

## WELLINGTON.

(From our own Correspondent.)

April 13.

THE most absorbing topics of news and gossip here during the past few weeks are the probabilities of an immediate war between Russia and England, and the means of strengthening our Colonial defences. The latter follows as of course from the importance of the former, and comes to the front periodically, whenever, at least, the cable informs us of there being any ominous signs of warfare apparent on the European horizon. The intelligence of there being Russian cruisers fitted out, destined for the Southern Pacific, seems to have now fully aroused the apathy of our local "horse guards," for active steps are being taken to fortify our valuable position as much as possible. The local defences, consisting of the erection of batteries for large ordnance, commanding the entrance to the harbour, are being pushed forward with all due dispatch, and are expected to be in position in complete telegraphic communication within a week or so. The batteries will be manned by a force of Armed Constabulary men, who are being instructed for that purpose and who will form a permanent artillery, or the nucleus of such a force. Active preparations are also being made for the immediate calling out of the first-class militia of the district. The existing commissions of all former militia officers are cancelled and the services of military officers are in requisition.

A feeling of uneasiness and alarm naturally prevades the female breast on such occasions as the present, when such signs of active warfare are abroad, and so many unexpected nocturnal commotions cause the more timid, at least, to believe that a Russian force has landed and are actually pillaging the city. A case in point came under my knowledge a few days since, which will show that this statement is not quite fictional. A peaceable inhabitant of our rising suburb of Newtown was induced through the strong inducements, nay, supplications of his better half, to purchase a revolver for the protection of their domicile, in the event of any Russian marauders discovering that retreat. The "shooting iron" was procured, loaded with great care and placed beneath the pillows to ensure its being to hand in case of being required on the shortest notice. A wakeful watch was now nightly kept during the "sma' hours ayant the twal" by husband and wife alternately, as a provision against any too sudden or unannounced indoor visit by such unwelcome visitors in search of booty. Things went on capitally in this manner for a few days, without any powder being wasted, until in the early hours of Good Friday morning when the sentinel wife aroused her liege lord, with the startling announcement that the enemy were upon them, for she had just heard the sounds of voices and footsteps in the back premises. They listened, yes, it was no false alarm,—the sound of muffled voices were plainly audible from the out-houses. Her husband grasped his instrument of defence, determined that if they were to be served *a la Russe*, they would sell their property, nay their lives, as dearly as possible. Without delaying to habilitate themselves in any other garments than those they had on, they stealthily proceeded in Indian file from the marital apartments to the back part of the premises where the aggressors would now be. Peering through the scullery windows, figures were visible groping around the wash-house. This was sufficient. After a fond embrace and an impressive request by the wife to be sure to do for all of them, or else they would be done for, the husband with valiant effort fired through the window into the outside darkness, deeming it were waste of the English language to give any admonitory notice of their intention to resist the cupidity of the Muscovites. The sound of two bodies falling against the building with a heavy thud, a low pitiable moan from one, and some pleading expression in the English vernacular from the other followed, breaking the stillness of the midnight air. This caused the shootist to pause in his bloody career and enquire in trembling accents, who were there. A voice as from the tomb replied "Oh, please sir, don't shoot no more we are only the baker's boys, bringin' the hot-cross bun, Oh, lud! oh, lud!" *Tableaux.* A fainting wife, a spectre-like figure wildly rushing outside the premises and exclaiming amid sobs over the swooning boy, "I've shot the baker! Oh! I've shot the baker."

I cannot chronicle any special celebration of the anniversary of Ireland's patron Saint, by the *Clan-na-Gael* of this city. A feeling of something akin to apathy seems to have crept over us for some years past, regarding the commemoration of St. Patrick's Day, which does not redound to the credit of Ireland's sons. There was a time when the celebration took the form of a dinner, at which all Irishmen could assemble whatever their varying creeds or political opinions, when speeches, anecdotes, and songs, "racy of the soil" abounded, which enkindled a spirit of unsectarian nationality and brought to the minds of many present the remembrance of scenes passed in dear old Ireland.

"That ling'ring haunt,  
The greenest spot on Mem'ry's waste."

Were it not for the sports organised by the Hibernian Society within the last few years, for the celebration of the occasion, St. Patrick's Day in Wellington could not now be distinguished from any other day in the calendar. Even for this small mark of appreciation of the day, the Society are blamed, and cold water thrown on their efforts, and that too in quarters where it should be otherwise. It is to be regretted that this Society, which is purely a benefit and non-political society, should be discountenanced and banned by the powers that be, as if it were a secret Society. There might be a reason for this, if another Catholic Society of similar objects, but with a less national appellation and sympathy, was proposed to be formed or in existence. In addition to the usual sports, the Hibernian Society this year arranged a capital concert appropriate to the occasion, which was held at the Athenaeum Hall, and was remarkably well patronised. An interesting feature of the entertainment was the introduction of a genuine Irish reel and jig, danced to the music, supplied by a real live Irish fiddler. It is needless to add that this part of the programme was thoroughly appreciated. The concert was repeated on

Easter Monday evening by special request. The proceeds of the concerts are intended to aid in the purchase of a splendid banner which the Society have ordered to be manufactured for it in Melbourne.

