

reports during the last few days. If we may judge by the language published concerning that which the reporters pass over as impossible to publish, the *tout ensemble* must have been edifying indeed. The Society is called the "Rational Sick and Burial Association," and whatever it may produce in the way of burial, it must be admitted that as represented by the meetings in question it may at least produce extremely rational sickness.—Nothing can be more disgraceful than the reports to which we allude.

It is perhaps as a set off against the fact of the devotion and self-sacrifice shown by nuns and priests in attending on the cholera patients of France and Italy that the *St. James' Gazette* publishes certain assumed records narrating feats of drunkenness and the encouragement given to such by nuns and ecclesiastics in the middle ages, and that our worthy contemporary the *Dunedin Evening Herald* quotes the article in question. Doubtful records of the middle ages are we know quite as much evidence as the ordinary Protestant requires, or, for the matter of that, can produce in order to counteract the influences likely to arise from the admiration deserved by Catholic heroism in the present. But the great Protestant Tradition must be maintained at any cost, if only by calumniating the past in order to divert attention from the present evidence. It is, nevertheless, true that Walter Mapes, or Map, Chaplain to Henry II, and commonly called the "jovial Archdeacon," wrote at least one drinking song in Leonine verse—but as he also wrote powerful satires in condemnation of ecclesiastical irregularities his transgression in that respect may perhaps be looked upon as in some degree mitigated. The fact, moreover, that a poet writes a drinking song is by no means conclusive as to drinking habits on his own part or a desire to encourage them on the part of others. Father Prout, again, another ecclesiastic by the way, says "A 'water-poet' is a poor creature in general." Meantime, whatever may have been the accusations brought against nuns or priests in the middle ages there can be but little suspicions of undue joviality or of carousing attached to those nuns who have succeeded one another, as death called upon them to do, in the hospitals of Toulon and Marseilles or the priests who have ministered to their flock without flinching in the pestilential atmosphere of Naples.—But these are matters concerning whose details we shall find but scant quotation in the columns of our contemporary the *Evening Herald* or those of any other journal that stoops to pander to bigotry.

THE report that a German firm have undertaken to supply the navy of their country with coal at certain islands in the South Pacific is suggestive when we consider that the annexation of Angra Pequena followed on the settlement there of a German merchant. There is a sentence also in an article published in connection with the asserted colonial designs of Austria by the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, that seems to have some bearing on the case. It is to the effect that commercial business must be established before its protection or development could be thought of. But coaling stations may well be found capable of a very full development,

SABBATARIANISM is in the ascendant among us. In section 13 of the Police Offences Bill passed the other day in committee the following clause occurs:—"Any person who, on Sunday, . . . plays at any game or pastime, in any public place, or discharges any firearms, shall for every such offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding £10." It is true that such silly interference with the liberty of the people, and above all, with that liberty of conscience concerning which so many boasts are made, still obtains, as a relic of religious oppression, in the Old Country; and, as a case in point, we find that a zealous parson brought a young man before the magistrates the other day, at Clane, in Kildare, for playing marbles with his little brothers on Sunday—the magistrates very wisely dismissing the case. But that is no reason in the world why so senseless and ridiculous a law should be re-enacted here. We do not know whether Mr. Stout's allowing the clause to pass unopposed was a move of the Mephistopheles-like sort, his intention being to discredit religion by making it absurd—but it may well have been so, that is, if Mr. Stout could stoop to such an action, and it is otherwise impossible to account for the course taken by him. At any rate, to impose such restrictions on the freedom of people who dissent altogether from the Puritan notions of the Sabbath, and either hold them as a monstrous distortion of the due observance of the day as commanded by the Christian Church, or reject them as wholly superstitious, is to act a very unwise and oppressive part, and one that may lead to a most undesirable reaction. There is still some hope that the Legislative Council may interfere to check the threatened mischief, and it is a case in which their preventive influence may be very laudably exercised.

