

"CONFESSIONS OF A DIPLOMAT."*

To most persons the secrets of diplomacy are a sealed book. Indeed, from the nature of the case, they must remain secrets till in books like this "Confessions of a Diplomat" they are, after many years, revealed. Such, for instance, is the statement that Lord Lyons, in defiance of his instructions, gave the United States Government twelve hours more than the allotted term for breaking off relations, and so prevented war between Great Britain and America.

Seward wrestled with his colleagues all night long, and at six in the morning sent word that the Confederate envoys would be given up.

Sir Edward Malet served his country in many foreign chancelleries for over forty years. He entered the service as an attache of the legations at Frankfort, at the mature age of sixteen. He disposes of the idea that diplomacy is a sinecure task. At Washington, during the Civil War, his hours were from nine to seven, and often till twelve or one in the morning. He tells many good stories of distinguished persons he met. "Of all the great men I have known," he says, "Lincoln is the one who has left upon me the impression of a sterling son of God." At a reception to a deputation of Indian chiefs in the White House, the chiefs were grouped around a large globe. "This is a representation," he said, "of the great earth on which we live." "Not the legs," he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "only the globe," and putting his finger on Great Britain, he said, "We white people all came from this little spot."

During the Arabi rebellion at Cairo Khedive Tewfik said, "I never go into my harem till three or four in the morning; I cannot face my poor wife and all the women. To them, you know, life is everything—their existence ends here—they cry and wail and fall at my feet and implore me to save them."

"Lord Dufferin," Sir Malet says, "was the most fascinating chief under whom I ever served."

The most difficult foreign chancellery was that of Constantinople.

"One was never free from the awful reality of the pains of Sisyphus; every stone that you rolled uphill came down again." The wire-pullers of the East were pastmasters in the art of intrigue. Even the bluntest British message was wreathed with Oriental flowers of speech and translation. While there he never got to bed till two, and rose at seven.

Sir E. Malet was present at the funerals of Napoleon, the Duke of Wellington, and Von Moltke, of Victor Emmanuel, Pius IX., Kaiser William I., and Frederick II. Of Frederick the Good he says: "His death was like the passing of Arthur, or the withdrawal of Lohengrin."

When at Washington he took a holiday in the far West, buffalo hunting. It took ten days to get through the herd going northwards as he was going west. The whole country, as far as the eye could reach, was dotted with buffalo.

Among Sir Edward's many wanderings was an excursion through Formosa, where the familiar strains of "Old Hundred," heard fitfully through the bamboos, brought him in touch with the Canadian mission of Dr. Mackay.

While a member of the British Embassy at Paris, he conveyed a message from the National Government through hostile lines to Count Bismarck. Bismarck was very frank. He said, "This is the twenty-seventh war in two centuries made by the French against Germany. We must have Strasburg and Metz as guarantees of peace. If it is necessary to burn Paris, we will not shrink from doing so. Our armies will live on the country." On his return to Paris Sir Edward writes, "Is it a nightmare, or have I indeed seen abandoned towns, blown-up bridge, burning ricks, the havoc and desolation of war."

Jules Favre went to confer with Bismarck, but burst into tears when the Count proposed a cession of territory. The French declared that not a stone of a fortress or inch of territory would they surrender, and fought it out to the bitter end.

When the French Government fled to Tours, the diplomatic corps followed. The city was so congested that Lord Lyons' party had to

* "Recollections of Forty Years." By Edward Malet, C.B. Svo. Toronto: Geo. N. Morang & Co., Limited. Price, \$2.00.