹¹⁵ He suggested the universal tendency to ascribe godlike attributes to humanity reflected a unique appreciation of the true terms of engagement between humankind and the divine. He pointed to the value placed on higher human qualities in classical

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹⁰ Cf. G to CG, 29 July 1881, in *GD* at this date.

¹¹¹ *GD* 19/1/76.

¹¹² *GD* 14/1/77.

¹¹³ G to G. V. Wellesley, 20 September 1881 in *GD* at this date.

¹¹⁴ G's annotated *Lux Mundi* is preserved at St Deiniol's Library, E 11/47.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Edward Stuart Talbot, 'The Preparation in History for Christ', in *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*, ed. by C. Gore (London: John Murray, 1889), 129-178, pp. 141, 159.

philosophy and the Hebrew prophecies in which ‘the strange vision of a human king with Divine attributes...strain[s] towards some manifestation of God in present nearness’.¹¹⁶ Gladstone marked this passage with two heavy vertical lines in the margin, meaning a special degree of notice. And well he might notice it. Talbot’s thesis echoed the great theme of Gladstone’s unfinished work on Olympian religion and mirrored almost exactly arguments he had made in ‘*Universitas Hominum*. or, the Unity of History’ (1887):

There was one country [Greece] in the world where, for centuries before the Advent, it had been the prime pursuit of Art to associate deity with the human form; and...where this practice spontaneously grew out of the prevailing and fundamental idea of the established religion. This aim led the artist ever upward to surmount imperfection and to reach upward after perfection. And though the finite could not incorporate the infinite, yet...actual performance was advanced to a point in the presentation of form, such as to supply a model for every country or age.¹¹⁷

Talbot related his thesis, as Gladstone did, to the evolutionary historicism inherent in Victorian intellectual culture. Modern students and enquirers are interested in change and movement, he argued, but simultaneously retain a need to see ‘the beauty of process’ and discern pattern and meaning in change. The mind ‘in the fullest sense of the word’ is ‘not the mere critical understanding, but the whole spiritual and rational energy’.¹¹⁸ This desire to construct an evolutionary aesthetic, informed by romantic philosophy, to match an evolutionary science is where the religion of the incarnation, to Talbot and Gladstone, became ever more central.

In terms of Christology, Gore’s embryonic kenotic theory has been the primary focus for readers of *Lux Mundi*. However, Talbot suggested something equally if not more radical in the following depiction of an evolving Christ.

The beginnings of life, as we know them, are laid in darkness: they emerge crude and childish: the physical and outward almost conceals the germ of spiritual and rational being which nevertheless is the self, and which will increasingly assert itself and rule. It may be so with that organism which God was to make the shrine of His Incarnation.¹¹⁹

Gladstone passed over this astonishing passage without comment. It is unlikely he would have described the incarnation in such explicitly evolutionary terms, but there is no doubt

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 165.

¹¹⁷ W. E. Gladstone, ‘*Universitas Hominum*. Or, the Unity of History’, *North American Review* 373 (December 1887), 589-602, p. 598.

¹¹⁸ Talbot, ‘Preparation’, p. 144.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 170.

the human aspect of incarnation attained an increasing importance in his religious belief. This was perhaps most explicitly expressed in his reading and review of Seeley's *Ecce Homo* (1866).¹²⁰ His annotated copy includes '+'s by the following quotations, which echo both the kenoticism and humanism of *Lux Mundi*.

[+ and double line:] This temperance in the use of supernatural power is the masterpiece of Christ...This repose in greatness makes him surely the most sublime image ever offered to the human imagination...

[+:] Christ raised the feeling of humanity from being a feeble restraining power to be an inspiring passion...humanity changed from a restraint to a motive.¹²¹

Talbot was a vital link between Gladstone and the *Lux Mundi* group as a whole. He took pains to introduce Gladstone to the work of other members of the group. For example, it was he who gave Gladstone a copy of Aubrey Moore's 1883 paper on 'Evolution in its relation to the Christian Faith' following a visit to Keble.¹²² But above all, it was his position as the Warden of the new college of Keble, which not only had an impact on the production of *Lux Mundi*, but also deepened Gladstone's acquaintainship with the Liberal Catholic revival.

2.2.3 Keble College, Oxford

Of the eleven contributors to *Lux Mundi*, more than half had been officially affiliated to Keble College: Aubrey Moore, J.R. Illingworth, Edward Talbot, R. C. Moberly, Arthur Lyttelton, W. Lock and W. J. H. Champion. Gladstone was closely connected with the College, and it provided the venue for the first written plan for St Deiniol's Library.

As early as 1845, a scheme had been discussed but not implemented for a new Oxford College to be founded on religious lines. The opportunity came after the death of John Keble in 1867 and plans were quickly formulated and spearheaded by Edward Pusey.¹²³ The foundation stone was laid on St. Mark's Day 1868 when Pusey voiced his fears for the future of religion in Oxford and his somewhat lofty and austere hopes for the

¹²⁰ W. E. Gladstone, *Ecce Homo* (London: Strahan & Co., 1868).

¹²¹ John Seeley, *Ecce Homo: A Survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ* (London and Cambridge: Macmillan, 1866), pp. 47, 186. G's annotated copy is preserved in the Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle.

¹²² Aubrey Lackington Moore (1848-1890). Cf. *GD* 10/12/85, 27/12/85ff, 22/2/88, 26/2/88, 'Glenalmond College Jubilee', *The Times*, 2 October 1891, SP 36, 145-154, p. 153, and Aubrey Moore, *Evolution in Its Relation to the Christian Faith: A Paper Read at the Reading Church Congress, October, 1883* (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1883). G's annotated copy survives in St. Deiniol's Library pamphlet collection (51/E/9) inscribed 'W. E. Gladstone with E. S. Talbot's affn. respect'. Cf. *GD* 2/12/83.

¹²³ William Thorn Warren, ed., *Kebleland* (Winchester and London: Warren and Son, Simpkin and Co., 1906), p. 63.

College.¹²⁴ Pusey initially wanted H. P. Liddon as the new warden but, on his refusal and at his suggestion, in 1869 Edward Talbot was asked to be the first head.¹²⁵ June 1870 saw the official opening of Keble, Talbot's marriage and his installation as Warden. The College had a royal charter but remained unfinished at its official opening, being without library, permanent hall or chapel.¹²⁶ It was, in the words of Pusey, 'an act of faith'.¹²⁷

The public statement of Keble's place and mission in Oxford was only fully realised, in visual terms at least, in 1877 with the dedication of William Butterfield's imposing chapel, which Gladstone thought 'noble',¹²⁸ and the official opening of the new hall and library on 25 April 1878.¹²⁹ The library opening was followed by lunch in hall and associated speeches - 'mine a long one,' recorded Gladstone. In it he was concerned to discuss the principles that Keble represented and, in doing so, again explicitly revealed the extent to which his High Churchmanship had broadened out between the 1840s and the late 1870s.¹³⁰ Pusey's vision for Keble College had been that 'besides a simplicity of life here, there will be a religious tone' appropriate to its namesake.¹³¹ Gladstone fully endorsed Pusey's ideal of simplicity but,¹³² despite his obvious respect for John Keble's Anglo-Catholic credentials, Gladstone's vision of the College's future had ultimately more in common with Talbot's:

It has been truly said that this is a college for special purposes, and as a college for special purposes it is open to special criticism...and ought not to shrink from that criticism. There would, in my opinion, be no greater calamity than that we should see formed in Oxford any new college characterised by fanciful peculiarities, or any new college open...to the charge of being sectarian.¹³³

This speech brings into sharp focus the Liberal Anglican educational agenda Gladstone shared with members of the *Lux Mundi* group. The force of the speech prefigures arguments Charles Gore was later to employ in *The Mission of the Church*, and yet again

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 64.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 68.

¹²⁶ G was involved in obtaining the charter for Keble. Cf. G to Earl de Grey, Lord President, 17 April 1870, BL GP Add MS 43514, fol. 5, in *GD* at this date.

¹²⁷ Fletcher, *Victorian Girls*, p. 154.

¹²⁸ *GD* 31/1/78.

¹²⁹ Cf. *GD* 23/4/78ff and 'Keble College. Opening of the Library and Hall', *The Guardian*, 26 April 1878, SP, 24, 31-41.

¹³⁰ Cf. Sheridan Gilley, 'Gladstone on State and Church', in *The Gladstone Umbrella: Papers Delivered at the Gladstone Centenary Conference 1998*, ed. by P.B. Francis (Hawarden: Monad Press, 2001), 1-13, pp. 2-3.

¹³¹ Warren, ed., *Kebleland*, p. 67.

¹³² SP, 24, pp. 38-9.

¹³³ SP, 24, p. 37.

suggests the existence of a coherent intellectual framework for the St Deiniol's project. Gladstone chose, somewhat controversially considering the occasion, to propose that Newman was 'greater than either' Keble or Pusey in terms of his religious and intellectual influence over Oxford. However, Gladstone indicated, the harm he did was also greater. Newman's secession not only destroyed the Oxford Movement but also destabilised the whole intellectual basis on which the structure was built. Newman *thought* his way to Rome and then abandoned thought; the repercussions of his mental journey were 'to throw all the brightest and noblest intellects of the University as wrecks upon every shore'.¹³⁴ Confidence in an intellectual Christianity was sapped because no one could be sure where it might lead. Hence no intellectual resistance remained to counter the age's growing 'want of respect for the ancient foundations of belief'. The apparent vacuum left by rigorous academic theology was the root of those unbalanced relations between different disciplines, which both Gladstone and Gore lamented.

The knowledge of the age, and the active and successful pursuit of some particular branches of knowledge, has led to an overestimate of their comparative importance and to a desire to invest them with a domination to which they have no title, and to a character to which they cannot pretend.¹³⁵

This reiterated the arguments Gladstone had made at Liverpool College and would make again at Glenalmond (near Perth) in the 1890s.¹³⁶ Because theologians had lost confidence in their own intellectual ability, the discoveries of science, supported by their 'factual' substrata, were allowed to make exclusive claims to truth without check. Gladstone was effectively acknowledging that the ways of seeking knowledge familiar to Newman, Keble, Pusey and himself and the institutional frameworks in which they had been fostered had been badly destabilised. In Gladstone's understanding, the only way forward for Anglicanism was for it to become intellectually broader and academically reinvigorated. The same conviction was articulated by Gore over a decade later and was enshrined in Gladstone's Hawarden foundation. Keble existed and St Deiniol's was to be instituted to 'meet these special and pressing dangers' crucially not from the *outside* but from the *inside*: the insularity, backwardness and fear, which caused disorientation and confusion within Victorian Christian culture and could easily result in a desire to create

¹³⁴ SP, 24, p. 40. Cf. Sheridan Gilley, *Newman and His Age* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1990), pp. 221-2, 371-9; James D. Bastable, ed., *Newman and Gladstone: Centennial Essays* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1978), esp. Ch. 15, pp. 287-304.

¹³⁵ SP, 24, pp. 39-40.

¹³⁶ 'Glenalmond College Jubilee', *The Times*, 2 October 1891, SP 36, 145-154.

immutable truths, either religious or scientific.¹³⁷ Hence the staff of Keble should not give 'too exclusive an ecclesiastical character to the college'. In contrast they should promulgate the idea

That religion is the groundwork and centre, and around that centre ought to be grouped, and upon that groundwork ought to be raised, every accomplishment...that can tend to the development of human nature, and its full equipment in every one of its gifts and faculties. There has been noticed appropriately the notable conjunction of Keble College with the [University] museum over the way. It has been well said that they are a representation of the sacred and secular at Oxford; and if the sacred and the secular do come to be compared...Keble College would have no reason to look upon the issue with dread. But it is an illustration of the harmony which ought to prevail...between the branches of education within this great university.¹³⁸

This statement articulates the theoretical basis on which St Deiniol's Library was conceived and founded.

Conclusion

Gladstone's relationship with Keble and Oxford's Liberal Catholic revival, with its emphasis on an academically alive, doctrinally streamlined, confident and broad Anglicanism, provides a context in which the foundation of St Deiniol's no longer appears so anomalous. It represented a natural and well-conceived response to the crisis of confidence afflicting Anglicanism rather than a defensive bastion against the circumstances of modern life. In fact, the evidence of Gladstone's Liberal Catholic connections and theological position make it unfeasible to describe Gladstone, as Colin Matthew did, simply as 'an orthodox sacramentalist with what was by the 1880s an old-fashioned view of heaven', 'an anglo-catholic' with residual evangelical tendencies, or as Shannon's intransigent and defensive church conservative.¹³⁹ Throughout his life Gladstone moved through several religious phases. He was brought up a strict evangelical and flirted with Anglo-Catholicism in his middle years.¹⁴⁰ But all along he also developed deepening Broad Church sympathies and ended up a Liberal Catholic. His increasing broadness of religious outlook did not involve repudiating his previous positions, which in

¹³⁷ SP, 24, p. 40.

¹³⁸ SP, 24, p. 41.

¹³⁹ *GD* X, clxxxix-cxc.

¹⁴⁰ Note G in later years distanced himself from too close an association with Anglo Catholicism: 'I was myself little more than an occasional visitant [to All Saints', Margaret Street, the leading High Anglican Church in London], and external observer'. G to Revd W. A. Whitworth, 3 Sept 1893, BL GP Add MS 44517 fol. 232 in *GD* at this date.

many important ways continued to influence him but, when one examines the textual evidence, one can see just how far he had moved. For example, Matthew's contention that Gladstone's view of heaven was increasingly 'old-fashioned' in the 1880s is seriously questioned when one considers the close attention he gave to descriptions of spiritualist heaven and angel activity in texts such as *The Testimony of the Unseen*.¹⁴¹ His reaction to certain evangelical attacks on spiritualism is a further case in point. Over Christmas and New Year 1884-5, Gladstone read G. H. Pember's *Earth's Earliest Ages; and their Connection with Modern Spiritualism and Theosophy* (London, 1884). Gladstone's verdict on the work, which was anti-theosophy and anti-spiritualism, was that it was 'awful'.¹⁴² His notes are suggestive. Pember asserted that 'Knowledge in this life is a gift fraught with peril: for our great task here is to learn the lesson of absolute dependence upon God, and entire submission to His will'. Gladstone disagreed with this explicitly evangelical and anti-intellectual statement, marking it with 'ma'.¹⁴³ As this chapter has shown, he valued intellectual rigour and prized an open mind too highly to remain theologically unmoved in the face of multiplying 'modern intellectual and moral problems'.

Nonetheless, tensions remained both for Gladstone personally and for Liberal Catholicism in general. One fascinating image of Gladstone, [fig. 6.1] entitled appropriately enough *The Aged Reader*, is firmly evangelical in its references: sombre Sunday best, right hand resting on the Bible.¹⁴⁴ But Gladstone's figure is integrated into the context of a late nineteenth-century gothic revival church. Of the two images of Christ that fill the windows either side of Gladstone's head, the one on the right is immediately recognisable as William Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World* (1853). The first version of this painting has been in Keble College Chapel ever since the day Gladstone made his long speech in 1878. The vaulting of this imaginary space is decorated with a criss-cross design also reminiscent of Keble. The tension between *and within* different Anglican traditions is marked in this composition just as it was in Gladstone's religious *mentalité*, but when confronted with either we are continually pressed to recognise the eclecticism, innovation, space and depth which such a mixture afforded.

¹⁴¹ *The Testimony of the Unseen - Communicated by E. L. S.*, (London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1888), pp. 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 17, 19-21.

¹⁴² GD 11/1/85.

¹⁴³ G. H. Pember, *Earth's Earliest Ages: And Their Connection with Modern Spiritualism and Theosophy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1884), p. 28.

¹⁴⁴ *William Ewart Gladstone [Illustrated Memorial Pamphlet]*, (Bristol: J Hepworth & Son Ltd, 1898), GX/Y/12.

There was clearly a coterminous vision being articulated by Gladstone and the *Lux Mundi* Group, of an ecumenical,¹⁴⁵ interdisciplinary, associationalist, clergy-led Christian culture, the growth of which would redress existing imbalances in Victorian intellectual life. This commitment provided the intellectual and theological motivation for Gladstone's foundation of a residential library during his final years, the circumstances of which will form the subject of the next and final chapter. As further preparation for this discussion, consider Gore's statement, in his *Mission* text, of what he understood to be the central paradox inflicting the relationship between theology and other intellectual disciplines, which Gladstone also recognised and acted upon in Hawarden. Firstly, the 'principle of faith is brought into exercise to some extent in all human life and knowledge', including the sciences. Secondly, there exists a lack of dialogue between the disciplines to the detriment of all. He wrote

It is a fact conspicuous in the history of mankind that whereas the representatives of great intellectual movements at different epochs have interpreted truly the movement, which they represented in itself, they have been strangely blind to the place which it was destined to hold in the whole of human knowledge or human life.¹⁴⁶

This mirrored one of Gladstone's enduring convictions, which he expressed and embodied most explicitly in St Deiniol's. In a speech at Hawarden, to a visiting delegation of Yorkshire Liberals, he explained his view on the relationship between theology and other disciplines.

Christianity is a religion adapted to the elevation and development of the entire nature of man, and, so far from seeing any antagonism between the prosecution of Divine knowledge and the prosecution of knowledge which is human and secular, in my opinion they never can be separated without disadvantage.¹⁴⁷

In the combative intellectual climate of the late nineteenth century, Gore and Gladstone saw a clear choice for theology. Either she could continue a threatened withdrawal from current intellectual debate, prompted largely by ignorance and fear of new developments apparently antagonistic to faith, or she could stand her ground and keep the channels of communication open. To Gore, it was a matter of 'duty' that Anglicans should learn from other branches of knowledge in order to assess more clearly their relative contribution to

¹⁴⁵ In an intellectual rather than a denominational sense. Both Gore and G retained an understandable sense of denominational hierarchy that privileged the Anglican Church in practical terms. Cf. e.g. Alan Wilkinson, *Christian Socialism: Scott Holland to Tony Blair: The 1998 Scott Holland Lectures* (London: SCM Press, 1998), p. 80.

¹⁴⁶ Gore, *Mission*, p. 97.

¹⁴⁷ 'Mr. Gladstone', *The Times*, 16 April 1895, SP, 38, 53-57, p. 55.

the sum of human knowledge.¹⁴⁸ This was no less important for Gladstone than the perceived need for Christians from different traditions to communicate and associate. Both preoccupations can be seen directly informing the structure of his Library: the proximity of theological and secular texts on its shelves and the engagement in debate between both believers and non-believers in its hostel. The Gladstone that Shannon describes preparing a bastion of defence against the Humphrey Wards and other doubters would never have conceived such an alarming arrangement. But this is not to imply this fraternisation was encouraged with the expectation on the part of either Gore or Gladstone that belief would be relinquished. On the contrary, such broadened knowledge would improve the ability of Anglicans to communicate, with ‘positive plainness’ and increased success, the first principles of their faith to a wider society.¹⁴⁹ In consideration of Gladstone’s life-long commitment to the transmission and proliferation of received knowledge and his long-standing sympathy with Broad Church/Liberal ideology it is possible to echo Shannon’s words if not his meaning and say that St Deiniol’s clearly was ‘characteristic of and conformable to Gladstone’s long-held prepossessions’.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Gore, *Mission*, p. 68.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 85.

¹⁵⁰ Shannon, *Gladstone II*, p. 477.

CHAPTER SEVEN ❖ ST DEINIOL'S LIBRARY: LIBERAL CATHOLICISM IN PRACTICE?

Introduction

Having established Gladstone's intellectual affinity with the Liberal Catholic Movement, we now consider how he sought to convert theory to practice by founding an institution in which its ideals could be embodied and lived out. As this chapter will demonstrate, this was far from a straightforward proposition. As we saw in Chapter Six, significant disagreement and uncertainty remained in High Church circles about the future of Anglo-Catholicism. For Liberal Catholics in particular, the central question was how to maintain, with integrity, the essential spirit of inherited Tractarian tradition whilst making it relevant to a new age. There were a number of different routes open to individuals seeking to implement Liberal Catholic ideas in practice and, as we shall see, Gladstone found the practical reality of formulating the shape and character of his institution as problematic as had the founders of Keble College. Part One of this chapter will firmly establish St Deiniol's Library's status as a Liberal Catholic institution in ethos and design. Part Two will address the multifarious problems faced by Gladstone in attempting to institutionalise Liberal Catholic ideology.

1 A Liberal Catholic Institution

There is no doubt that the idea of a residential library originated in Gladstone's engagement with Liberal Catholic ideas, rather than merely being the general expression of instinctive High Churchmanship. His most consistently articulated aim in founding St Deiniol's was as an overarching response to a 'deeper & more searching need' existent in modern life. As he wrote in 1893, 'a special necessity appears to have arisen at the present epoch requiring to be met by special means'. The 'necessity' was 'a severance between the Christian system and the general thought of the time'; one of the 'means' was to be St Deiniol's: an intellectual resource for a beleaguered and isolated Church.¹ As we shall see, the expectation of Welsh disestablishment largely legitimised the Library's foundation in Wales but Gladstone consistently privileged intellectual over practical motivations.

¹ W. E. Gladstone, '1893 St. Deiniol's', St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS. Cf. also Mary Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library at "St. Deiniol's Hawarden"', *Nineteenth Century* 59 (June 1906), 944-954, p. 944.

I have not here principally in view the likelihood that...the Church in Wales may be deprived or discharged of her temporal endowments, this constitutes a call for pecuniary aid with a view to the due and dignified maintenance of her ministrations...I refer to a deeper & more searching need.²

St Deiniol's was to be his personal contribution to the project that aimed to return 'the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems'.³ However there was, as we have indicated, no one way in which 'the Catholic faith' could be realised in practice.

1.1 Regeneration or Memorialisation?

Several commentators have concluded Gladstone was inspired by the model of Pusey House when founding St Deiniol's, suggesting that the initial idea came to him after attending Edward Pusey's funeral in 1882 after which plans for that institution were formulated.⁴ There are certainly parallels between the two foundations. For example, H. P. Liddon initially envisaged the memorial to Pusey as

A College of Clergy in Oxford, to be a centre of religious faith, theological learning, and personal sympathy, as the most fitting Memorial of one whose whole heart was devoted to the preservation of the Faith, and whose days had been spent in fighting its battles in Oxford.⁵

Gladstone's plans for St Deiniol's certainly suggest it was designed to be 'a centre of religious faith, theological learning, and personal sympathy'; he also considered a future for it as a 'College of Clergy' and the Pusey House model was directly referred to during the formulation of the Library's Trust.⁶ Liddon had also articulated a hope that the work of the Pusey memorial would continue 'to impart new spiritual energy to the English Church', which was one of Gladstone's central aims.⁷ However, there are limits to the equivalence. G. W. E. Russell, for example, felt 'the distinctiveness, individuality, and characteristic features of the Foundation would be lost' if St Deiniol's was too closely associated or even eventually merged with Pusey House.⁸ And crucially, Gladstone had serious reservations about the institution. When he visited Charles Gore there in 1885, he

² W. E. Gladstone, '1893 St. Deiniol's', St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

³ Charles Gore, 'Preface', in *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*, ed. by C. Gore (London: John Murray, 1889), vii-x, p. vii.

⁴ E.g. T. W. Pritchard, *A History of St Deiniol's Library* (Hawarden: Monad Press, 1999), p. 9.

⁵ H. P. Liddon, *The Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, 2nd edn, 4 vols (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1897), 4, p. 391.

⁶ W. Phillimore to G, 27 November 1895, 25 October 1895, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁷ Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, p. 394.

⁸ G. W. E. Russell, 'Memorandum on The Rev. R. L. Page's suggestions about St. Deiniol's', 20 August 1895, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

was disappointed with both the House and Library and subsequently, as we saw in Chapter Six, wished Gore would leave and devote himself to ‘a different work’.⁹ This in particular indicates Gladstone’s estimation of Pusey House’s inadequacy was a sign, not that he was planning something the same only better, but rather something very different.¹⁰

There was a significant difference between the circumstances surrounding the foundation of Pusey House, or indeed the later foundation of Liddon House in London, and that of St Deiniol’s Library. The former institutions were established first and foremost as memorials to dead High Churchmen. St Deiniol’s was not. Links have been identified between the translation of collections and individual concerns with self-memorialisation and immortality,¹¹ and, as stated in the Introduction, some scholars have argued strongly that Gladstone was consciously seeking to create his own memorial by founding St Deiniol’s.¹² Gladstone founded the Library only a decade before he died and there is some efficacy in associating the Library with the memorialising culture of the first generation Tractarians, but there is no substantial evidence to suggest Gladstone was so preoccupied with his own legacy that he created St Deiniol’s as an advance memorial to himself. In her 1906 article, written to promote the memorial library, Mary Drew made clear ‘how little’, in her opinion, ‘Mr. Gladstone ever realised his position in the hearts and minds of mankind, and the interest that might belong to relics connected with his youth’. Whilst, as Chapter Five made clear, Gladstone was not this naïve, the anecdote with which she illustrates the claim does little to support the claim Gladstone was keen to memorialise *himself* through his *books*. She described Gladstone taking

A quarto MS. book bound in red leather, in an excellent state of preservation...with beautifully written mathematical notes and diagrams. These he neatly cut out, and, presenting the book to a member of his family, expressed a hope that now he had removed the already used pages, it might be of some service. One page of diagrams in the middle of the volume had luckily escaped his notice, and for this and the early autograph signatures the book is treasured in a manner very contrary to his expectations.¹³

⁹ G to SEG, 20 March 1893, BL GP Add MS 44549, fol. 73 printed in *GD* 20/3/93.

¹⁰ *GD* 3/7/85ff.

¹¹ Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 248ff.

¹² Cf. Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 565; Michael J Christensen, ‘St Deiniol’s Library, Hawarden: The Gladstone National Memorial’ (unpublished MA thesis, University of Liverpool, 2000), p. 83.

¹³ Drew, ‘Mr. Gladstone’s Library’, p. 946. Cf. also Hulda Friederichs, ‘Mr Gladstone’s Library & Hostel at Hawarden’, *Westminster Budget* (Supplement) (23 November 1894), p. 4.

In Gladstone's opinion, the collection was important because of the accumulated knowledge it contained and represented, not because he had owned the books or that they displayed signs of his ownership.

Ultimately, the nature of Gladstone's relationship with the Oxford Liberal Catholics makes the memorialisation interpretation untenable considering the movement's emphasis on shaping the future of the church rather than enshrining unchanged aspects of its past. The interpretation of the Library as, first and foremost, a practical contribution to and working resource for the Liberal Catholic Movement is one supported by an examination of the circumstances surrounding the Library's foundation and the way in which Gladstone designed and laid it out.

