

[Anon.], *The Gladstone Gas Company Prospectus: A Relic of the Midlothian Campaign, 1886* (Edinburgh, privately printed, 1886)

This brief satirical pamphlet was issued a year or so after Gladstone's third successful election campaign in Midlothian. As a privately printed work, it did not apparently circulate very widely and it is not present among the works in St Deiniol's Library. It does, however, show an interesting aspect of Victorian political literature and is a good example of the satirical pamphlets which were produced in large numbers during this period. Not all commentators regarded Gladstone and his policies favourably, and among these some were prepared to use a measure of sarcasm to support their arguments.

The pamphlet is modelled on the 'Victorian Limited Company' prospectus and had supposedly been found among the wastepaper of the Irish Office. This is obviously not true, and whoever wrote it has composed a lively and amusing piece of work of imagination.

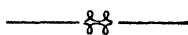
Gladstone's oratory, which was sometimes praised by contemporaries and also occasionally lauded by historians, was clearly not always highly thought of in his own day. Some contemporaries thought Gladstone had a tendency to make unnecessarily lengthy speeches.

We can assume that this document was written in response to the flight of the 'Hawarden Kite' in December 1885 and the General Election campaign of July 1886. The author of the pamphlet makes plain his opinion that Gladstone intended to sell out the Protestants of Ulster (and the British Empire as a whole) in favour of the Catholic Home Rulers. He is not prepared to pull any punches with argument.

Gladstone was only too well aware how badly his party had done in the recent election, retaining a mere 181 seats, in comparison with 314 on the Conservative side. Even with the Irish Nationalists retaining eighty-five seats, Gladstone was now leader of a minority party.



## The Gladstone Gas Company.



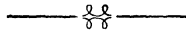
### ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following extraordinary document is supposed to have been ejected from the Irish Office among the waste paper clearance, at the time of the last change of administration. As is now well known the movement to float the Company proved abortive; so that interest in the Prospectus may be somewhat impaired by the lapse of time. It is thought, however, that the continuance of the struggle for the attainment of some of the purposes of the Company may still make it of interest to many readers. It has been for some time in the possession of the present holder; but, owing to a species of boycotting, he has hitherto been unable to give the public the benefit of it. It need only be added, that the Prospectus appears to have been drawn up during the period known as the last Midlothian Campaign.

*May 1887.*

# The Gladstone Gas Company.

UNLIMITED AND UNREDUCED.



*To be Incorporated under the Irish Acts 1886-87.*

Capital £200,000,000 British Sterling in 30,000,000  
Shares of various amounts.

*The First Issue is limited to £50,000,000.*

## Directors.

\*Right Hon. HAWARDEN CASTLE, M.P., *Chairman*.  
Right Hon. PHILOSOPHICUS RADICALIS, M.P., Coalcastle.  
Right Hon. HUGE GULLING HEDGER, M.P., Dunedin.  
Right Hon. EARL PINAFORE, K.G.  
Right Hon. Sir WILLIAM KINGSON BROWBEAT, M.P.  
Right Hon. PRIMROSE, EARL GOOSEBERRY.

\* Will join the Board after allotment.

## Bankers.

BANKS OF ESK, LEITH, AND ALMOND.

## Auditors.

MESSRS. GULLABLE BROTHERS & CO.

## Stockbrokers.

MESSRS. CAUCUS & WIREPULLER.

## Solicitor.

OFFICE SEEKER, Esq.

## Manager.

IRISH BLACKGUARD, Esq., Cork.

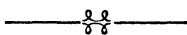
## Secretary.

HOMES TUSKER, Esq., Dunedin.

## Registered Office.

MACGREGOR'S BUILDINGS, MIDLOTHIAN.

## PROSPECTUS.



THIS COMPANY is promoted for the acquisition, as a going concern, of the well-known gas producing property called the GOM. The property is leasehold, and although seventy-seven years of the lease have already run, it is believed that the unexpired period will afford ample opportunity for production on an extended scale. The works are situated mainly in London, and near Chester; but it is one of the most valuable characteristics of this enterprise, that production can be carried on anywhere on the shortest notice. For example, the vendor has, on several occasions, while travelling between London and Edinburgh, supplied an extensive population all along the route, sometimes even when the train was moving. The lucrative nature of the business is well illustrated by the facts, that at every station where a stoppage was made enormous crowds were waiting for hours to get the small quantities of attenuated quality which could be supplied under these conditions; and that said crowds were so gratified with what they received, that they eagerly offered in exchange walking sticks, plaids, trousers, a tailor's goose, an old chair, and many other useful and equally ornamental articles.

The works have been in active operation for more than fifty years, during which period the production has been on a large and ever increasing scale. At present the supply appears to be practically inexhaustible. A temporary stoppage, which occurred some time ago, has been got over, and arrangements have been made which the Directors believe will prevent a recurrence of the accident.

