

## BISMARCK.

To ascribe to him the astuteness of a Machiavelli, or even of a Talleyrand, is to give him credit for, or perhaps to give him the discredit of, qualities which he does not possess. His strength is the strength of a man who knows what he wants, and who, having in years past played very boldly for high stakes, has happened to win, and, having won, is strong enough to hold his own. In 1866 Prince Bismarck risked everything, even the loss of his head, but he justified the proud words which he flung at the head of the Prussian Parliament, when, for the sake of the army, he broke the law, and told the members that within a year an indemnity would be voted. Since that victory he has been supreme in Europe, and in a position to have little occasion for the use of diplomatic artifice. It is now, and perhaps in the last years of his life, that, through the growth of the military power of Russia and of France, and through the recent revelations of Austrian military weakness, Prince Bismarck will be called upon to make more serious diplomatic efforts than he has ever yet had occasion to put forth. Those who look upon him as a type man of the race must regret the neuralgia and the indigestion, because, above all, he is a strong man, and an almost ideal representative of Prussian power. The story of the interview at five o'clock in the morning, in which the completion of the evacuation arrangements of the treaty of Frankfurt was brought about after much deliberation over a jug which contained champagne, porter and various forms of ardent spirits, blended with a red-hot poker by the German Chancellor, and swallowed with a wry face by the Frenchman for his country's sake, is less familiar than the story of the *Fernieres* interview, as recounted by M. Jules Favre, and is perhaps not one of dignity, but it is one of those which complete the figure of the man, and I repeat that the neuralgia and other ailments of Prince Bismarck detract somewhat from that triumph of Prussia which he personifies. One of those paradoxes which possibly some day may come to look less like a paradox than it does at present would consist in the confident assertion that Prince Bismarck after all was much such a man as his own son, who is well known in this country. Count Herbert Bismarck—that is, less an old-fashioned statesman than a strong and very decided person, knowing exactly what he means to do, and exactly how he means to do it. Prince Bismarck is not mortal, in the sense that his policy and even the impress of his peculiar personality will continue to direct Prussia after he in the flesh is no longer in this world. What is now said of the probable consequence of the death of the German Emperor is not after all unlike what used to be said of the probable consequence in Russia of the death of the second Alexander, in the days when Aksakoff directed the political footsteps of the present Czar, and made him fine those who spoke German at his card table—a fine which his august father had frequently to pay. It was generally expected that there would be war with Germany the day that he ascended the throne, but it will be noticed that affairs have gone on since he came to the throne much as they went on before, and so it will be in Germany.—*The Fortnightly Review*.

## THE WENDS.

As with other Slavonic tribes, music and dancing are the passion of the Wends; their language is especially adapted for song, and the spiritual side of the people has as yet only found its primitive expression in melody. The national vice is also one which they are reported to share with the rest of the Slavonic stock, namely, spirit drinking; once it was honey-mead and the spirit distilled from the birch tree, now it is the common and pernicious brandy. Otherwise they are a law-abiding people and thoroughly loyal, in spite of the tradition that there is always a secretly elected king among them. Industry, courage, honour and hospitality their chroniclers have always credited them with; so faithful indeed, says a letter of the eighth century, were their womankind, that wives immolated themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands; and if in those early times a custom prevailed which modern sensitiveness must repudiate, the custom of prematurely terminating the lives of the aged, it was prompted by the laudable motive of hastening their journey to the gods. As late as the year 1520, Lewin von der Schulenburg rescued an old man who was being dragged away into the forest by the younger members of his family—Abraham about to be sacrificed by Isaac. "Where are you taking him to?" he cried. "To God," was the grim answer. However, the tough old gentleman was placed beyond the reach of his zealous family, and survived twenty years as doerkeeper in the castle of his deliverer.—*Macmillan's Magazine*.

## EARLY EARTHQUAKES.

Two periods stand out with especial prominence for the magnitude of their convulsions, and for the profound influence which these have had upon the scenery of England. The first of these periods lies far back in the dim mists of geological history. In the earliest glimpse that is obtainable of primeval Britain we can faintly descry a few scattered islets, bare perhaps of vegetation, or at least clothed only with plants of a humble grade, such as club mosses and ferns. Round these rocky prominences a wide but shallow sea swept eastward across what is now Europe, with here and there a ridge or island marking where some of the great mountain chains of the Continent have since been upheaved. To the north lay a mass of land that stretched across where Scandinavia and Finland now lie, and may also have extended westward into America—a wide arctic continent, out of whose waste came the materials that have served as the foundations for the superstructure both of Europe and of North America. Spreading eastward and southward across the site of the European Continent, the sea, which was probably an eastward extension of the original Atlantic Ocean, received a continual supply of mud, silt and sand, swept into it from the shores

