

## THE POPE A FREEMASON.

To the Editor of the 'Times.'

SIR—I observe that your columns are not yet shut against the stale announcement of the Pope having been a Freemason in his youth. It is loathsome to Catholics to hear this statement repeated. They know certainly that all crimes are remissable in this world. Yet that their Pope should have given such scandal, and ever been in the state of damnation, is to them painful to think of. The thing has been denied over and over again. It has been proved false and ludicrous. The tale is still rehearsed, either to vex the Catholics or to mock the Pope, and no doubt to gratify Masonry. Well, sir, to you and to your readers I will give a proof that will settle the matter at once. In France there is a certain law, even apart from the law for libel, by which those who propagate false news in the Press are amenable to a criminal court. Such proved to be the case in that country a few months ago in regard to the news of the Pope having been a Freemason. On the 1st December, at Lyons, G. Petilleau, editor of the *Frondeur*, was found guilty of the above offence, and sentenced to the penalty attached to it. Should you wish to have the proceedings in full, I will be most happy to forward them to you. So far, the French law upholds God's commandment: Thou shalt not bear false testimony against thy neighbour. In New Zealand there is no enactment against the propagation of false news, but the Divine law is universal, and there ought to be a conscience everywhere, especially among journalists.—I am, &c.,  
Wellington, 5th May, 1876.

JAMES DOYLE.

## EASTER SERVICES IN WAIKATO.

SPECIAL Divine Services were performed by our worthy resident priest, the Rev. Father Golden, at Rangiaohia and Kihikihi on Easter Day, after which he delivered most impressive sermons at each place, which were listened to with marked attention throughout by large and attentive congregations. The offertory, we learn, was large.

### THE NEW CHURCH AT OHAUPO

will be completed, Father Golden informs us, in about a fortnight. The church building is situated in a most commanding position, and will, when finished, be an ornament to Ohaupo and the Waikato. The new church will shortly be formally opened with due solemnity, of which we shall take care to advise our readers. It is exceedingly gratifying to see the congregation of the faithful in Waikato so fully alive to their own spiritual necessities, and the advancement of the Holy Mother Church, as they have repeatedly shown themselves. It is only a few months since we were pleased to notice the endeavors of our Catholic fellow-settlers to provide for themselves a place of worship at Taupiri, and now it is our pleasing duty to record a similar act of zeal in such good work in another part of the district.—*Waikato Times.*

## DIOCESE OF TUAM.

THE Lenten Pastoral addressed by his Grace the Most Rev. Dr. MacHale to the Very Rev. and Rev. clergy and laity of the diocese of Tuam, was read on Sunday in all the churches in his diocese. His Grace says,—“Never was the want of any fixed principle of belief on the part of the opponents of the Catholic Church more manifest to the world than during those latter years, when the wildest decisions of past times have been called up from the forgetfulness in which they slumbered, and men, glorying in their weakness, have aspired to the strange distinction of being only the brethren of beasts of the field, with no loftier destiny than the dust, to which their bodies are dissolved, and utterly insensible to having been created in God's image, in order to be sharers for all eternity in God's ineffable bliss. Those foolish men remind one of the significant language of the inspired writer, ‘Men when in honor did not understand, but became as one of the beasts of the field.’ Not to occupy your attention further with those creatures than to solicit your pity for their blindness, and your prayers for their conversion, we proceed, as we have been wont, to advert to the manner in which you are called upon to sanctify the coming forty days of Lent. Although the duty of preaching and propagating our holy religion belongs in a special manner to the clergy, to co-operate with them and give them every assistance in carrying on this holy work has been ever deemed the glory of the Irish race. As long as they were a free people that freedom was always manifested in dispensing among the neighboring nations the blessings of their religion, which they never neglected but when they ceased to be free. There is now no overt persecution to create alarm; but there is an incessant study to introduce educational contrivances through school boards, whose history or example affords no inducement for their adoption. It is to be regretted that several well-meaning men even among the clergy, unsuspecting of the crafty designs of those untrusting intermeddlers, suffer themselves to be so easily acquiescent in projects which they have afterwards reason to deplore. Besides, all these educational schemes add considerably to the pecuniary burdens of the people. All the school projects now afloat are not unlike those which, some years ago, urged several of the gentry to co-operate with an adverse government in planting over the land very expensive model schools and infidel colleges. What has been the consequence? That the zeal of the clergy and their faithful flocks took the alarm, and those hostile buildings remain to the present day striking monuments of the folly of their projectors, as well as of the zeal and piety of the people. It would be well if a portion of those funds, originally belonging to the Catholic Church, of which it has been despoiled, were restored to it for assisting the education of so many Levites, bereft of the adequate means to complete the varied course of classics, philosophy, and theology required by candidates for the priesthood. In the ab-

sence of any such assistance, we are obliged to appeal to the pious generosity of our flocks to come to the seasonable aid of the Church, and to enable our young candidates to realize their aspirations to the priesthood in preference to any secular vocation. It is said, that through the generous contributions of the people the ecclesiastical students of several other dioceses are engaged to go through their regular course of studies at Maynooth, enjoying free places; so creditable a state of things will, we trust, have a beneficial influence in persuading our clergy and people to exert themselves in imitating their example.”