1.2 'The Meditated Foundation': a brief chronology

Open discussion of Gladstone's new project was first recorded in July 1886 but plans had been 'maturing...for many months'.¹⁴ Despite obvious excitement, during the first two years Gladstone restricted the project's details to his immediate family;¹⁵ his early priorities were to build the Library in Hawarden and to involve his family in the project. Between 1886 and 1888, with the help of sons Willy and Stephen, he searched exhaustively for a suitable site in the village.¹⁶ During this period, Gladstone's ideas about the form the projected institution was to take remained nebulous. It was crucially only when he visited Keble and his Liberal Catholic circle, between 10 and 13 November 1888, that plans really began to crystallise. Significantly, Charles Gore and Talbot were the first to be informed. On the very evening of his arrival, Gladstone sounded Gore on the project.¹⁷ He reacted with initial incredulity, complaining: 'Really it is a joke. Mr. Gladstone wanted to see me last night...about a scheme he has got for the furtherance of theological study amongst the clergy, as if he had no other thought in the world'.¹⁸ By doubting his seriousness, Gore misjudged Gladstone, who spent the following day busily devouring Gore's *The Ministry of the Christian Church* (1888) to facilitate further debate. In addition he clearly exhibited the uncertainty that characterised Liberal Catholic attitudes towards the

¹⁴ GD 12/7/86; SEG to HNG, 4 August 1886, GG 896, quoted in Pritchard, *History*, p. 9.

¹⁵ E.g. In October 1888 he was holding 'close talk' on St. Deiniol's, GD 1/10/88. Early discussion was possibly restricted to the male Gladstones: G did not fully explain his plans to his wife until 1888, when he 'explained all to C. in the subject of the meditated Institute', GD 15/8/88.

¹⁶ Cf. GD 15/9/87, 15/8/88ff, 7/9/88ff; Pritchard, *History*, p. 16.

¹⁷ GD 10/11/88.

¹⁸ G. L. Prestige, *The Life of Charles Gore: A Great Englishman* (London: Heinemann, 1935), p. 79.

furtherance of their ideals.¹⁹ On the 12 November, Gladstone held a 'Full conversation with Warden [Talbot] & Mr Gore on [the] Meditated foundation'.²⁰ Talbot, like Gore, was initially sceptical about the project's practicality, regarding it as 'possible & even probable' that a Library built in Hawarden would have to be moved.²¹

During the summer of 1889 Gladstone, undaunted, recommenced his search for a site, concluding it successfully that September.²² But Gore and Talbot's reservations clearly worried him. On 13 September he confided his solution to his Diary: 'I am rather turning to a temporary scheme'. Gladstone commissioned a temporary structure of galvanised iron from a Mr Humphreys of London and building was soon underway, supervised by Bailey, the local carpenter.²³ Gladstone had already commenced plans for its interior design and organisation.²⁴ He designed bookcases for the Library, based on the three-sided design he had developed for the Temple of Peace,²⁵ and exhibited his underlying preoccupation with the placing theology at the centre by being adamant, when much else was uncertain, that 'My ground floor is to be Theological & planned for 25000 volumes'.²⁶

The 'grand transfer' of books began on 21 December 1889 when Gladstone 'sent off my first instalment to Saint Deiniol's'.²⁷ The words '*sent off*' undermine Roy Jenkins' contention that Gladstone personally wheelbarrowed all the books from the Castle to St Deiniol's.²⁸ (He is further discredited by Mary Drew's description of the move. Although Gladstone packed and unpacked at each end 'no *vehicle* was ever allowed to leave the Castle without its consignment of book bundles').²⁹

By the end of January 1890, Gladstone estimated he had 5,700 volumes in place. During the course of the year the Library's first room became so full that books had to be doubled up on the swelling shelves. By September, Gladstone hoped 'we approach

¹⁹ GD 11/11/88. Gore was not alone in marvelling at G's subordination of other responsibilities to planning St. Deiniol's. Cf. Charlotte Ribblesdale, 'A Visit to Hawarden', *Nineteenth Century* (April 1904), 637-650, pp. 644-5.

²⁰ GD 12/11/88. Following this meeting, G drafted a memorandum articulating his vision for St Deiniol's for the first time. Cf. BL GP Add MS 44773, fol. 75. Printed in GD 12/11/88.

²¹ EST to G, 23 November 1888, BL GP Add MS 44505 fol. 156.

²² Cf. GD 8/8/89, 19/8/89, 11/9/89.

²³ Cf. GD 23/8/89ff, 13/9/89ff, Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 947.

²⁴ Cf. GD 20/8/89ff, 18/9/89, 1/10/89, 9/11/89, 18/11/89, 22/11/89.

²⁵ For a detailed description cf. Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 949. Mary based this on her father's memoranda (St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS) and W. E. Gladstone, 'On Books and the Housing of Them', *Nineteenth Century* 27 (March 1890), 384-396.

²⁶ GD 21/8/89.

²⁷ GD 21/12/89.

²⁸ Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p. 178.

10,000 volumes'.³⁰ His attention then turned to the second room. Bookcases were fixed and, at the beginning of October 1890, Gladstone recorded 'I have now *in situ* bookcases for 22 [to]...24000 volumes: & full 12000 carried up'.³¹ The work proved heavier going in November as the Library suffered storm damage and Gladstone found himself preoccupied with 'the awful matter of Parnell'.³²

Despite setbacks and distractions Gladstone remained totally committed to the task of setting up the Library; over the next couple of years time spent at Hawarden was dominated by the project. During August 1891, for example, he was working there almost every day. As more of his books were transported to the new buildings, Gladstone not only engaged in practical work at the Library but also read there.³³ Despite numerous difficulties, the Library and hostel were ready for other readers by the beginning of 1894 and the first resident arrived that Easter.³⁴

1.3 The Library & the Cultural Organisation of Knowledge

An examination of the design and layout of the first St Deiniol's Library is vital to confirming our understanding of its nascent ethos. Limitations are placed on this by the lack of an original catalogue or class list,³⁵ and the fact that subsequent accessions were simply subsumed into the founding donation. However on the basis of surviving memoranda, plans and photographs, it is possible to reconstruct, in general but meaningful terms, the original layout.

A plan, dating from 1906, [fig. 7.1] shows the location of the 'Tin Tabernacle', as it was affectionately known, in relation to the Memorial Library and Residence (built on the site of the original hostel building). As can be seen, the Library lay on a North-South line to the north west of the existing building. In external appearance [fig. 7.2] the Library was 'not a thing of beauty'.³⁶ With its small spire and gabled ends, it resembled a mission

²⁹ My emphasis. Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 948.

³⁰ GD 28/1/90; 8/8/90ff; 19/9/90.

³¹ GD 23/9/90ff; 6/10/90. (The three dots in the latter quotation are present in GD.)

³² GD 14/11/90; 20/11/90.

³³ GD 11-12/8/91. Ribblesdale, 'Visit to Hawarden', p. 644-5.

³⁴ Cf. GD 20/5/93; T. W. Pritchard, 'The Revd. S. E. Gladstone (1844-1920)', *Flintshire Historical Society Journal* 35 (1999), 191-241, p. 227ff. *Hawarden Parish Magazine*, (February 1894).

³⁵ The Library had a card catalogue, which over the past hundred years has changed beyond recognition. Cf. Hulda Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days: A Study of Mr. Gladstone in Retirement, with Some Account of St. Deiniol's Library and Hostel*, Westminster Gazette Library (London: Westminster Gazette, 1896), p. 121; Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 951.

³⁶ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, pp. 111-2.

church (the usual function of Mr Humphrey's iron buildings). Internally it was a condensed version of the Temple of Peace, dominated by the same buttressed shelving, desks and chairs and decorated with a small selection of pictures and medallion portraits [figs. 7.3-7.4].

In a memorandum, undated but apparently written at Dalmeny Park before September 1894,³⁷ Gladstone set out 'to give an idea of the principle & method of arrangement...upon which the books of this Library have been placed' and importantly described the classification scheme and its layout in the tin Library [fig. 7.5]. He referred to the two rooms as 'North' and 'Southern', which aids in identifying them on the plan, but it can be clearly seen that the fundamental division between divinity and humanity (which characterises the Memorial Library) was in existence from the very beginning. For our purposes, the most important characteristic of the first Library's classification scheme was the sheer broadness of its divinity section. Note the striking inclusion of 'Magic and Spiritism' in the very centre of the room, as well as 'Non Christian Religions', 'Pre-History' and 'Philosophy of Man' and 'Of Nature'. Radically, Gladstone regarded these as major parts of his collection; minor sections, including such mainstream and 'orthodox' subjects as 'Epitaphs &c. Books on marriage &c. Hymns. Liturgies', were relegated to the memorandum's preamble.³⁸

Several contemporary commentators stressed the breadth and inclusiveness of the St Deiniol's theological collection. David Williamson wrote: 'The choice of volumes was made on no exclusive basis, and I noticed the works of Churchmen, Catholics, and Nonconformists side by side'.³⁹ And J. C. Story observed

³⁷ The same words are reused in a memorandum written by G at this date, 'The Library of St. Deiniols' (September 1894), St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

³⁸ W. E. Gladstone, 'St Deiniol's Library', n.d., [Dalmeny Memorandum], St Deiniol's Library Uncatalogued MSS.

³⁹ David Williamson, *Gladstone: The Man: A Non-Political Biography*, 2nd edn (London: James Bowden, 1898), p. 62.

The theological student who examines the books in the Divinity Room will be struck with the breadth of the donor's conception. Here is no sign of narrowness; nothing of the sectarian spirit; all is otherwise. Suppose the student wishes the answers to such questions as these: What is religion? In what forms has the religious spirit manifested itself in the human race? In what order have these different forms appeared? Here, in consecutive arrangement, are the books which will supply the answers. From Fetishism and Animism up to Judaism; from Judaism up to Christianity, in every phase and expression of the same, all may be traced, and the shelves, as they succeed one another, point the way.⁴⁰

When Gladstone spoke or wrote about St Deiniol's, he described the intellectual work that he envisaged going on there as 'divine learning'. The definition of this term has proved somewhat fugitive to historians and successive administrators of Gladstone's foundation. It has been suggested that 'divine learning' was Gladstone's way of describing the liberal education he had experienced at Oxford – *literae humaniores*, incorporating classical language, history and philosophy; and divinity.⁴¹ However on the basis of these memoranda and other writings it is clear Gladstone used 'divine learning' as a straightforward synonym for theology. As he told a delegation of Yorkshire Liberals in 1895, 'stores of Divine learning occupy the first place on these shelves and undoubtedly the maintenance and promotion of it has been in the foundation of this library an object very near my heart'.⁴² And theology in its *broadest* incarnation was Gladstone's priority; J. C. Story was correct in describing St Deiniol's as 'a monument of Mr. Gladstone's interest in theology, and an expression of his belief that so far from theology being a declining science, it is one which will make ever increasing demands upon the mind of man'.⁴³ Hulda Friederichs, in what is probably the most detailed description of the original tin library, also emphasised the centrality of theology in Gladstone's scheme: 'the Döllinger or Divinity Room', she described as 'the most important part of the Library' whilst 'the Humanity Room' supplied 'whatever your heart may wish for in the way of literary wares...in order that when you have steeped your mind in theology during a long, studious day you may have some recreative reading'.⁴⁴

It is important to note that Friederich's distinction between theology as serious, and secular literature as recreative, reading actually missed the point of Gladstone's design. As

⁴⁰ James Capes Story, *The Hawarden Temple of Peace: A Description of St. Deiniol's Library, Founded by the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone* (Hawarden: William Bell Jones, The Post Office, 1905), p. 18. Cf. also Revd. E. T. Slater, *A Temple of Peace: For the Advancement of Divine Learning* ([n. p.]: [n. pub.], 1903), p. 742.

⁴¹ Pritchard, *History*, p. 7; Story, *Hawarden Temple*, p. 10.

⁴² 'Mr. Gladstone', *The Times*, 16 April 1895, SP 38, 53-57, pp. 55-6.

⁴³ Story, *Hawarden Temple*, p. 15.

⁴⁴ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, pp. 108-121.

he made clear to his Yorkshire audience, 'stores of Divine learning ought, in my judgement, to be associated with stores of human learning'. The point of engagement between the two was the vital thing. Theology could not survive independently, cut off from engagement with other intellectual disciplines or from the circumstances of everyday life. The importance, to Gladstone's understanding of the character and purpose of divinity, of acquiring knowledge cumulatively, which Chapter Six illustrated in relation to Newman, Gore and the Liberal Catholic Movement, is underlined again here in Gladstone's skeletal classification and library layout 'where the shelves, as they succeed one another' literally 'point the way' to an ameliorated understanding of the relationship between different branches of human learning.⁴⁵

In addition, the whole scheme fascinatingly mirrored the progress and fluctuating preoccupations of his personal religious life; thus school, university, 'Church and State', Anglican devotion, foreign theology, church history, the occult and other religions succeeded each other consecutively on the shelves. In the 'Southern' humanity room, the chronological constitution was also quite striking. English history and literature made up the largest sections, but divisions on romance and poetry, Scotland, classics, history and, of course, Ireland remind one not only of Gladstone's abiding preoccupations, but also of specific phases of his life and career. In order to indicate that this interpretation is not merely the historian's fancy, in 'On Books and the Housing of Them' Gladstone pondered

whether the arrangement of a library ought not in some degree to correspond with and represent the mind of the man who forms it. For my own part, I plead guilty...of favouritism in classification. I am sensible that sympathy and its reverse have something to do with determining in what company a book shall stand. And further, does there not enter into the matter a principle of humanity to the authors themselves. Ought we not to place them...in the neighbourhood which they would like.⁴⁶

The Library itself was therefore the ultimate and very personal manifestation (especially when one remembers that Gladstone categorised his collection before the relative standardisation of the Dewey decimal system) of Gladstone's understanding of the organising principles and cumulative power of human knowledge. It was also a clear reflection of the broadness of his religious outlook, his acknowledgement of varieties of 'orthodoxy' and above all his commitment to the Liberal Catholic ideal. During the

⁴⁵ Story, *Harvard Temple*, p. 18. Cf. also Slater, *A Temple of Peace*, p. 742.

⁴⁶ Gladstone, 'On Books', p. 390.

autumn of 1889 Gladstone briefly considered renaming the Library ‘The Monad’, which explicitly reflected his Liberal Catholic understanding of the Library as a space in which theological and other types of knowledge were to be unified and form the basis of a new epistemological consensus.⁴⁷

This then was the theory behind the Library and its organisation: focused very much on intellectual and cultural goals to be realised in the future. However, as well as setting up the Library according to a well-worked out intellectual rationale, Gladstone had to formulate a secure *practical* plan for its future.

1.4 Future Plans

Gladstone thus instituted a Trust to run St Deiniol’s after his death. He drew up ‘Mem[orand]a. for [the] Trust’ in 1889,⁴⁸ seriously addressed the matter from 1891 (once most of his books had been transferred)⁴⁹ and, despite increasing infirmity, presided over the Trust’s formal establishment. On 14 October 1895 Gladstone met the proposed trustees and ‘discussed...the particulars’ and in November endowed the Library with almost £40,000 in bonds and stock (the equivalent of about £2m).⁵⁰ ‘May God of His mercy prosper it’ he wrote that December. Uncomfortable circumstances surrounding the Trust’s institution should alert us to underlying problems in the practical establishment of the Library. Gladstone handled the transmission of power over the Library rather poorly, promising control of it first to his son Stephen (whom he made Chair of Trustees) then to his son-in-law Harry Drew (who was made acting Warden) before choosing his permanent successor, Gilbert Joyce, himself.⁵¹ Such contrariness produced a deal of bad feeling.⁵² In his last diary entry, written on his 87th birthday, Gladstone wrote ‘I have...got

⁴⁷ The exact sense of G’s usage is not clear. Cf. H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 553. Monad, defined by *OED*, is ‘the number one, unity; an arithmetical unit. Now only *Hist.* With reference to the Pythagorean or other Greek philosophies, in which numbers were regarded as real entities, and as the primordial principles of existence’; ‘An ultimate unit of being; and absolutely simple entity. Also *attrib.*’ Also ‘applied to the Deity’. The term is associated with the philosophy of G. W. Leibnitz; G knew his work e.g. he recorded reading G. W. von Leibnitz, *A System of Theology*, trans. by C.W. Russell (London: Burns and Lambert, 1850). *GD* 31/8/51.

⁴⁸ *GD* 12/11/88. Cf. also undated memoranda preserved at BL GP Add MS 44773, fols 75 and 83.

⁴⁹ *GD* 11/1/91, 16/9/91, 20/5/93; GG 840, fol. 6.

⁵⁰ *GD* 6/11/95ff. Library and Trust were formally constituted on 1 January 1896.

⁵¹ Pritchard, *History*, p. 30. *GD* Vol. 13, p. 423ff. [Dating is so sporadic at this point that it is easier to give a page reference].

⁵² Cf. Pritchard, ‘S. E. Gladstone’. This article, through a careful study of family correspondence, presents a convincing picture of the tensions present within the Hawarden family group and the difficulties this posed for the Library’s future prospects.

St. Deiniol's very near its launch upon the really difficult and critical part of the undertaking'.⁵³

The St Deiniol's project had moved, with only momentary hindrances, from inspiration to institution within ten years. Gladstone's concerns about its future were only to be expected. At eighty-seven, his faculties were failing and he was unsure how his brainchild would survive without his guiding hand. Nonetheless, the Library had been 'launched' for over two years; why should Gladstone have been so worried about its future? The answer is that Gladstone was worried by a fissure that evidently existed between his firm and clear understanding of the institution's intellectual rationale and the potential for its satisfactory practical realisation.

2 The 'Difficult and Critical Part of the Undertaking': The Perils of Practical Liberal Catholicism

The essential problem was that there was no centrally agreed idea about how best to institutionalise Liberal Catholicism let alone the Tractarian tradition. For example, Pusey House gave birth to the Community of the Resurrection in 1887; St Deiniol's did not, despite considerable attention being given to the proposition, generate any comparable society. In order to understand fully Gladstone's anxiety and elaborate the problems of putting Liberal Catholicism into practice, as well as to explain why the rationale behind St Deiniol's has been so obscured in the years since its foundation, it is necessary to examine three central problems which afflicted the practical establishment of this Liberal Catholic experiment: the questions of location, community and 'Liberalism'.

2.1 The Location of the Library

Following Gladstone's initial revelation of his library plans in Oxford, Charles Gore and Edward Talbot responded to them with growing enthusiasm. Gore told Gladstone that his experience at Pusey House 'encourages me in the belief that a library is an admirable basis of operations for an Ecclesiastical institution such as you propose' and 'I cannot but feel...that a great deal of good to religious learning may come of the enterprise'.⁵⁴ But both men immediately and strongly questioned Gladstone's choice of location. Gore accepted Gladstone's need to supervise the foundation personally, which would 'leave no doubt as to the place where the start of the undertaking should be' but maintained that

⁵³ *GD* 29/12/96.

The ultimate situation of the library should be left an open question. Its first organization should be arranged so as to admit of its being ultimately moved, if it was found advisable, wherever its chances of usefulness would be greatest. I...still incline to the opinion that on the whole it is more likely ultimately to be found workable in a town.⁵⁵

Talbot's reaction was similar, if more conciliatory: 'I quite feel now that it would be best for you to proceed with the organisation of the Library at Hawarden, though in a way which would make after transplantation possible & even probable'.⁵⁶

As we have noted, one of Gladstone's primary motivations for instituting the Library was his belief that the Church in Wales would be disestablished first (which proved correct) and would urgently require independent educational support; a point made by the following letter from Stephen to Henry Gladstone (the earliest document to discuss the Library's location):

He plans to leave his library to the Church of England as a legacy – together with a sufficient endowment to let it become a centre of study and learning...He thinks of building a Library in Hawarden, future railways will make it soon very convenient for Liverpool etc. He doesn't want this talked of. Isn't it fine?...He thinks when the Ch[urch]. is disestablished (& in Wales it soon may be) that places of learning will be greatly wanted.⁵⁷

As can be seen here and elsewhere, Gladstone recognised the claims of his home town of Liverpool. This clearly reflected the level of influence Talbot and Gore had on him (as did his eventual decision to build the Library in galvanised iron, which was only ever going to be a temporary solution).⁵⁸ Liverpool was cited in the Keble Memorandum as 'the only possible town' site and Gladstone wished the Library to provide assistance, from a distance if necessary, to that 'great city',⁵⁹ but he noted that 'an inhospitable atmosphere cuts off all idea of my personal agency'.⁶⁰ This undoubtedly reflected Gladstone's ambivalent and frequently uncomfortable relationship with the city of his birth, whose radical toryism and religious sectarianism, intensified by the Home Rule question, would indeed have provided 'an inhospitable atmosphere' for the kind of institution Gladstone

⁵⁴ Charles Gore to G, 22 November 1888, BL GP Add MS 44505 fol. 148.

⁵⁵ Charles Gore to G, 22 November 1888, BL GP Add MS 44505 fol. 148.

⁵⁶ EST to G, 23 November 1888, BL GP Add MS 44505 fol. 156.

⁵⁷ SEG to HNG, 4 August 1886, GG MS 896. Cf. Pritchard, *History*, p. 9.

⁵⁸ Cf. Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 947. However, it is unwise to assume G was completely resigned to a future move. In 1896 Friederichs noted 'it is Mr. Gladstone's wish that the permanent building should be in the same place where, in the present iron structure, the scheme came first into operation'. Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, p. 127.

⁵⁹ Undated document preserved with BL GP Add MS 44773, fol. 75.

envisaged.⁶¹ Moreover, a Hawarden foundation allowed Gladstone to maintain greater personal control over the institution.

Nonetheless, Gladstone's foundation of a rural Library appeared to go against the prevailing trend of Victorian ecclesiastical interest: the cities, their heaving populations and overworked clergy. It was this preoccupation that undeniably formed the basis of Gore and Talbot's objections, especially considering Gore and his associates' fundamental contribution to the resurgence of Christian Socialism in the 1880s.⁶² However there was a coincident strand of Anglican thought that identified the countryside as 'the pastoral ideal'.⁶³ Gladstone held a positive vision of the advantages of an isolated rural location. In 1891, he defended the isolated foundation of Glenalmond College in the following terms:

It may seem that it was a daring and a rash proceeding to attempt to found a college of this description at so great a distance from centres of population...I dare say it may be said that...a town offers a more popular and attractive site...Undoubtedly...proximity to masses of the population offers considerable advantage...But...there are some advantages...that should not be overlooked with respect to...[a] foundation...in the country[:]...the opportunity of free communication with nature...larger liberty, and...a practical acquaintance with the beautiful and romantic.⁶⁴

Gladstone characterised Glenalmond as a place of rest, holidays, refreshment and retirement, according with popular idealisation of rural life and the spirit-enhancing benefits of leisure. Hulda Friederichs' propounded a similar understanding of St Deiniol's; an urban location would 'have obviated the necessity of acquiring a special building'.

⁶⁰ Keble Memorandum, BL GP Add MS 44773, fol. 75.

⁶¹ On G's relationship with and standing in Liverpool cf. P. J. Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism: A Political and Social History of Liverpool 1868-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1981), pp. 74-6, 123, 132, 384, 401.

⁶² Cf. Alan Wilkinson, *Christian Socialism: Scott Holland to Tony Blair. The 1998 Scott Holland Lectures* (London: SCM Press, 1998).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

⁶⁴ 'Glenalmond College Jubilee', *The Times*, 2 October 1891, SP 36, 145-154, p. 149. For more on the College, cf. Matthew, *Gladstone*, pp. 61, 97, 100, 245.

But it was argued that neither London nor Liverpool, nor any other great central town, would be a place wherein quiet students and scholars might with advantage pursue a course of study in “Divine learning.” The restlessness and roar of millionfold human life would be a disturbing element in any library intended for a Temple of Peace...The perfect seclusion of the village; the ease with which it may be reached...; the beauty and healthiness of the district; and also the associations of the whole place with Mr. Gladstone; all seemed to point to Hawarden as the ideal situation for the Theological Library.⁶⁵

In addition, the emphasis on ‘larger liberty’ in Gladstone’s Glenalmond speech reflected his desire to establish a liberal and, in Scottish terms, an *independent* (Episcopal) institution; in many ways he aimed at the same result in Wales. Gladstone pledged the Library would provide ‘aid to the local church’ and foresaw it might have a ‘connection with...local study’ and form a ‘centre of occasional instruction by Lectures’.⁶⁶

Circumstances thus enabled Gladstone’s personal organisation of the Library within a well-known context, tailoring it to the needs of the locality as well as offering to those further afield, as commentators suggested, the benefits of rest and retirement he himself had enjoyed in Hawarden. However, there is another important factor to consider in Gladstone’s foundation of the Library in a remote rural location. A significant revival of Anglican religious community life took place from the mid-Victorian period.⁶⁷ The impetus for this clearly came from the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church and there were specifically Liberal Catholic communities instituted, most significantly Charles Gore’s Community of the Resurrection (founded 1887).⁶⁸ Evidence shows Gladstone expended time and energy considering the possibility that St Deiniol’s might house a religious community, a process which revealed once again the uncertainties which underlay Liberal Catholicism in general and his library design in particular.

2.2 The Question of Community

In his first, Keble memorandum on St Deiniol’s, Gladstone had included amongst his ‘higher’ purposes the ‘gradual formation of a body’ and in 1893 he proposed that

⁶⁵ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, pp. 97-8. Cf. also Story, *Hawarden Temple*, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Keble Memorandum, BL GP Add MS 44773, fol. 75.

⁶⁷ For a study of the revival of religious communities in the Anglican Church cf. A. M. Allchin, *The Silent Rebellion: Anglican Religious Communities 1845-1900* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1958).

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-243.

