

the Church in our time would be to rid humanity of this great curse—to persuade kings and rulers to turn their thoughts to the things which make for peace. One can hardly wonder that the masses are breaking away from the Church, and turning a deaf ear to the Christian Gospel, when we find the heads of the Church encouraging preparations for bloodshed, and advising voters that the maintenance of immense armies is a means of averting strife.

THE LATE LORD IDDESLEIGH.

LONDON, January 21.

THE death of Lord Idlesleigh, whom Americans as well as Englishmen doubtless know better under the name of Sir Stafford Northcote, has caused deep and general regret in this country. He was probably the only eminent statesman whom both parties equally respected. He had filled a conspicuous place for many years, and filled it with integrity and dignity. The suddenness of his death, coming at a moment when public sentiment had already condemned the slight deemed to have been put upon him in the reconstruction of the present Ministry, evoked a burst of sympathy such as has hardly been seen since Peel perished by an accident more than thirty years ago. The question as to his treatment by his colleagues is of only a transient interest; but your American readers may like to hear some personal impressions of a man with whose name they were familiar, and who, as one of the Commissioners who negotiated the *Alabama* Claims Treaty of Washington in 1871, had been himself concerned in American affairs.

He belonged to a type of politician less common among us than formerly, and likely to become still more rare as England grows more democratic—the county gentleman of old family and good estate, who is naturally returned to Parliament in respect of his social position in his county, who has leisure to cultivate himself for statesmanship, and has no need to supplement his private means by public office. Devonshire, from which he came, has preserved more of the old features of English country life than the central and northern parts of England, where manufactures and the growth of population have swept away the venerable remains of feudalism. In Devonshire the old families are still deeply respected by the people. They are nearly all allied to one another by marriage. Few rich parvenus have intruded among them; aristocratic society is therefore exceptionally easy, simple, and unostentatious. There is still a strong local patriotism, which makes every Devonshire man, whatever his religious or political prepossessions, proud of other Devonshire men who rise to eminence, and which exerts a wholesome influence on the tone of manners and social intercourse. Sir Stafford was a thorough Devonshire man, who loved his county and knew its dialect; his Devonshire stories, told with the strong accent he could assume, were the delight of any company that could tempt him to repeat them. He had the regular education of the good old English type, was a schoolboy at Eton, then went to Oxford, won the highest distinctions as a scholar, and laid the foundations of a remarkably wide knowledge of modern as well as ancient literature. He served his apprenticeship to statesmanship as private secretary to Mr. Gladstone, who was then (1843) a member of Sir Robert Peel's Government. When the great schism in the Tory party took place over the question of free trade in corn, he was not yet in Parliament, and therefore had not to choose between Peel and the protectionists. In 1855, when he first entered the House of Commons, that question was settled

and gone; so there was no inconsistency in his ranging himself with the Tory party, although himself a decided free-trader. His ability speedily brought him to the top. He became a Minister in 1859, entered the Cabinet in 1866, when a new Tory Ministry was formed under Lord Derby, and in 1876, when Mr. Disraeli retired to the House of Lords, he became leader of the Ministerial majority in the House of Commons.

As a Parliamentarian he had two great and eminent merits—immense knowledge and admirable readiness. He was all his life a keen observer and a diligent student; and as his memory was unusually retentive, all that he had observed or read stood constantly at his command. In questions of trade and finance—questions which, owing, perhaps, to their increasing intricacy, seem to be less and less mastered by practical politicians—he was especially strong. He was, indeed, the only man on his own side in politics whose authority on such matters was generally acknowledged, and the brunt of the battle fell on him alone when they came up for discussion. As he now had his old master for his chief antagonist, the conflict was no easy one; but he never shrank from it. Not less remarkable was his quickness in debate. His manner was somewhat ineffective, for it wanted variety. Sentence followed sentence in a smooth and easy stream, always clear, always grammatically correct, but the stream was perhaps too equable. There were few impressive phrases, few brilliant figures, few of those appeals to passion with which it is necessary to warm and rouse a large assembly. When the House grew excited at the close of a long party debate, and Sir Stafford rose in the small hours of the morning to wind it up in behalf of his party, men felt that the ripple of his sweet voice, the softness of his gentle manner, were not what the occasion called for. But what he had to say was always to the point and well worth hearing. No facts or arguments suddenly thrown at him by opponents seemed to disconcert him; there was sure to be an answer ready. However weak his own case might seem, his ingenuity could always strengthen it; however powerfully the hostile case had been presented, he never failed to find weak places in it and to break it down by a succession of well-planted criticisms, each apparently small, but damaging when taken all together.

