

THE DEEPER TIDE

STAFF CORRESPONDENCE FROM ENGLAND

THE land question in England seems to the impressionistic observer to be a vital one. But it certainly is a vexing and a complex one. In a new country like ours the system of land tenure is of the utmost simplicity. All land is freehold—that is, the owner possesses it absolutely, in fee simple. When it is sold, the title passes unhampered and unimpaired, and in perpetuity. And the owner of a house or building almost universally owns the land on which it stands. It is true that in some cities, as in New York, a few buildings are on leasehold land, but the number is so small as merely to emphasize the extent of the contrary practice.

But in an old country, where land titles come down from feudal days, the matter is not so simple. All the land originally belonged to the King. He granted to his lords and barons large tracts of it, in consideration of which they owed him certain services, such as the providing of so many men to fight the King's battles. They in turn allotted certain portions of their land to their retainers in return for specified services, either such as a free man might render or such as were servile. In these two ways, speaking in the roughest sort of way, arose the forms of tenure known as freehold and copyhold. The latter form can no longer be created, but it still exists extensively, and the holder of such lands must still make certain real, or traditional and symbolical, payments to the descendant of an ancient manorial lord. For instance, the old law of copyhold tenure provided that on the death of the holder the lord of the manor might take the best beast on the lands as his own. This law has given rise within a very few years to an interesting case. On a piece of property near one of the big race-courses a corner of the land was copyhold, and that particular corner happened to contain the stables. During the racing season the owner died, and the lord of the manor descended upon the property and took the best beast it contained—a horse which had recently won the

Derby, the classic of English horse races. And he made good his right to the horse in the courts. The incident suggests some of the peculiarities of English land tenure.

In many other ways, unknown in a new country, titles are complicated and obscured, so that, in the words of a Parliamentary authority on the subject, "the laws relating to land are so complicated that only lawyers can understand them." An acquaintance of mine told me the other day that he recently bought a piece of land, in the deed of which a strip along one edge of the property was described as a *freeboard*. Having no idea what the term meant in such a connection, he hunted up authorities. The latest reference he could find to the subject was in a book written in Latin and published in the reign of Queen Anne. There he found that a *freeboard* was a strip just as wide as the distance a wounded stag could jump; on to this strip the owner of the neighboring land might follow wounded game. The stags have vanished with the years, but the freeboard remains, a vexation to both owners. Neither knows exactly what his rights are along this strip. It makes little difference while the land is agricultural, but if it should come to be closely built upon, annoying complications might arise. So the continuation of feudal ideas, terms, customs, and practices into a time when the reason for them—the feudal relationship of lord and vassal—has vanished, has made the question of land tenure not only an intricate one to comprehend, but a delicate one to touch. But the feudal idea has even more to answer for than this.

In the old days much of the land was common land, to which all the people of the community had access for the pasturage of their animals, for the cutting of timber for fuel and repairs, and for other similar purposes. It is reckoned that until the thirteenth century two-thirds of the land in England was common land. But in 1235 the practice of inclosing common land by individual landlords began to be legalized

by general statute. For centuries this acquisition by landlords of the lands to which the people had formerly had free access went slowly on. In the reign of Queen Anne the practice arose of legalizing such inclosures by special acts, and in the next two hundred years more than 7,175,000 acres of common lands were thus inclosed. In 1845 a general Enclosure Act was passed, and in the next twenty-four years 614,800 acres passed from common use into individual possession. This custom of inclosure has been condemned by many as an invasion of the rights of the common people. John Stuart Mill said, "I confess that I cannot speak of the existing practice of dividing the common lands among the landlords by any gentler name than robbery—robbery of the poor." The practice, probably not unassisted by other causes and tendencies, built up great estates, and tended to destroy the old race of yeomen who used to cultivate their own land. It has made England a land of landlords and tenants, and, in the opinion of many students, has done more than anything else to create the problem of pauperism with which England is constantly seeking to deal in its Poor Law.