The Trustees may place the Institution under the control of or in association with any Community or Institution having similar aims and may devolve on such community all or any of their powers; provided they shall be satisfied that the purposes of the Institution will thus be more effectively answered.⁶⁹

In 1895 he asked the Society of St John the Evangelist [SSJE], the oldest of the nineteenth-century Anglican foundations, for help and advice.⁷⁰ In return he received a detailed memorandum from R. L. Page, which addressed the practicalities of the Library's association with a Community.⁷¹ Page stated that SSJE was unable to get practically involved itself,⁷² but provided Gladstone with his opinions on the potential function of the Library.⁷³ He too questioned Hawarden's suitability as a location. 'London, Oxford, Cambridge or (Durham) seem more suitable,' he wrote, 'as having the largest libraries, being seats of learning & more easy of access for persons generally'.⁷⁴ Page proceeded to set out a vision of St Deiniol's as a theological 'think-tank': a body of theologians giving advice and publishing on a range of theological issues to meet the needs of the Church. He suggested St Deiniol's might become a theological college, a retreat centre with clergy versed in 'ascetic theology', and a place of rest and help to the local clergy. This in part mirrored Gladstone's vision of how 'divine learning' might be successfully promoted but in Page's opinion, because the Library's endowment was insufficient to support a paid staff, an existing theological college or religious community should take over the running of the institution. Significantly he proposed Gore's Community of the Resurrection [CR].

Gladstone received some strong advice against the idea of associating St Deiniol's with a religious community at all, reflecting tensions between understandings of St Deiniol's as an independent or a community-led institution. G. W. E. Russell responded to Page's ideas with misgiving, pointing out that the presence of such a community would not guarantee learning. He estimated monastic guidance 'undesirable' for both local clergy and especially for any future theological college students, concluding with the following indictment.

⁶⁹ W. E. Gladstone, '1893 St. Deiniol's', St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁷⁰ The SSJE, or Cowley Fathers, was founded in the 1860s in Oxford by Richard Meux Benson. Cf. Allchin, *Silent Rebellion*, Ch. 11.

⁷¹ R. L. Page, 'Notes on the proposal of the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, to found at Hawarden, an Institution for the Cultivation of Divine learning' (1895), St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁷² R. L. Page to G, 24 April 1895, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS. G had further discussions with a Fr. Puller of Cowley in 1896 with reference to the Wardenship. Cf. G to A. C. Headlam, 1 July 1896, *Ibid.*

⁷³ R. L. Page, 'Notes', (1895), St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁷⁴ Page, 'Notes', fol. 6.

St Deiniol's would necessarily become a mere creature of the Community, influenced and ruled according to the prevailing idea at the moment in the mind of the Superior or Community. The Founder's Hand would cease to operate; and the distinctness and individuality of the Institution would disappear as completely as if the Library were bodily removed to Oxford.⁷⁵

In a subsequent letter, he cast doubt on Page's assertion that a Community would ensure permanence: 'I do not think that we can yet be assured of the permanence of the Cowley Brotherhood', he wrote.⁷⁶ Edward Talbot was also doubtful about Gladstone's idea of 'some form of community-life akin to that of Pusey House' growing up round the Library.⁷⁷

There was consistent and close involvement by Liberal Catholics in Gladstone's deliberations over the question of the Library 'community' and who should staff it but their contributions importantly displayed inconsistency and disagreement. This was because of the fundamental paradox in founding what were essentially 'counter-cultural communities' to further the Liberal Catholic aim of participating fully in and shaping modern life.⁷⁸ The documentary evidence surrounding Gladstone's search for a Warden for his Library both shows how influential the Liberal Catholic/St Deiniol's nexus continued to be but also demonstrates the problems that dogged efforts to realise the Liberal Catholic vision.⁷⁹

Henry Scott Holland wrote to Gladstone suggesting a member of CR, Mr Rackham, as a possible first Warden. He added 'it seems to me a real gain to associate this high venture for Theology, with the Company gathered under Gore's leadership, who have the cause so deeply at heart, and who are working toward the same ends in so congenial in spirit'.⁸⁰ But Gore himself, despite his enthusiastic attitude to the Library, as Community Superior forbade Rackham's candidature, voicing a widespread anxiety amongst fledgling Anglican orders not to disperse too early, before an enduring sense of community had been

⁷⁵ G. W. E. Russell, 'Memorandum on...Page's suggestions', 20 August 1895, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁷⁶ G. W. E. Russell to G, 29 August 1895, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS. In fact the Library of SSJE, numbering some 10,000 books, came to St Deiniol's in 1980 following the closure of the Oxford house. Pritchard, *History*, p. 29.

⁷⁷ He particularly felt that it might not be welcome to G's children. EST to G, 23 November 1888, BL GP Add MS 44505 fol.156.

⁷⁸ Wilkinson, *Christian Socialism*, p. 134.

⁷⁹ Francis Paget also wrote to G suggesting candidates. Cf. Francis Paget to G, 30? March and 29 June 1896, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁸⁰ H. S. Holland to G, 4 December 1895, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS. Holland suggested the idea to Gore, whose initial response was that he would not wish Rackham to move to Hawarden without one or two other members of the fraternity. H. S. Holland to Harry Drew, 5 December 1895, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

established.⁸¹ Instead he joined Talbot and Walter Lock in proposing a Keble man, E. W. Delahay, for Warden.⁸² Gladstone was keen to appoint an unmarried man, ostensibly for reasons of space but in all likelihood in line with his thinking about a possible Community.⁸³ But this proved more difficult than Gladstone anticipated. A significant number of those who were suggested or applied were married or about to be.⁸⁴ This was true of A. C. Headlam (1862-1947), then a young fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford, who was Gladstone's first serious choice.⁸⁵ As a Liberal Catholic, Headlam was an ideal candidate for Warden in view of the purpose of the institution. W. Saceday wrote to Gladstone confirming Headlam's (and by implication Gladstone's) Liberal Catholic credentials:

He would approach matters very much from the point of view from which I believe that you would wish them approached – that of a High Churchman, progressive, independent and anxious to bring theories of doctrine into accord with the realities of things, but never rash in grasping at novelties.

He added more generally, on the role of the Library itself, 'I entertain great hopes as to the possibilities of the new foundation in helping to correct one of the weakest points in the English Church – a want of thoroughness in thought & study.'⁸⁶ However, Headlam ultimately decided Gladstone's offer was one he 'could not accept...on the terms you offered it'.⁸⁷ He had initially made clear he was unlikely to be suitable; he had resigned his fellowship to marry. But, as he baldly stated, he desired practical, parochial work, not 'theology divorced from life'. This was a brutal check for Gladstone who envisaged St Deiniol's would directly counter this tendency.⁸⁸ Gladstone had from the beginning recognised the difficulties inherent in trying to achieve the 'gradual formation of a body' in

⁸¹ Charles Gore to G, 10 and 19 December 1895, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS. Cf. also Allchin, *Silent Rebellion*, p. 242.

⁸² Cf. EST to G, 7 April 1896, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS; Charles Gore to G, 10 April 1896, *Ibid.*; EST to H. Drew, 1 May 1896, *Ibid.* Delahay did not stand much chance of appointment: as well as the disadvantage of being engaged, SEG thought 'Mr. Gore's man' too young, SEG to G, 12 May 1896, *Ibid.*

⁸³ This was made clear in G's original advert for the Wardenship. G elaborated to A. C. Headlam in 1896 'there is however great advantage, for this juncture at any rate, in having an unmarried man'. G to A. C. Headlam, 1 July 1896 (copy), St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁸⁴ Delahay was engaged, hence G put 'NB. marriage' after his name on his list of candidates and did not seriously consider him. 'List of possible Wardens: names, current employment and proposers', n.d., St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁸⁵ G wrote directly to Headlam in 1896 describing 'the embryo institution' he was nurturing and offered the Wardenship. Headlam had accepted a parish elsewhere but because 'the idea I wish to suggest is one generically so different', G canvassed Headlam regardless. G to A. C. Headlam (copy), 1 July 1896, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁸⁶ W. Saceday to G, 17 July 1896, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS. G and the Drews also received testimonials from Talbot and C. S. Laing for Headlam. Cf. *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ A. C. Headlam to G, 31 July 1896, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁸⁸ A. C. Headlam to G, 2 July 1896, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS. G was unperturbed and invited Headlam to visit Hawarden.

Hawarden,⁸⁹ but Headlam's refusal so seriously questioned the direction Gladstone's plans were taking him that he was persuaded to abandon the idea of forming a community proper. It is, for example, indicative that Gladstone's negotiations with his eventual choice for Warden, G. C. Joyce (another scholarly priest from the catholic wing of the Church), placed far less emphasis on devotional life than had his discussions with Headlam.⁹⁰

Historically speaking, Gladstone's ultimate rejection of the idea of St Deiniol's as a counter-cultural religious community has not been made much of by commentators. Principally this has been because of his own family's disagreement over the institution's purpose following his death. Mary Drew was the crucial figure here. She was chiefly responsible for publicising the *memorial* Library following its opening. Her version of the foundation and purpose of St Deiniol's, first published in the *Nineteenth Century*, was styled as the 'authoritative account' and proved tremendously (but misleadingly) influential, on both her contemporaries and later scholars.⁹¹

Mary stated unequivocally that the Library was designed 'for the purposes of study and research, "for the pursuit of divine learning," a centre of religious life, a resident body of students, men of studious mind and habit, unfitted by various causes for active life or the turmoil of great cities'.⁹² She regarded the work of the temporary library as only in line with Gladstone's 'secondary purposes' for the institution; it was only with the completion of 'a permanent Residence for Warden and Students' or Community that 'will arrive the real opportunity of fulfilling the main design of the founder'.⁹³ Although she described the Library as being 'open to thinkers of every class, even to those to whom the gift of faith has been denied, earnest enquirers, seekers, searchers after the truth that is divine', she maintained that

⁸⁹ Keble Memorandum.

⁹⁰ Joyce was Sub Warden of St Michael's Theological College, Aberdare, before his appointment and subsequently became Bishop of Monmouth (1928-1940). Cf. Arthur Edwards, *The Seven Bishops of Monmouth* (Newport: Seary Printers, 1996), pp. 14-20; Pritchard, *History*, pp. 30-1. G's offer to Joyce was very business-like and concentrated on the practicalities of organising the Library. Cf. G to G. C. Joyce (copy), 16 October 1896, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS and G. C. Joyce to G (copy), 17 October 1896, Ibid. With Headlam, G had discussed devotional life and practice, the relationship between parish church and library, marriage and simplicity of living. 'Memorandum', 16 July 1896, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

⁹¹ Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 944.

⁹² Ibid., p. 947.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 952-3.

For 'the advancement of divine learning' he looked specially to the resident community. And the type of men that undoubtedly he had in view...were men residing in religious bodies already existing and in working order, men who by the example of their lives and the fruits of their labours, by their learning, their teaching, their writings and their ministrations, would form at Hawarden a living centre of religion, and would do for their own generation what Pusey and Stubbs, Lightfoot and Westcott had done for theirs. Mr. Gladstone saw that in an age when the negative tendencies of thought were seeking to dethrone Christianity from its true predominance over the intellectual and moral development of humanity, it would be good to revive something of the methods of the wise of old. By their lives that predominance had originally been won, by their austere experience they had shown it could best be sustained by the spiritual discipline of the consecrated life, inspired and strengthened by corporate devotion and aspiration.⁹⁴

This was far in advance of anything Gladstone himself articulated and, by privileging the qualifications of a withdrawn 'consecrated' community to form the heart of the Library, Drew obscured much of the Liberal Catholic spirit that informed Gladstone's project. Although apparently Gladstone did not think 'luxurious living...conducive to the well-being of the increased intellectual activity of those whom the institution is intended to benefit', this was a far cry from wanting it to be a place of ascetic denial.⁹⁵

There were other versions of the story available. Voices were raised which articulated Gladstone's vision correctly. Prominent amongst these was Stephen Liberty (sub-warden of the Library between 1906-1910). His short introduction to the Library, written soon after Drew's article, by implication took issue with her interpretation. He acknowledged her 'authority of intimate knowledge,' but asserted 'Foundations, however, like individuals, require a little time to "find their level"; indeed the Founder in this case himself wisely left it to future generations to decide...the exact shape which his Institution should assume'.⁹⁶ His account concentrated on the role the Library fulfilled for working clergy and as such tallied with the original ethos Gladstone envisaged.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 954.

⁹⁵ Friederichs, 'Mr Gladstone's Library', p. 5.

⁹⁶ Stephen Liberty, *In the Cause of Divine Learning* (London: Henry Frowde, 1906), p. 3.

The consecration of criticism – the viewing in the light of God...all advances of the human intellect...most now would admit this to be the only effective way of resisting unbelief. Such a combination of Prayer and Study, or Science and Religion, is struggling on bearing its fruit in many places of the Church. But it is useful to have a definite spot where men can readily find such an atmosphere at need, and breathe it together in social intercourse. St. Deiniol's may well claim that it provides our country with this opportunity in a way that other institutions cannot...Here is a house which all the year round opens its doors to any man who wants to return for a long or short time from the burden and heat of action to the upper air of learning and resolve, which first sent him out into the world. In some cases a long stay and an extensive course of study would be found practicable...but in cases (probably the majority) where this is not expected, it is, surely, something for the hard-worked or isolated parson to be able to come even for a week or two and turn over the new books, to discuss them in friendly intercourse with others either of his own or of a different standpoint, and generally to renew contact with the main stream of Christian thought...

The supplying in this way of an admitted need of the clergy is probably the most considerable, at any rate the most tangible, work that St. Deiniol's has yet been able to do.⁹⁷

Gladstone's difficulty in combining the Library and community ideas lay in a significant disjunction between their intellectual and theological rationale. Gladstone's central aim was for St Deiniol's to foster theology's engagement with the world by functioning principally as a periodical resource rather than a place of permanent withdrawal for clergy.⁹⁸ Contrast Gladstone's vision with that of R. M. Benson describing the origins of SSJE. Benson asserted 'our Society was not called by human wisdom. If it had been formed by ourselves to meet some special emergency, then we should be continually downcast, constantly watching and speculating upon success'.⁹⁹ St Deiniol's was conceived as a response to contemporary moral and intellectual problems and its primary aim was, through making knowledge available to its readers, to effect a much needed rehabilitation of theology. Although Benson's vision of how SSJE should serve the Church, through mission preaching, retreats and teaching, to an extent accorded with Gladstone's it was more dependent on the life of the Community itself. Above all, whereas in Benson's view all intellectual study must be 'subservient to holiness and the

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-5. Cf. also Story, *Hawarden Temple*, foreword.

⁹⁸ This aim was, with the exception of an undated holograph preserved with the Keble Memorandum where it follows 'devotion', always put first by G and expressed unequivocally by him. 'The special purpose then to which with the help of God I desire to minister is the presentation of Divine Learning, now rendered more difficult by the remorseless activity of the age, in association with its proper human accompaniments'. '1893. St Deiniol's', St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS. SEG maintained that 'my Father's one great aim: [was] the establishment of this Foundation...for the promotion of Divine learning', SEG to Duke of Westminster, 24 March 1899, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS. Gore and Talbot showed, in their preference for an independent, urban-based institution, their clear understanding of what the Library's primary function should be.

love of God' in Gladstone's the ability to practice as well as understand true religion was rooted in intellectual study.¹⁰⁰

In the end the religious Community idea did not materialise. And this is not surprising. Gladstone did not set out to found one and, following his preferred candidate's rejection, essentially turned against the idea. But ultimately, although Drew did not see her ideal Community installed at St Deiniol's, the authority of her 'intimate knowledge' significantly contributed to a consequent neglect of the Library's Liberal Catholic context. This circumstance highlights the importance and influential nature of the *public* reception of the St Deiniol's project and prompts a specific consideration of how the Library was perceived in the public domain. The final section of this chapter will show how confusion over what sort of Liberalism the Library embodied ultimately ensured, not only a obscuring of Gladstone's original theological rationale, but also determined the Library's relative isolation within its own local 'community'.

2.3 A Question of Liberalism: Religious or Political?

Although Gladstone's reading persona and Library had, by the 1880s, a high and positive profile in the public sphere, the foundation of St Deiniol's marked a new level of publicity. This was something Gladstone encouraged; from October 1889, practically every visitor to the Castle was taken along to view and admire the new building. As an increasing number of people were made aware of the project, it was only a matter of time before questions began to be asked and speculations made about the purpose and relative attractions of the foundation. There was a certain amount of confusion about what and for whom St Deiniol's was designed both locally and nationally. Lady Charlotte Ribblesdale was adamant that Gladstone 'had not ventured to tell himself, far less anybody else, what was to be the ultimate end of this library' at the time of her visit in 1892.¹⁰¹

As we saw in Chapter Five, during Gladstone's lifetime, and certainly after his death, commentators enthusiastically made the connection between Gladstone's political Liberalism, his Library and reading. It should therefore be unsurprising that characterisations of St Deiniol's as essentially a 'public' library were plentiful and were linked explicitly with Gladstone's status as the representative of enlightened Liberalism.

⁹⁹ R. M. Benson, *The Religious Vocation*, p. 82ff quoted in Allchin, *Silent Rebellion*, p. 199.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 202.

¹⁰¹ Ribblesdale, 'Visit to Hawarden', pp. 644-5.

All the accounts of the Library agreed that much of St Deiniol's importance derived from the fact of it *being* Gladstone's Library. Friederichs noted that Gladstone's presence (to be photographed at St Deiniol's by the *Westminster Gazette*) gave 'the institution a separate and particular charm, apart from its own attractions'.¹⁰² And, as we saw in Chapter Five, Gladstone exploited this occasion to the full, encouraging the identification of his 'People's William' persona with the Library and his intellectual interests. Friederichs immediately described the Library as 'a scheme of public utility which has been in Mr. Gladstone's mind for many years'.¹⁰³ She closely linked the Library's foundation with his political and intellectual Liberalism: 'Thus it will be seen that in this his munificent gift Mr. Gladstone has acted on the same large-minded and large-hearted principles to which he has adhered all the days of his life'.¹⁰⁴ She also highlighted the "liberal" tendency of Gladstone's Trust arrangements, especially his provision that 'Trustees and officials may be men or women, married or single' together with 'the ample power given to the Trustees to make the Foundation "move with the times"'.¹⁰⁵ And she was not alone in employing such politicised rhetoric. Mary Drew suggested that

Often pondering, as he did, how best to benefit his fellow creatures, how to bring together readers who had no books and books who had no readers, gradually the thought evolved itself in his mind into a plan for the permanent disposal of his library. A country home for the purposes of study and research, [and] 'for the pursuit of divine learning'.¹⁰⁶

J. C. Story echoed this populist notion, telling his readers that 'Mr. Gladstone's books became one of his treasured possessions; yet for years he cherished the intention of presenting them to others'.¹⁰⁷ He described the Library as an act of 'great benevolence' and 'joyful sacrifice', for 'while he lived he gave it for the use of the public'.¹⁰⁸ He understandably gave a broad definition of those whom the Library was intended to attract:

¹⁰² Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, pp. 128-9.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁶ Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 947. Cf. also Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, p. 109ff.

¹⁰⁷ Story, *Hawarden Temple*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8, 18.

His intention was that thinkers of every class – not those preparing for the Christian ministry only, nor those professing the Christian faith only, but those who have no definite religious faith at all, but are enquirers, wishful to know the best that has been written on the highest themes; representatives, too, of the hoary systems of religious of the East, now rapidly coming under the influence of Western thought; in short, truth-seekers of whatever name, and from whatever land, all are to be freely welcome to enjoy the benefits of this foundation. It should hardly be necessary to say that studious persons, of whatever class, residing in the neighbourhood, as well as strangers from afar, are equally eligible. It is, then, as a temple of learning, not a school, a college, or a free library, in the ordinary sense, but a place of restful meditation, for research, for mental and spiritual refreshment and stimulus – and this amid charming natural surroundings, at the feet of the Welsh mountains – that this Library is a new thing in the world.¹⁰⁹

Such characterisations were clearly the logical result of that successful rehabilitation of Gladstone's scholarly persona explored in Chapter Five. However, as we have seen, St Deiniol's was the expression of Gladstone's theological not his political liberalism. As has been consistently argued, although working compromises could be effected, tensions and inconsistencies remained in the engagement between these two species as well as in the constitution of Liberal Catholicism itself. Visions of how to effect change according to Liberal Catholic ideas were not always politically liberal. For example, Charles Gore thought

Christianity should be 'a spiritual aristocracy' (a revealing phrase)...He passionately believed that change could only come from the disciplined few. He pointed to what had been wrought by the Tractarian minority. A small number of really committed Christians could also transform society.¹¹⁰

In many ways this mirrored Gladstone's vision for St Deiniol's. As shown above, the earliest reference to Gladstone's plan made clear the Library was intended principally as a resource for the Anglican Church, and the Keble Memorandum indicates this was heavily weighted towards the needs of the clergy, both local and national. At an early stage, Gladstone drew up a leaflet to advertise the Library. It was broad in its characterisation of readers: 'students (lay and clerical, of any age), inquirers, authors, and clergy, or others desiring times of rest', but apparently was only 'sent to such of Mr. Gladstone's friends as are interested in the scheme'.¹¹¹ Reference was made to the early establishment of scholarship funding, but the imagined list of worthy recipients clearly privileged curates

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹⁰ Wilkinson, *Christian Socialism*, p. 80.

¹¹¹ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, pp. 137-8.

and other poor ‘men’.¹¹² It was to be the clergy, who had borrowed books from the Temple of Peace and debated with Gladstone about theology, that were to be the principal inheritors of his book collection and intellectual legacy. Men like these were, in his view, the future of the Church; those who would change it by engaging in academic pursuits and practical pastoral theology. Whilst they were not to be kept isolated in community, they were still to be a powerful and influential clerisy. This vital distinction is well illustrated by Stephen Liberty’s prefacing of his short introduction to the Library with the following quotation from De Bury’s *Philobiblion*:

Having taken a survey of human necessities in every direction, with a view to bestow our charity upon them, our compassionate inclinations have chosen to bear pious aid to...[a] class of men, in whom there is...such hope of advantage to the Church, and to provide for them, not only in respect of things necessary to their support, but much more in respect of the books so useful to their studies.¹¹³

These men’s late Victorian equivalents were to be the inheritors of Gladstone’s beloved theological book collection. In the same way as he sold his historical and political library in 1875 to one who would continue in his political stead, so Gladstone now bestowed his theological books on those who would continue the work he had begun in that sphere. The practical circumstances of the transfer of Gladstone’s books from Castle to St Deiniol’s also reflected the essential exclusiveness of his vision for the institution. Some accounts presented the process as straightforward and complete. For example, Friederichs claimed that Gladstone ‘bequeathed every one of the books...acquired in a long lifetime’, with the exception of the Glynne Library, ‘which he found when Hawarden came into his possession’.¹¹⁴ But this was inaccurate; she was here again making the most of characterising Gladstone as a Liberal, almost communistical benefactor. Although it is difficult to be sure of exactly how Gladstone decided which books to send and which to retain (superficially the process appeared *ad hoc*),¹¹⁵ Gladstone did not allow all his personal, private collection to move fully into an independent public domain. Whilst the majority of volumes were transferred, a significant residuum was retained in the Temple of Peace. And neither was the continuing relationship between these two parts of Gladstone’s collection straightforward. There appears to have been a wish on Gladstone’s

¹¹² Ibid., p. 140.

¹¹³ My emphasis. Liberty, *Divine Learning*, title page.

¹¹⁴ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, pp. 121-2.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 99.

part to make all his books available for consultation, including those retained at the Castle. Thus Friederichs noted

That the library at Hawarden Castle – is by the owner thereof now only considered as part of St. Deiniol's Library. It is simply... 'the Castle Section,' which Mr. Gladstone looks upon as a loan he is privileged to make from the rightful owners.¹¹⁶

But Gladstone clearly found it difficult to relinquish either control or use of the St Deiniol's books. As we saw in Chapter Five, Gladstone was St Deiniol's first 'external' reader and he obviously missed the books sent there: 'Yes, I do miss them', he told Friederichs, 'I miss them every day and every hour. When I want a book it is sure to be at St. Deiniol's'. Apparently he even considered 'some modern communication between the two parts of the library, by means of which a book can be called for at a moment's notice'.¹¹⁷ There is no way of knowing whether some books originally sent to the Library, borrowed back by Gladstone, were then retained at the Castle, but it should not be ruled out as a possibility. There were clearly books retained at the Castle with which Gladstone was extremely loathe to part. In Gladstone's private memoranda, he made reference to the books remaining at the Castle and hinted that some select collections would not come over.

I have sent to the new building by far the larger number of my books (a number estimated at about 25000): but I retain at the Castle mainly for my own use a smaller portion (perhaps 6000) including some important branches and many select works. The two should be regarded as eventually in substance one, subject perhaps to some special exceptions.¹¹⁸

Friederichs made specific reference to a collection of theology books, indisputably the most important books to Gladstone, which were earmarked for inclusion in the St Deiniol's collection following his death:

Considerable additions (which fortunately can be made to the card catalogue without at all interfering with its neatness and comprehensive form) will have to be made whenever the remainder of Mr. Gladstone's gift books, now still at the Castle, are brought over to St. Deiniol's. These number from six to eight thousand volumes, all of which will eventually go to the Theological Library.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 121-2. Cf. also Ibid., p. 37

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 50.

¹¹⁸ 'The Library of St. Deiniols' (September 1894), St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

¹¹⁹ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, p. 121.

There is a substantial deposit in the earliest St Deiniol's accession register (30 August 1897 to 29 March 1900, Nos. 28214-32866). The titles marked 'Rt Hon W. E. Gladstone Bequest' begin on 13 August 1898 and continue spasmodically until the end of the volume but they number less than half Friederichs' most conservative estimate of the deposit (approximately 3205). It is not surprising that Gladstone found the physical transition of his books more difficult in practice than in theory. He was using his books right up until his death. And it was quite a different matter to be able to monitor outside borrowers to the Temple of Peace, which we saw him doing in Chapter Three, and just be another reader at St Deiniol's.

In the light of our revised understanding of Gladstone's theological priorities and their determining of the character of St Deiniol's, such a vision makes perfect sense. However, in the contemporary context, where borrowers and readers other than clergy had been accustomed to borrowing Gladstone's private books, and the public had been conditioned to associate Gladstone's reading directly with his status as Liberal sage, the possibility of his gift to the nation having a rather more exclusive and clerical character proved harder to recognise and integrate into popular discourse. The question of whether this inconsistency was resolved is one to which we now turn.

Contrary to Story's assertion, there is no avoiding the fact that the Library was not in any way designed for the village in which it was built or for those ordinary people who had made use of the Temple of Peace. Gladstone took a keen interest in the Public Library Movement, the aim of which was to facilitate universal access for readers to books, but St Deiniol's was not designed to meet this need (unlike his support of and donation of a small collection of books to Hawarden Institute).¹²⁰ Whilst the Library was being constructed in Hawarden he volunteered little information to the curious villagers. Hulda Friederichs noted 'At first there were manifold rumours, but gradually it appeared that this was...a library, and it was Mr. Gladstone's. And with this knowledge the villagers had to be satisfied'.¹²¹ Eventually, in response to unauthorised speculation about the new building, Gladstone included a letter in the December Parish Magazine of 1889, which simultaneously aimed to stop the rumourmongers and disillusion any villager who

¹²⁰ To understand more of his attitude to working class education and library use, and its radical difference from his St Deiniol's plan, cf. W. E. Gladstone, *Address by the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone MP at the AGM of Subscribers* (Hawarden: Hawarden Literary and Scientific Institution, 1875); Williamson, *Non-Political Biography*, p. 89; Ruth Clayton, 'Masses or Classes? The Question of Community in the Foundation of Gladstone's Library', *Library History* (November 2003).

