

FRANCESCO CRISPI.

BY THE EDITOR.

FRANCESCO CRISPI, one of the greatest Italian statesmen and an important factor in the unification of his country, would have completed in the present month, viz., on October 4th, his 82nd year; but he died almost two months ago, on August 11th. He was born at Ribera de Girgenti, Sicily, and thus it is probable that he was of Greek extraction. He studied law in Palermo and Naples, and became a lawyer. In Naples he belonged to the revolutionary committee, and took an active part in the revolution of 1848. He was a frequent contributor to the ultra-radical magazine, *L'Apostolato*. When in 1849 the revolution was suppressed, many of the revolutionists were granted an amnesty; he, however, was excluded and had to flee for his life, taking up his residence successively in Marseilles, Turin, Malta, Paris, and London. Being an ardent adherent of Mazzini, he opposed the policy of the government of Turin, and was in consequence banished by Cavour.

In 1859, Crispi returned to Sicily, and became the leader of the party of action, in which rôle he succeeded in inducing Garibaldi to carry out in company with Bixio and Bertani his famous raid in May, 1860. Having taken possession of the island, Crispi was made dictator, and now he surprised the world by issuing a plebiscite in favor of uniting Sicily to the kingdom of Italy. Crispi had learned to see the difficulties of establishing a democratic government, and being convinced above all of the necessity of national unity, he saw the realisation of his favorite plans in supporting a constitutional government, which on the one hand would procure national unity and on the other guarantee sufficient liberty for the citizens by a liberal constitution.

Crispi was chosen deputy in 1861, and his oratory, readiness, and grasp of the situation soon made him a prominent member of

the left wing of the House. In 1865, he justified the change in his political convictions in a pamphlet entitled: *Repubblica e Monarchia*, in which he insisted upon the necessity of national unity, and claimed that republican principles of government tend to division, but a monarchy will unite. In this way, he became the leader of the constitutional party, and when this faction grew in adherents Crispi became president of the House of Deputies. In 1877, he travelled through Europe, meeting Prince Bismarck in Gastein and visiting him again in Berlin. Thenceforth, he remained an admirer and supporter of Bismarck's policy, being convinced of the advisability of Italy's joining Germany and Austria in their efforts to maintain the peace of Europe. In 1877, he was made a member of the ministry Depretis, which position he gave up temporarily when implicated in an accusation of bigamy; but after his justification, he was re-established.

When Depretis died, Crispi was deemed his worthy successor. An attack on his life, which failed, only served to make him extremely popular all over Italy. In 1891, his adversaries succeeded in passing a vote of censure; he resigned and Rudini took his place; but the latter was soon succeeded by Giolitti. When in 1893 Giolitti too appeared incapable of holding the reins of government, the hope of all rested on Crispi as the only one capable of restoring civil peace. In December, 1893, he formed the new ministry, reformed the finances, suppressed socialistic revolts in Sicily and in Massa e Carrara. He escaped another attack on his life, which again served to show the strength of the sympathy of the people; and when his adversaries accused him of being implicated in bribery cases and corruption, he was not only exonerated, but received a vote of confidence in the House of Deputies, June 25, 1895. His ship of state foundered, however, when General Baratieri was beaten by Adua. He resigned, never again to become the leader of the destiny of his nation. He remained, however, a member of the Chamber of Deputies to the end of his life.

It is true that some of his enemies never ceased to suspect his integrity, but we ought to bear in mind that Italian politicians are bitter toward their antagonists, and the truth remains that Crispi has been one of the greatest, most influential, and sincerest of modern Italians.