

FRANCIS OTTIWELL ADAMS.

FRANCIS OTTIWELL ADAMS was born at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1825. He was educated at Rugby and Trinity College, Cambridge, called to the bar in 1852, and shortly afterwards entering the Diplomatic Service was appointed attaché at Stockholm in 1854. After filling posts at St.

* *Swiss Travel and Swiss Guide-Books*, p. 109.

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Petersburg, Washington, and Yeddo, he was promoted in 1872 to be Secretary of Embassy at Berlin, and while there was acting Chargé d'Affaires for some months in 1873 and 1874. At the end of 1874 he was transferred to Paris, and having been accredited Minister Plenipotentiary in the absence of the Ambassador, he acted in that capacity for various periods in each of the years from 1875 to 1881, when he was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Swiss Confederation. He was first British Delegate to the International Postal Congress at Paris in 1878 and the International Copyright Conference at Bern in 1884-85-86. He was created a C.B. in 1878 and subsequently K.C.M.G., and retired from the Diplomatic Service on a pension in 1888.

More than one of his old colleagues have told me that throughout the whole of Sir Francis' career he displayed the most untiring zeal and energy in his profession; but like much of the most important diplomatic work, what he accomplished was often of a kind which never came under the notice of the public. He possessed one of the most important qualities of a diplomatist, the power of viewing questions under discussion from an opposite standpoint to his own, and always seemed able to put himself in the place of those with whom he was endeavouring to transact affairs. He was singularly free from local or party prejudice; his thirty-four years of service in all parts of the world had made him a thorough cosmopolitan; and it was impossible to discuss any question in his presence without recognising his breadth of view, and noticing the impartiality with which he acknowledged the claims of those who held opinions entirely different from his own. It was the firm belief in his absolute fairness, and the instinctive knowledge that it was impossible to him to take a mean advantage, which gained for him the confidence of everyone with whom he came in contact during his diplomatic career. He was thus almost invariably able to settle a disputed point amongst his colleagues, or with the representatives of foreign governments, in a friendly informal way, without having recourse to official correspondence.

His wide sympathies led him to take a keen interest in the lives and surroundings of those whose country became his temporary home. After returning from Yeddo he wrote a 'History of Japan,' now out of print but still regarded as the standard work on the particular phases of history with which it deals; and in 1887 while British Minister at Bern he commenced to arrange with me the materials for 'The Swiss Confederation.'

There is certainly no post in Europe where a minister is brought so much in contact with officials who do not actually belong to the central government to which he is accredited. In other capitals a foreign representative has to deal almost exclusively with the Ministry or the Cabinet, but in Bern many questions arise which have to be referred to local officials in one or other of the twenty-two different cantons. And it can well be understood by anyone who ever met Sir Francis Adams, how his genuine kindness of manner at once won the hearts of the Swiss. 'Nous avons toujours regardé votre Ministre beaucoup plus

a late President of the Swiss Confederation has often remarked: a sentiment which thoroughly expresses the feelings with which Sir Francis was regarded by all sorts and conditions of the people. He was indeed as popular among the shrewd country-folk in the Oberland as among their representatives in the Palais Fédéral; and during the years he lived in their midst they would confide to him, with an absence of reserve rarely shown to a foreigner, their hopes and fears for the future and welfare of the little country they knew he loved so well.

In private life few men ever had such a wide circle of devoted friends as Sir Francis Adams. In Paris, at the Legation at Bern, and in later years at 18 Albemarle Street, he was surrounded by those who pursued many various callings in life, and who had perhaps little in common but the one firm bond which brought them together—the great esteem and regard they felt for their host. Many of those thirty odd years Sir Francis spent in the service of his country had been eventful ones. He had served in three of the greatest political centres of Europe, in St. Petersburg, in Berlin during the formation of the new Empire, and in Paris during Macmahon's presidency. He was a capital *raconteur*, and the various incidents of his wide travels possessed, as related by him, a great freshness and charm. His rooms were filled with many interesting souvenirs of his stay in foreign lands, each of which had some special history of its own.

It was in 1882 that Sir Francis first became acquainted with the High Alps; he ascended the Galenstock, crossed the Mönchjoch, and did many other excursions which were no mean performance for one who began his mountaineering career when nearly sixty years of age. In 1886 he was elected honorary member of the Alpine Club. He had the most intense delight in mountain scenery, and often referred with pleasure to the fact that from his windows at Bern the great peaks of the Oberland were constantly in sight. I well remember how he would rise from his writing-table in the Legation, and drawing aside the curtains gaze upon these snowclad giants in the starlight of a frosty winter's night; it was a picture of which he never seemed to tire. Not a year passed without his paying several visits to Grindelwald, where he was wont to speak of the Bär as his 'country house.' It was indeed pleasant to watch the eagerness with which one who had spent so many years at foreign courts and great capitals counted the days till it was time to start for that Oberland valley. And when the time came for Sir Francis to present his letters of recall, the thought that in the future he would be able to spend months instead of weeks in his favourite mountain haunts seemed in a measure to counter-balance those regrets everyone must feel at retiring from active service in a useful and honourable profession.

But this was not to be. During the first visit he paid to Grindelwald after resigning his post, Sir Francis returned to the Bär over-fatigued from an excursion and the following afternoon he passed quietly away.

was carried shoulder-high by some of the 'old guard' of the Oberland guides, many of whom had often accompanied Sir Francis among the mountains. His successor, Mr. Scott, C.B., the staff of his old legation, and some of his old colleagues and friends from Bern were present; the President of the Republic sent a representative, one of the greatest marks of respect it is possible for the Confederation to give and an honour they but rarely bestow. Many of the guides and country-folk, who will long remember Sir Francis' kindly greeting as he passed their châteaux, came to pay a last tribute of respect. Each one of the sad group who stood around that grave shared in the same sorrow, and the words with which Pfarrer Strasser concluded his funeral address found an answering echo in every heart, 'Edler Freund unseres Vaterlandes, treuer Freund unseres Thales, gut sollst du hier ruhen. . . . Dein Andenken lebt fort und fort in vielen treuen Herzen.'

C. D. C.

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