¹²¹ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, p. 98.

assumed that St Deiniol's was intended for his or her use. 'With reference to the small structure of corrugated iron which I am now erecting near the church', he wrote:

I address to you these few lines with the view of obviating any misapprehensions among my fellow parishioners...The building is simply a repository for books, with the additions necessary for due care-taking, and will be in no wise suited for the purposes of a reading room.¹²²

This was of course far from the truth. Gladstone had from the very beginning intended the iron building to be a reading room adjoined by a hostel for the accommodation of visiting readers. However, these readers were not to be ordinary villagers nor the tin library a reading room as they would have understood the term (for relaxation after work and newspaper reading). 'The library was not for them', Miss Friederichs concluded.

This might have been a blow – even though Hawarden had its library at the local institute – to some spirits thirsting for 'book-learning;' but the blow was tempered when it became known that the bulk of the twenty thousand volumes of which it is composed are mostly on theological and kindred subjects.¹²³

Her very description of the Library and its surroundings made clear exactly the sort of reader to be allowed access. Flowers gave

A welcome to all who may walk along the gravel walk that leads from St. Deiniol's Church to the Hostel, and then onward to the Library.

As it is with the Hostel, so it is with the Library itself...There was at the beginning only a somewhat undefined country path across the green field separating the Library from the high road. Now a wide, neat, gravelled walk, at the end of which a new iron gate prevents the 'man in the street' from too easy admittance into the precincts of the Library, leads up to the very door.¹²⁴

And she described an actual example of this exclusion. When Gladstone met her *Westminster Gazette* photographer at the Library, she described how Gladstone's retinue tried to 'keep...off' an Irishman, who had, apparently, 'come all the way from Ireland on the chance of seeing Mr. Gladstone'.¹²⁵

However, it is essential to note that the practical exclusiveness of St Deiniol's did not significantly affect the popular conceptualisation of the Library as an expression of

¹²² G to the Editor of Hawarden Parish Magazine [SEG], 30 October 1889, *Hawarden Parish Magazine* (December 1889).

¹²³ Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, pp. 98-9.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

Gladstone's inclusive liberal values. The view of the Welsh themselves is an important and revealing case in point. Although the future of the Anglican Church in Wales was a clear motivator behind Gladstone's decision to found St Deiniol's and to locate it in Flintshire, this was a very localised and anglicised Wales that Gladstone was considering; Hawarden was (and still is) overwhelmingly English-speaking. However, there is evidence to suggest that St Deiniol's and Gladstone as reader remained of substantial and universal interest to the Liberal Welsh-Speaking Welsh. Thus Griffith Ellis, in his 1898 Welsh-language memorial biography of Gladstone, firmly located St Deiniol's in a tradition of Welsh library foundation, comparing it to 'Dr Owen Thomas' Library in Bala Theological College'.¹²⁶ Nonetheless, this and those explicitly 'democratic' representations of St Deiniol's cited above, whether fostered by Gladstone or not, did not really penetrate to the heart of Gladstone's intention in founding St Deiniol's. They essentially saw the foundation as evidence of his political not his religious liberalism, a vision further confused by Mary Drew's exclusive and conservative vision of the early St Deiniol's as a 'country home' for a resident community.¹²⁷ In the end, Gladstone had done his job of rehabilitation too well. His Library was accepted as the expression of his political liberalism but at the expense of obscuring that which, as we can now see, clearly characterised his theology.

Conclusion

It has been shown that that, whilst Gladstone was adamant about the intellectual rationale behind his decision to leave his books for the spiritual benefit of future generations, he was simultaneously unsure about how such the institution would be constituted and work *in practice*. When he confessed, in 1895, that 'It is an institution not yet fully developed', he was giving a fair assessment of the state of his thinking on its future and was articulating a broader uncertainty, felt by many Liberal Catholics, about how an intellectual vision could be implemented in a relevant and practical way.¹²⁸

Nonetheless, despite the considerable problems which his vision faced, set within the class-related inconsistencies which afflicted Liberal Catholic ideology, we can clearly

¹²⁶ Griffith Ellis, *William Ewart Gladstone: Eifynydd A'i Waith [His Life and Work]* (Gwrecsam: Cyhoeddiedig Gan Hughes A'i Fab, Heol Estyn, 1898), pp. 435, 434, 439. Thanks to Rowan O'Neill for providing translations from the Welsh.

¹²⁷ Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 947. Friederichs described the Hostel similarly: 'Standing outside St. Deiniol's Library door, and looking straight ahead, you have before you an old world entrance to a country house'. Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, p. 134.

¹²⁸ 'Mr. Gladstone', *The Times*, 16 April 1895, SP 38, 53-57, p. 55.

identify the central purpose for which St Deiniol's was founded and those for which it was not. It was not to be a 'public' library in the real sense, as can be seen from the careful hedging round of both the physical buildings and its intellectual rationale. It was there to nurture 'a learned clergy'.¹²⁹ At the opening of the memorial Library the Right Revd. Dr. Edwards, Bishop of St Asaph, summed up the central aim of St Deiniol's as follows:

If the hearts and minds of men are to be won to the faith of Christ, there must be that scientific exposition of what we know of God and of his relations to the world, which can only be effectively given by those adequately equipped in Divine learning. And while the principles are clear and definite, they are pre-eminently broad and inclusive.¹³⁰

Neither was it designed, as Mary Drew would later argue, to be a permanent retreat from the world and its problems; note Hulda Friederichs' description of the Hostel as 'a congenial *temporary* home' for 'a student coming in from the busy world', in 1896.¹³¹ Gladstone's commitment was to found a non-sectarian institution 'upon the widest basis',¹³² with 'inexpensive lodgings together with congenial society',¹³³ where visiting scholars could 'attempt to put the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems', in the conducive atmosphere of the Welsh countryside.¹³⁴ To look at surviving photographs of the original Library and hostel, it can be seen how closely Liberal Catholic theories had been put into practice. The hostel was parsonage-like and yet, adjacent to an eclectic library, it challenged the priest to be both pastor and academic theologian [fig. 7.6]. Common domestic space was provided for all, a communal dining room encouraged debate with the hope of increased mutual understanding and the prayer room (not a specially constructed chapel) was decorated although not ostentatiously sectarian. The warden was represented in quiet studious contemplation in his study reading [figs. 7.7–7.10].

But inconsistency and confusion remained. As argued in Chapter Six, there was a distinct difference between 'liberal' in its political and ecclesiastical senses. This difference was evident in the construction of a Library, not for universal public use, but for the rejuvenation of both an academic subject and an active, parochial clergy. The creative

¹²⁹ Cf. Slater, *A Temple of Peace*, p. 736–7, 742.

¹³⁰ 'Opening of St Deiniol's Library', 1902, St Deiniol's Uncatalogued MSS.

¹³¹ My emphasis. Friederichs, *In the Evening of His Days*, p. 100, 103.

¹³² Drew, 'Mr. Gladstone's Library', p. 944.

¹³³ Story, *Hawarden Temple*, p. 11.

¹³⁴ Gore, 'Preface', p. vii.

tensions observable in Gladstone's late Victorian Liberal Catholicism were also visible in his Library and also in its reception within the public domain. Both Press and public had been coaxed and wooed into accepting Gladstone's intellectual life and Library and interpreting it as part of a popular Liberal *political* agenda. It is therefore unsurprising that they fitted St Deiniol's into this familiar context rather than in the more private, clerical, somewhat anomalous Liberal Catholic *religious* frame of reference, which was never overtly publicised and would not necessarily have found favour had it been. Even Mary Drew felt the need to publicise the Library in popular political terms. One could argue that in the end Gladstone was the victim of his own success. So well had he integrated his scholarly image in this context that he had once again lost a substantial measure of control over it.

Nonetheless, St Deiniol's remains by far the most potent statement of the broadness of Gladstone's spiritual and cultural vision. By the dynamic and selective creation of an appropriate material layout to epitomise and make sense of the knowledge that he had succeeded to and collected, he was making his own ultimate contribution a lifelong ideal, that of 'enlarging the text' and 'extending the bounds of the common inheritance'.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ W. E. Gladstone, 'Universitas Hominum: Or, the Unity of History', *North American Review* 373 (December 1887), 589-602, pp. 601-2.

CONCLUSION

Studying Gladstone as reader forces us to reassess many long-standing preconceptions about his character, his religion, his priorities and his politics, as well as revealing more about a marginalised and somewhat misunderstood aspect of his life. Gladstone, the straight man in the great Victorian political double act of Gladstone and Disraeli, has become such a representative and oft-caricatured figure in both popular and academic imaginations that it is in fact difficult to reinterpret and reconfigure him even on the basis of new evidence.¹ Although the publication of the *Gladstone Diaries* prompted an increased and commendable interest in recasting Gladstone's significance in the context of a public/private engagement, the character of many post-1968 analyses problematically remained that of Gladstone's public life and political career.

Gladstone's use of his books, Library and attitude to scholarship reveal the existence of a more finely balanced dialogue between the private processes of amassing information from texts and the practical application of such knowledge in public spheres than has so far been fully recognised.² If we revisit the question of the importance of Gladstone's library work and how it functioned in the context of his life as a whole, there is no doubt that Gladstone's private Library and reading had significant implications for his public persona and actions and vice versa. The Library itself operated as a private space for his own reading and as a semi-public space for his family, neighbours and friends to read and borrow. In addition it was also an important factor in the way Gladstone was perceived and judged in a public context.

The Library and Gladstone's activities within it illuminate uncertainties about his identity: his political role and vocation; his role as husband and father. Centrally, it is important to recognise Gladstone's uneasy and ambiguous relationship with the world of high politics. For all our preconceptions about him, in many ways Gladstone was not a 'natural' politician. From his initial, thwarted desire to go into the Anglican Church he was dogged with uncertainty about whether politics was really his vocation and he seriously questioned

¹ John Gardiner recently asserted that the twentieth century saw G 'constantly reinterpreted and reconfigured to suit new readings and needs'. John Gardiner, *The Victorians: An Age in Retrospect* (London and New York: Hambledon, 2002), p. 182.

² W. H. Sherman, 'The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance: John Dee Revisited', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by J. Raven, H. Small, and N. Tadmor (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 62-76, p. 63.

the extent to which it truly reflected his identity or ideals as either a private or public person. Instead, Gladstone's passion and priority was theology. But Gladstone's privileging of theology and his private, library-based work on it had serious implications and tremendous impact, not only on his own behaviour, but also on his public reputation. Gladstone conceived himself not only as a Christian in politics but also as an intellectual in politics (rather than as either an intellectual or Christian *politician*). Partly due to the problems he had coping with the stresses of public responsibility but also due to an intellectual's sense that the kind of knowledge which was most important to him was not that valued by those with and for whom he was trying to work, Gladstone was, particularly from the late 1850s on, afflicted with a sense of intellectual alienation. The result of this alienation was that Gladstone periodically imposed a clear division between his public and private worlds and sought to do work for the public good from within the private context of his Library. It was on occasions such as these that the Library operated primarily (but not completely) as a private space. And this was how outsiders perceived it. It is in these circumstances that a recognition and understanding of the 'publicity' of the private Library becomes vital.

Gladstone's persona as a scholar-statesman was crucial in terms of his public reputation. Gladstone's library space was made available to the public through increasingly prolific representation in word and image, a circumstance with tremendous import both for contemporary reactions to Gladstone and for our ability to gain a fully integrated understanding of him as a nineteenth-century individual. By presenting himself as a rarefied Oxford scholar at the beginning of his political career, Gladstone adopted a deeply unpopular persona. Fashionable Victorian men of letters and the public at large saw no advantage, attractiveness or prospects in a politician whose loyalties and priorities seemed suspect. And Gladstone's later tendency to retreat into his private, library world at moments of stress aggravated the situation. Again, it was Gladstone's religious motivations which commentators fastened on and criticised most of all, in part sharing with their later successors a sense of incredulity and annoyance that a political leader should consider theology something important enough for which to resign. But it is essential to take Gladstone seriously here, or else we have no chance of understanding why he acted as he did. Gladstone retired in 1875 because he truly believed that he could do more good writing theological pamphlets saying what he really wanted to say rather than wasting his time in Parliament or on the election platform in front of those who, as he thought, wilfully misunderstood his ideology. It is essential to understand that

Gladstone saw this as activity for the public good, although many of his contemporaries and later commentators did not.

This is not to say that Gladstone remained impervious to the implications of such unpopularity. He did not and, indeed, his response to it reveals his ultimate skill as a politician. We have seen how these negative receptions were at first tempered before being turned round completely by the skilful representation of Gladstone's private, scholarly persona in a new, negotiated public sphere - a project he both sponsored and carefully manipulated with consummate ability. So successful was this project that, by and in death, the Library served as an important locus of Gladstone's popular political image. It was appropriated by various differing British identities, of class and nation, middle and upper as well as lower class; Scottish, Welsh and Irish as well as English. Such representations and their politicised status seriously question any exclusive and privileged characterisation of Gladstone in high political terms.

Gladstone's belief in the public relevance of theology was part of a complex and ever-developing systematisation of his religious thought, which is central to understanding Gladstone the man. It is also crucial to our understanding the role of the Library in Gladstone's life and the role he envisaged for it after his death.

Previous biographers have marvelled at the eclectic nature of Gladstone's reading but its sheer breadth has often left commentators incapable of contemplating the reason for such activity. By seriously surveying the material Gladstone read, looking closely at his engagement with a range of individual texts and considering his responses to authors (both privately and in public review) we are able to suggest an underlying motivation for such frenetic activity. Gladstone read widely and eclectically not just because Victorian polymaths like him did or even because he had the leisure time to do it (he patently did not). It was because Gladstone fundamentally possessed an open (but not indiscriminating) and indefatigable intellectual curiosity. It was a characteristic that in so many ways made Gladstone the man he was. He was interested in being exposed to the best possible knowledge 'come how it may';³ a position that was only going to be attained by adopting an inclusive approach to reading. Patrick Collinson once observed (of historical 'revisionism') that 'we can state it as a general rule that...if it is to be salutary, [it]

³ *GD* 18/11/84.

ought to open up areas of historical inquiry, not close them down'.⁴ During four years of work I have not come across one occasion where Gladstone refused point blank to read a book he was given. He may only have read part of it or concluded it was of inferior quality but such was his openness and his curiosity that he would always *engage*. And he displayed not only eclecticism but also intellectual broadness. This has tremendous ramifications for how we understand and characterise him. It is this attribute that some commentators have been all too eager to deny him and by so doing have bypassed a number of significant implications for understanding his life and career. The most important of these is an underestimation of the broadness of Gladstone's later religious thinking. Again and again, by his reading and reviewing of Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, the literature of faith and doubt and his engagement with unorthodox belief, Gladstone showed an increasing sympathy for Broad Church ideas and eventually embraced a recognisably Liberal Catholic position - a result encouraged and fostered by his close relationship with the members of the *Lux Mundi* group in Oxford.

The central tenet of nineteenth-century Liberal Catholicism, as a theological movement and practical endeavour, was to make theology and Christianity relevant to modern life. Gladstone's long-standing belief in theology as public work made him instinctively receptive to this view but his inherent inquisitiveness and openness ensured it. Without understanding that Gladstone became increasingly committed to this Liberal Catholic vision (a difficult challenge indeed with our cemented conceptions of religion as privatised spirituality, commodified and apolitical), it is impossible to completely understand his foundation of St Deiniol's Library. It was designed as a place where readers were expected to engage in interdisciplinary study of sacred and secular texts and subsequently take back their insights into the world and put theology to practical work where it was most needed. Gladstone understood theology not as a defensive and exclusive force for shoring up old dogmas, but as an inclusive and relevant system of knowledge that could make a difference in solving a variety of contemporary problems.

As we have seen, Gladstone's relationship with Liberal Catholicism and his St Deiniol's foundation were not without their tensions. St Deiniol's was both a radical, open and liberal venture as well as an intellectually idealistic and overwhelming clerical vision. But it is only through appreciating Gladstone's religious and intellectual broadmindedness, which incorporated and held in tension both liberalism and catholicism, that we can

⁴ Patrick Collinson, 'Puritans, Men of Business and Elizabethan Parliaments', *Parliamentary History* (1988), 187-211, p. 191.

appreciate quite how far St Deiniol's was an outgrowth of Gladstone's overall personal and intellectual development, rather than a peripheral afterthought. St Deiniol's was a project of long gestation. It might be tempting to interpret Gladstone's foundation as a variety of the Europe-wide *fin de siècle* mentalité, which called for the public to be educated for a spiritual as well as a cultural revival and for the past to be closely studied not rejected.⁵ But Gladstone's preoccupation with the transmission of knowledge across the generations was a conviction that had long-sustained and informed his politics, his religion and his personal actions. Library reading had, over a lifetime, formed the bedrock of Gladstone's understanding of his own worth and identity. His upbringing in an evangelical, argumentative, lively, competitive, ambitious and affectionate home environment dominated by book culture sowed the seeds and Gladstone remained profoundly influenced by his early reading experiences, particularly the work of Sir Walter Scott. Scott's influence on Gladstone was immense and shows how much of his entire identity, personal, familial and national, was forged by his reading practice.

It might be carrying it too far to use book collection as a metaphor for Gladstone's approach to life, but the (occasionally obsessional and dangerous) collecting instinct certainly was fundamental to Gladstone's attitude to it. He collected (and so increased his knowledge of) books, art, women, theological ideas as well as political causes and electoral constituencies and he ended his life by bestowing his amassed collection of this knowledge to humanity for its greater edification and hopeful of its continued progress. To echo Gladstone's comment, 'turning now to the title of this paper', I have entitled my thesis 'Enlarging the Text' not only because it has sought to broaden (if only in a 'limited and fragmentary' way) our general understanding and appreciation of Gladstone the man as well as just the reader and intellectual, but because my most significant conclusion is that Gladstone's Library both influenced and, in its surviving archival form, represents the essential and intensifying broadness of Gladstone's private thought and the ways in which he sought practically and publicly to implement it.

⁵ Cf. Walter Laqueur, 'Fin-De-Siècle: Once More with Feeling', *Journal of Contemporary History* 31 (1996), 5-47, p. 9.

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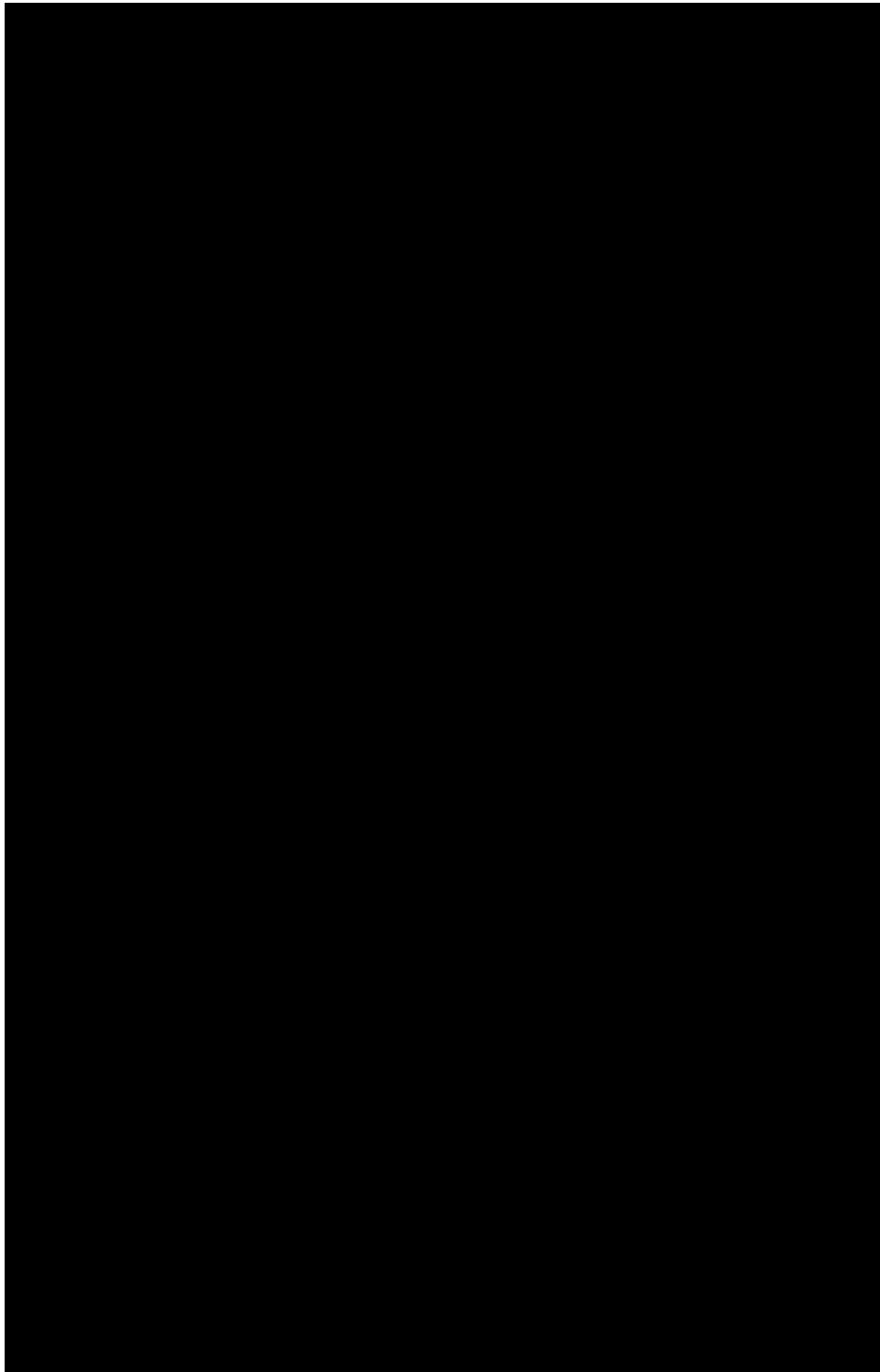


Fig. 0.1. John Tenniel, 'Critics', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 14 May 1870.

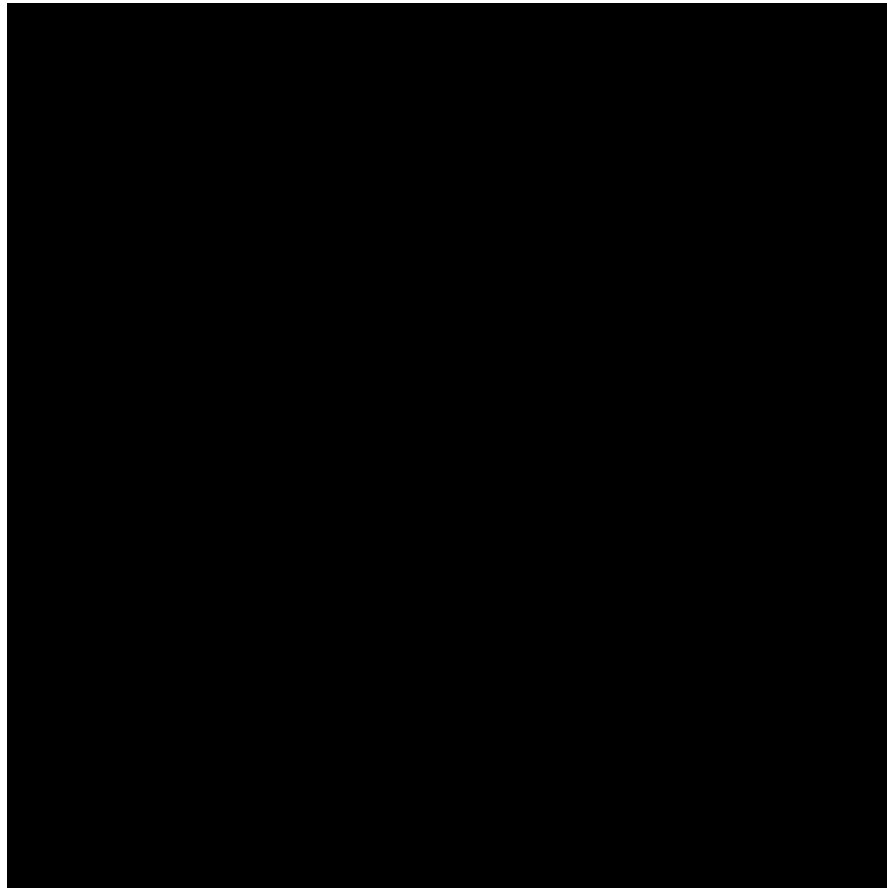


Fig. 0.2. Gladstone's Annotation Key, February 1836.

notice..... |
/
special notice....*NB*
/
n. [note] with approbation...+.
/
disapprobation..X, =.
/
special do. [ditto]..... XX, XXX.
/
a doubt....?
/
a reservation or qualification*ma.*
/
disbelief or surprise ...!
(at statement, or, manner of statement)

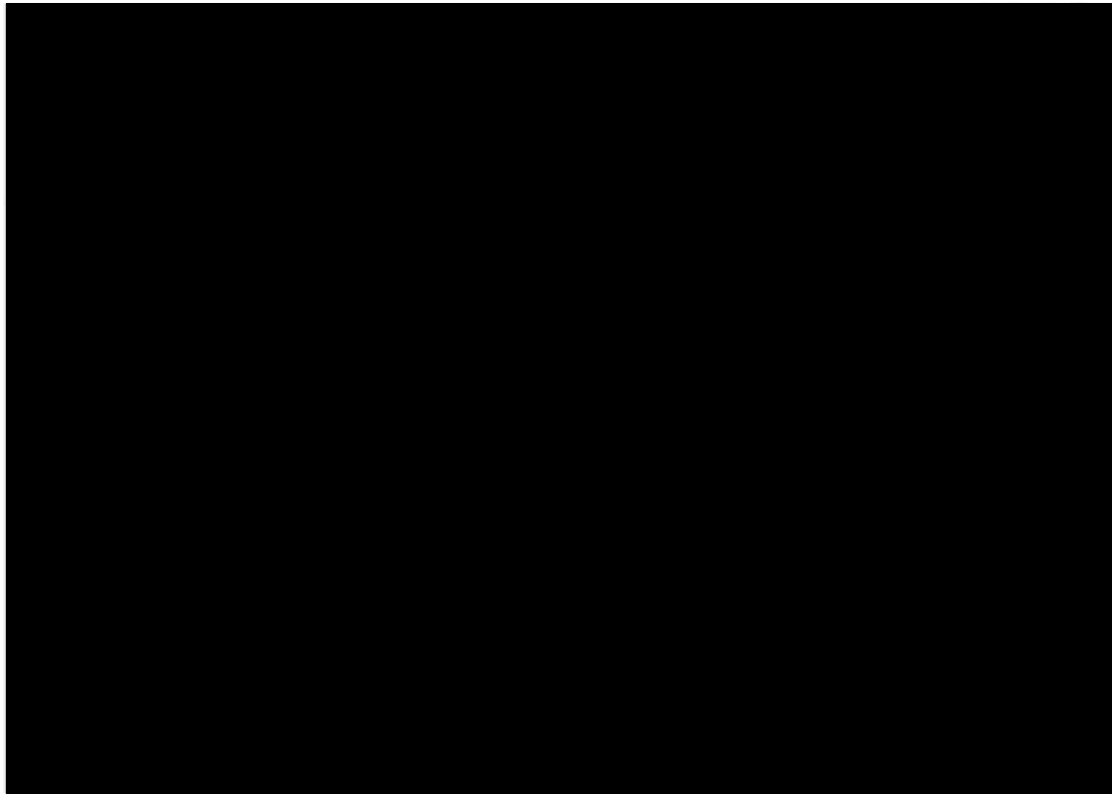


Fig. 1.1. Thomas Hargreaves, *William and Helen Gladstone* (c. 1816).