## LIFE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

WHILE on a visit to Herne Bay in 1871, Mr. Frank Buckland had an interview with W. Wood, a retired diver, who told some curious stories of under-water life. Mr. Wood made his first real start in life by an extraordinary, and, as it turned out, a very lucky piece of diving. If the reader will look at the map of Ireland, he will see that outside Belfast Lough, and a little to the southwest, opposite Donaghadee, are situated the Copeland Islands. It so happened that a Whitstable man was a coastguardman in this district. He heard a legend that a ship laden with a heavy cargo of silver, had been wrecked off the Copeland Islands some half a century ago. He therefore communicated with some of his friends at Whitstable who were divers. Accordingly, Mr. Wood and four others put their diving dresses on board a vessel, and sailed from Whitstable to Donaghadee. It appears that the people on board the ship had tried to escape, having first filled their shirt sleeves with dollars; but in getting up the rocks many of them had fallen back and met with an untimely end, as the weight of the dollars had kept their heads under water. No one had ever disturbed the wreck since the vessel went down, so Mr. Wood and his friends set to work to find out where she was. They put on their diving dress, and for two or three days walked about to and fro at the bottom of the sea, in about forty feet of water, searching for the treasure. This they did by clearing away the weeds and turning over the stones with crowbars, and feeling for the dollars with their hands, as the water was too thick to see. The wood part of the wreck itself had entirely perished through lapse of time and the ravages of sea-worms. After a long and careful search at last they came upon the dollars; they were mostly spread out among the stones, but many had slipped down among a heap of iron ore which had formed the ballast of the ship. Many of the dollars were worn thin by the action of the water. When hunting among the wreck for dollars Mr. Wood had some curious under-water adventures. One of the divers complained that he was annoyed by a lobster and couldn't work. Mr. Wood learned the whereabouts of the lobster and went down after him. He soon discovered Mr. Lobster, sitting under a rock, looking as savage as a lobster can look. His feelers were pointed well forward, and he held out his two great claws wide open in a threatening attitude. Wood, knowing the habits of lobsters, offered this fellow his crowbar, which he immediately nipped with his claws. Then, watching his opportunity, he passed his signal-line over the lobster's tail, made it fast, and signalled to the men above to “haul away.” This they did, and instantly away went Mr. Lobster flying through the water into the air above with his claws still expanded, and as scared as a lobster could be. A great conger eel also paid the divers a visit. He was an immense fellow, and kept swimming around Wood, but would not come near him. Wood was afraid of his hand being bitten, as a conger's bite is very bad. He once knew a diver whose finger was seized by a conger. The brute took all the flesh clean off the man's finger. A conger is a very dangerous animal to a man when diving in the water. However, this conger kept swimming round about Wood, so he took his clasp-knife out and tried to stab him; but the conger would not come near enough to be “knifed.” It was a long while before the conger would go away; and even after he had gone away Wood could not go on working, because he was not sure the brute had gone for good, and he might have come out of some corner at any minute and nipped his fingers.—*Chambers's Journal.*

## WINTER LIFE IN SIBERIA.

A LETTER from Siberia says:—“Our dinner party in the evening—and it was really a dinner party—was extremely merry. Each one laid his stores under contribution. Some brought out frozen bread, others frozen caviare, others still frozen preserves, others again sausages which could not be bent even if put against the knee and pulled with all the strength of both arms. Can you imagine without laughing the appearance presented of seven half-famished people sitting at table with thirty different dishes before them, and unable to touch one of them except at the risk of breaking their teeth? Nothing could be done except to wait patiently for the dishes to be thawed. Gradually, as each article of food softened, faces brighten, and when at last a knife entered one of the dishes there were shouts of triumph, which announced the beginning of the meal. At the close of the meal we had some excellent fruit, which had been kept frozen. Throughout Siberia, as soon as very cold weather sets in, all fruit is placed out of doors with a northern exposure, that the sun may never touch them. They are frozen through and through, and retain their flavor as completely as if just plucked from the tree. When placed upon the table they are as hard as wood, and when they fall accidentally upon the floor they make the same noise as a wooden ball would do. The heat of the dining-room gradually softens them, and they resume their original form. When eating some game one day, I, out of curiosity, asked how long it had been killed. I was told, ‘Over two months ago.’ When cold weather sets in, nearly every butcher kills all the meat he requires during the winter. Fish become so solid that in all the markets they are seen leaning against the walls on their tails, no matter what their length or weight may be.”