The uses to which the Gas can be put are various. 1st, as an Illuminant, it is considered by many persons of liberal education as second to none. The degree of light given cannot be stated in candlepower, as it depends entirely on the

receptive powers of the persons using it. *N.B.*—It is specially adapted for people of weak sight.

2d. As a heat producer it is unequalled. It is a recognised fact that wherever this Gas is produced the mean temperature is perceptibly raised. This is observable not only among those who habitually use it, but even among persons who are prejudiced against it.

3d. As an Anæsthetic it is vastly more effective than Chloroform or Laughing Gas, at least in mental operations. Persons submitting to its effects are perfectly impervious to outside influences. Crowds of people thus operated on have been seen to stand for hours with open eyes and gaping mouths gazing at hotel windows, regardless of lashing rain or broiling sun, hunger or thirst, even when the Gas display was not in operation. Everyone who finds thinking a difficulty, reasoning weariness, and argument dull, should use this Gas, as he will find it so strengthen instilled ideas, and preconceived prejudices, as to make the thoughts, reasons and arguments of others run as harmlessly off him as water off a duck's back.

4th. As an Explosive, it greatly surpasses Gun Cotton or Dynamite. One charge has been known utterly to shatter a large ecclesiastical edifice; and, so alarmed were the friends of another similar establishment at the prospect of a repetition of the experiment, that 700,000 of them requested that they might not be subjected to its effects. Again, it was used for the purpose of improving some boggy land in the south and west of Ireland, when it occasioned a shock which extended through the length and breadth of the island, producing great distress and damage to an important section of the community, and raising a tidal wave which has since never ceased to trouble the western shores of Scotland. Again, a large party has been suddenly split into two or three portions, by the incautious use of the Gas; and the Promoters have reason to

believe that the recent failure of the Gas to utterly blow up a neighbouring island, was due not to any inefficiency or insufficiency of the Explosive, but to the interference of rival firms who introduced so much pure air into the receiver that the Gas was dissipated before it could be properly applied.

Several Contracts have been entered into, of which the following may be specified, viz. :—

1. With the **UNCROWNED KING OF IRELAND.**
2. With **O'DONOVAN ROSSA, U.S.A.**
3. With the **FENIAN BROTHERHOOD.**
4. With the **SKIRMISHING FUND.**
5. With the **NATIONAL LEAGUE.**
6. With the **BOYCOTTERS.**

Many others have been made which it is desirable not to mention ; but Subscribers are requested to show confidence in the Promoters, and to wait patiently for the result, when they shall see what they shall see. Faith is a religious principle.

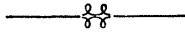
It is proposed that several existing contracts shall be cancelled, for example

1. With the **PROVINCE OF ULSTER.**
2. With the **PROTESTANTS OF IRELAND.**
3. With the **BRITISH TAXPAYERS.**
4. With the **IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.**
5. With **JUSTICE, MERCY, HONOUR & COMPANY.**
6. With the **PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY.**

The liability of Members will be limited to the acceptance of consignments of the Gas when delivered. The number of Shares has been fixed at 30,000,000, as it is believed that the whole population of Great Britain is seriously interested in the Scheme.

Application for a settlement and quotation will be made in due course, and it is expected that a settlement at least will be obtained.

## SCIENTIFIC REPORTS



THE volatile nature of the Gas is sufficiently shown by the following extract from a Report supplied by CECIL SALISBURY, Esq., Fellow of the Antiquarian Society :—

‘ A large quantity of the Gladstone Gas has been subjected by me to critical analysis, in order to discover its essential properties. As yet, however, I have entirely failed, as, when the extraneous elements were eliminated, I have invariably been surprised to find that no residuum was left.’

The following give different manifestations of its properties :—

MR CAVENDISH HARTINGTON (Royal Geographical Society) writes—

‘ While experimenting with a very small quantity of the Gas, with the object of employing it for harmless purposes, I was suddenly alarmed by a terrific explosion, which hurled me, along with 669 other persons, with great precipitation from the House in which we were assembled.’

MR J. C. LAIN (Statistical Society) says :—

‘ A considerable amount of the currency of the British Empire having been subjected to the influence of the Gas, I can testify that its scouring properties are so great that, unless it be used in microscopic quantities, there is great danger of the entire destruction of the precious metals brought within the range of its application.’