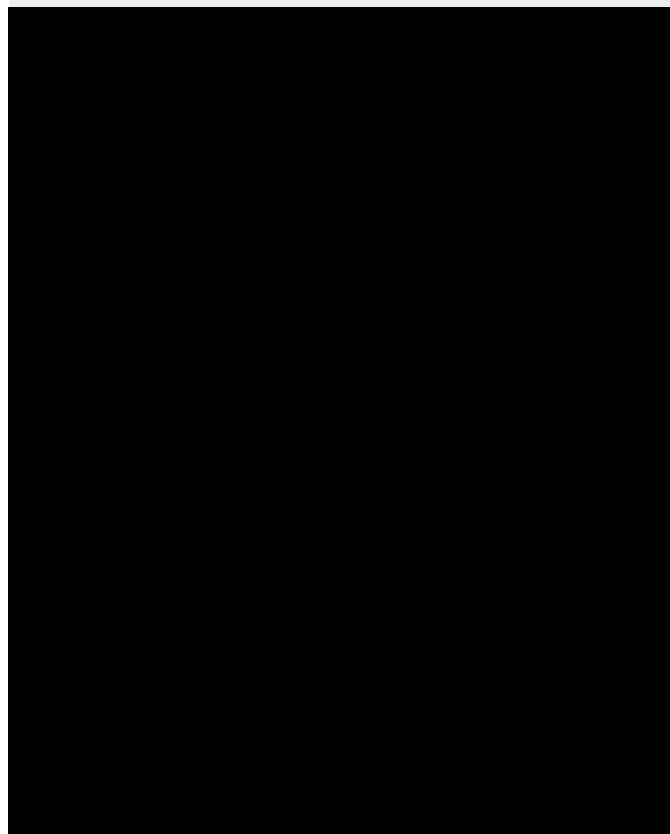


Fig. 1.2. Alexander Munro's Sketch of John and Anne Gladstone's Memorial, Fasque, 1854.

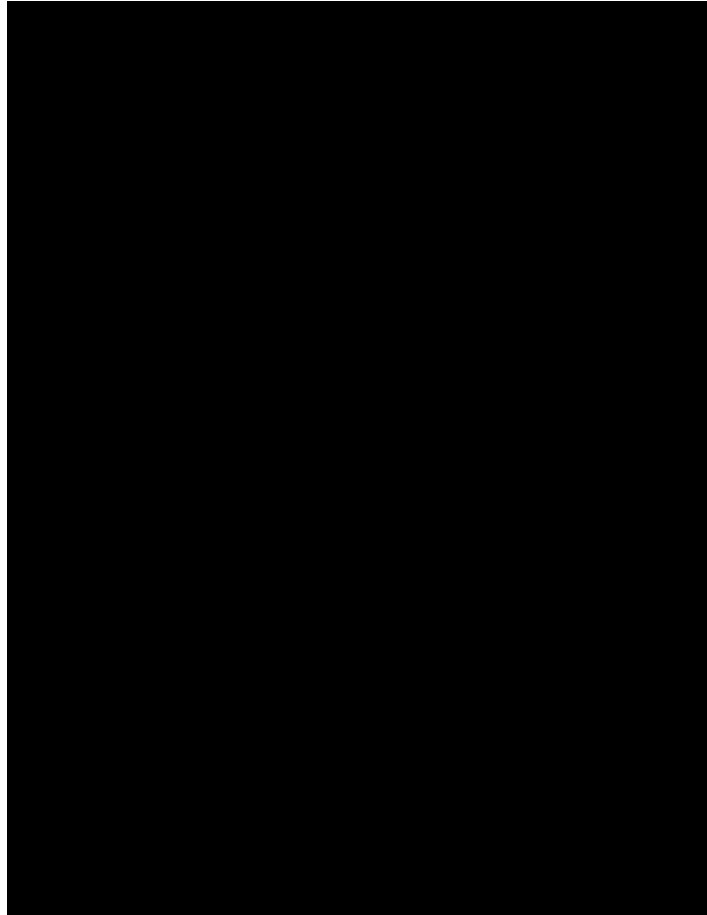


Fig. 1.3. Alexander Munro's Sketch for John and Anne Gladstone's Memorial, Fasque, 1854. (Later Version).



Fig. 1.4. Alexander Munro, *The Gladstone Memorial, Fasque* (1854).



Fig. 1.5. *The Library at Fasque* (2002).

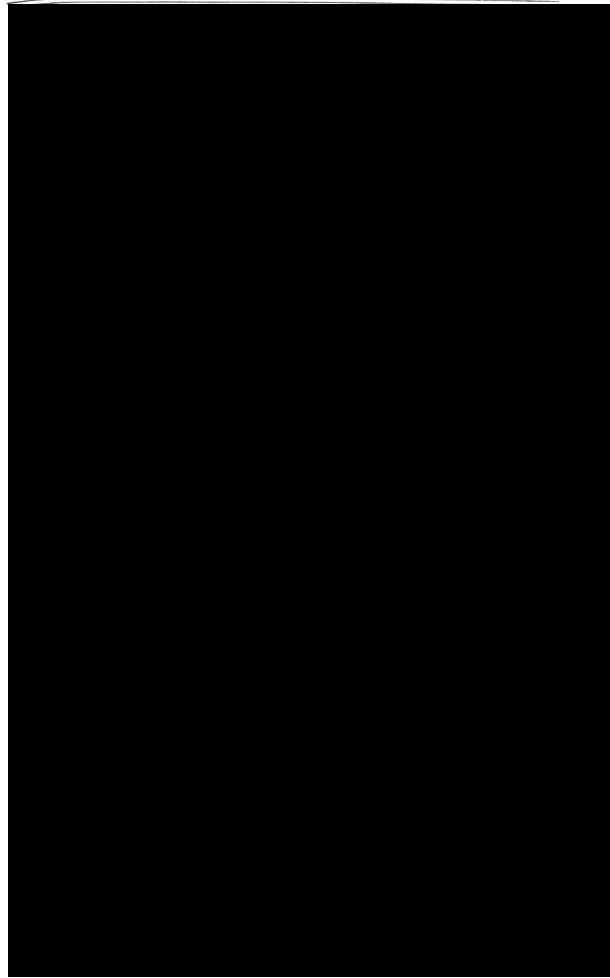


Fig. 2.1. John Tenniel, 'Raising the "Fiery Cross." Midlothian, August, 1884', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 30 August 1884.



Fig. 2.2. Harry Furniss, 'The Grand Old Campaigner in Scotland', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 25 October 1890. (Detail).

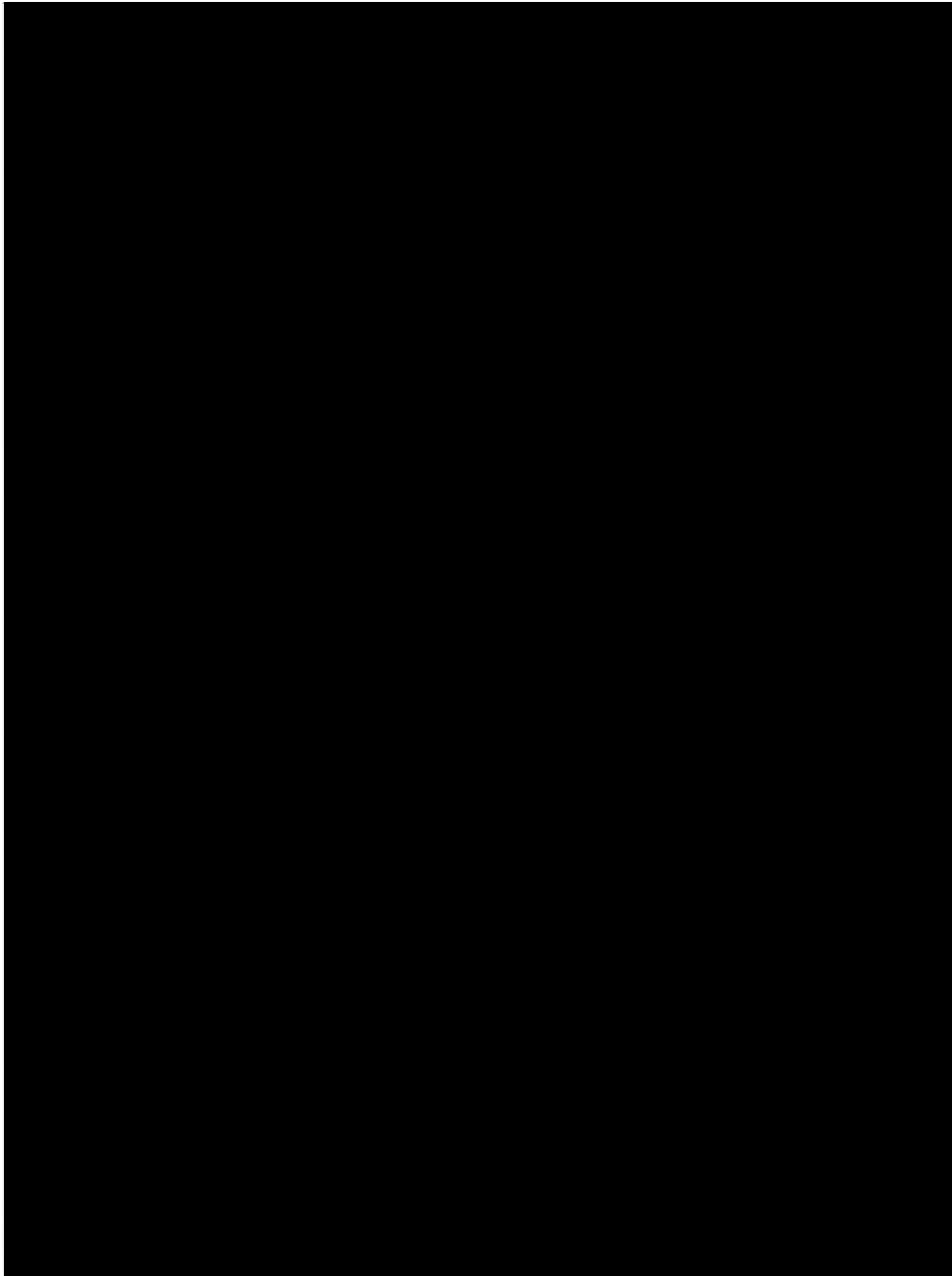


Fig. 2.3. Engraving after Raeburn's *Sir Walter Scott*, in the Temple of Peace.

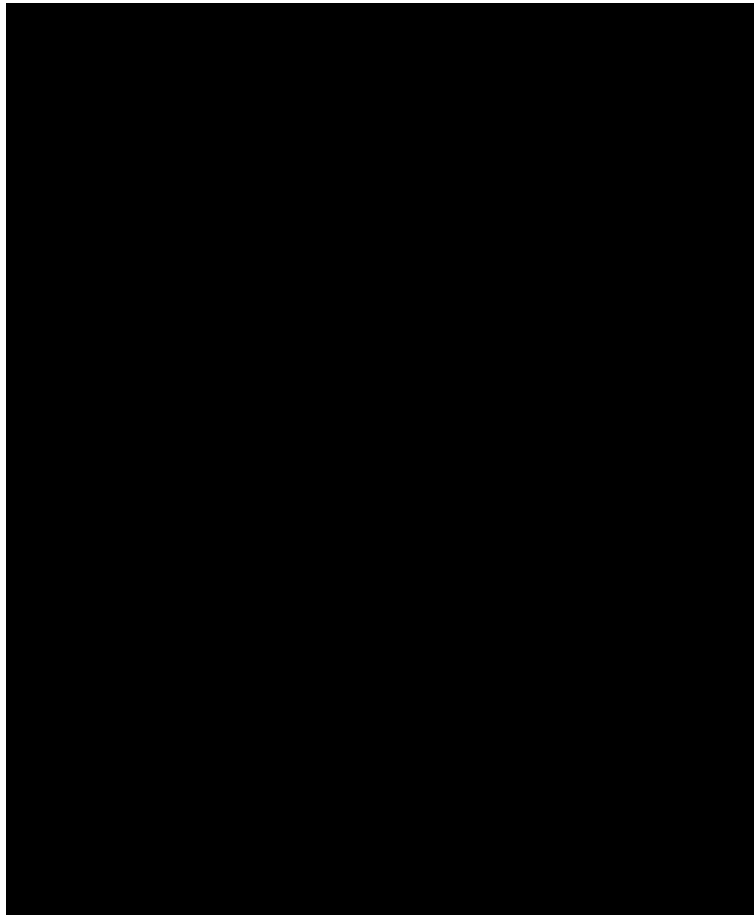


Fig. 3.1. *Exterior of the Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle* (n.d.)

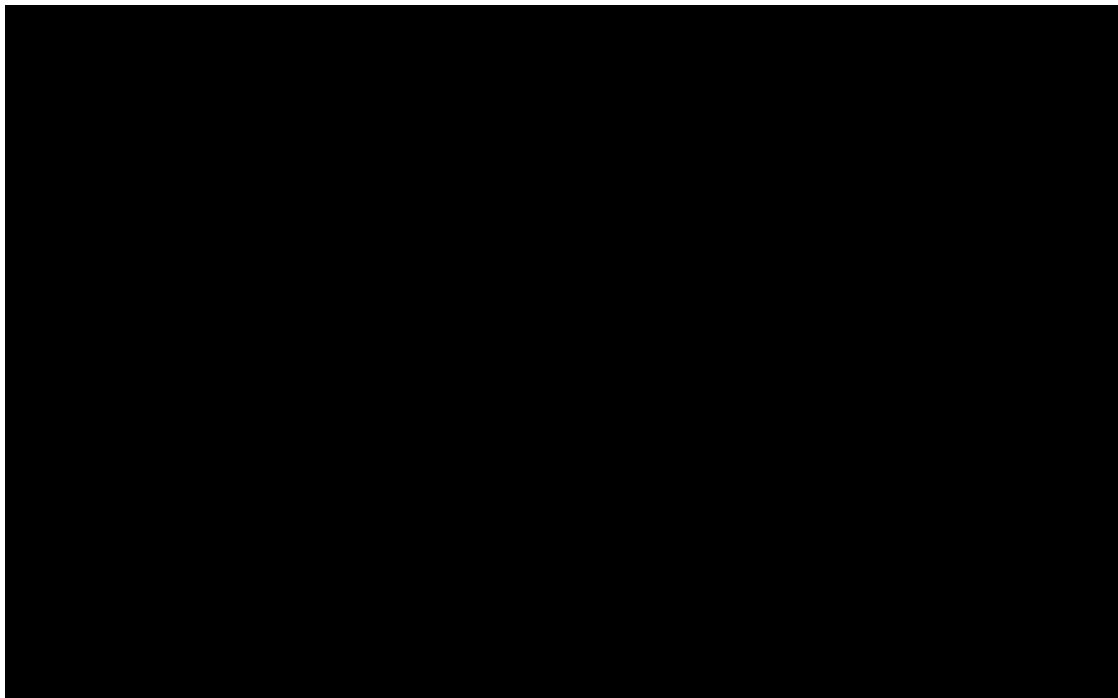


Fig. 3.2. *Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle* (c. 1880).



Fig. 3.3. *The Temple of Peace, Hawarden Castle* (1999).



Fig. 3.4. Moyniham, *Bust of Lord Beaconsfield*.

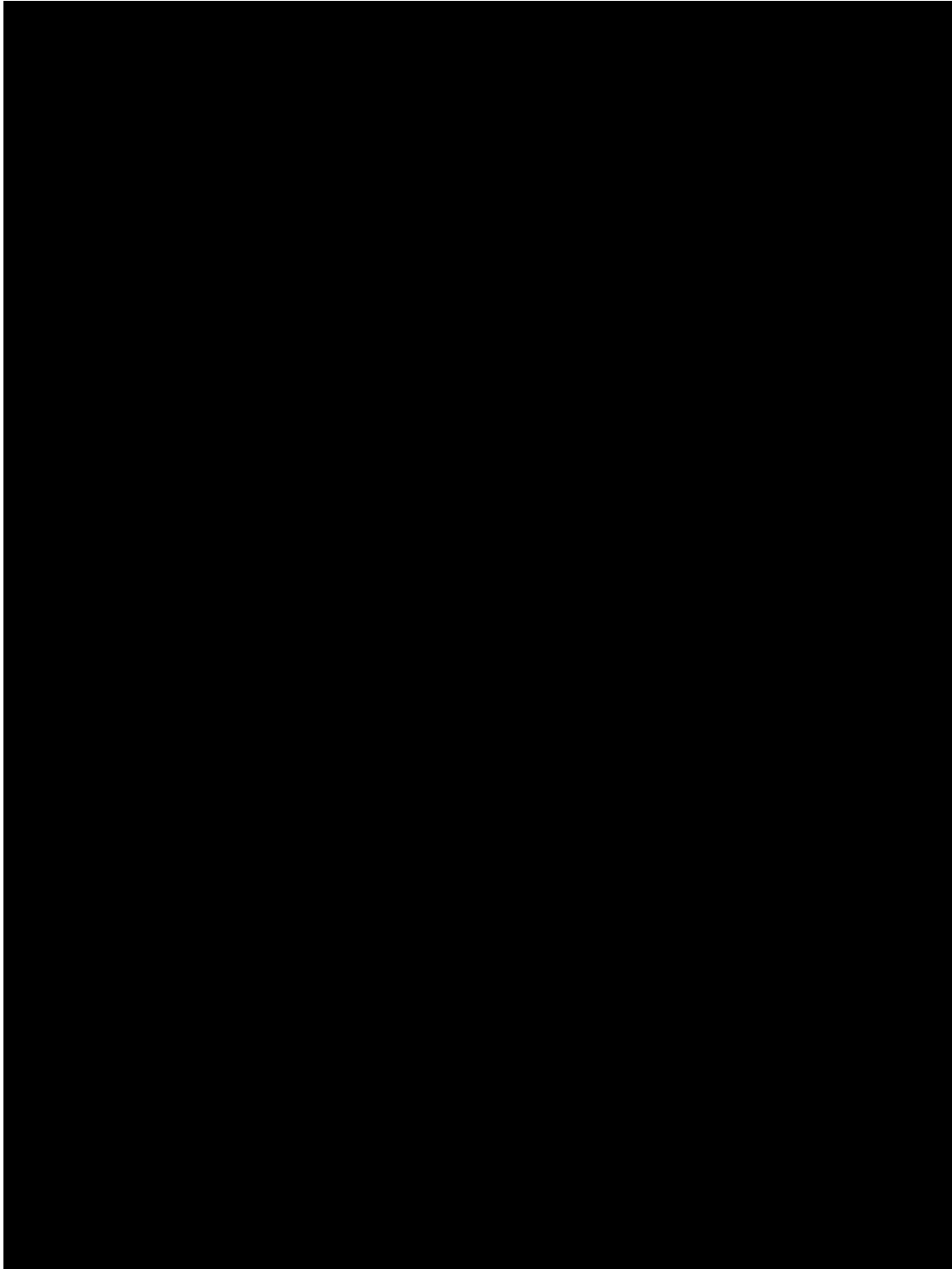


Fig. 3.5. Alexander Munro, *Paolo and Francesca* (1853).

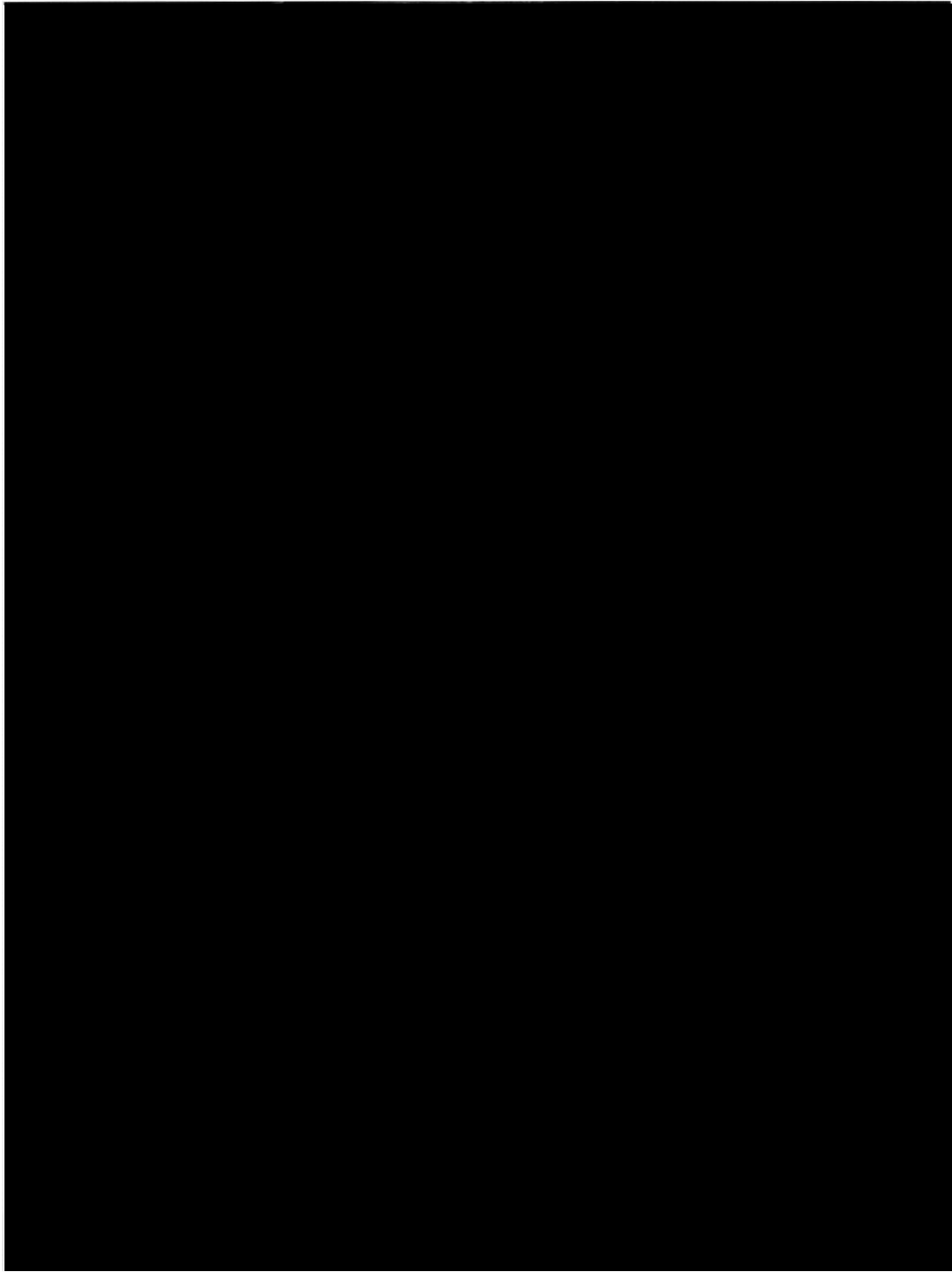


Fig. 3.6. William Dyce, *Lady with Coronet of Jasmine* (1859).

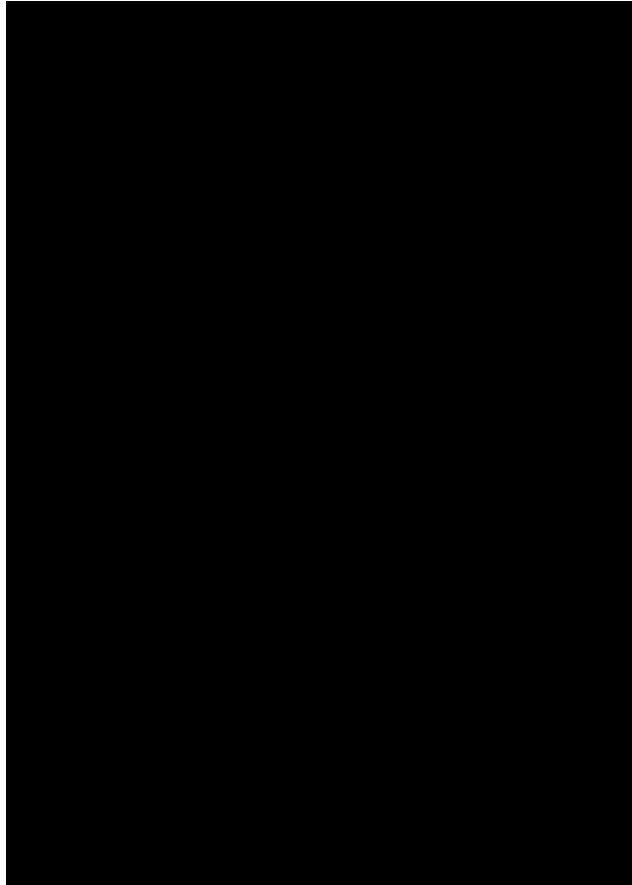


Fig. 5.1. William Bradley, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1839).

