

accord to Mr. Stout's ewe lamb and the older one all the indulgence that is their due. Why, indeed, should not the devil have his own?

A SIGNIFICANT SPEECH. THE expression of sympathy with Mr. Parnell and his aspirations on the part of the Vice-President of the United States is very significant and it is little to be wondered at if has excited a storm of indignation in all quarters where the Irish cause is opposed. It seems to prove the falsehood of that statement we so often see advanced to the effect that the sympathy with Ireland felt by the American people properly so-called is but doubtful, and that it is but Irish-Americans, and those who for objects of their own desire to stand well with them, who are the advocates and well-wishers of their cause. But even if an official so highly placed were to show himself desirous of conciliating the Irish population the fact would still be very important, for it would show how great was their power in the common-wealth proving at the same time that anything done for the sake of their favour was not regarded as likely to offend any equivalent body of their fellow-citizens. We may then take it as admitted that the Irish cause stands well with the American people as a whole, and that they watch its progress towards success with interest and approval. That such a condition of things should create anger and consternation in England is but natural. They have been accustomed there to view the American disposition as represented by such examples, for instance, as Mr. Russell Lowell, anxious to proclaim himself an Englishman in everything but the accidents of birth-place, and ever ready to protest, so far as his official position allowed of it, against anything tending to favour the Irish cause. One of the English newspapers, moreover, that cry out in condemnation of the Vice-President's speech expresses an assurance that Americans residing in England will also disown its sentiments, and the blow has evidently been felt as doubly severe owing to its being unexpected. It has rudely interrupted English concert, and dispelled an agreeable popular illusion with provoking suddenness. The English Press, it would seem, has talked in a very bold and even threatening strain concerning this matter, and one organ at least has more than hinted at its affording a sufficient cause for a hostile declaration. We do not expect, however, that anything of the kind will take place. We are hardly destined to see a bombardment of any American port occasioned by English fears as to the American attitude towards Ireland. Nor, on the other hand, do we expect to witness the landing of American troops on the shores of Ireland with a view towards bringing about the independence of that country. The very utmost that will occur will be a little protesting, with civil explanations in reply tending to appease but meaning very little. And the speech of the Vice President will still stand for what it is worth. Its meaning, we say again, is either that an official of so high a rank, representing in this matter the great body of American opinion, truly and sincerely sympathises with the Irish cause, and ardently desires its success, in which case a very important effect must be produced upon the English mind which is singularly sensitive as to the reputation of England in the world; or it means that so high an official finds the Irish element in the Great Republic so strong and vigorous, that he feels obliged to go out of his way, and act somewhat inconsistently with the position he occupies, in the desire to conciliate it, and secure its lasting friendship. And this, perhaps, would be the more significant interpretation of the two, as it would open a way for almost unlimited speculations as to the possibilities of the future.

FRUITS OF PROGRESS.

ANYTHING that illustrates for us the progress of the period and shows us the true condition of the world, more or less separated from the ancient traditions, the control of religion, and the influence of the Church should be of interest to us. The

onward march of the times should be such as to fill us with admiration for the present and hope for the future, enabling us by its brilliancy to throw aside the last vestiges of superstition, and to recognise how much better is this condition of things than that which formerly prevailed. Very interesting, then, do we find a certain article in the London *Spectator* for August 22nd which gives us details concerning one of those countries in which the marks of progress should be most evident, since the steps taken there to break away from the past and to set up the new and better order of things have been exceptionally energetic, and were not only the object of most certain hopes, but are now constantly pointed out as having already resulted in all that is excellent and hopeful. We allude to Italy, which having been raised from the dead by the great deliverer of the age, whose memory is embalmed in the sanctum sanctorum of every friend of the people, should afford us an example of popular happiness not to be equalled anywhere, much less surpassed. Certain strikes, then, having occurred in this model kingdom, and among the enfranchised masses of humanity whom it contains, the *Spectator* explains them as follows:—"The immediate cause of the outbreak is said to be the inability of the peasants to pay the King's taxes; but the rioters are much more likely to be agricultural labourers, whose condition is probably more deplorable than that of the tillers of the