As we anticipated the Castle inquiry into the revelations made by Casey and Philbin have simply resulted in the determined whitewashing of Bolton—that is, on the side of him that is turned towards the anti-Irish party—whitewash won't stick on the other side. The *Nation* of August 30, refers to the case as follows:—"Earl Spencer on Saturday last wrote to his Grace the Most Rev. Dr. McEvilly, Archbishop of Tuam, officially informing him that no public inquiry would be granted to test the accuracy or inaccuracy of the statements made by Casey and Philbin, the informers in the Maamtrasna murder trials. The Lord Lieutenant assured his Grace that a prolonged and

searching private inquiry has been held, and that this inquiry established two things, viz., that Myles Joyce and the four men now undergoing penal servitude were really guilty, and that neither Casey nor Philbin was in any way tempted to give false evidence. But who proves all this? Why, the very men who are accused. It is as if a party of culprits presided at their own trial, and, after taking each other's evidence, returned a verdict of acquittal. George Bolton is the chief party against whom a serious charge is made, yet George Bolton is held guiltless, just because in the secrecy of the Castle he denies the truth of what Casey and Philbin say. Why should the three men not be put in the witness-box and examined and cross-examined publicly? This is the only way in which the truth might be arrived at. Besides, if the Castle has such a strong case on its side, what possible objection can there be to the holding of a public inquiry? George Bolton's private word is not sufficient in the minds of the Irish people to disprove what the two informers state. If no public inquiry is held, the Irish public will believe that Myles Joyce was hanged illegally, and that four innocent men were transported."

DENUNCIATIONS of the Encyclical *Humanum Genus* continue to be the order of the day among Freemasons and their friends, if they reckon anyone outside of their own order as such which is somewhat questionable. There can, however, be no doubt whatever but that the Holy Father counted on the storm that must arise, and was prepared to meet it. We are told that the Pope has been tardy in his condemnation, but other Popes had preceded him in it; that he has written a tiresome rigmarole, but that depends on the ability of the particular editor to judge; that many clergymen belong to the society, but clergymen cannot consistently belong to a society where the Zendavesta for example, holds a place on a level with that occupied by the Bible; that the Grand Orient of Paris has been condemned because of its atheism, but prominent English masons continue to make common cause with the Grand Orient, as for instance Admiral Hewett the other day, and Masons in communion with the Grand Orient are still admitted to take part in English Masonic ceremonies; that all Christians should worship in common the "Supreme Author of the Universe," but Catholics worship the Triune God alone; that princes and nobles belong to the order, but there is nothing to ensure princes and nobles against deceit, indeed the importance ascribed to their membership may make it all the more desirable that they should be deceived. Finally the unbounded charity of the society is vaunted, but there is every reason to believe it to be a charity confined to the members of the Society only, with those who are or have been dependant on them. And, indeed, if it were so vast, self-sacrificing, and universal as it is asserted to be, there should be hardly any poverty left to relieve, considering the numbers of the Freemasons, and the great wealth of many of them. That the Society is charitable within its own limits and in more ways than one no one can deny. We have, indeed, lately had an example of this in the tender manner with which certain men accused of crime in Dublin have been treated—the men in question being Freemasons and those who managed their trials brothers in the order.

A GENTLEMAN the other day furnished a highly sensational report to our contemporary the *Otago Daily Times* concerning the cowardly conduct of an Irish policeman who preferred to put foolish questions to a Chinaman rather than attempt to stop a runaway horse that bade fair to damage the Chinaman's express. It turns out, however, that the policeman was an Englishman—and we can only, therefore, account for the mistake by supposing that on hearing the said policeman speak without dropping his h's, as many Englishmen do, some Cockney scribe took it as a matter of course that he must be "h'Irish," and invented his paragraph according to his prejudices and breeding.

The friends of Mr. J. D. Pope, late of Lyttelton, will be glad to hear that he has settled in Wellington where he has found congenial occupation on the staff of the *Evening Press*. Mr. Pope as a literary man should soon make his mark in Wellington, as he is an accomplished writer, and well up to the work generally. He has in the past furnished many well-written reports, and able articles to the TABLET, as well as to several other newspapers in the colony. In Lyttelton Mr. Pope will be especially remembered as the founder of St. Joseph's choir, and as organist of the Church for many years. He also was chiefly instrumental in establishing the brass band, and in having the instruments vested in the Town Council in trust for the ratepayers. He was as well in many other respects a useful and energetic member of society, and we have no doubt but that he will ere long have secured for himself a high reputation and many friends in his new sphere of life—in which we wish him success.

THE Cliptomaniac of our contemporary the *Evening Star* descends to the Limerick Police Court in search of a nasty case, in which some fellow cheated a girl of part of her fortune and married a richer one, in order to find an illustration of the marriage customs of the Irish peasantry.—The dirty records of a police court are not however, the place in which the customs of respectable people are to be discovered. If the gentleman, nevertheless, who clips news for our contemporary finds them congenial reading and thinks his subscribers have no higher tastes, we shall not dispute the matter with him.