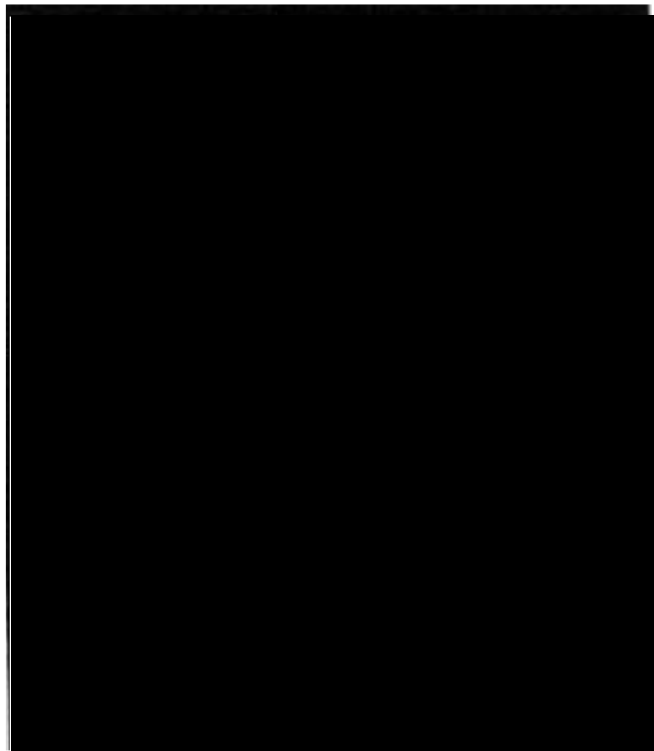


Fig. 5.2. Antonio Canova, *Venus Italica*.



Fig. 5.3. W. H. Cubley, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1841).

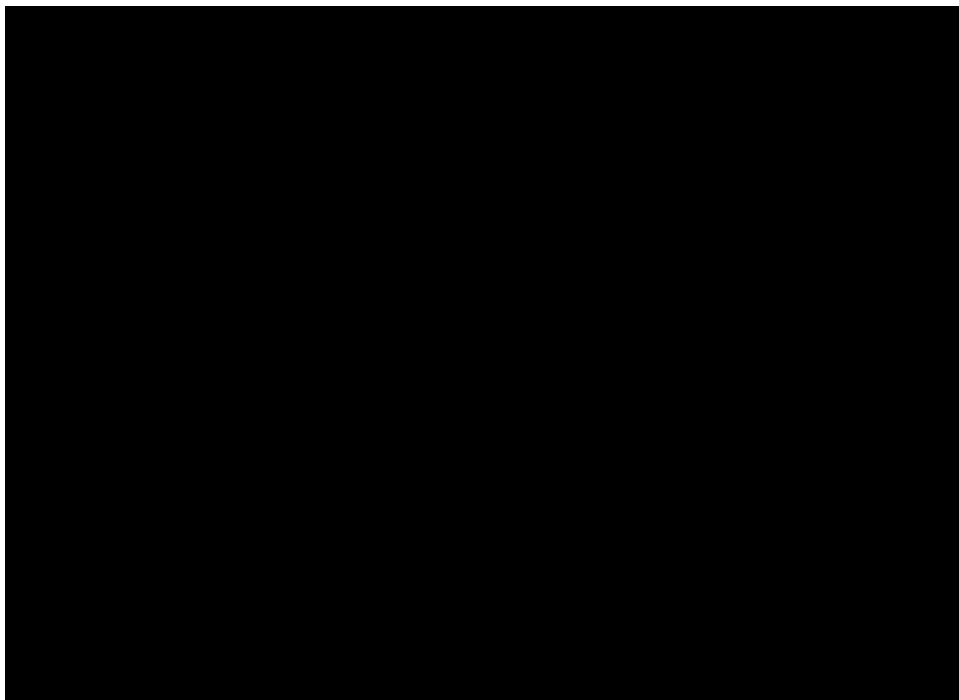


Fig. 5.4. H. B., 'Another Corn-Law Caricature – "The New Christmas Pantomime"', 1845.

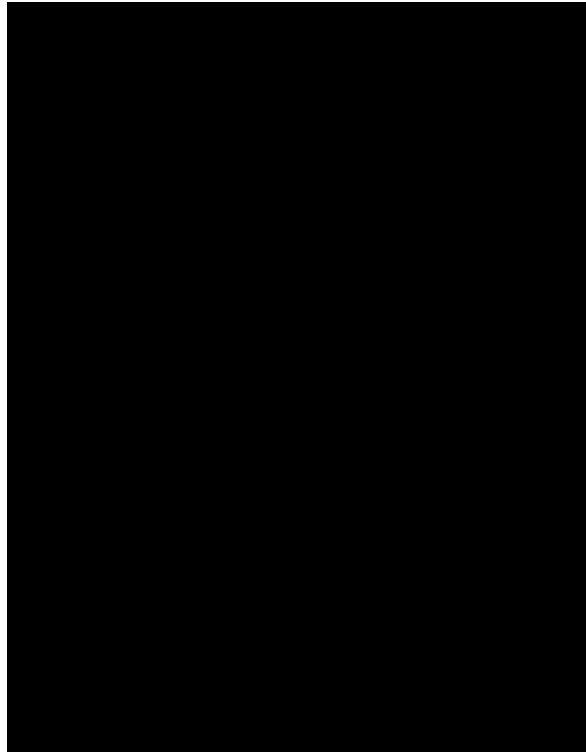


Fig. 5.5. William Bradley, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1841).



Fig. 5.6. John Lucas, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1843).

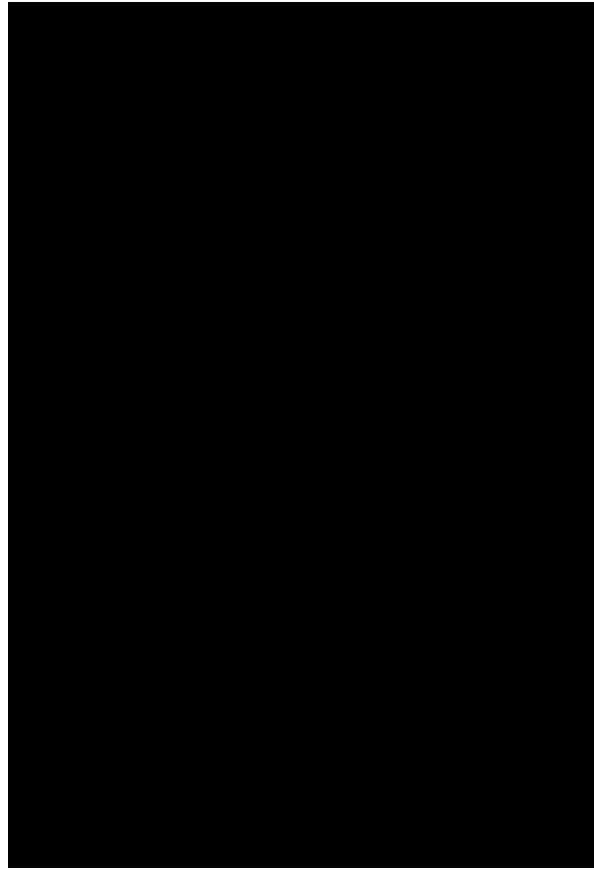


Fig. 5.7. 'Holiday Occupations of the Gladstone Ministry', *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 9 August 1873.

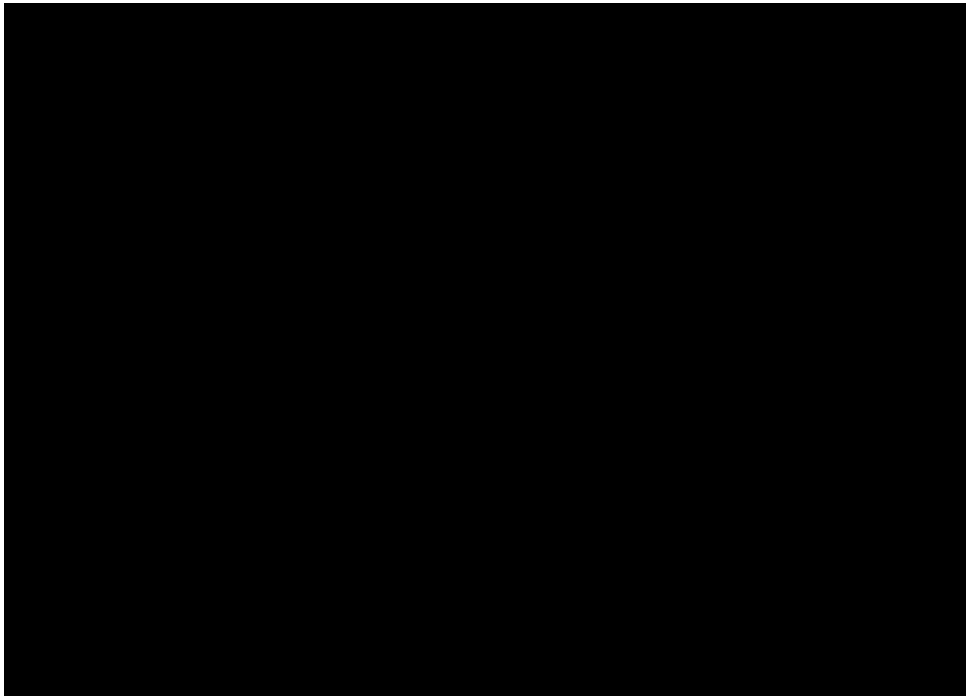


Fig. 5.8. 'Far from the Madding Crowd', *Judy*, 27 January 1875.

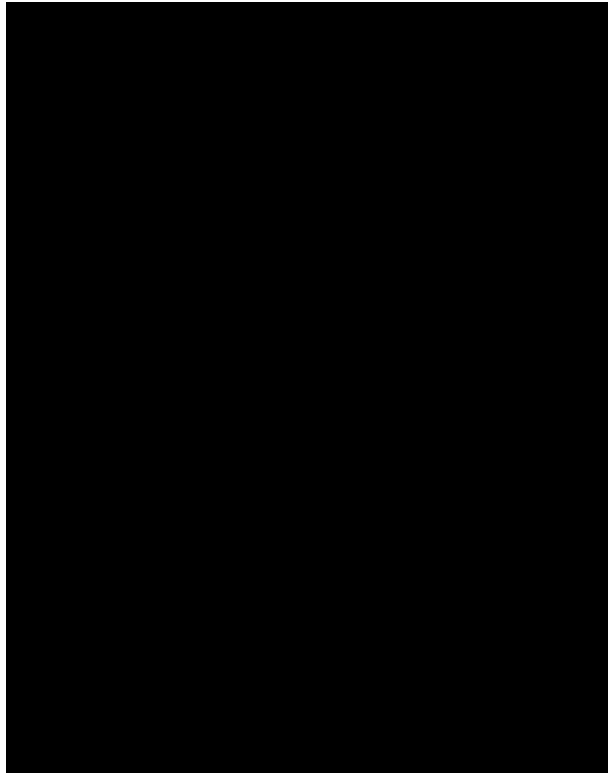


Fig. 5.9. 'Goodbye!' *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 30 January 1875.



Fig. 5.10. 'Arcades Ambo!' *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 14 April 1877.

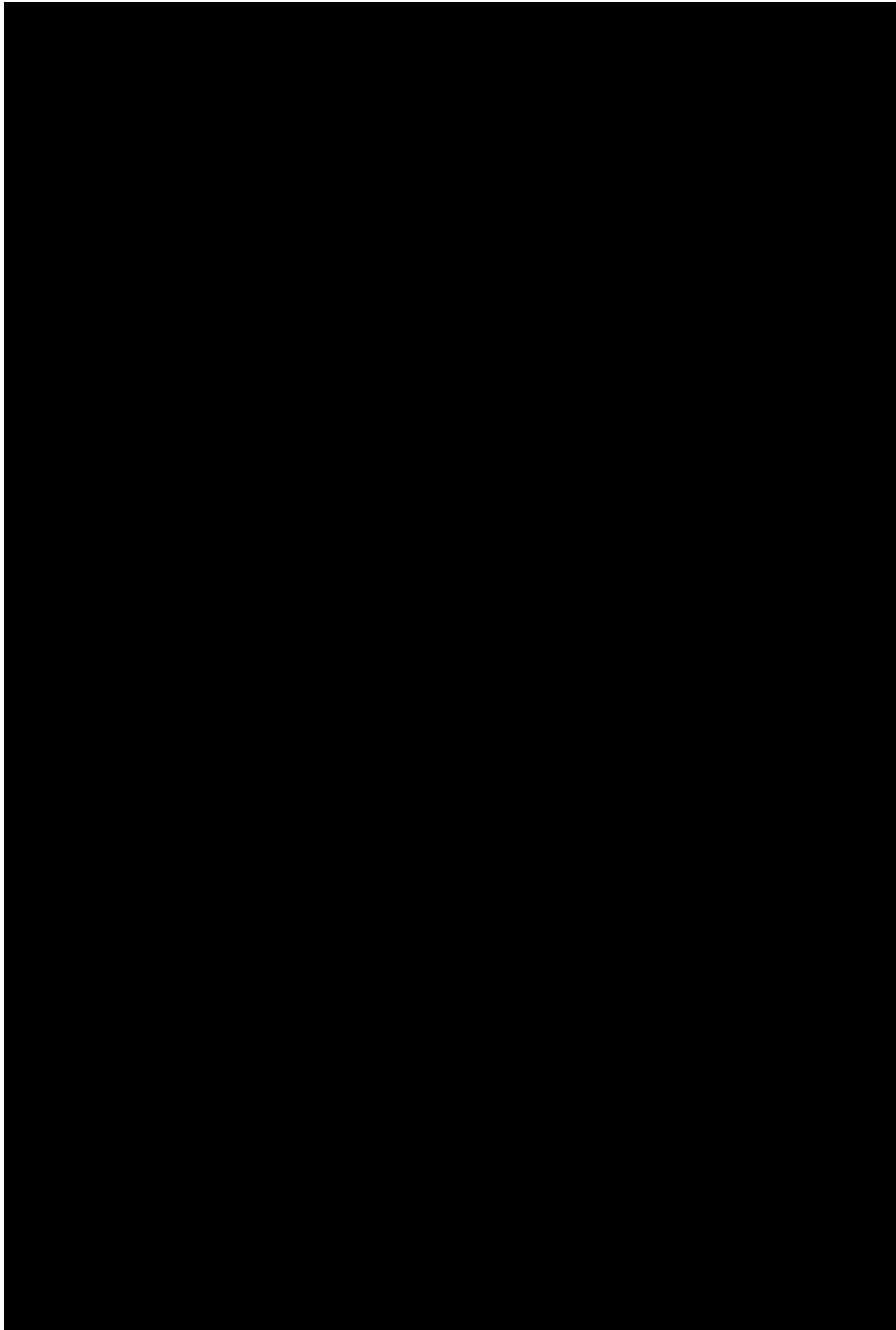


Fig. 5.11. 'A Terrible Threat!' *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 11 October 1884.

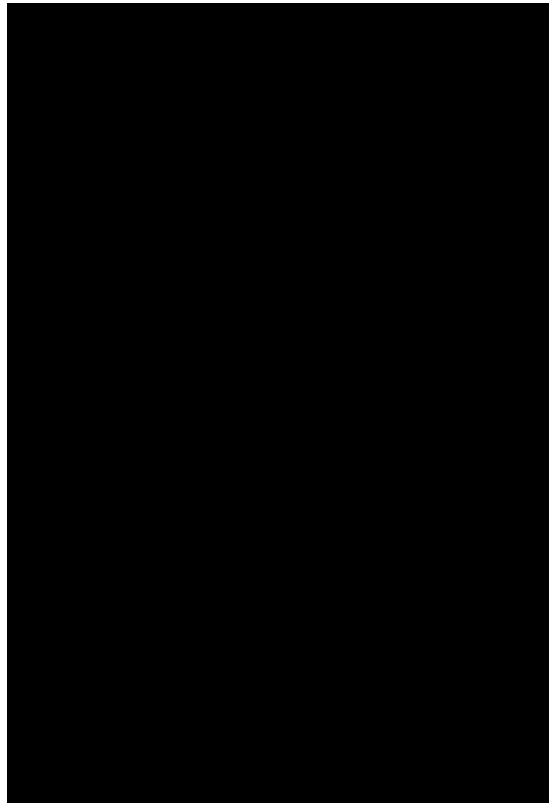


Fig. 5.12. William Currey, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1877).



Fig. 5.13. William Currey, *William Ewart Gladstone and William Henry Gladstone* (1877).



Fig. 5.14. William Currey, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1877).

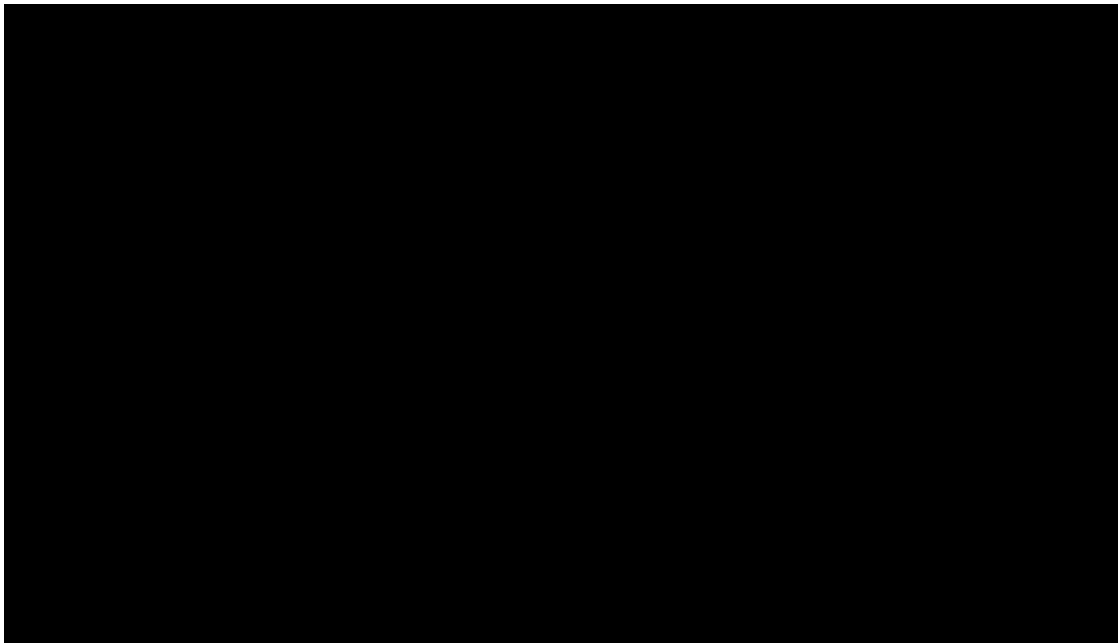


Fig. 5.15. *Gladstone and Family Woodcutting* (n.d.)



Fig. 5.16. Ford Madox Brown, *Work* (1852-65).

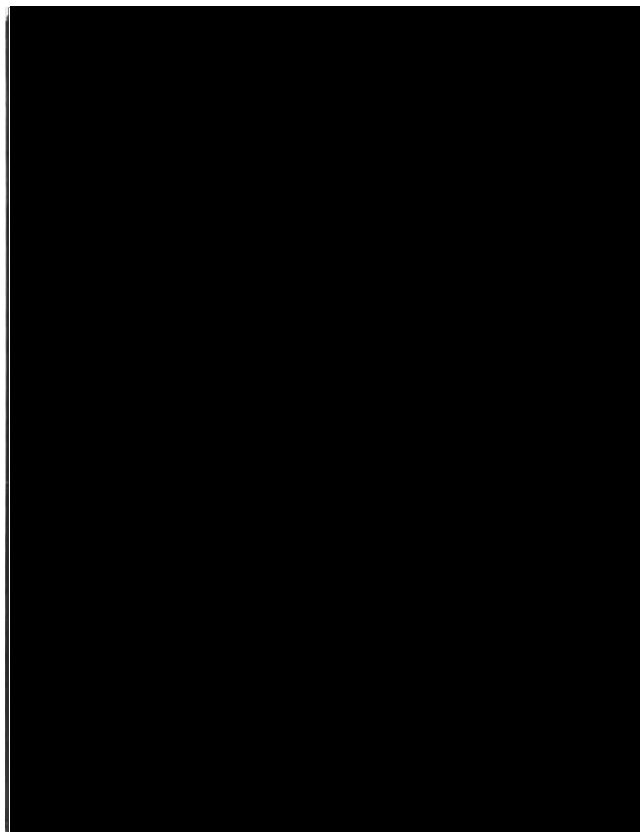


Fig. 5.17. Sydney Prior Hall, *Gladstone Reading the Lesson in Hamarden Church* (1892).

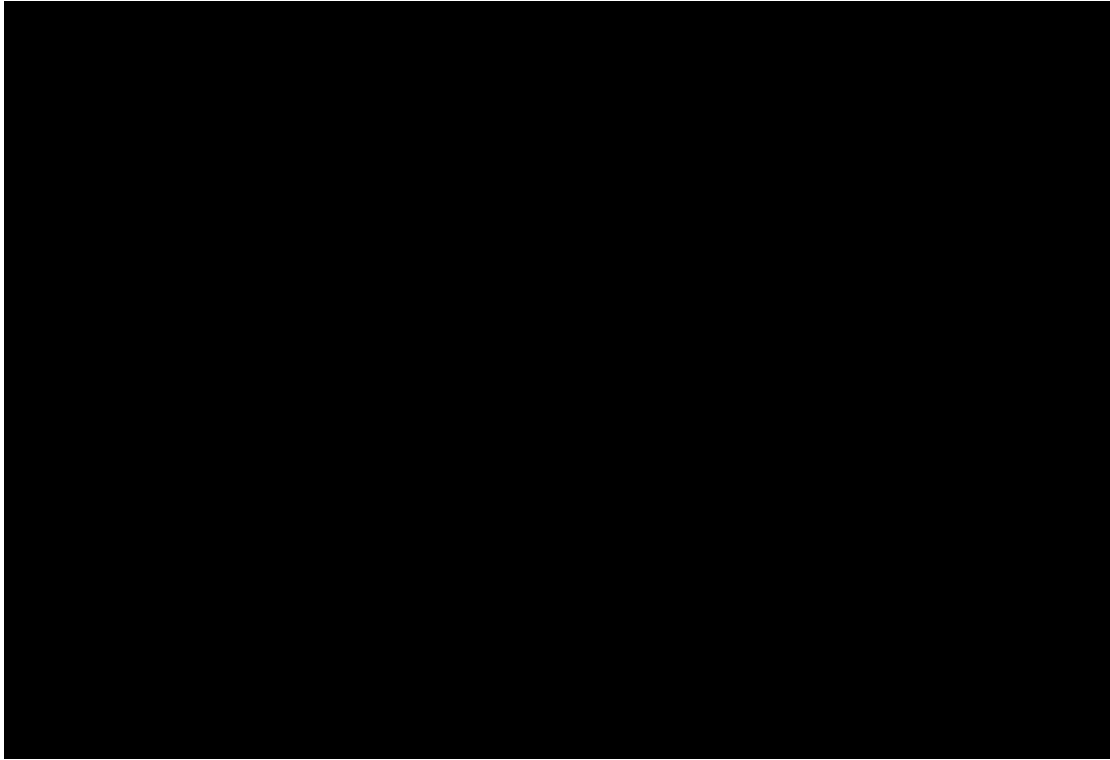


Fig. 5.18. Sydney Prior Hall, *Gladstone Reading in the Temple of Peace* (n.d.)

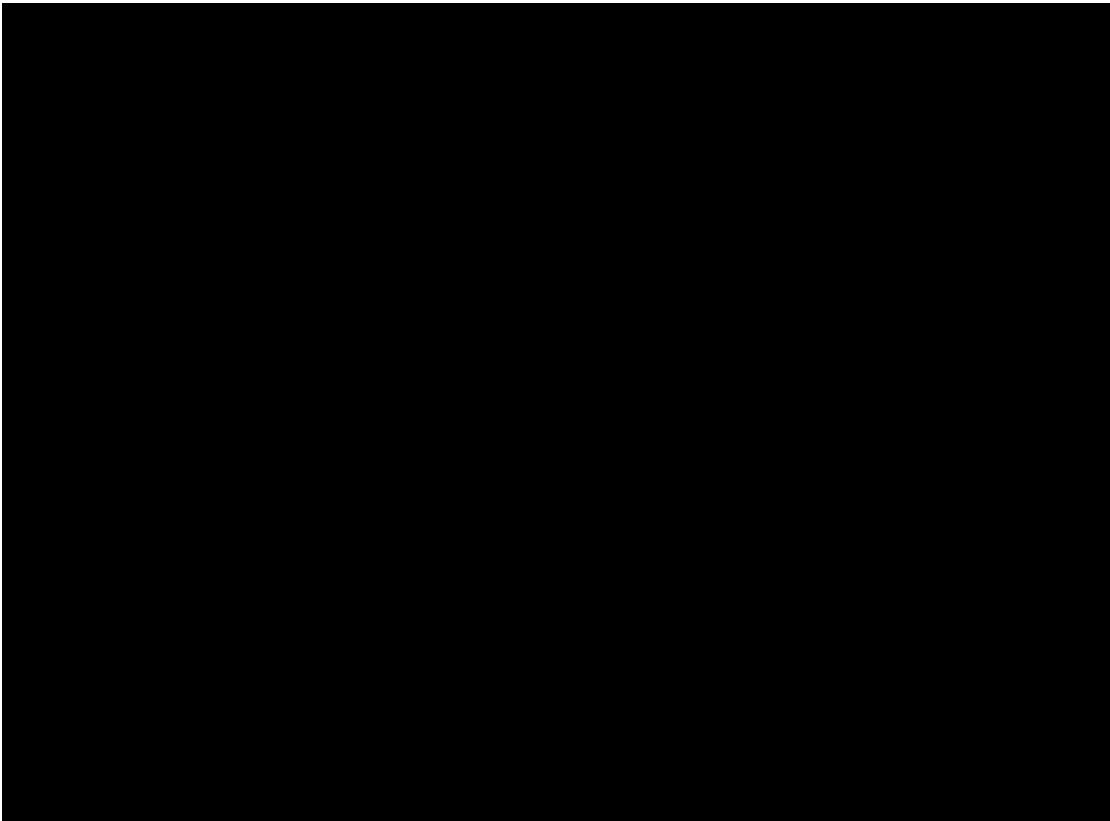


Fig. 5.19. Sydney Prior Hall, *Gladstone Reading in the Temple of Peace* (Watercolour Study)
(n.d.)

