

**AT HAWARDEN WITH MR.  
GLADSTONE: AND OTHER  
TRANSATLANTIC  
EXPERIENCES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649066643

At Hawarden with Mr. Gladstone: And Other Transatlantic Experiences by William H. Rideing

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**WILLIAM H. RIDEING**

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With Mr. Gladstone

*AND OTHER  
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WILLIAM H. RIDEING

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NEW YORK: 46 EAST FOURTEENTH STREET  
THOMAS V. CROWELL & COMPANY  
BOSTON: 100 PURCHASE STREET

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## At Hawarden with Mr. Gladstone.

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IN reading a recent biography of Mr. Gladstone by George W. E. Russell, one is struck by the applicability to the household at Hawarden of the description given of the home life of the great statesman's father, Sir John Gladstone. "The house was, by all accounts, a home pre-eminently calculated to mould the thoughts and direct the course of an intelligent and receptive nature. There was the father's masterful will and keen perception, the sweetness and piety of the mother, wealth with all its substantial advantages and few of its mischiefs, a strong sense of the value of money, a rigid avoidance of extravagance and excess; everywhere a strenuous purpose



in life, constant employment, and concentrated ambition."

Nearly every word of that is true of the life at Hawarden to-day. The spirit that rules is the spirit of simplicity itself; not ascetic, not indifferent to the good things of the world, but alien alike to pomp, ceremony, and epicureanism. Time is held as a trust to be accounted for minute by minute. A wilful, purposeless idler, no matter what his rank, would find himself aloof and estranged as in few other places. Not the head of the house alone, but mother, sons, and daughters, following his example, find employment to fill the day from an early rising to an early bedtime. The extravagances of the London season and the supplementary splendors of the ordinary country house are shut out, and the days are ordered with as little ostentation and as much quiet benevolence and scrupulousness as in an ideal country parsonage.

This, however, must not be allowed to convey an impression of cheerlessness or the exclusion of natural interests of the worldly sort. You may hear in this household some profound theology, and scan horizons of philosophy which you may never reach ; you may hear more of the searchings of scholarship than the universities teach, and be led beyond your depth in political speculation : but you will also hear of the newest novel and the latest play, of pictures, travels, inventions, of all things not frivolous that ripple through the conversation of the hour. There is wine on the table at luncheon and at dinner, and after dinner there is music, of which Mr. Gladstone is a great lover. As for cheerfulness, Mr. Gladstone himself is full of gaiety in his moments of relaxation, and falsifies the familiar portraits of him, which represent him as being without the sense of humor. There are times when he has a boy's playfulness, and

then his eye dances with mischievous glee.

Entering the drawing-room after luncheon we came unexpectedly upon his little grandchild, not yet six years old, who was running about with bare feet. We had been talking about protection and free trade, and the representations made by the advocates of the McKinley tariff as to the condition of English workmen.

"There!" said Mr. Gladstone, as soon as he saw the child, his face gleaming at the mischief of the innuendo, "when you return to America you might say that in a free-trade country even the children of the moderately well-to-do go bare-footed."

Then, seriously, he added an affirmation of his belief that no country can be wholly prosperous at home, or entirely happy in its foreign relations, unless it is a free-trade country.

Hawarden is but a few miles from Chester, and a new railway leaves one