

the scarcity of provisions, the pressure of poor-rates, bread riots, the horrors of work-houses, the swarms of vagrants, are dwelt upon from different points of view, sometimes with pity, more often with the alarm, indignation, and cruelty of fear; but always with the assumption that the facts were notorious and undeniable." As to vagrants he says, "The lowest class is treated in a tone of loathing that renders more natural than we had been accustomed to think it, that well-known letter of the Duchess of Buckingham to Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, on the impertinence of Methodism and its outrage on good breeding in reducing all ranks to the common level of sinners. 'It is monstrous to be told,' says her grace, 'that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl the earth.' The vagrant classes were really regarded as vermin to be hunted down; creatures that crawled on the earth, and must be got rid of." Thomas Alcock, writing on the poor-laws in the middle of the century, he tells us, lays down three degrees of punishment for contumacy. "First, if any idle person shall be found begging twelve hours after notice to depart, he shall be sent to the House of Correction and hard labour for a week, and then dismissed to his place of settlement; on a second offence he shall be taken up, whipped, and confined to hard labour for a month; 'And upon a third offence to be confined as above till the quarter sessions of the peace, and on proof of such a person being an incorrigible rogue, etc., to be transported, made a slave of, or whatever the quarter sessions shall think proper.'" Of what were the dictates uttered by the national religion of the day on the subject we find an example in the following extract from a sermon on the text "Be ye therefore merciful." "Here there is one caution to be laid down, which is of the last consequence to be carefully attended to; and that is that the vagrant beggar is an eternal exception to all the precepts and dictates of Christian charity. The race of vagrant beggars are the vilest race that ever cursed the earth." Here and there, nevertheless, there was a voice raised on behalf of these poor wretches, and it also serves to bring before us their miserable condition. "To see our fellow-creatures," says one writer, "hunted from parish to parish like noxious animals for no other crime than beggary must fill every compassionate breast with the deepest concern." "What would a stranger say," inquires another, "to find a people exhibiting such a distinguished external appearance of prosperity, yet at the very same time their streets swarming with wretched objects exposed to all the horrors of want and misery; their roads infested with lawless miscreants, to the terror of innocent travellers; their parishes groaning under a burden of poor wretches crammed together in places miscalled workhouses, where they linger out an indolent nasty existence, their numbers increasing yearly to such a degree that it has long engaged the attention of the legislature and exercised the ingenuity of individuals in vain." The beggars found also their apologists, who pleaded for those in real distress and protested against the tyranny exercised towards the aged. "One writer (1775) explains that this tyranny was carried to the greatest pitch in large cities and in small solitary villages, and ventures to point out that the obstinacy and profligacy of the poor, which is the excuse for everything, found its parallel among their betters, observing that 'many of the maintainers of the poor will swear profusely and drink to excess as well as the poor themselves, but would think it hard to be starved, and whipped, and poisoned, as punishment for their swearing and drunkenness.' He quotes 'a very just remark of the late Mr. Fielding, whose opportunities of knowledge of this kind were as little circumscribed as most men's,' that 'the vices of the poor are better known than their miseries; they starve, they freeze, and rot among themselves; they beg and steal and rob among their betters.'" On the whole, then, it may be clearly seen that the condition of the poor in England during the eighteenth century was by no means such as to justify the harsh comments made so often by Englishmen on the treatment of the poor in France, and further that the Church of the Reformation has not much to gain by comparing her charity even with that of corrupt Catholicism.

OUT of "Oliver Twist" we have never yet heard of ANOTHER STEP IN ADVANCE. anything like the tactics hinted at by Mr. Saunders, M.H.R., at Kaikoura the other night. The education of children to make "headway in the world," the continuation of the education vote for this purpose and the consequent repudiation of its debts by the country, are a programme of the most remarkable kind. Fagan himself could hardly have drawn out one more adapted to the propagation of "prigs." Godlessness, then, is going apace; our legislators who banished God from the schools, are now, as they may well be, entering upon the design of banishing common honesty from the public transactions of the colony. The Supreme Law-Giver has been set aside, and moral obligation necessarily retires with Him into the background. It is all very charming and appropriate. It is, however but extending the system that already exists here: education that has been in part supported by the plunder of Catholics is now to be supported as well by the plunder of the public creditor. If the

character of the future colonists of New Zealand at all answers to the method in which their intellectual needs have been provided for, they will be found a very wide-awake race indeed. Meantime, we fancy the public creditor, also, may have a word or two to say on the subject, it is not in the least likely that he is going to stand with arms folded looking on while New Zealand closes on his capital and applies it to fitting her rising generation to make "headway in the world." He will consider, no doubt, that quite enough headway has been already made here, and will cry "stop thief" sufficiently loud to interfere, at least, with the perfect coolness of our movements. It is imprudent of Fagan to speak out so boldly; speculation carried on under the cover of bigotry is a different thing from open robbery under no disguise. It may be as immoral, but the chances of its succeeding are infinitely greater.