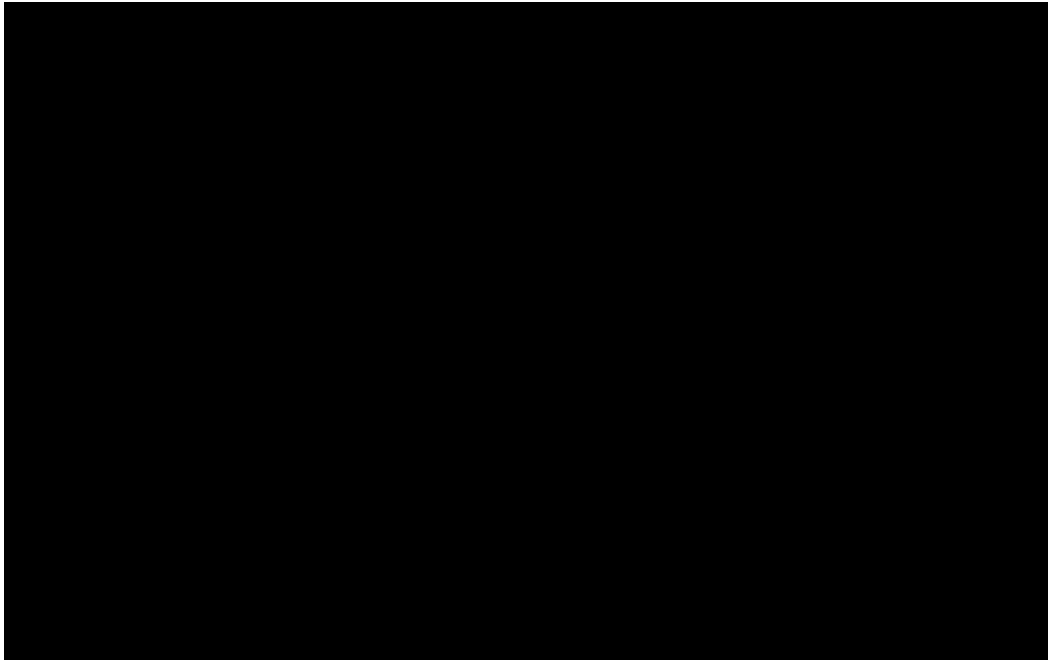


Fig. 5.20. John McClure Hamilton, *Gladstone in the Temple of Peace* (Pastel Study) (1890).

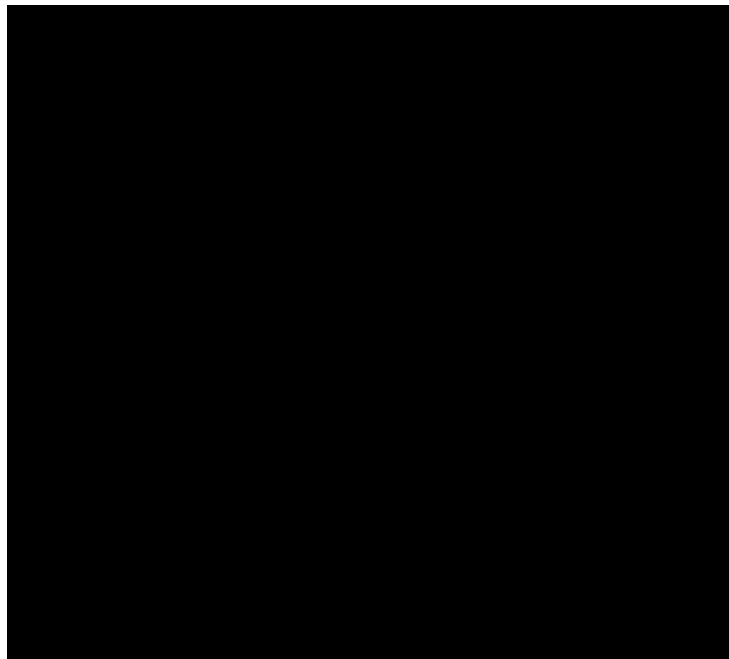


Fig. 5.21. *Gladstone Editing Butler in the Temple of Peace* (n.d.)



Fig. 5.22. Prince Troubetskoi, *Gladstone in Downing Street* (n.d.)

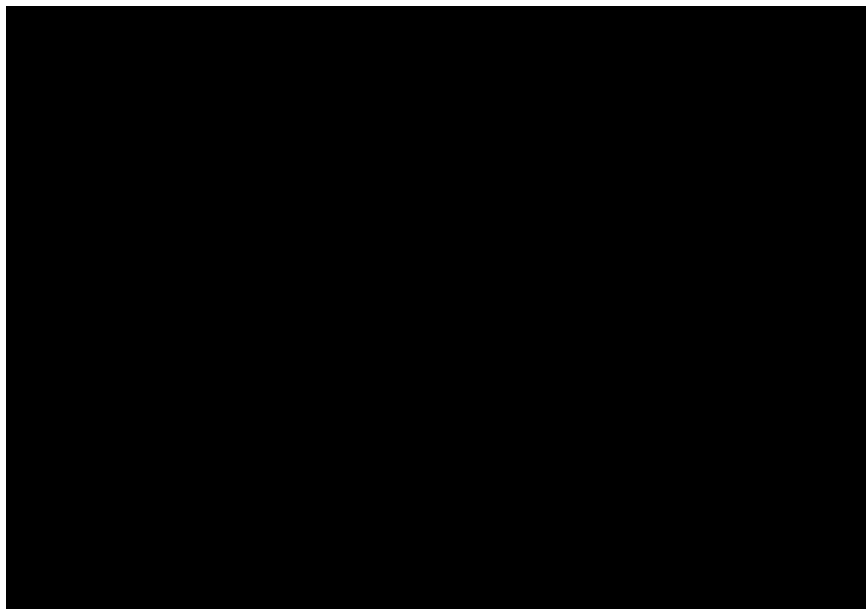


Fig. 5.23. *Gladstone in the Temple of Peace* (c. 1885).

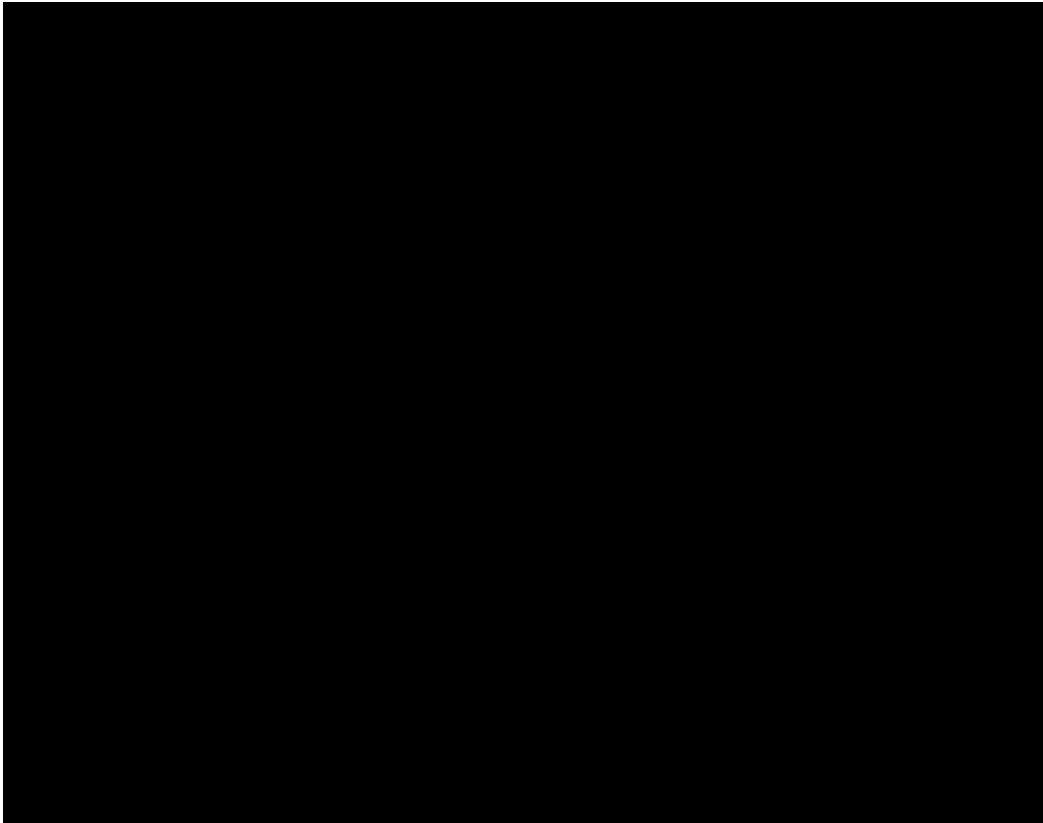


Fig. 5.24. 'Library, Hawarden', *Black & White*, Memorial Number, May 1898.

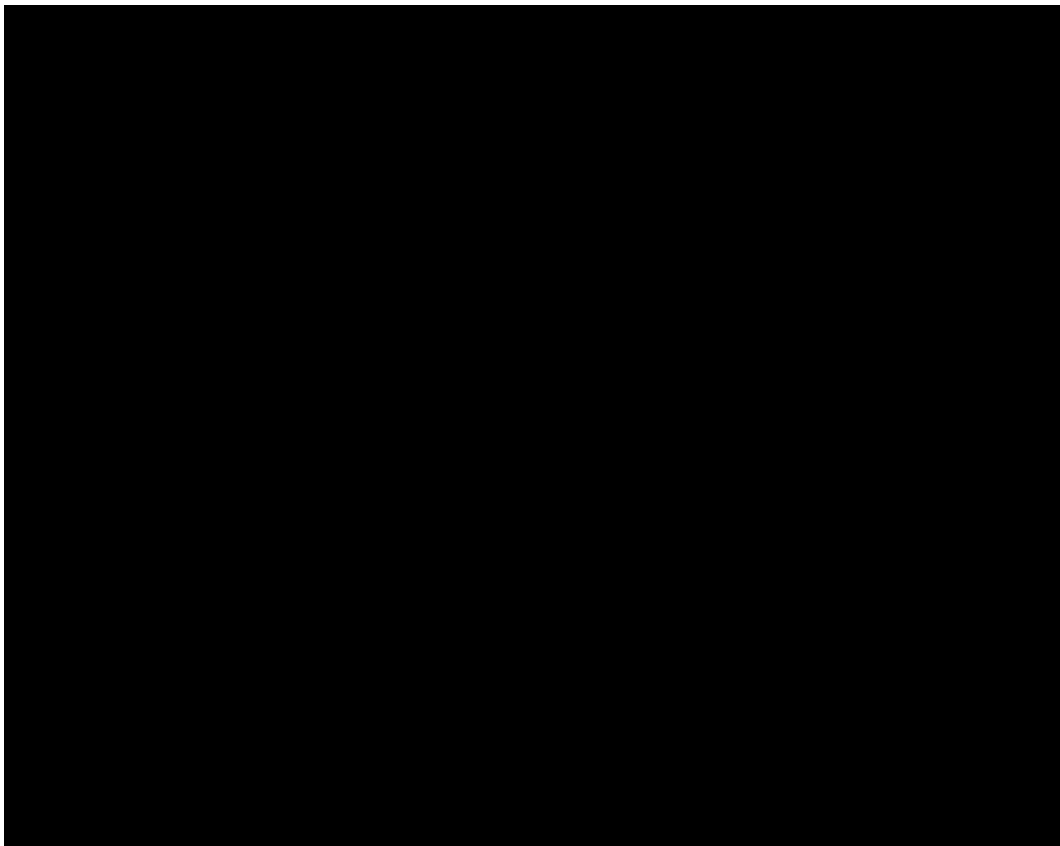


Fig. 5.25. William Blake Richmond, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Pencil Sketch) (1898).

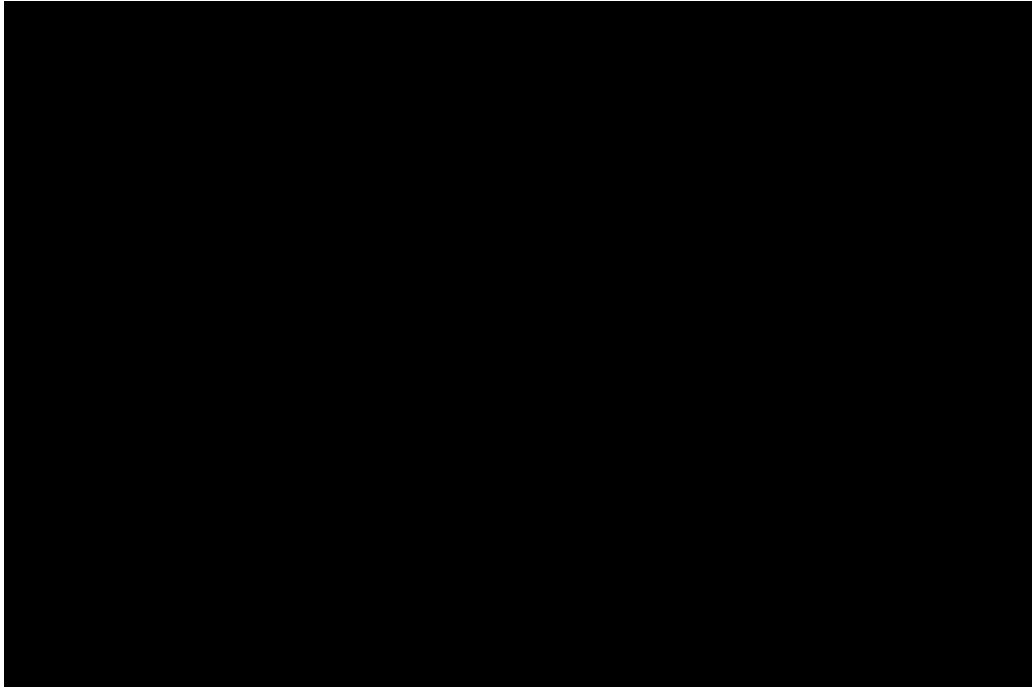


Fig. 5.26. William Blake Richmond, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Chalk and Pastel Study) (1898).

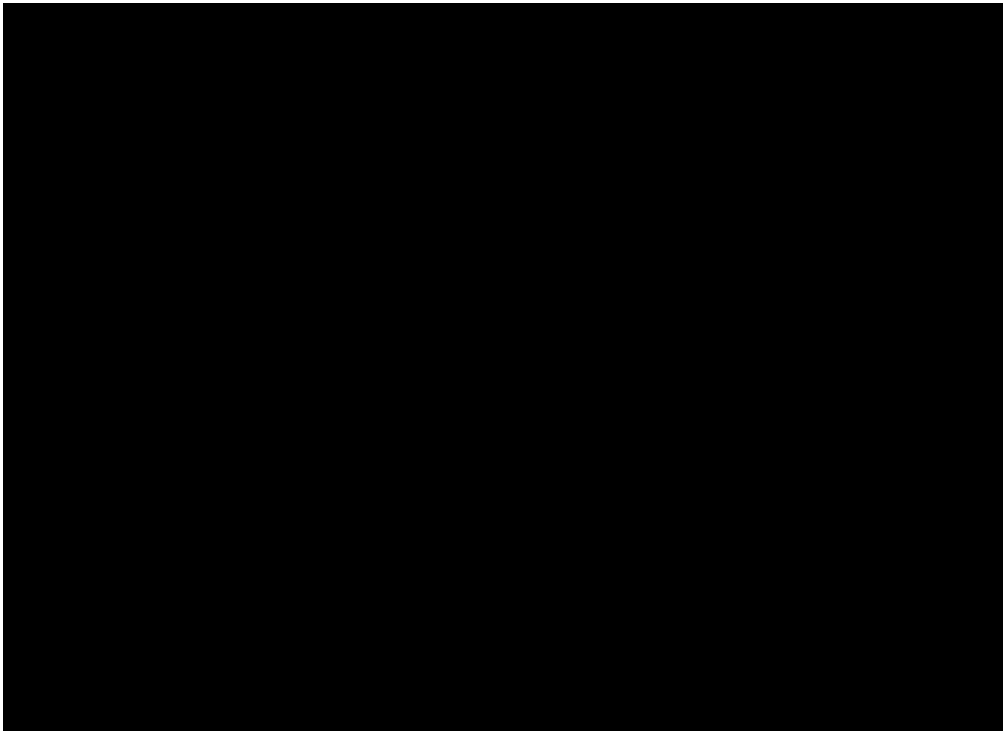


Fig. 5.27. William Blake Richmond, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Chalk and Pastel Study) (1898).

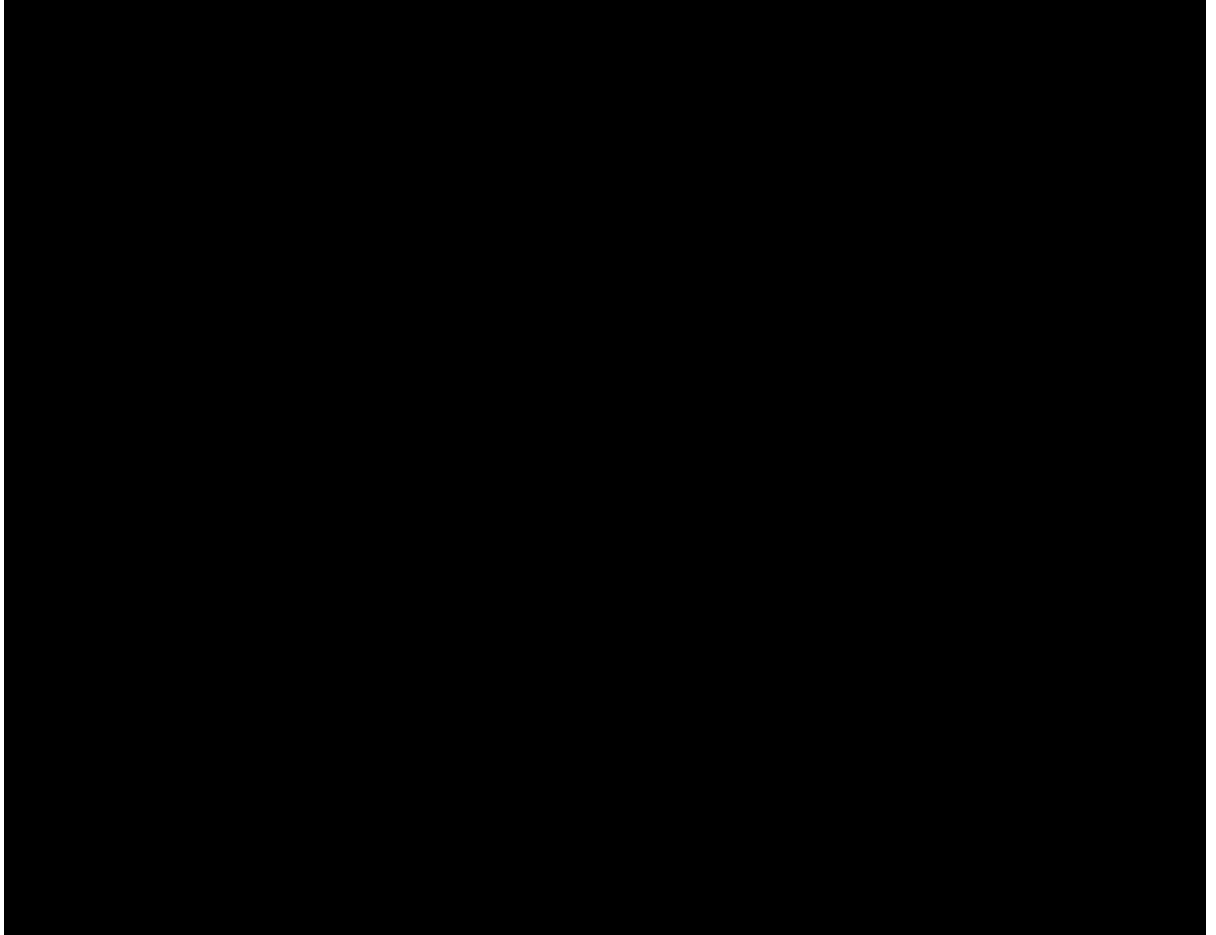


Fig. 5.28. G. Watmough Webster, *Room at Hawarden in which Mr. Gladstone Died* (1898).

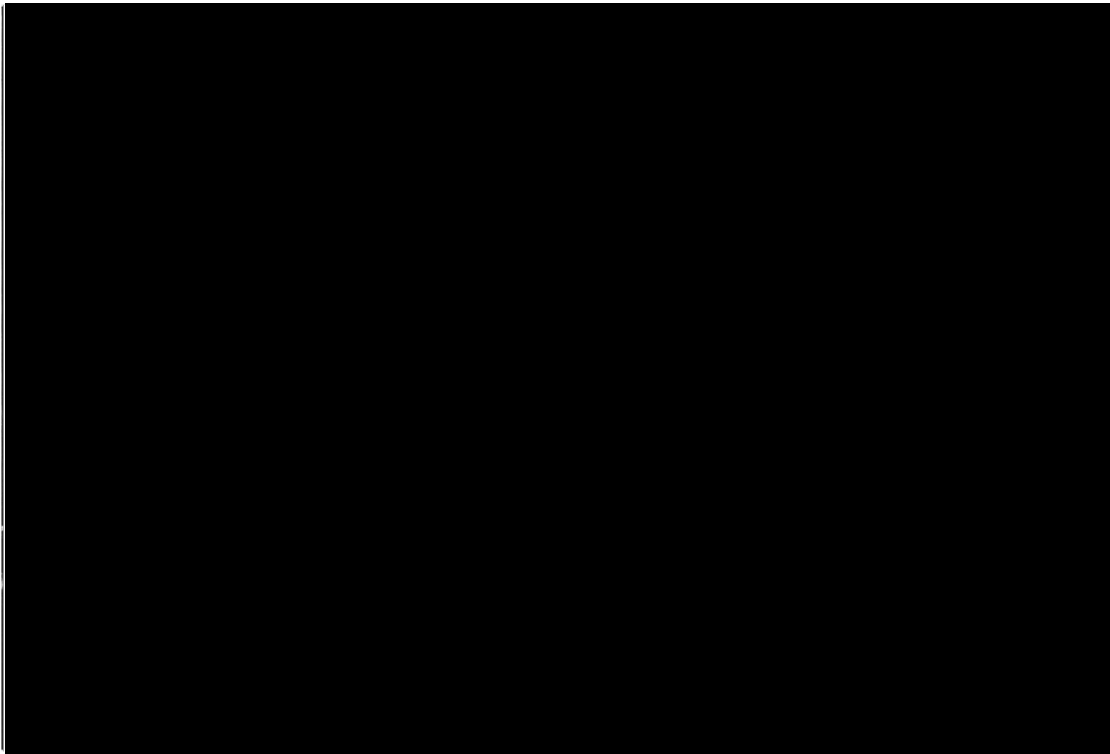


Fig. 5.29. J. H. Spencer, *Gladstone laid out in the Temple of Peace* (1898).

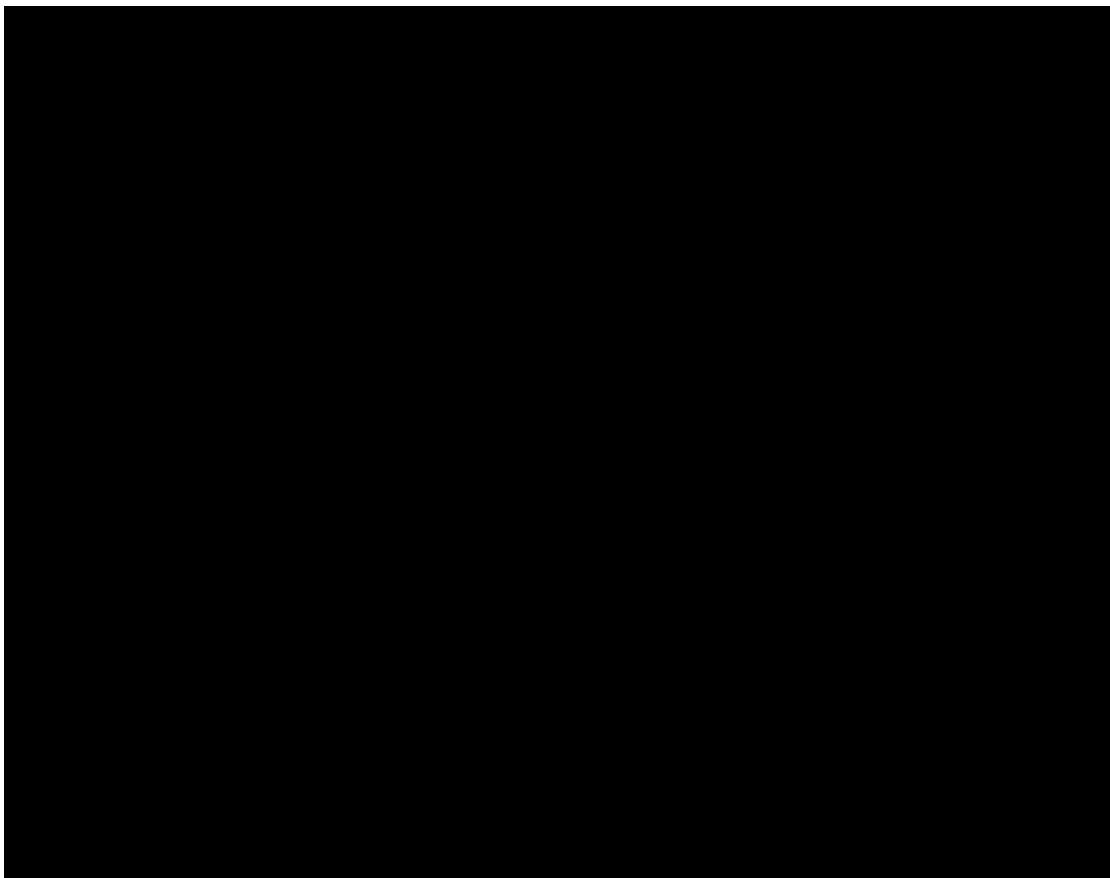


Fig. 5.30. J. H. Spencer, *Gladstone laid out in the Temple of Peace* (1898).