of its islands and from the northern land. Slowly its floor sank down, and the sediments gathered there until the islands were one by one submerged and buried under an ever-increasing load of detritus. But as the supply of sediment seems to have kept pace, on the whole, with the depression, the sea never became abysmal. Its depth may not have greatly varied, but over its floor there came eventually to be accumulated a depth of sediment amounting to many thousands of feet. While these events were transpiring over the area of the future Europe, a long succession of submarine volcanic outbursts took place in the west, across the tract that now forms the basin of the Irish Sea. Thick sheets of lava and copious showers of ashes were poured forth, which spread out upon the floor of the sea, and probably in some cases built themselves up into volcanic islands. As one centre of eruption died out another would break forth from where are now the hills of Waterford and the headlands of Pembrokeshire northward to the borders of Scotland. But the volcanic energy at last expended itself. The volcanoes sank one by one into the sea, and over their submerged streams of lava and hardened sheets of ashes the sea-borne sand and mud once more gathered. As the downward movement went on not only were the volcanoes obliterated, but their very sites were buried under thousands of feet of sediment.—*Dr. Geikie, in Good Words*.

## SEEDS.

We are sowing, daily sowing,  
Countless seeds of good and ill,  
Scattered on the level lowland,  
Cast upon the windy hill;  
Seeds that sink in rich, brown furrows,  
Soft with heaven's gracious rains,  
Seeds that rest upon the surface  
Of the dry, unyielding plain.

Seeds that fall amid the stillness  
Of the lonely mountain glen;  
Seeds cast out in crowded places,  
Trodden under foot of men;  
Seeds by idle hearts forgotten,  
Flung at random on the air;  
Seeds by faithful souls remembered,  
Sown in tears and love and prayer.

Seeds that lie unchanged, unquicken'd,  
Lifeless on the teeming mold;  
Seeds that live and grow and flourish  
When the sower's hand is cold;  
By a whisper sow we blessings,  
By a breath we scatter strife;  
In our words and looks and actions  
Lie the seeds of death and life.

Those who knowest all our weakness,  
Leave us not to sow alone!  
Bid Thine angels guard the furrows  
Where the precious grain is sown,  
Till the fields are crowned with glory,  
Filled with mellow, ripened ears,  
Filled with fruit of life eternal  
From the seed we sowed in tears.

Check the forward thought and passions,  
Stay the hasty, heedless hands;  
Lest the germs of sin and sorrow  
Mar our fair and pleasant lands.  
Father, help each weak endeavour,  
Make each faithful effort blest,  
Till Thine harvest shall be garnered,  
And we enter into rest. —*Selected*

## MILITARY PRESSURE.

The pressure of the army staffs of Europe toward war is an element in the situation of which too little account is taken. The civil power is here so completely supreme that the opinion of the army counts for little, even in foreign politics, and in home politics does not count at all. Upon the Continent, however, the Governments, even when, as in France, they are nominally civil, rest ultimately upon vast armies, whose chiefs are as potent in affairs, and especially in foreign affairs, as leading statesmen. The Russian and Austrian Emperors look to the army as the mainstay of their power—there are men who say there is no true Austria except the Imperial army—and would regard any widespread discontent among their officers or any contempt for their action felt within the barracks as grave calamities. Even when not soldiers themselves—and they are both soldiers—those two sovereigns listen to their generals with deep attention; and when told that great military opportunities are passing away, or that grave military dangers may arise from delay, are as much influenced as an English Minister is when he perceives that his party is eager for a special course of action. They court, in fact, their most effective supporters. In France the Government is at times actually afraid of the army, which, if irritated, can overset it; and though that fear is not felt in Germany, where loyalty is a military passion, any "loss of heart" among officers is sincerely dreaded. That is a loss of the impulse which makes a cruel discipline tolerable, induces all classes to serve, and helps in the hour of danger to insure the sacrifices which can alone produce victory. An army which believes in its chief's capacities is a different instrument from an army which doubts them, and an indefinitely stronger one. If, therefore, the great group of picked and scientific soldiers who form the army staff of Germany report as their deliberate judgment that "the retention of Metz will in the next war save 100,000 men," or that the delay of a year will add five per cent. to the mobility of the French army, the German court, including Prince Bismarck, are compelled to listen with grave attention.—*The Spectator*.

## British and Foreign.

MORAY Free Church Synod has invited the Assembly to meet next year in Inverness.

THE Rev. Stevenson Horne, Slamannan, has died suddenly in his fifty-seventh year. He was ordained in 1854.

THE Rev. Alexander Westwater, missionary in China, has died of fever, in his thirty-fifth year. He was a native of Dunfermline.