In 1876 a census of the landowners in the United Kingdom was made by order of the House of Lords. The census was not accurately made, many owners being counted two, three, four, even eleven times, if they owned property in different parts of the country. In many other ways the figures were carelessly prepared, so that they tended to show that land was more widely distributed than was actually the case. Careful analysis of the figures in this census by several students of the subject, making due allowance for such inaccuracies, tends to show, in the words of one, that "a landed aristocracy, consisting of about 2,250 persons, own together nearly half the inclosed land in England and Wales." It is also calculated that the owners of more than one acre in England and Wales were not more numerous than from 150,000 to 166,000. Nine-tenths of Scotland, it is claimed, were owned by 1,700 persons, and two-thirds of Ireland by 1,942 persons. The members of the House of Lords, according to the census, owned over 15,000,000 acres, out of a total in the United Kingdom of

not quite 78,000,000 acres. "The overwhelming majority of the people," says another writer, "do not possess a square inch of the soil of their native country, and are simply tenants-at-will and residents on sufferance and not by right."

Here is a condition which it needs no theorizing to prove unjust. Such a distribution of wealth—especially of natural wealth, the title to which arises in the vast majority of cases from no expenditure of effort on the part of the owner, but from the accident of heredity—cannot but exalt the rich and debase the poor. It must constitute a national problem whose solution is vital to the nation's continued well-being. In my limited space, and more especially with the cursory study that I have been able to give it, I can only present the problem seen, as it were, "by flashes of lightning," or rather by the intermittent gleams of the glowworm. But that it is a vital problem for England I firmly believe. That it is *the* problem of England I strongly suspect.

And it is this problem which the most important and most controverted part of Mr. Lloyd-George's Budget attacks. Not with any attempt at a complete solution, not even perhaps with an entire consciousness of whither his proposals really tend, but in a tentative and modest endeavor to correct some of the injustice inherent in present conditions.

Mr. Lloyd-George's land proposals are five, of which the first is a tax of twenty per cent on the unearned increment of land. Unearned increment is an unwieldy phrase, but it means a very real and simple thing. Everybody knows that the value of land in or near a city or town increases, whether the owner does anything to improve it or not. The mere fact that it lies in a growing part of the community, where population is increasing and business is developing, raises the value of the land, sometimes steadily, sometimes by leaps and bounds. If you own a piece of land on a business street, and a fine building or two goes up near it, so also goes up the price of your property. If your land, entirely undeveloped, lies on the outskirts of the town, and the town grows out to and takes it in, up jump your values. The incident is of every-

day occurrence, the fact of elementary simplicity. The crucial point about it is that the value increases, not because of anything that you, the owner, have done, but because of things that your neighbors and the community have done. This increase in value due to the growth of the community and the enterprise of the landowner's neighbors is the unearned increment. The landowner has done nothing to create it but sit still and watch it grow.

"Very well," says the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "since the community creates this value, and without the community it would not exist, let the community take a part of it for its needs. Let us say one-fifth, or twenty per cent—surely a modest proportion of the value of which the community creates *all*. The tax shall be collected when the land is sold, when it passes into other hands at death, and when a lease of the land is granted to another. Corporations, which do not die, shall pay the tax every fifteen years."

Let us take an example or two of the values which the community creates for the landowner who simply "sits tight," or, to be a little more American, "stands pat." The examples are Mr. Lloyd-George's:

Not so many years ago, between the Lea and the Thames, you had hundreds of acres of land which was not very useful even for agricultural purposes. In the main it was a sodden marsh. The commerce and the trade of London increased under free trade, the tonnage of your shipping went up by hundreds of thousands of tons and by millions; labor was attracted from all parts of the country to cope with all the trade and business done there.