It was interesting to watch him as he sat on the front bench, with his hat set so low on his brow that it hid all the upper part of his face, while the lower part was covered by a thick beard—perfectly motionless, rarely taking a note of what was said, and, to all appearance, the most indifferent figure in the House. But when he rose, one perceived that nothing had escaped him. Every point which an antagonist had made was taken up and dealt with; no point that could aid his own contention was neglected, and the fluent grace with which his discourse swept along was not more surprising than the unflinching skill with which he shunned dangerous ground, and put his propositions in a form which made it difficult to contradict them. I remember to have heard an eminent chief of the opposite party remark, that nothing was more difficult than to defend your argument from Northcote, because he had the art of nibbling it away, admitting a little in order to evade or overthrow the rest.

With these intellectual gifts, he possessed the still rarer merit of unflinching courtesy and a temper almost too unruffled. Not only did he never seek to give pain, even where pain might have been a wholesome discipline for pushing selfishness—he seemed incapable of irritation, and bore with vexatious obstruction from some members of the House and mutinous attacks from others who belonged to his own party, when a spirit less kindly and forgiving might have better se-

cured his own authority and the dignity of the assembly. He seemed to proceed on the assumption that every one else was a gentleman like himself, penetrated by the old traditions of the House of Commons. It is an assumption which, as his own career proved, can no longer be safely made.

His tactics in leading the Opposition against Mr. Gladstone's Ministry from 1880 till 1885 have been often censured by his own party. That party was then furious at its unexpected defeat at the election of 1880; it was full of fight, burning for revenge, eager to denounce every trifling error of the Ministry, and give battle on small as well as great occasions. Hence it resented the calm and cautiously critical attitude which Sir Stafford Northcote took up. He saw, as impartial observers saw, that little was to be gained by worrying an enemy so superior in force and flushed with victory, and that it was wiser to wait till the Ministry should begin to make mistakes and incur misfortunes in the natural course of events, before resuming the offensive against them. There is always a tendency to reaction in English popular opinion, and a tendency to murmur against whichever party may be in power. This tendency would before long have told in favor of the Tories, with little effort on their own part; and when it was already manifest, a Parliamentary attack could have been delivered with effect. Sir Stafford was probably right, but, being too prone to yield to pressure, he allowed himself to be drawn by the clamor of his followers into aggressive operations which, nevertheless, not quite himself approving them, he conducted in what seemed a half-hearted way.

Not only was his own temper pacific, but he was too reasonable a man, too large-minded, too dispassionate, to be a successful party leader. He was superior to the ordinary prejudices of old-fashioned Toryism, while yet he was too cautious and conscientious to lend himself to the demagogism of Tory democracy. In fact, so far as political opinions went, he might, had fortune sent him into the world as the son of a Whig family, have made an excellent Whig, removed as far from high Toryism on the one hand as from Radicalism on the other. There was, therefore, a certain incompatibility between the man and the position. The average partisan felt that his leader was not in perfect sympathy with his own sentiments. The militant partisans, whatever their sentiments, desired a pugnacious chief. Had he possessed a more imperious will, he might have overcome these difficulties, because his abilities and experience were so great that the party could not do without him, and his character stood so high that the mass of sensible Tories all over the country would have rallied to him, if he had appealed to them against the intriguers and malcontents who sought to supplant him. Lord Salisbury has been blamed for not having given him a vigorous support against these intriguers; but till more is known of the secret history of the last three years, it would be unfair to take the charge as proved.

As an administrator, Sir Stafford Northcote was diligent, judicious, and singularly free from any taint of jobbery. He sought for nothing for himself; he never abused his patronage; he never forgot the interests of the country; he never grudged labor, although there might be no prospect of winning credit by it. It was remarked of him that even in great party meetings, where invective against political opponents is apt to be expected and relished, he never condescended to abuse, and always argued fairly. Few statesmen of our times have been so generally popular. The fire of his opponents was hardly ever directed against him, even when controversy was hottest. In private life he had the charm of perfectly simple and unpretending

manners, coupled with a rich fund of humor, an immense store of anecdote, and a geniality which came straight from the heart. Three years ago, when the University of Edinburgh celebrated its tercentenary, he happened to be Lord Rector, and in that capacity had to preside over the festivities. Although a total stranger to Scotland, and far removed (for he was a strong High Churchman) from sympathy with Scottish Presbyterianism, he won golden opinions from the Scotch, as well as from the crowd of foreign visitors, by the tact and grace with which he discharged all his duties, and the skill with which, putting off the politician, he entered into the spirit of the occasion as a lover of letters and learning. Though it was in respect of his political eminence that he had been elected to the office, every one felt that it would not have been easy to have found in the ranks of literature and science any one fitter to preside over such a gathering.

