

the astute managers of the American caucus, that the number of Irish-born immigrants has for ten years been a diminishing figure: it has decreased both absolutely and relatively. For while in 1850 the percentage of Irish among the foreign-born inhabitants of the States was 43.5, in 1880 it was only 27.7. It is obvious from the statistical figures published that the numerical ascendancy of the Irish has vanished in America. While immigration from Ireland culminated long ago, other nationalities are steadily increasing their numbers, and the American politicians might do well, perhaps, to draw the obvious moral that to pander to a diminishing political force is a blunder—at all events from the point of view of the caucus managers.

THE *Philadelphia Record* seems to hold that England, upon annexing Burmah, should at once have conferred constitutional government on the country, with universal suffrage. It does not consider that an eastern people cannot be transformed in a day into that ideal of freedom—a nation of ward politicians; and accordingly, remarking on the condition of Burmah, it observes that, "it is a strange anomaly that, with all her enlightenment, when England annexes a country she does not allow its inhabitants as much freedom as does even autocratic Russia." This sapient observation is another proof, however, of how little capable our affectionate cousins are of satisfactorily doing a job they are very fond of undertaking—directing the management of the British Empire. A few weeks ago they were all advising England that the best way to deal with the conspirators who have usurped the government of Ireland was to do as the United States *did not do* in the case of the Southern rebels—to retire the Queen's Government from the country, and legally establish the Government of the National League in its place. And we suspect their idea of what is required in Burmah is not a whit sounder than this disinterested advice about Ireland; perhaps, however, if the States should ever rise out of their present somewhat limited political state to the government of a world-wide empire, their grasp of the science of politics may be better. In the meantime, let us assure the *Record* that the troubles in Burmah do not arise from any denial of Home Rule to the Burmese, but from the neglect of the late Home Rule Administration in England to follow up with vigour the policy begun by the preceding Government. If that Administration of enthusiasts, doctrinaires, and adventurers had spared a little of the time they wasted over their quack Irish nostrum, for Burmah, Lord Salisbury, on his return to power, would not have found the condition of the country in a worse state than when he left it. But it may be hoped he is still in time; and if he addresses himself at once—as Mr. Gladstone should have done, by taking in hand the needful railway extension toward China—to satisfy the people that the British have come to stay, and that they are likely to derive substantial benefit from British rule, why, then, dacoity will soon cease; the so-called dacoits will be easily transformed into police and soldiers under the Queen's colours; and peace and prosperity will speedily follow the killing, burning, and destroying that has resulted from the time of the Gladstone Administration being so wholly engrossed by their desperate electioneering.

THE abandonment by Mr. Gladstone of the Land Purchase half of his Home Rule scheme is quite consistent with his repeated declarations that he adopted this feature, not from belief in the necessity of protecting the landlords against the proposed Irish Parliament, but in deference to English prejudices on the subject. This is the exact reverse of the position taken by Mr. John Morley, who, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Gladstone, insists absolutely that the landlords must be protected against the confiscation which he clearly foresees would result from a National League Government in Ireland. Whether this difference will breed internal disunion in the Disunionist camp it is not worth while now to inquire; sufficient to remark that on this head Mr. Gladstone must be acquitted from the probable charge that he has dropped Land Purchase from tactical motives, because experience has taught him that it will never be agreed to by the English Democracy; that in fact his Home Rule scheme went to wreck mainly on this very question in the late elections.

WITH respect, however, to Mr. Gladstone's statement that the idea of Home Rule has been growing in his mind for fifteen years—that for fifteen years he has never opposed Home Rule upon principle—we cannot help comparing a speech he made almost exactly fifteen years ago (the 27th September, 1871) with one delivered not more than ten months ago. In the first, referring to Mr. Butt's proposal of a separate Parliament for Ireland, he said:—"Can any sensible man, any rational man, suppose that at this time of day, in the condition of this world, we are going to disintegrate the great capital institutions of this country for the purpose of making our-