What happened? There was no housing accommodation. The East End of London became overcrowded, and the population overflowed. That was the opportunity of the owners of the marsh. All that land became valuable building land, and land which used to be rented at \$10 to \$15 an acre has been selling within the last few years at \$10,000 an acre, \$15,000 an acre, \$30,000 an acre, \$40,000 an acre. Who created that increment? Who made that golden swamp? Was it the landlord? Was it his energy? Was it his brains—a very bad lookout for the place if it were. Was it his forethought? It was purely the combined efforts of all the people engaged in the trade and commerce of the Port of London—trader, merchant, shipowner, dock laborer, workman—everybody except the landlord. Now, you follow that

transaction. Land worth \$10 or \$15 an acre running up to tens of thousands.

Take cases where the value of land has gone up in the course, perhaps, of a couple of years through a new tramway or a new railway being opened. Golder's Green is a case in point. A few years ago there was a plot of land there which was sold at \$800. Last year I went and opened a tube railway there. What was the result? This year that very piece of land has been sold for \$10,500—\$800 before the railway was opened—before I went there—\$10,500 now. . . .

Any one who has ever owned land, or known those who have, in a growing community, can supply examples from his own experience.

Let it be noted that the Chancellor proposes to start from the present moment with his unearned increment tax. He says to the landowner: "You may keep every penny that the community has made for you in the past; but from now on you may keep only four-fifths of what the community makes for you—the other fifth the community will take for the common use."

This principle leads naturally to Mr. Lloyd-George's second proposal—for an official valuation of all the lands in the United Kingdom. Such a valuation is essential for the determination of the unearned increment, and of another tax which we shall consider in a moment. The effect of this provision will be to make a new Domesday Book, in which will be written down the site value of every piece of land in the four kingdoms. The site value of the land is the value which it possesses just because it is a piece of plain land situated just where it is. Site value takes no account of improvements, buildings or other structures, timber or other growing things. It represents the amount which the fee simple of the piece of property, divested of all such improvements, might be expected to bring if sold in the open market by a willing seller.

The new Domesday Book, which such a valuation will create, will be of the greatest utility, not only for the purposes of the new taxation, but for local rating, and because it will show the whole country just what is the actual value of its greatest natural resource and in whose hands it is held. It will be an accurate register of

the present distribution of natural wealth. It will perhaps reveal conditions of which the English people are only dimly conscious, and will conceivably disclose that the concentration of landed wealth in a few hands is more pronounced than even close students of the subject have realized. Perhaps it will reveal just the opposite condition—but it does not seem likely. It is asserted, with a good deal of plausibility, that the strongest opposition on the part of landowners is to this provision of the Budget. They do not want, it is said, the public to know what land they own and what it is really worth.

The third proposal of Mr. Lloyd-George is for a tax of a halfpenny in the pound (roughly, two-fifths of one per cent) on the value of undeveloped land, "of land which is not used to the best advantage." This will not seem a very revolutionary proposal to America, where almost universally, I believe, undeveloped land is taxed. At any rate, I know that just before I left home I paid a tax on a modest piece of land which I had just bought—for a home some day—not at the rate of two-fifths of one per cent, but at the rate of two per cent, at least, on the true value of it. And the little piece is as undeveloped as any land can be. But in England land in towns which is unbuilt upon is taxed hardly at all. In fact, even unoccupied houses are untaxed. (From this proposed tax, and the unearned increment tax as well, agricultural land is to be exempt, so we will ignore such land in considering the subject.) As a result we have such anomalies as these:

In London, Devonshire House, its grounds and garden, occupy 163,000 square feet. Its taxed value is \$20,840. The block just across the street, on which stand the Berkeley Hotel and other buildings (area about 153,000 square feet) is taxed on a valuation of \$217,850. The Ritz Hotel, just across Piccadilly, occupies an area of 26,000 square feet and is taxed on \$85,420; Lansdowne House, its garden and grounds, occupy 93,000 square feet and are taxed on \$12,500. Of course there is a difference in the values of the buildings on the plots here compared, but even when allowances are made for these differences in the values of improvements, the discrimination in favor of unimproved land is apparent. The present

system penalizes development, puts a premium on undevelopment.