He leaves behind few or none in his own party in whom the capacities of the practical statesman are so happily blended with a philosophic judgment and a wide culture. It is a combination which was inadequately appreciated in his own person, and is likely to be less and less appreciated in the stormy epoch on which England seems to be entering. Vehemence in controversy, domineering audacity of purpose, the power of moving crowds by incisive and stirring harangues, are the qualities which the new generation seems disposed to cultivate. They are qualities apt to be valued in a time of strife, a time when men are less concerned to develop and advance their principles than to consolidate the organization of their party and dazzle the nation by large promises or bold strokes.

O. D.

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE DAILY PRESS IN ITALY.

ROME, January 21.

As against "J. W. M." in No. 1123 of the *Nation*, I am not disposed to claim a very high position for the Italian press as compared with the leading English and American papers; but what your correspondent says of the principal papers is most unjust. The *Perseveranza* is one of the best dailies on the Continent, and as able as ever it was; the *Nazione* of Florence is a high-toned, honest, admirably written paper, and one of the most influential in the kingdom. Its articles on the Papal question and the chief topics of Continental politics are cast in the largest type of patriotism, and it never bends to local prejudices, lends itself to personalities, or fears to be locally unpopular. I "read the *Opinione* of Rome," and find it very clear-headed and fair, though I do not know its editor or one of its writers. The *Tribuna*, *me judice*, is far from being the best Roman paper, though I should hardly be prepared to say which is. I should, six months ago, have named the *Rassegna*, but that was stopped in November, as "J. W. M." says, not without some inaccuracy. The *Rassegna* was owned by Sonnino and Toraca. They differed on the course to be taken at the last crisis, and, both being deputies, one voted with, and the other against, the Ministry; and as they saw no prospect of working together, and neither cared to carry on the paper at his sole expense, they agreed to stop it lest it fall below the old standard in some other hands. It was as good a paper as any on the Continent, much of the character of the *Temps* of Paris, the best French daily.

The *Opinione*, the *Stampa*, and the *Riforma* are all better papers, in my opinion, than the *Tribuna*; and the *Popolo Romano*, a small paper, contains (as it well may, being the official paper) little besides concise and well-written short arti-

cles expressing the views of the Ministry, and few papers in Italy give much space to anything but the news and internal correspondence, general Italian information. *Fanfulla* and *Capitan Fracassa* are very bright, witty papers, and the *Corriere di Roma* is a capital daily, if a little too abundant in sparkling articles, admirably written, however. Besides these, there are scores of papers not noteworthy by name, but, as local organs, creditable and always in good Italian, though, like American country newspapers, devoted to local interests.

Italian journalism is unexciting, it is true, because it has no cause to be savage or trenchant; but it is as clever: intellectually as ever. The difficulty is that, as journalism lives on the suggestions of the day, it is dull on dull days. "J. W. M." misses the entire character of Italian public life, which has changed with the changed state of the country. Italians are too sensible to form parties on fictions, and, there being no parties and no party organs, and nobody being excited about topics of general publicity, the journals are for the time poorly supported. This makes them poorly paid, and throws them into the hands of men of political aspirations, and (inevitable consequence in all countries), instead of being party organs, they become personal organs. Very few of them pay expenses, and they are therefore mostly kept alive by subventions as was always the case. If the *Popolo Romano* is the organ of the Ministry as a whole, the *Stampa* of the Department of the Interior, etc., etc., in what is that better or worse than that the *Riforma* should be the organ of Crispi, the *Roma del Popolo* of Mazzini, the *Diritto* of Doda, or the *Tribuna* of Cairoli, etc., etc.? "Of the *Popolo Romano* and its editor, the less said the better." I do not know the editor, and have never heard him spoken of for ill or good; but I have the paper on my breakfast table every morning, and find it, if concise and reserved when I wish it would speak out, a respectable and dignified journal, able, always to the point, and with plenty of backbone. It is (and I speak from a position outside of the circle of Roman journalists, of whom I know not half-a-dozen) a paper to be well spoken of and read with profit.

