

MR. GLADSTONE ON ARMENIA.

To many sincere American minds to criticise any act of Mr. Gladstone is to tread upon the parlous verge of heresy. So broad has been his humanitarianism, so wide his culture and influence, that whatever he says or does carries weight wherever the English tongue is spoken. All civilization will applaud him for his abuse of the unspeakable Turk; for his declaration that the ravages upon the Armenian Christians are not the work of "the dangerous classes, but of the government in Constantinople and its agents."

Out of office, out of office, indeed, for the remainder of life, so has the weight of years fallen upon him, Mr. Gladstone is ready to read a resolution that "Her Majesty's Government will have the cordial support of the nation in any measure it may adopt" to secure reform for the Armenians. The resolution sufficiently is non-committal, "a moderate one," as Mr. Gladstone specified. In an address following its reading he showed himself less dispassionate. "We must not accept Turkish promises," said he. "We must not fear the word coercion. It is a word that is heartily appreciated in Constantinople."

Fancy Mr. Gladstone, were he Premier of Great Britain to-day, seeking to coerce the Turks in Constantinople, or the Turks in Armenia or any other hostile foe whose strength might annoy England. To placate, to smooth, ever has been his desire. Englishmen never can forget the slaughter of General Gordon. Quixotic chevalier though he may have been, he embodied the dominant force that all men admire, whether it comes to us in the athletes who fight in the ring for prizes, or in the chiefs who lead great armies to battle for noble cause and national rights. And Mr. Gladstone hemmed and hawed while El Mahdi's wild dervishes threatened Khartoum; was hemming and hawing yet, when the False Prophet's wild dervishes were tossing the brave English soldier's head from spear-point to spear-point, in proof of their contempt for all things English.

It is well for Mr. Gladstone to read his "moderate" resolution when butchery of Armenians is the reason of it. It has been aptly said by his enemies that his foreign policy consisted in not having any. Once he showed a glimpse of one by intemperate praise and words of admiration for the slave-holders who rebelled against the United States of America. And because of the good in him, Americans wonder if they are not wrong if they do not see him always as a grand old man upon a pinnacle. But people with memories will recall how Mr. Gladstone promised a policy of "Hands off" to Austria from the hustings in 1880, and a month later, when in office, apologized for the expression. The "Hands"—in Herzegovina—have ever since been "on."