On this point Mr. Lloyd-George has said:

The owner of valuable land which is required, or likely in the near future to be required, for building purposes, who contents himself with an income therefrom wholly incommensurate with the capital value of the land in the hope of recouping himself ultimately in the shape of an increased price, is in a similar position to the investor in securities who reinvests the greater part of his dividends; but, while the latter is required to pay income tax both upon the portion of the dividends enjoyed and also upon the portion reinvested, the former escapes taxation upon his accumulating capital altogether, and this although the latter by his self-denial is increasing the wealth of the community, while the former, by withholding from the market land which is required for housing or industry, is creating a speculative inflation of values which is socially mischievous.

It seems a simple and not too voracious proposal. If you will not use your land, and prefer to hold it "for the rise," or for your own pleasure, you must pay the community a very modest compensation for the privilege. For, after all, land, even when undeveloped, is property, and profits like other property from the expenditures which the taxpayers of the community make for the common good.

The fourth proposal relates to leaseholds. And here we enter upon a system practically unknown in the United States, except here and there in a few of the larger cities.

"You have a system in this country," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "which is not tolerated in any other country in the world except, I believe, Turkey—the system whereby landlords take advantage of the fact that they have got complete control over the land to let it for a term of years. Spend money upon it in building, in developing it, in improving the buildings, and year by year the value passes into the pockets of the landlord, and at the end of sixty, seventy, eighty, or ninety years the whole of it passes away to the pockets of a man who never spent a penny upon it."

The system is this: In the vast number of cases you do not own the land on which you build. You lease the land from the landlord for from sixty to one hundred years, pay him an annual ground rent, erect your building, and, when the lease expires, everything you have built on the land belongs to him. Leases differ, of course, in

their provisions, but in some of them it is stipulated that the buildings put upon the land shall be of a certain size and cost, and that they shall be handed over to the landlord on the termination of the lease in good tenable repair and free from encumbrances. If the tenant, at the expiration of his lease, wishes to renew it, he must pay a fine or premium, in addition, usually, to an increased rental. Let us consider a typical case, which Mr. Lloyd-George describes graphically:

There is the famous Gorringe case. In that case advantage was taken of the fact that a man had built up a great business. They say: "Here you are, you have built up a great business here; you cannot take it away; you cannot move to other premises because your trade and good-will are here; your lease is coming to an end, and we decline to renew it except on the most oppressive terms." The Gorringe case is a very famous case. It was the case of the Duke of Westminster. Oh, these dukes—how they harass us!

Mr. Gorringe had got a lease of the premises at a few hundred pounds a year ground rent. He built up a great business. He was a very able business man, and, when the end of the lease came, he went to the Duke of Westminster, and he said, "Will you renew my lease? I want to carry on my business here." He said, "Oh, yes, I will; but I will do it on condition that the few hundreds a year you pay for ground rent shall in the future be \$20,000 a year." In addition to that he had to pay a fine—a fine, mind you!—of \$250,000, and he had to build up huge premises at enormous expense according to plans submitted to the Duke of Westminster. All I can say is this—if it is confiscation and robbery for us to say to that Duke that, being in need of money for public purposes, we will take ten per cent of all you have got for that purpose, what would you call *his* taking nine-tenths from Mr. Gorringe?

For that is the proposal of the Budget—a tax of ten per cent on the benefit accruing to the landowner at the conclusion of a lease.

The system is well-nigh universal. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that London is built on leasehold ground. The very hotel in which I write stands on land belonging to the Duke of Bedford, whose land, I read in a year-book, "extends, with here and there a slight break, from the Strand to the district between Euston Station and the Hampstead Road. It includes Covent Garden Market—which yields a clear income of over \$100,000

per annum—and Bedford, Woburn, Bloomsbury, and Russell Squares. It runs along Southampton Row, New Oxford Street, and a good way up the Tottenham Court Road. The late Duke once referred to himself as being able to meet the agricultural depression only by being 'the fortunate possessor of a few lodging-houses in Bloomsbury.'"

