

**A CYCLE OF ADAMS
LETTERS, 1861-1865.
VOL. I; PP. 1-297**

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A Cycle of Adams Letters, 1861-1865. Vol. I; pp. 1-297 by Worthington Chauncey Ford & Charles Francis Adams & Henry Adams

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**WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD &
CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS & HENRY ADAMS**

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A CYCLE OF ADAMS LETTERS



Charles Francis Adams

A CYCLE
OF ADAMS LETTERS
1861-1865

EDITED BY
WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME I



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1920

TO
MARY OGDEN ADAMS

Possum donata reponere laetus.
HOR.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE series of letters printed in these volumes, individual in themselves, make an almost unique combination. The time of writing, the crisis through which not only the nation but republican institutions were passing, the inheritance and position of the writers, and the personal characteristics of each as shown in the letters and as developed in later days, unite to give interest to the subjects treated and the manner of presentation. They are family letters, written in all the freedom of family intercourse, selected from what would fill many volumes; they are much more than family letters, for the description of social conditions, the discussion of public questions, and the wide relations held by the writers, make them a contribution to the social, military and diplomatic history of the War of Secession, unequalled in scope and concentrated interest.

For nearly a century the Adams family of Massachusetts had filled high public office, a succession of students of government, of able administrators, whose independence and upright character commanded recognition. The third generation had as its representative Charles Francis Adams, the favored son of John Quincy Adams. On the election of Lincoln to the Presidency Mr. Adams was nominated to be Minister of the United States to Great Britain and was at once confirmed by the Senate. He sailed for his post in

May, 1861, and reached England only to be met by the Queen's proclamation recognizing the South as belligerents. The act, justified in international law, was interpreted as unfriendly, and seemed in fact to represent the feeling of suspicion and hostility of the ruling class in England towards the American republic, a feeling that found expression in sympathy for the South, in the wish for its success and in a hope that a divided people would remove anxiety on the growth of a democracy that could not be confined to present bounds, and the influence of which on old institutions of Europe was already felt.

The almost complete isolation of the Minister for months after his arrival in London is a strange phenomenon. The requirements of official etiquette were fulfilled, but little beyond that came to welcome the strangers. Mr. Adams himself was, indeed, no stranger in England. When his father held the same office, immediately after the close of the War of 1812, the son had been in an English school. This experience served him well in 1861. He knew the English characteristics, he had been trained in their methods, he could divine how the English mind would think, and so forecast the resulting action. The English reserve and self-restraint were no greater than his own. He could anticipate the manner of expressing a difference of opinion, and provide against surprise by an unexpected performance. He was thoroughly grounded in the history of the United States, in the relations which had subsisted between the United States and Great Britain, and in republican government, with its ever-