soil in any other European country, Russia not excepted. . . . According to the report of the Commission appointed by the Italian Parliament in 1877, and whose inquiries extended over several years, the lot of proprietors and farmers, if not brilliant, is at least tolerable, whereas anything worse than the condition of the labourers it is hard to conceive. The members of the Commission failed to arrive at any exact conclusion as to the average pay of these unfortunates. According to some it runs from threepence to fourpence a day, according to others to sevenpence, without making any allowance for loss of time, either through bad weather or ill-health. For this pittance they have to work like galley slaves, and out of it such of them as have families must provide food for their children, and keep a roof of some sort over their heads. The utmost that a labourer can earn *with the help of his family*, says Signor Arcozzi Manio, a large land-owner, is 884 lire a year, equal to a little more than tenpence a day. Their food consists of a coarse black bread, made of a mixture of rye and maize of inferior quality, rice soup, and dry haricots dressed with rancid oil. Wine and flesh-meat they never taste. 'Hard labour combined with insufficient food,' writes Signor Meru in the *Bibliothèque Universelle*, 'necessarily reacts with disastrous effect on the health of our agricultural masses who are forced by want to live in wretched hovels destitute alike of sunshine and fresh air? The report of the Commission gives in this regard details which cannot be read without a shudder. In Lombardy as well as in the south whole families live pell-mell in huts reeking with every sort of abomination, 'in a state of revolting promiscuousness.' 'It is in the neighbourhood of rich and opulent Milan,' writes Commander Jancini (a gentleman who has published a summary of the chief facts contained in the Report), that the labourers are the most wretched; the fever of exhaustion (pellagra) and phthisis make terrible ravages amongst them. They are worse fed than dogs.'" Let us, for our part, remark, moreover, that it was to the cost of these unfortunate people that their enlightened rulers—the men who form the admiration of all the Protestant and infidel world—robbed, oppressed, and banished the religious orders, the friends of the poor, and from whose hospitable doors no one demanding aid there, was ever repulsed. As to the property, so confiscated, and in reality stolen from the needy population, it went, as we have learned from other sources, to enrich officials, whose greed, nevertheless, must be excused in consideration of their enlightenment. Was it not necessary to banish superstition from Italy, and were not those engaged in the task deserving of their reward? The *Spectator* continues:—"This year the agitation seems to be more formidable than it was last; the prisons of Mantua are overflowing with prisoners who have been brought in from the country, and the trouble is still far from being at an end. The authorities are seriously disquieted, and with reason, by the reluctance of the soldiers to act against the rebellious peasantry, with whom their sympathy is so great that they often given them a part of their rations."—Unreasonable soldiers who sympathise wish those of whose flesh and bone they are in their misery, not understanding that the army of a kingdom united in the cause of progress should be above all that savours of the old-world Christianity. The commission gives several reasons for the want that prevails and among the rest, that of heavy taxation. "The taxes on land in Italy are equal to a charge of 30 per cent on the nett income derived therefrom. Nor is this the worst, for the imposts are unequal. In some districts they are more, in others less. In the neighbourhood of Cremona, for instance, the fiscal burdens on land are equal to an income tax of 60 per cent. per annum. Besides these there are taxes on cattle, on salt, and on personal property while the Protectionist policy of the Italian government has the effect of artificially enhancing the price of many articles used in husbandry." But let progress go its way, though all the world should starve, and even the ultimate beggarman must sacrifice his last rag to it. Enfranchisement Italy must play her part as a great power, or enfranchisement is in danger of suffering a loss of fame—among old-fashioned people, that is, for in the enlightened it will maintain its place, though nature itself should call out against it. It is interesting to learn, meantime, that the effect of the enlightened system now prevailing in Italy has been in some respects similar to that following on the enlightened English rule in Ireland, and if Protestantism, for English rule in Ireland has been distinctively and above all things Protestant, and the Revolution go once more hand in hand let us not be surprised. The alliance is only that of the parent with its offspring. Says the *Spectator* once more; "The young and vigorous, who desire to better themselves leave the country in droves. Those of them who can raise a few liras go to Australia or America; the less fortunate foot it over the Alps and seek work in Germany, Switzerland, and France. According to official figures there are now living in divers foreign countries upwards of 1,200,000 Italian immigrants, and this estimate is believed to be much below the mark. Ten years ago the emigration was at the rate of 40,000; last year there left the kingdom 140,000 individuals, by far the greater number of whom were adult males in the prime of life." The Italian, like the Irish emigrant, also remembers, those whom he has left behind him and sends back a great part of his earnings to aid them, the income