Of course the ground rents are smaller than they probably would be if the landlord were not to have all the improvements at the end of the lease; but the conviction seems to be so widespread as to be almost universal (except perhaps among the landlords) that under the leasehold system the landlord gets all the fat, the tenant all the lean. Certainly the tenant takes all the risk, does all the work, expends all the effort, thought, and capital, while the landlord sits still, receives the income, and in the end opens his granaries to the harvest of augmented value.

And to the landlord says Mr. Lloyd-George: "We want a tithe of the harvest which is reaped for you. Your tenants and the community have sown, watered, tended, and reaped for you: give us a tenth of the increase for the common use."

The last proposal of the Budget in relation to land is a tax of five per cent on the royalties which the landlord receives from mines on his land. Let me once more quote from Mr. Lloyd-George (if I seem to draw too much from one source, remember it is his Budget, and he should best know how to describe and to justify it):

At the present moment the South Wales coal-field pays a million and a half [seven and a half million dollars] per annum to just a few landlords, and hundreds of thousands in ground rents. Let me give you just one or two figures which will show what is done there. You get, first of all, land not very rich, agricultural land, rather poor agricultural land—and they discover coal there. The landlord leases the property to somebody who has the necessary enterprise and capital for purposes of development. The landlord himself does not sink any capital in these properties. It is only in very rare exceptions that you find it. There are just a few. Somebody else works it, somebody else faces the risk of a loss, and the landlord takes sixpence a ton in the way of royalties. Then you come to the surface. You must employ workmen for the purpose of carrying on your mining operations, and the workmen

must have homes. So they start building, and the landlord then says, "Yes, certainly, by all means you may build, but you have got to pay a ground rent," and there is land now leased in these valleys in South Wales for which, though even within living memory (it may be only a few years ago in some cases) it produced only 25 cents an acre, the landlord is getting \$150 and \$200 per acre per annum, simply for the permission to build a few cottages upon it. They are able to build on lease, and in about sixty years the whole of this land will fall into the landlord's hands.

There was a case given to me from South Wales the other day, of a company which had sunk a good deal of money in mining operations, and they sent me their balance-sheet. I find their profits are \$15,000 per annum—the profits of last year, I won't say per annum—and what do you think they paid to the landlords in royalties? \$53,000. This company paid \$17,500 in rates, they made a profit of \$15,000, and the landlords got \$53,000—more than the profits and the rates together—and yet they do not contribute a penny to the rates of the district.

So the Chancellor says to the mine landlord: "You are making great profits, without a stroke of labor, or a moment of thought, or a particle of risk, just out of natural wealth which happens to be upon or rather beneath land which you happen to own. Give us a twentieth of the income which you have acquired so easily from the common store of natural wealth, that we may use it for the common good."

The objections to the land tax which are brought by the opponents of the Budget may be divided into two classes: those which are based on a fundamental principle, and those which relate to method. Lord Lansdowne, in moving the rejection of the Finance Bill in the House of Lords, summed up the objections as follows:

We object to these taxes, first, because they are unproductive for present purposes; secondly, because they tax people on what they have not got; thirdly, because they are cumulative and tax the same people over and over again; fourthly, because they single out for specially severe treatment a class that does not merit it; fifthly, because they fetter and obstruct the land market; and, sixthly, because they are based on a Socialistic fallacy, on which you are acting, but which you have not the courage to avow.

