IN MEMORIAM.

ALFRED WILLIAMS.

THERE passed away at Sainte Maxime, France, on March 19, 1905, Alfred Williams, in his 73rd year.

In him died one of the most devoted lovers of the Alps; he loved all mountains, great and small, from the rugged peaks of Skye to the snows of the Himalayas, but his devotion to the Alps amounted to a passion, which deepened as the years rolled on.

Like many of us his first experience of the hills was in the English Lake District, which he visited when quite a youth. He used to relate to the present writer how different the mountains looked from their presentment in the fashionable water colour of the period, but the infinite superiority of the facts to the fiction soon asserted itself in his mind, and he set to work to draw the fells as they appeared to him. He next visited Scotland, and stayed for some months at the farm of Letter, on the N. shore of Loch Katrine, working with his wonted energy and with an ever deepening love for Nature. But it was not till after a laborious walking tour along the Riviera in summer, terminating with a visit to the Alpine valleys, that he found his true *métier* in art, and from that date till the day of his death his allegiance never wavered. This walking tour has always struck the writer as a very remarkable display of artistic energy. He and the friend who was with him started soon after daylight and walked a number of miles, making at the same time a half imperial drawing, rested in the middle of the day, and repeated the performance in the evening; and this day after day. It is a keynote to his character. No hardship was too great for him to brave if he wished to accomplish a drawing of some favourite mountain. He visited the Alps on every available occasion, camping out in little wooden huts in most out-of-the-way and exposed places, in fair weather and foul. For many years he was accompanied by his favourite guide, Anton Ritz, or Riffelhaus Toni, as he was called. He also was known as 'Der Maler Ritz,' owing to his engagements with Williams. The connection only terminated with the sad death of Ritz by drowning some time in the '90's. I have only space here to enumerate a few of the places he chose for his camps, Monte Moro, Pierre à Béranger, the mountains on the S.E. of the Italian Val Ferret (it was from this camp that he made the drawing of the Grandes Jorasses belonging to the Alpine Club), remote and wild spots in Dauphiné, and in Scotland, on the lonely shoulder above Loch Coruisk, in the Isle of Skye, during the months of February and March, at which period, though the effects are grand, the exposed spot is lashed by rain-floods and gales of wind.

But perhaps the crowning point of his career was the very remarkable journey he undertook, when getting on for 70 years of age, to the Himalayas, which resulted in the fine and interesting series of drawings which were seen at the late Himalayan Exhibi-

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tion at the Alpine Club. He had to sit often for days at a time watching the mists, and hoping against hope that they would clear, in order that he might work. The snows occasionally did so for a few minutes at a time, and it is a marvel he should have accomplished anything, let alone the drawings he did do.

This is no place for a criticism of his life work, but I feel bound to call attention to his keen appreciation of the beauty of mountain form and atmosphere, and his realisation of the size of the mountains he painted. He never exaggerated or falsified for the sake of effect, and there is an utter absence of trick in his works, which makes their simplicity very impressive.

To his friends who knew him on the mountain-side or at home among his works his loss is irreparable. His genial humour and kindly sympathy will be hard to do without, and it will strike all who love the mountains with a keen pang of regret that they will no more see their rugged features pourtrayed by the loving hand of Alfred Williams.

COLIN BENT PHILLIP.

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