



## On Books and the Housing of Them

*William Ewart Gladstone*

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# On Books and the Housing of Them

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**On Books and the Housing of Them** William Ewart Gladstone

**William Ewart Gladstone's essay concerning the proper care and maintenance of large book collections is published here unabridged.**

Known in life as an avid reader and collector of old books, William Gladstone was moved to author this piece, which details how best to keep such a collection. Gladstone personally amassed about 32,000 books in his home at Hawarden Castle, which he had transferred to a public library during his old age. Part of a sizeable bequeathment in Gladstone's will paid for construction of a new library in the 1890s, which today bears his name.

A great believer in the power of knowledge and learning, William Gladstone was Prime Minister of Great Britain during the period in which the British Empire neared its height. Famous for his decades long rivalry with Benjamin Disraeli, with whom he would debate vigorously in the British Parliament, Gladstone is today celebrated as one of the finest Prime Ministers to ever assume office.

Today, Gladstone's Library is a tourist attraction situated at Hawarden in Flintshire, Wales. Together with its historical affinity with the British Prime Minister, the library is active in the local community, making much of its collection available to the public for perusal within the building and lending. The instructions found in this essay influence to this day the management of Gladstone's book collection.

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