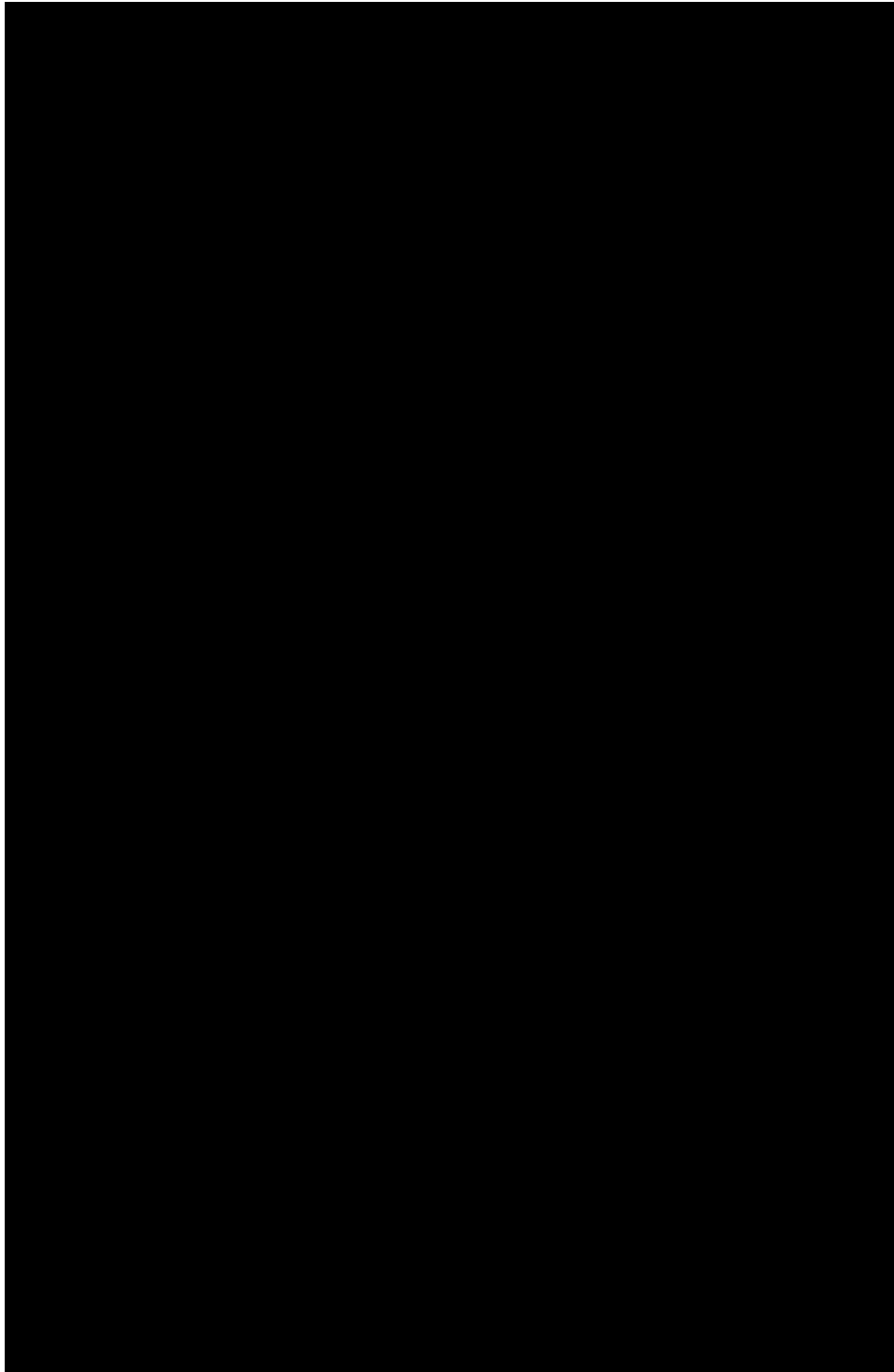


Fig. 6.1. "The Aged Reader" (1898).



Fig. 7.1. Plan showing the 'Tin Tabernacle' with the new Memorial Library and Residence, Douglas and Minshull (Architects), 1906.

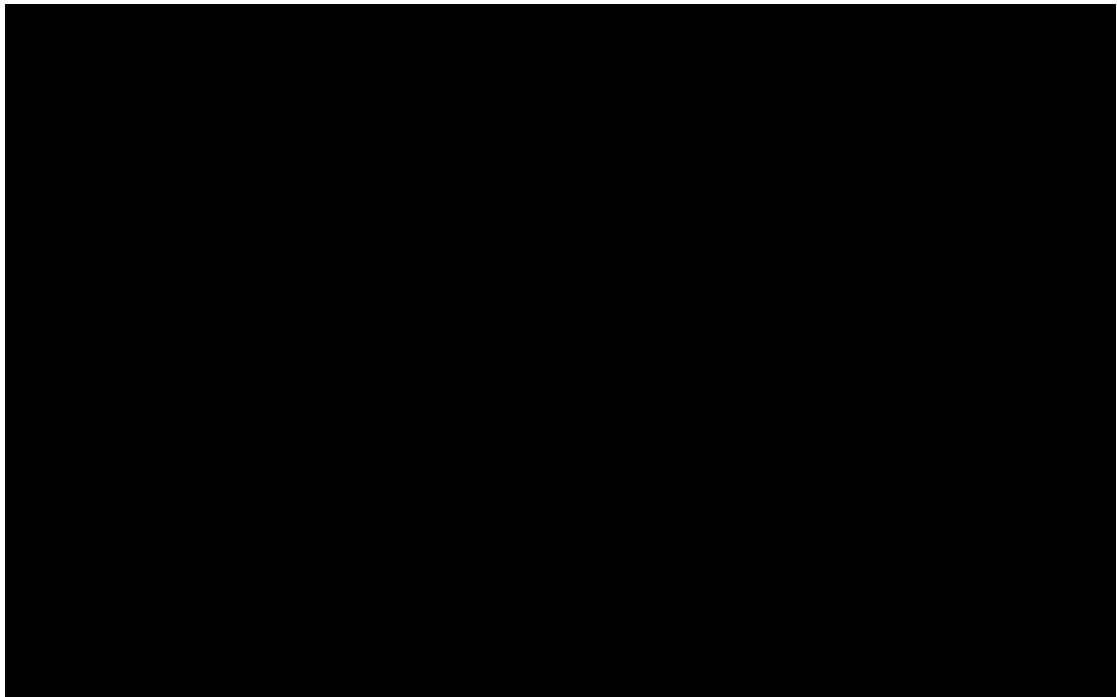


Fig. 7. 2. *The Exterior of the 'Tin Tabernacle' (1890).*



Fig. 7.3. *The Interior of the 'Tin Tabernacle' (Humanity Room) and the First Permanent Warden, G. C. Joyce (n.d.)*

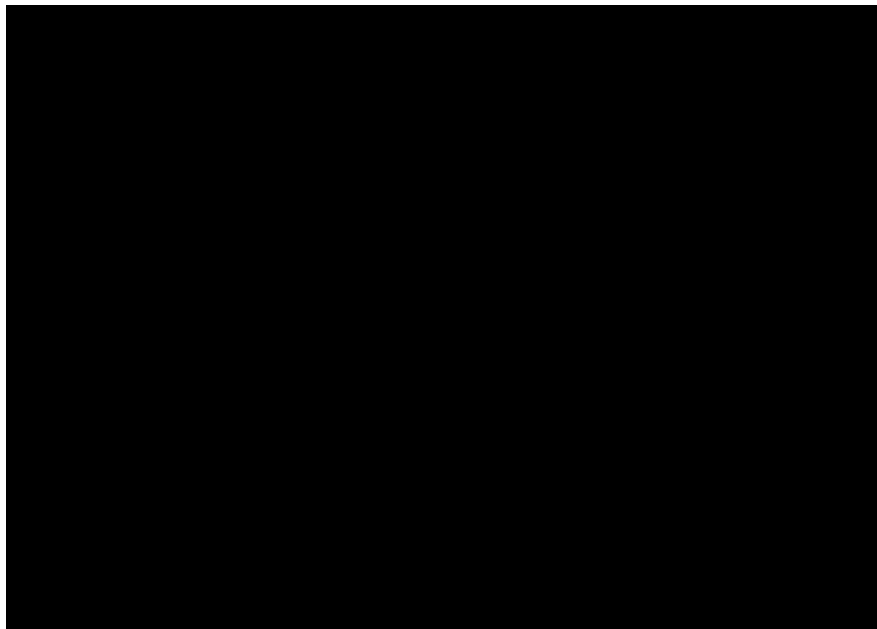


Fig. 7.4. *The Interior of the 'Tin Tabernacle' (Divinity Room) (n.d.)*

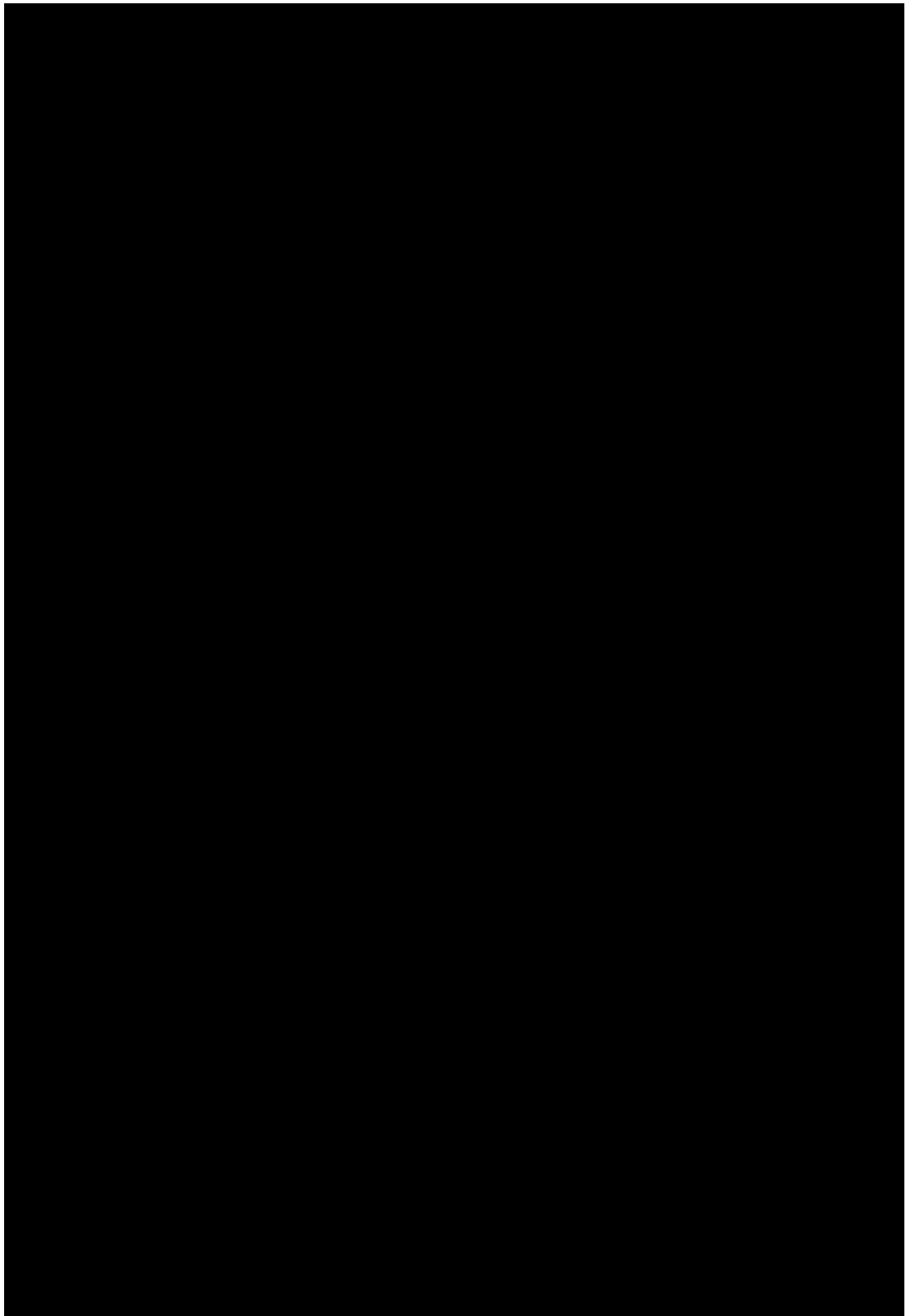


Fig. 7.5. Plan of the 'Tin Tabernacle' based on Gladstone's Dalmeny Memorandum.

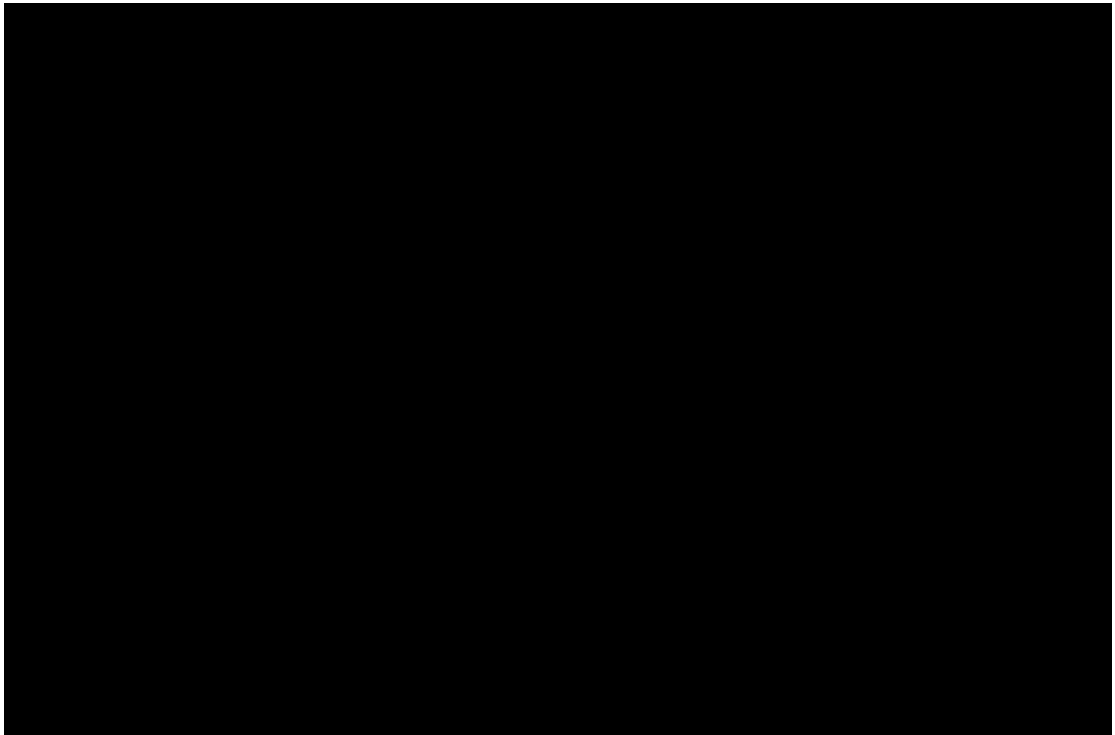


Fig. 7.6. *The Seventeenth-Century Grammar School and Master House which became the Hostel to the Library (c. 1890).*

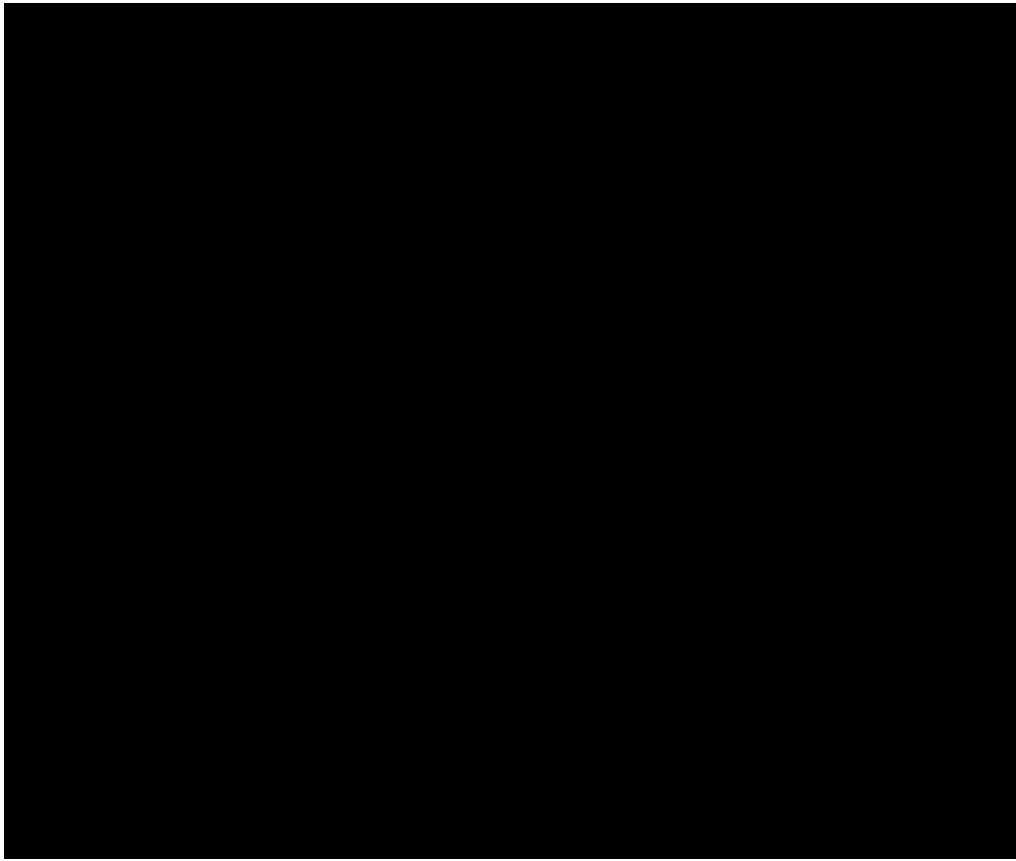


Fig. 7.7. 'St Deiniol's Hostel: The Common Room' (1896).

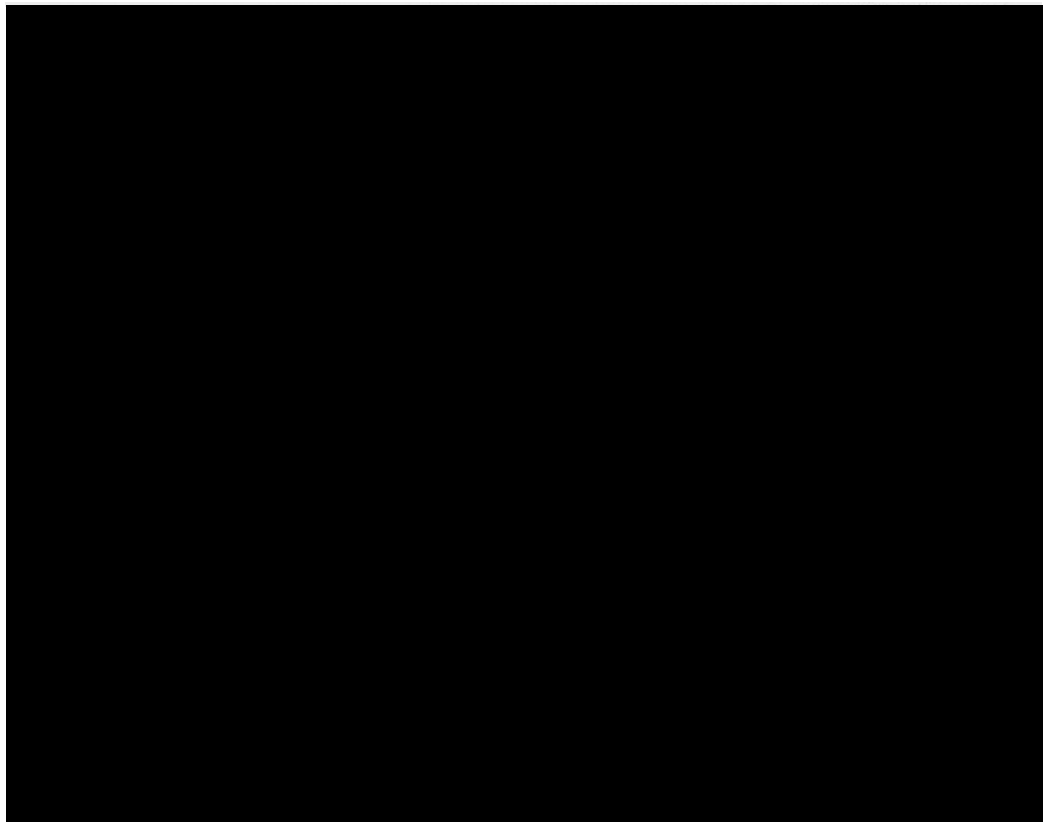


Fig. 7.8. 'St Deiniol's Hostel: The Dining Room' (1896).

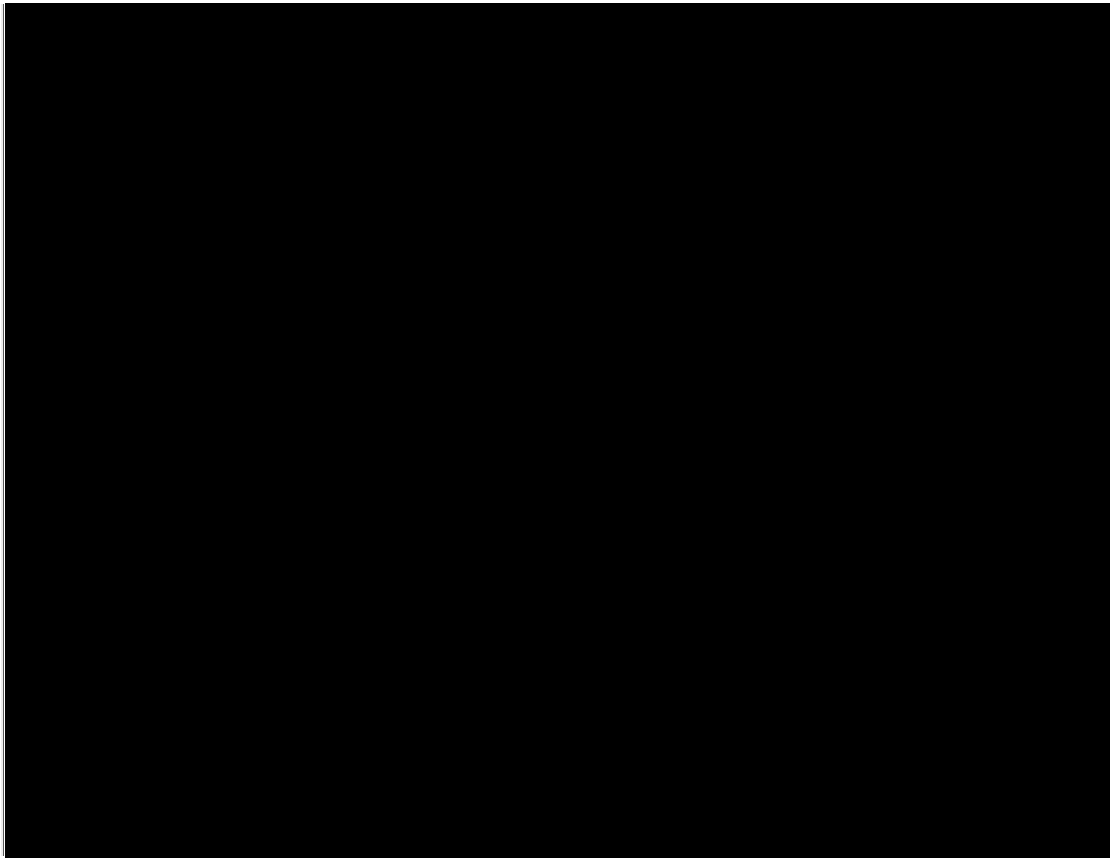


Fig. 7.9. 'St Deiniol's Hostel: The Prayer Room' (1896).

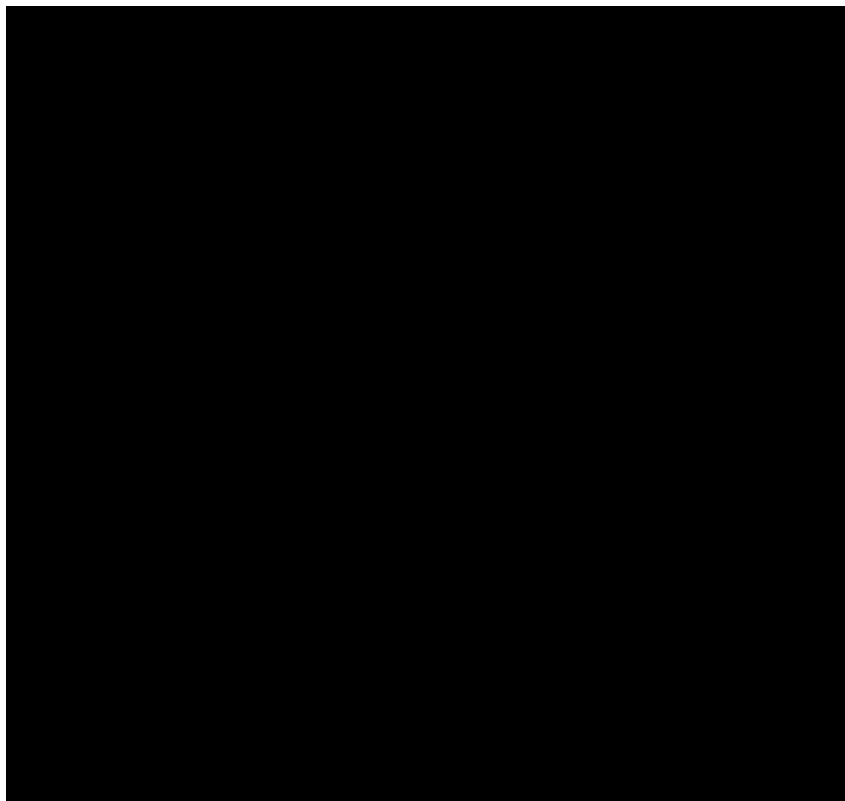


Fig. 7.10. 'St Deiniol's Library: The Warden's Room' (1896).