THE Rev. J. W. Whigham has been unanimously recommended to next Irish General Assembly as Convener of the Sustentation Fund.

THE closing lecture of a series by Rev. Peter Carmichael, at Park Church, Highbury, was on "The Covenanters," and attracted an audience which filled the building.

MR. JAMES MORTON, Greenock, is to preside at a conference of elders during the sittings of the Synod to consider the question of the better representation of elders in the supreme court.

DR. SOMERVILLE, Moderator of the Free Church Assembly, brought his evangelistic tour to a close on a recent Sabbath, by preaching to a large congregation in St. Stephen's, Perth.

DR. J. H. VINCENT, Chancellor of Chautauqua University, and Rev. James Chalmers, of New Guinea, are to be among the speakers at the next annual meeting of the Religious Tract Society.

DR. CHANCELLOR, of Belfast, and Rev. James Dick, M.A., the former, and John Martin, the present pastor, conducted on Sabbath the centenary services in the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Wishaw.

THE sum of \$1,025 was realized from a sale of work held in aid of the M'Cull memorial mission halls, in connection with the Newton Place U. P. Church, Partick, of which Mr. M'Ewan Morgan, M.A., is pastor.

THE old Scotch Independent Church in Glasgow, of which David Dale was one of the original pastors from 1760 till his death in 1806, commemorated recently the fiftieth year of opening the chapel in Oswald Street.

DR. THAIN DAVIDSON, of Islington, is spoken of for the vacancy in Anderson Church, Glasgow. The congregation is in communication with him on the subject. Dr. Davidson has contradicted a rumour that he desired to leave London.

THE Rev. W. P. Begg, M.A., Augustine Church, Greenock, has been presented with a purse of sovereigns on leaving for Canada. He has been pastor of the congregation for six years, and it was mainly through his efforts that the new church was built.

THE Government propose to ask \$100,000 for the cost of the jubilee services in Westminster Abbey, by an ancient charter all timber that goes into the Abbey becomes its property, so all the galleries, barriers and scaffolding will be paid for by the nation and sold by the dean and his chapter.

MR. LACHLAN MACLAINE, Congregational minister, Leatherhead, Surrey, and Mr. George H. Moorehead, Irish Presbyterian Church, Leitrim, wish to join the Church. Their applications have been transmitted through Edinburgh Presbytery with a favourable recommendation to the Assembly.

THE Rev. John Smith, M.A., Edinburgh, at the English Presbyterian Synod said there is a growing feeling in Scotland that it is absolutely necessary they should have union. How it was to be effected they did not yet see, but the desire was growing in every branch of the Presbyterian Church.

It has been resolved to raise from \$10,000 to \$15,000 by public subscription to erect a place of worship for the West Coast Mission at Lochmaddy, in North Uist. There is no building in the district exclusively devoted to worship, the mission services being held in the school and those of the church in the court house.

THE Rev. Dr. Dobie, Shamrock Street, Glasgow, has been presented with addresses and a purse of sovereigns on the occasion of his semi-jubilee. There has been an increase during his pastorate of 200 on the membership, which now exceeds 1,000. Dr. Dobie also received a cheque for \$500 from a private friend.

THERE are now 564 congregations in the U. P. Church, with a membership of 182,063, an increase of eight congregations and 917 members on the year. The income in 1886 was \$1,867,725, being \$88,255 less than the preceding year, but the bulk of the decrease is accounted for by exceptionally large contributions in 1885 for church buildings. The average stipend paid was nearly \$1,200.

THE Rev. J. A. Broad, Dunbar, proposed at the Edinburgh Diocesan Council that in order to obtain full reports, the leading Scotch newspapers should be "subsidized" during the days on which the representative council met. Bishop Dowden, who was presiding, exclaimed amidst laughter: "The idea of subsidizing any of the leading newspapers!" Only the mover and Dr. Cazenove, his seconder, supported the absurd proposal.

MR. STURGEON, reviewing in his magazine the recently published "Treasury of the Scottish Covenant," by Mr. Johnston, of Dunoon, expresses admiration of the infinite pains the author has taken to make his work complete. "We have need in England," he says, "of more anchors, and we dare say that Scotland will be none the worse for a few such holdfast books as this, since they may hold weak ones in their places till the present storm is overpast."

THE Rev. James Stalker, M.A., Kirkcaldy, in accepting the call to St. Matthew's, Glasgow, said it had been one of his wishes to be a growing man, and the fascination for him was the prospect the call opened up for intellectual and spiritual stimulation from the life of the city and the religious enterprise of Glasgow. Rev. Norman L. Walker, of Dysart, remarked that as a preacher Mr. Stalker was unequalled in any denomination either in the Presbytery or Synod.