- p. 223, l. 29: *Mr T. P. O'Connor*: see T. P. O'Connor, *Gladstone's House of Commons*, pp. 36–98 in this volume.
- p. 223, ll. 38–9: *Mr O'Brien*: William O'Brien (1852–1928), journalist and Irish Nationalist, MP from 1883 to 1914.
- p. 224, l. 2: *the 'United Ireland'*: Irish newspaper supporting the Home Rule Party.
- p. 224, l. 15: *Mr Butt*: Isaac Butt (1813–79), Professor of Political Economy at Trinity College, Dublin (1836–41) and a 'Liberal Conservative' MP from 1852 to 1869. In 1870 he founded the Home Rule Party and was an MP for it (1870–9). He was replaced by Parnell as leader of the Home Rule Party in 1878.
- p. 225, l. 5: *Mr Trevelyan*: George Otto Trevelyan (1838–1928), MP Tynemouth.
- p. 225, l. 17: *Mr Justin M'Carthy*: see Justin McCarthy, 'William Ewart Gladstone', pp. 383–403 in this volume.
- p. 226, l. 8: *combined Franchise and Redistribution Bill*: Gladstone's government had introduced two separate bills in 1884.
- p. 228, l. 9: *Sir Wilfrid and Professor Thorold Rogers*: Sir Wilfrid is probably Sir Wilfrid Lawson (1829–1906), Liberal politician and temperance campaigner. He supported free trade, peace and Irish Home Rule. In 1877 he was the only English MP to vote in favour of a motion calling for it. Thorold Rogers (1823–1900), political economist and politician. He was an MP between 1880 and 1886.
- p. 228, l. 18: *Pall Mall Gazette*, see above, p. 447.
- p. 230, l. 5: *Lord Hartington*, see above, p. 442.
- p. 230, l. 9: *the Maamtrasna disclosures*: This refers to an Irish murder case.
- p. 230, ll. 39–40: *Lord Wolseley up the Nile to fish out General Gordon*: A British force under Wolseley's command had been sent to rescue Gordon and his force from Khartoum.
- p. 231, l. 4: *Principal Rainy*: Robert Rainy (1820–1906), United Free Church of Scotland minister and Principal of New College, Edinburgh.
- p. 231, l. 5: *Dr Hutton*: George Clark Hutton (1825–1908), Free Church of Scotland minister. An evangelical preacher and strong anti-establishmentarian, he was also a friend of Gladstone.
- p. 231, l. 21: *Professor Blackie*: John Stuart Blackie (1809–95), liberal scholar of Greek.
- p. 231, ll. 23–4: *Professor Donaldson*: James Donaldson (1831–1915), also a liberal classical scholar.

**[Anon.], *The Gladstone Gas Company Prospectus***

- p. 236, l. 8: *Right Hon. HAWARDEN CASTLE, M.P.*: reference to Gladstone.

- p. 236, l. 9: *Right Hon. PHILOSOPHICUS RADICALIS, M.P.*: probably John Morley, MP for Newcastle.
- p. 236, l. 10: *Right Hon. HUGE GULLING HEDGER, M.P.*: probably Gladstone himself.
- p. 236, l. 11: *Right Hon. EARL PINAFORE, M.P.*: It is uncertain who this was.
- p. 236, l. 12: *Right Hon. Sir WILLIAM KINGSTON BROWBEAT, M.P.*: Sir William Harcourt.
- p. 236, l. 13: *Right Hon. PRIMROSE, EARL GOOSEBERRY*: a reference to the Earl of Rosebery.
- p. 237, ll. 2–3: *the GOM*: a reference to Gladstone: ‘Grand Old Man’.
- p. 239, l. 8: *the UNCROWNED KING OF IRELAND*: a common reference to Charles Stewart Parnell.
- p. 240, l. 2: *CECIL SALISBURY*: Marquess of Salisbury.
- p. 240, l. 12: *Mr CAVENDISH HARTINGDON*: Marquess of Hartington.
- p. 240, l. 20: *Mr J. C. LAIN*: Joseph Chamberlain.

### Thomas Webb, *The Irish Question*

- p. 245, ll. 9–10: *the Convention Parliament of 1689*: This refers to the convention (not strictly a parliament) which met in February 1689, in order to make arrangements for the future after the ‘glorious revolution’.
- p. 246, l. 12: *Machiavelli or a Montesquieu*: Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Italian political philosopher. Charles Louis de Secondat (Montesquieu) (1689–1755), French political philosopher.
- p. 247, ll. 8–9: *another Chapter of Autobiography*: Gladstone’s *A Chapter of Autobiography* (1868).
- p. 248, ll. 21–22: *the History of an Idea*: W. E. Gladstone, *The Irish Question: (1) History of an Idea, (2) Lessons of the Election* (1886).
- p. 248, l. 27: *Mr Parnell*: see above, p. 443.
- p. 248, ll. 28–9: *Autobiography of Wolfe Tone*: Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763–98), Irish Nationalist.
- p. 248, l. 29: *Mr Davitt*: Michael Davitt (1846–1906), leader of the Irish Land League.
- p. 248, l. 30: *Mr Carey*: probably James Carey.
- p. 252, ll. 2–3: *Mr Campbell-Bannerman*: Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1836–1908), Liberal. Held junior offices (1871–4, 1880–4). Chief Secretary for Ireland (1884–5), Secretary for War (1886, 1892–5). He was Prime Minister from 1905 to 1908.
- p. 252, l. 3: *Sir William Harcourt*: see above, p. 442.
- p. 252, l. 4: *Mr Stansfeld*: James Stansfeld (1820–98). President of the Local Government Board (1871–4, 1886).