

Chas Francis Adams

J. W. O. Chas. Francis Adams

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My dear Sir William:

Time indeed passes with considerable rapidity and as one grows older, with increasing suggestiveness.

It will be six full weeks Tuesday next,--this being Saturday--since I landed in Boston on my return from my last visit to England. A week before I sailed, however, November 11th, you had prepared that elaborate and very kindly communication to the New York Nation which appeared in its issue of the 27th. You certainly gave me what is commercially known as a "first-class send-off." For this accept my thanks.

Since my return I have been in rather active negotiation with the authorities of your old University, the Johns Hopkins of Baltimore, looking to a repetition of these lectures as one of their courses of this winter. Nothing definite has yet come of it. I am, however, somewhat tempted to accept the proposal, should it reach me in proper form, in view of the obligation it would put upon me to work over my Oxford lectures and get them into a final and definitive shape. In their present form they do not quite satisfy me.

I was glad you accompanied your presentation of the speech in the original Latin with a translation; for

I can only say that on the occasion referred to I found myself somewhat deluged by Latinity, and was almost painfully reminded of how rusty my Latin had become.

Of this, by the way, I was still more forcibly reminded by a lapsus in my Oxford lectures, or in the language of Virgil:--

"Infandum, Regina, jubes renovare dolorem," which, translated, signifieth in this connection,--

"Doctor, let me confide to you my unspeakable mortification."

In the eyes of classical Oxford, I am no better than that eminent explorer, Dr. Cook, and stand convicted of the unpardonable. I have made not only a bit of bad Latinity, but a false quantity, two sins altogether unpardonable in the eyes of Oxford.

If you will turn to page 154² of my lectures you will see to what I refer, in the line there quoted from Lucan. I also enclose you herewith a copy of a recent letter which I have addressed to the authority in chief of your Clarendon Press at "Amen Corner", in which I set forth such extenuating circumstances as suggested themselves in excuse of my altogether unpardonable lapsus.

By the way, I have never received my degree. Perhaps, as in the case of Dr. Cook, it is proposed to withhold it for reasons above set forth. Nevertheless, if such is not the case, I would like to have it duly

Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victum Calvini

forwarded to me here, to place among my collection of similar honors conferred. Some day, if such a day ever comes, when you have nothing else to do, I should like to have you inform the proper authorities that the document, if forwarded, has not reached its destination.

I am now here with Mrs. Adams, settled down for the winter. Since I got home, I have been simply submerged by arrears which had accumulated during my two absences, as also by the process of removal from Lincoln to Washington. I do not even yet feel in the slightest degree settled. The fact is, occasion for frequent visits to Boston sadly breaks up the unity, or rather the sequence of life in Washington. As respects life in Washington, however, you have no personal knowledge derived from experience. I can only say that the break occasioned here, both socially and politically, by the recent change in administration, has been greater than I would have imagined possible. I seem to be here in a wholly strange element. I hope and assume that gradually I shall accustom myself to the new conditions; but I notice one does not do this so easily at the time of life at which I have now arrived as fifty years earlier.

I see that my successor in the American lectureship is President Hadley of Yale. I shall take an opportunity before he goes out to give him one or two suggestions as to his course of procedure. He, however, will find himself more at home than I in University circles; nor will

he, like myself, be almost wholly distracted from Oxford by having another line of investigation of a very different character absorbing nearly his entire attention during the time of the delivery of his lectures. Meanwhile, let me again express in as forcible words as I can, though they may be few, the sense of obligation I feel under to you and to Lady Osler during my two visits to England in the last nine months.

Believe me, my dear Sir William,

Most sincerely,

Sir William Osler,

13, Norham Gardens, Oxford, England.