

and ridicule by attempting to treat it as literal and scientific. Mr. Gladstone is obliged to admit that the science of Genesis, though, as he conceives, supernaturally accurate in the main, is not accurate throughout; so that according to his hypothesis the Supreme Being, though deficient in information on certain points, and perhaps believing in the Ptolemaic system, has, considering the circumstances, made a highly-creditable approach to truth. Consequences not less strange arise from Mr. Gladstone's acceptance of the doctrine of Evolution, and his willingness to admit a comparatively late date for the composition of Genesis. Can we believe that a scientific revelation, embracing the Nebular Hypothesis, was given to the first anthropoid that descended from his tree, and handed down from him by oral tradition to the time, possibly, of Solomon? Yet Mr. Gladstone's speculations on cosmogony are not cruder or more erroneous than, in the estimation of scholars, are his speculations on Homeric Mythology and the primeval history of Greece. In the one case, as in the other, he has been run away with by the merest fancies in dealing with a subject which he had not studied. In both cases alike he has exposed himself to criticism, if not to ridicule. This matter has its serious aspect when we consider that the writer of "The Dawn of Religious Worship" and "Homeric Studies" has the destinies of the Empire in his hands, and has won by his solemn persuasiveness the almost implicit confidence of the people. Men have their strong and weak points, it is true; but in no mind is there a partition wall; nor are mental habits put on and off in passing from one subject to another. Has Mr. Gladstone made a more thorough and conscientious study of the Irish question than he had of mythology and cosmogony when he rushed into print upon those subjects? The catastrophe of a baseless theory is of little importance compared with the wreck of a nation.

THE recent *rapprochement* between the Pope and Prince Bismarck seems to have been brought about by the astute Chancellor mainly for the purpose of neutralizing the opposition of a party in the Reichsrath that has for many years thwarted his domestic policy. By humouring His Holiness's desire to be recognized as an arbitrator in international disputes—a practical realization of his dream of a Church restored to supremacy among the nations—Prince Bismarck inclined the Pope towards himself, and now hopes to win him over entirely by formally repealing the Falk laws—laws which can be repealed in form without being repealed in substance, for their essential spirit is interwoven into the whole legal system of Germany. By this seeming concession the Clerical Opposition, which has always given Prince Bismarck so much trouble, is broken up, and Herr Windthorst, at the head of these Ultramontanes, not merely paralyzed for offence, but moreover converted into a supporter of the Government; thus leaving Prince Bismarck freer to pursue his plan of paternalizing the Government of Germany.

As Prussia expels her Poles, Austria welcomes them with open arms; and while the German Chancellor denounces them as the enemies of the Empire, the Saxon Minister at Vienna attends a Polish ball which is manifestly intended as a demonstration against him, the Crown Princess of Austria dances at it with a Polish nobleman, and Austrian Royalty wears the Polish colours. The House of Austria evidently of purpose embraces the opportunity to add to Austrian prestige among the non-Russian Slavs by showing favour to them: Austria desires above all to strengthen her Empire eastward by extending her power in the Slav countries of the Balkan Peninsula; and her espousal of the cause of the Poles is a good card to play. But Saxony?—the representative of a German Federal State "demonstrating" against the German Chancellor! Does this portend internal trouble? It is not impossible: a dangerous tension sometimes exists within the Reichsrath, and Bismarck must have had a powerful motive for humbling himself before the Pope in order to win over the Clericals to his side.

AFFAIRS in the Balkan Peninsula are steadily making towards the end THE WEEK has always maintained to be the best solution of the Eastern Question. The beginning of a confederation of the several states in the Peninsula has been now made by an alliance of Turkey with Bulgaria, and the project of a similar alliance with Serbia and Greece is reported to be afoot. Under the Bulgarian-Turkish agreement Prince Alexander becomes Prince of the two Bulgarias, with a country almost twice as large as Belgium, with three million of subjects, and with an army of 150,000 disciplined men. He is thus stronger than was Victor Emmanuel when he began his task of unifying Italy. This position he has purchased by accepting the rank of Field-Marshal in the Turkish Army, binding himself to hold his forces at the disposition of the Ottoman Empire. If a similar agreement be made with the Kings of Serbia and Greece, Serbia