Plenty of papers are dead in Italy and plenty more will die, because, though Italy is an old country and its people a mature one, their state is in a metamorphosis, and the relation of parts is new, so that changes are continually taking place, new commercial interests developing, new institutions being formed. But the life intellectual of the nation is as vigorous as ever it was, and if the absorbing or exciting topic does not offer, the subtlety and intellectual grasp are as great as ever. Italians as a nation do not read much, it is true, because education is still very limited; they love little, considering what those nations generally read that do read much. They do not print many books, but we know nations that print too many. I cannot say, though I have every interest to wish it otherwise, that journalism is largely patronized in Italy; but I can conscientiously say that it is not falling off in ability, and if it does not govern the nation as in exciting days, it does all that the existing conditions demand. It is true that in Italy journalism is mostly ill paid, and occupies young men of talent who are forming their views and creating their positions, so that necessarily there is a great deal of immature work to be found in the journals. But one must be a dreary doctrinaire not to find in the *Nazione*, the *Italia*, the *Pungolo*, *Perseveranza*, *Opinione*, *Riforma*, and many others the proof that the Italian mind is as alert, active and subtle as ever it was if the theme offers. Why, even the old *Osservatore Romano*, organ of the Vatican, is ten times the paper it used to be when the Pope reigned over Rome. The views

of "J. W. M." are those of one out of all present connection with politics and out of touch with the actual condition of Italy, forgetful that the entire Italian life has changed between 1870 and 1886, and surprised not to find *midi à quatre heures*. W.

DUMAS'S "FRANCILLON."

PARIS, January 28, 1887.

I MUST confess having been disappointed in "Francillon," the new drama by Alexandre Dumas which is being played at the Théâtre-Française, and, I will say at once, admirably played. I have no fault to find with the actors, but the actors disappear, in this case, before the author; their perfection seemed to me even rather irritating, and I could at times not help asking myself if they were not doing too much for the author, and concealing too completely the imperfections of the piece. It is impossible not to feel great sympathy for Alexandre Dumas; there is in all his literary work a constant and at times an almost painful effort towards a better social ideal, towards a higher standard of morality. He is a singular sort of moralist, but he is a moralist. He has discovered virtue, as a traveller discovers some new land, and he has liked it after having discovered it. He began life with the free-and-easy "Dame aux Camélias," and he surrounded her with a poetical halo. He afterwards found his way out of the "demi-monde," and took the mask off the face of the dangerous adventurers who means to rise from the "demi-monde" into the real "monde." He learned to distinguish between the good and the bad peaches, as handsome as the good ones, but with a little black spot, the only sign of decay and corruption. He afterwards fought many a battle for the rights of the natural son, for the rights of woman, for divorce. He may be considered one of the authors of the law which has recently been passed, and which has reestablished divorce in France, under certain conditions.

Under the various expressions of his intense curiosity and of his moralizing tendencies, under all his bitter expressions of contempt, of anger, at the sight of all the sufferings caused by the present arrangement of society, you can discover a fundamental idea, a Calvinistic idea, an innate belief in the iniquity of man and of woman. Dumas believes in what the Puritans called the total depravity of man; and though he proposes to-day one cure, to-morrow another, for the evils of society, he really believes in none. It cannot be said of him, "Castigat ridendo mores." There is something sinister in his laugh; his pleasant-ries are cutting, he has no geniality. He is an artist, however, he can at times give us a poetical and fresh outline of youth, of pure love, of the pleasures of maternity; but he seems ashamed of himself when he has dwelt too long in the azure of fine and pure sentiments, and he throws himself back immediately, as with a sudden jerk, into the dark abyss of vice, of hypocrisy, of corruption. He takes a dark view of life, of his own time, and of all times; and, in this respect, he may be called a representative man. He is the true image of a generation which has no definite principles, no clear view of duty, which is working its way towards an unknown future with fear, with effort, without hope, in a sort of pathological despair.

All these tendencies, all these preoccupations, are found in a high degree in "Francillon." Dumas has set before himself, as usual, a high and moral object: he wished to prove that conjugal fidelity is as imperative a duty for a man as it is for a woman; that a contract is bilateral, and that it cannot give rights without duties. So far, so good; but how has he worked out this idea? He has been obliged to invent very repul-