ACCOUNTS still reach us from Ireland of apparitions APPARITIONS there of the Blessed Virgin—all of them most INTERESTING. interesting, and some of them exceedingly beautiful.

At the now celebrated church of Knock, in Clare, in Limerick, the Immaculate Mother of God is said to have manifested herself in various ways; the last vision, of which a description has been received by us, being that said to have appeared to the children at the Convent of Mount St. Vincent, near Limerick, by whom it was seen in the sky on the Feast of the Assumption. It was a vision of the Blessed Virgin holding a rosary in her hands, and moving through the clouds to a position above a certain portion of the convent on which there stands a statue of her. It was seen by all the children from various parts of the grounds at once, and afterwards lights were seen by some of the Sisters, as well as by the crowd that assembled outside the convent walls. We cannot pronounce anything more than a private opinion on these things, and we give it for what it is worth; but at the same time we see particular reasons for receiving as genuine the reports of the visions in question. So far as we can judge, it seems a most opportune time for manifestations of the supernatural in Ireland, and confirmation of the Irish people in their faith. It is, in short, a time of peculiar trials for them: not only have they been tried in temporal matters by the adverse seasons that have now, we are happy to say, concluded, but in spiritual matters also they are being sorely tempted; for attempts are being made to detach them from the guidance that has always been their best support and stay in all their misfortunes. The circumstances of the times have thrown the country open to agitators to a remarkable degree, and many of them are men who, though they may mean well, are destitute of the Catholic spirit that alone could make them the safe leaders of a Catholic people. Some of the most influential of these men are using their influence, then, to incline the people against the guidance of their priests; Follow your priests, they say, when they are patriots, but when they are not, reverence them still as priests, but otherwise avoid their advice. But were such influence yielded to, were the thin edge of the weapon that should separate the people from their priests thus introduced the misfortune would be incalculable. The breach must grow and widen until the faith of the country that has endured through all persecutions and misery, sustained by the union between priests and people, would become cold, if not altogether lost, and Ireland would receive throughout her boundaries, where all has been hitherto so unwavering, the elements of that rationalism that elsewhere is proving itself so destructive to all that is good and holy. We can well believe, then, that heaven has beheld with pity this time of exceeding trial, and, mindful of the long centuries of suffering for the faith borne by our people, has deigned to make special manifestations calculated to support their constancy, and to strengthen their fervour, and their belief that the Catholic religion faithfully adhered to is the one thing needful for them.

The ruins of the sanctuary at Emmaus have at length, after a year of dilatory negotiations, come into the possession of Catholics. The agreement was signed last month, and the property is now secured to Mlle. Dartigaux de Saint-Cric, of Pau, foundress of the Carmelite convent at Bethlehem, a wealthy lady. She proposes to restore the sanctuary, and to found close by it a Carmelite monastery, that the religious may take care of it and keep it open to pilgrims who may visit it.

The Pope's desire to erect a worthy monument to the memory of Pius IX. in the Basilica of St. Peter's will lead, it is said, to an international competition among artists. It is not intended that the body of the late Pope shall be removed from its resting place in the Basilica of San Lorenzo, beyond the walls, since it was the wish and special direction of Pius IX. that his remains should repose forever in that place. At San Lorenzo a monument of the simplest kind will be raised to him, but in St. Peter's it is proposed to set up a work of art that shall properly commemorate his long pontificate, and the eventful changes and events which marked his career.

The Peruvians sent a torpedo boat adrift among the Chilean war vessels which blockaded the port in Callao Bay. The boat had a deck-load of fruit, and the Chileans on board a transport ship were tempted to capture it. They lowered a boat and towed the destructive machine alongside their ship and commenced to unload the cargo. The torpedo exploded, blew the ship to atoms, and killed and drowned 150 persons.