selves ridiculous in the sight of mankind and crippling any power we possess for bestowing benefits upon the inhabitants of Ireland?" And in his speech at Edinburgh on November 9th, 1885, just previous to the elections of last year, Mr. Gladstone said: "It will be a vital danger to this country and the Empire, at a time when the demand of Ireland for large powers of self-government is to be dealt with, if there is not in Parliament a party totally independent of the Irish vote. . . . Let me now suppose for argument's sake, I may suppose it possible, that the Liberal party might be returned to the coming Parliament—that is rather a staggering supposition, but I beg you to indulge me for an instant,—might be returned to the coming Parliament in a minority which might become a majority by the aid of the Irish vote, and I will suppose that, owing to some cause, the present Government has disappeared, and a Liberal party was called to deal with this great constitutional question of the government of Ireland, in a position where it was in a minority, dependent on the Irish vote for converting it into a majority. Now, gentlemen, I tell you seriously and solemnly that, though I believe the Liberal party to be honourable, patriotic, and trustworthy, in such a position as that, it would not be safe for it to enter on the consideration of a measure in respect to which, at the first steps of its progress, it would be in the power of a party coming from Ireland to say, "Unless you do this and unless you do that, we will turn you out to-morrow." This utterance is most remarkable in view of what actually afterwards occurred: it might be inscribed on the page of history as the epitaph of the late Gladstonian Administration; for it exactly describes the temptation to which Mr. Gladstone afterwards so miserably succumbed: and we much fear that the idea of Home Rule, so far from having been germinating in Mr. Gladstone's mind for fifteen years was of a mushroom growth, having its root in a design to thwart the English constituencies in their emphatic condemnation of the right honourable gentleman's methods of government last autumn; and there is, we submit, much in Mr. Gladstone's speech of November 9th, 1885, to lead to the suspicion that his sudden conviction on the subject of Home Rule, following within a few weeks the speech, and the defeat he foreshadowed with its probable result, was not honestly come by.

It is hardly credible that the German Emperor should have advised Prince Alexander to make his humble submission to the Czar, without first making sure that the submission would be effectual. It looks more like a desperate attempt of the Prince's own to placate his implacable enemy; an invertebrate step which only invited the brutal answer returned. Whosoever is responsible, the submission exhibited a fatal degree of weakness; and no wonder the Czar seized a welcome opportunity as well to insult the hated Prince as to slap the face of Europe. Whether the smart of this rebuff will prove unbearable by Europe is now the question. The situation is perilous on all sides. Germany's attitude on the subject is still an enigma; but Austria can hardly submit tamely to such a blunt and overbearing assertion of Russian predominance in the Balkans; Turkey cannot see with equanimity a Russian province set up at the very door of Constantinople; Roumania, Servia, and the other States of the Balkans, ought to have something to say about the vanishing prospect of Balkan unity; and Greece will certainly seize the slightest excuse to invade Thessaly and Albania. She missed her opportunity by hesitancy and trust in the Powers the last time the pot boiled over; but this is a mistake she will not repeat: she will have if she can a *fait accompli*, instead of a claim, to present to the next Conference on Balkan affairs. And England? England's action must depend altogether on that of Bismarck, who, however, is playing his own hand. England has a definite policy; but she is not bound alone to carry the whole of Eastern Europe on her shoulders: the Danube is a German river, and the Danube it is that is threatened by Russian aggression in the Balkans; therefore let the German Powers see to it. England can protect her own peculiar interest as far as they may be affected by any threatened change in the ownership of Constantinople; and to this end mainly, if the German Powers step out of Russia's path through European Turkey to the Bosphorus her diplomacy should be directed. To prevent Russia from making Asia Minor a vantage-ground, to seize Constantinople should be England's object; not, however, for the sake of Constantinople, but because, if Russian influence should prevail in Asia Minor, that would in itself be a serious menace to England's interests in the far East.

AN anecdote which throws some light upon an enigmatic side of the negro character was told in the course of the discussion which followed Dr. Ogle's monograph on suicide at the last meeting of the British Statistical Society. Many years ago a West India regiment stationed at Kingston was afflicted with a martinet colonel, whose severities led to an epidemic of suicide