His sixth objection is the one which is based on a principle. It is asserted that

the land taxes of Mr. Lloyd-George have for their end and aim the nationalization of the land, which is a doctrine of the Socialists; it is therefore unsound, as all Socialistic doctrine is unsound. This contention was amplified by Lord Lansdowne in the statement: "There is only one justification, so far as I can understand the matter, for these proposals, and that is a justification which noble lords on that bench opposite have not the courage to avow. These taxes are justifiable if you believe that land is national property, and that it should be the business of Parliament to nationalize the land of the United Kingdom."

On the other hand, it is contended that the taxes are unfair to the landowners, and unworkable in practice. To again quote Lord Lansdowne:

You have singled out for specially severe financial treatment a form of wealth which is derived from an enterprise in which the profits are small and uncertain—an enterprise which is only just recovering from a very serious crisis, an enterprise which fills relatively a much smaller place in the wealth of the country than it did forty or fifty years ago. It is, moreover, an enterprise which, as we now know, and as his Majesty's Ministers frankly admit, has for years past been paying, in consequence of the manner in which it has been assessed for income tax, a great deal more into the Exchequer than it could reasonably be expected to pay. So that there can be no doubt "these rapacious landowners," who have monopolized so much power in the political system of this country, have, after all, really been the sufferers and victims rather than the occasion of suffering to others. We ask, and I think we are entitled to ask, what discredit, in your opinion, attaches to the ownership of land that you single us out for treatment of this kind?

It is asserted that the valuation proposals of the Budget cannot be satisfactorily carried out because "the complicated process of reducing land to naked site value as proposed by . . . the bill is ridiculous. At the best it would require most difficult calculation and be a cause of endless dispute and litigation. . . . The bill, as it stands, practically proposes to set up in this country two distinct and different systems of valuation side by side, namely, the valuation upon the annual basis for local rates which has existed for centuries, and a new valuation upon capital basis for national revenue. I do not believe there is a country in the

world which has these two systems in operation at the same time. . . ."

It is contended that if the unearned increment in land is to be taxed, there should be equally taxed the unearned increment in other property, such as stocks and bonds, old furniture, jewelry, paintings, and similar possessions. It is asserted that the proposal to tax the benefit accruing to the landowner at the conclusion of a lease is "to confiscate a large percentage of the profit which was clearly in the contemplation of both parties to the contract," and it is said that "such a disability attaches to no other lawful transaction."

These are some of the arguments which are officially presented against the Lloyd-George land taxes. In private conversation the view is further advanced that, in a country where the conditions of land tenure are so complicated by traditions and the overlapping of custom and precedent for hundreds of years, it is no light matter to interfere with land values and the rights of ownership. Just the other day it was told me, though without the strict accuracy of the story being vouched for, that a land lease originally made for one thousand years had recently expired, and had been renewed by the original parties to the lease. This paradoxical statement was made clear by the further explanation that the parties to the lease were the Crown and the Dean and Clergy of Westminster. Obviously these two parties were, in a sense, artificial persons whose individuality could not be altered by even the passing of ten centuries. If the story is not true, it ought to be, for it throws an informing light upon the conditions which surround and involve land tenure in England. Evidently the problems of landownership in a country where such an occurrence is possible are not to be solved out of hand; but perhaps not so obviously, though certainly no less truly, I may be permitted to add from my own conviction that even the Gordian knot of tradition and the hoary years should not be sacred from the keen blade of right and justice.

I have intimated that the question of the land taxes of Mr. Lloyd-George's Budget seems to be the fundamental one in this election, but I must confess that this question is almost inextricably entwined with that of the treatment of the Finance Bill by the House of Lords.

The following figures will give some indication of why this is true. On the final division in the House of Lords, 360 peers (including those who were paired) voted against the Budget. These 360 peers own 10,078,979 acres out of a total of 77,683,084 acres in the British Isles. Among them were twenty-one dukes, who own 3,717,169 acres. I confess that these figures come from a partisan source, so that I do not vouch for their accuracy; but an equally partisan newspaper on the other side credits the twenty-seven dukes of England with the ownership of 4,239,453 acres.