being granted all that remains of Old Serbia and Greece Epirus, each receiving a Field-Marshal's bâton; if the same obligation to support the Sultan be accepted by them, and Macedonia and Albania be granted their autonomy with a similar obligation,—the throne of the Sultan and his Asiatic Empire will be guaranteed by five leaders of five armies, with an aggregate of 400,000 disciplined men, supported in war by the Asiatic troops of Turkey. The Balkan States would in fact form a strong military confederation under the Sultan, yet retaining to the full their autonomy and their exemption from Turkish interference. In the natural course of things, through the growth of these nationalities, it is likely that the Porte may in time retire to an Asiatic seat where the Sultan could hold sway undisturbed by encroaching neighbours; while the Balkan States, still under his suzerainty, might enlarge their military confederation into a commercial union. The beginning of the work as we see has been firmly set: it only remains to let it go on unhindered by enmity without or impatience within. The foundation of a strong bulwark against the Northern Powers has at length been laid, thanks, we believe, to Sir William White, England's temporary representative at Constantinople; and neither Greece nor Serbia ought to be permitted to rush to the destruction of their own future. Many obstacles and dangers are ahead: chief among which are the fury of Russia at being balked of her prospect of acquiring Constantinople by this conversion of Prince Alexander into the natural guardian of the Balkan Passes; and the jealousy of Austria at the growth of Bulgaria, which threatens to lose her the chance of Salonica. These Powers will, if they can, prevent a federation intended to withstand invasion; but their selfish motive will be so apparent that if they oppose it they stand convicted before the whole world.

THE flag on Government House has been half-masted for one who was deservedly the most popular of former mistresses of that mansion. In Lady Howland's time Government House was truly a social centre. Among the larger circle of her friends, and of those who had felt her kindness and beneficence, her memory will not be soon allowed to die.

As between local option and high license, says the *Washington Herald*, the latter is gaining sure ground in the cities. Prohibition—even in the disguise of local option—has failed to accomplish its objects. High license decreases the number of dives where poisonous doctored alcohol is vended on the sly, and furnishes an increased fund for the prevention and detection of crime.

THE *Moniteur de Rome*, which is supposed to be the official organ of the Vatican, in commenting on the recent address of Archbishop Walsh on the appointment of Mr. Morley as Chief Secretary for Ireland, says the Archbishop, in making such an address, acted in direct opposition to the urgent counsels of the Pope. It regrets that the Pope has no power over the Irish clergy in matters affecting Ireland.

THE Radical motion to expel the Princes from France has signally failed, escaping rejection only by being tabled by its friends. The Count and Countess of Paris are receiving royal greetings in public from their adherents; and one of the leading French papers, which favours the Orleanist cause, predicts the speedy downfall of the Cabinet of M. de Freycinet unless it is promptly and radically reconstructed.

THE Rev. Frederick Burnside, the Honorary Secretary to the Committee which brings out the "Official Year-Book of the Church of England," sends to the English papers a statement that the *voluntary* expenditure of English Churchmen during the twenty-five years between 1860 and 1885 has been £81,573,237,—or, counting the people of England and Wales at 26,000,000, and giving the half of these to the Church, we may say, speaking in the rough, it amounts on an average to £25 a family in twenty-five years, or nearly £1 per annum per family during that period. Moreover, according to Mr. Burnside, these figures leave out various other sums which he has not been able to compute accurately.

THE *Whitehall Review* is responsible for a story which, if true, gives some indication of the magnitude of the task Mr. Gladstone has undertaken in trying to satisfy the demands of his Irish supporters. When, it seems, a certain Irish member of Parliament, who is also a lawyer, was settling down in his new house, he asked to have the methods of the gas-meter explained to him. This was accordingly done, the usual explanation being given that at the end of each quarter the hands on the clock working forward indicated the amount of gas that had been consumed. At the close of one quarter, when the inspector called, the gas-meter clock had gone back instead of forward, and, as the occupier of the house remarked, showed that the gas company was in his debt exactly six-and-eightpence.