The question is really a double one—the power and influence of a privileged class both in the economic and the political field. Shall the great landowners have a special privilege in the economic world? and, Shall the hereditary class have a special privilege in the political field? The two questions can hardly be separated, but it seems to me that the economic one is the more important. I conceive, therefore, that the land tax proposals of Mr. Lloyd-George constitute the most vital and fundamental question of the present election, because they embody, though perhaps in a fragmentary and merely tentative way, an eternal principle. That principle is that the only natural right to property is that which arises from labor. Its corollary, that all the natural resources of a country belong naturally and rightfully to the whole people, is the doctrine which informs the Lloyd-George proposals and gives them a sound basis of justice. As it seems to me, the movement which the Lloyd-George Budget represents is a movement which has a close parallel in the United States. This parallel I shall refer to again in a later article.

HAROLD J. HOWLAND.

GLADSTONE THE MAN

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF HIS BIRTH

BY JAMES BRYCE

AMONG those who fill the eye and win the applause of their contemporaries there are none who so quickly pass into oblivion as the men of affairs, and especially the Parliamentary politicians. Even those statesmen who are in their lifetime most conspicuous and who most direct the march of events pass out of our thoughts as soon as their activity has ceased. Nothing is so dead as are the details of dead politics; nothing becomes after a while more uninteresting, except of course to the historical specialist, than the record of legislative debates and cabinet intrigues and elections, unless in the rare cases when an event proves to have marked a turning-point in history and to have been followed by results of enduring significance. Thus there have been in each age of the world extremely few statesmen whose characters and careers are of permanent interest to the world at large. The great poet lives forever, and often gains a far wider admiration from posterity than his own generation gave him. The great artist's fame is limited only by the perishable nature of the material in which he has worked. But the administrator in State or Church, the party leader, the commander in war by land or sea, has each of them a short lease of glory. It is only a very few of the most eminent, men associated with events of world magnitude or whose characters have had some very striking and impressive personal quality, who escape forgetfulness.

Few, accordingly, are the European statesmen of the nineteenth century who are likely to be figures still interesting outside their respective countries in the middle of the twentieth. Besides Napoleon Bonaparte and Talleyrand and Pitt and Fox and Wellington the list would include Cavour and Kossuth and Mazzini and Garibaldi and Bismarck, with possibly two or three others of less evident claims. It is a small list for a century full of great events, even if the more doubtful names

are admitted. But to this list Mr. Gladstone would certainly belong. His career was one of almost unexampled length. He exerted an almost unexampled influence within his own nation, and he became a figure of more than British importance through the fact that on several occasions his action had a permanently decisive effect on the politics of Europe.

It is not, however, of Mr. Gladstone's political career that I propose to speak here and now on the occasion of his centenary. Much of that career is still matter of party controversy in England, and could not be discussed without opening up partisan issues. All I seek to do is to present a view of him as a Man, a powerful and striking personality, unlike anybody else in his own time or for a long while before, one who was just as interesting in private as in public, and whose qualities deserve to be recorded in order that they may be known to those in the next generation, who, in so often meeting his name in the annals of our time, will ask, "What manner of man was he?"

He was born in that year 1809 which gave to the United States, together with Oliver Wendell Holmes and Edgar Allan Poe, the great President whose ever-glorious memory was celebrated on the 12th of February last, Abraham Lincoln; which gave Mendelssohn to Germany; and which gave to Britain Alfred Tennyson, our greatest poet since Wordsworth, and Charles Darwin, one of the greatest men of science since Isaac Newton.

Gladstone died in May, 1898, having resigned his post as Prime Minister and retired from public life in March, 1894. He had sat in Parliament for sixty-four years, and had been four times First Minister of the Crown. Affairs of state were by no means the only things that occupied his incessantly active and versatile mind. But, as it was by them that he was chiefly known, it is with them that I will begin.