I must defer the mention of some other matters until my next.

## ST. PATRICKS DAY AT BLENHEIM.

(Marlborough Times, March 13.)

THE first sports in connection with the H.A.C.B. Society, which were held yesterday, passed off very satisfactorily. The members of the Society, to the number of about 60, assembled at the schoolroom at 9.30, and after forming two by two they marched through the town, the President and the other officers leading. The procession was marshalled by Mr. O'Neill, and presented quite an attractive appearance, each member having donned the regalia of the Society. They were accompanied by the Friendly Societies' Band, who played several selections along the line of route. After a halt in Market square the procession marched to Mr. H. Jellyman's paddock in Maxwell road, where the sports were held. The attendance during the earlier portion of the day was not large, but as the day wore on it was considerably augmented. Male adults to the number of 573 paid for admission, while the ladies and children were admitted free. Taking all things into consideration the Society are to be congratulated on the success of their first gathering.

The concert given in Ewart's hall last evening, under the auspices of the local H.A.C.B. Society, was the most successful of the kind we have known in the district. Owing to the great pressure on our space caused by the report of the sports and an exceptionally large amount of telegrams, we are unfortunately precluded from publishing a lengthy criticism of the efforts of the various performers. Although the late hour at which the sports concluded was calculated to deter a number from attending until long after the opening hour, the hall was simply crammed at a quarter to eight, and those who arrived late had to seek the kindly services of the obliging members of the H.A.C.B.S. to secure seats. Every endeavor was made to afford sitting room for a larger number of persons than the hall could comfortably accommodate, but everyone being in a good humour temporary discomfort was willingly put up with, and room was found for everybody. The concert was opened by an overture from the Oratorio "Elif" by the Blenheim String Band. The playing of the Band throughout the programme reflected the greatest credit upon them, and was an additional evidence of the care with which they have endeavoured to make it creditable to themselves. The second item on the programme was the part song "The meeting of the Waters," which was well rendered by the members of the chorus. Mr. Leonard Redwood with "Hear the Wild Wind Blow" obtained the applause of the audience, although, to our mind, the song might have been more pleasingly rendered. Mr. Walshe, an entirely new amateur to the district, secured a great success in his character sketch "Teddy O'Rourke's Letter." Mr. Walshe, with the exception of one other gentleman in the district, is the only comic singer we have heard here with pleasure. Later in the evening he sang with equal success "The Irishman's Farewell," bringing down an appreciative house. The solo "A Dream within a Dream," by Miss Walshe, was thoroughly appreciated, as was her rendering of "Molly Asthore" in the second part, which was as well sung as we have ever heard it, the pleasing pathos of the music and words taking possession of the hearers and inducing them to give a most enthusiastic encore. Miss Walshe's "Molly Asthore" was generally considered the gem of the evening. Miss Mark gave "The Irish Diamonds" as a pianoforte solo with good taste and expression. Messrs. Green and Gudgeon took the duet, "The Moon hath raised her lamp above," and the first part was brought to a conclusion by "The Midshipmite," which, although a well hackneyed song, in the hands of Master Harry Redwood, was very popular. Mr. Vavasour was decidedly successful with his solo, "The Yeoman's Wedding Song." The trio, "Our Evening Song," by Mrs. Ward and the Misses Redwood and Augustus, formed a pleasing feature of the programme. Miss Clary was fairly successful with the song "Kate O'Shane," her detracting nervousness being excusable under the circumstances. Mr. Holmes was in his best form in his rendering of that ever attractive ballad "Eileen Alannah," and scored an enthusiastic encore. The interest taken in the concert was largely due to the assistance of Mrs. and Miss Mark. In the first part of the programme Mrs. Mark sang "Erin my Country" in excellent voice and with splendid execution. In a duet with Miss Mark "The Elfin Call" her voice blended very pleasingly with her daughter's. The finest duet of the evening was the "Two Cousins," by Misses Augustus and Marks, which was deservedly encored. "The Blind Girl to her Harp" by Mrs. Mark was generally admired, whilst the concert was on all hands pronounced to have passed off with the utmost satisfaction. We have to regret that the great disadvantage at which we were placed in having to put up with a seat at the extreme end of the Hall, prevented us from giving that attention to the proceedings we desired.

Mgr. Herzog, Prince-Bishop of Breslau, under the jurisdiction of whom are all the seaports of Northern Germany, has made this announcement: "The Emperor of Germany having manifested the desire that the German navy should henceforth be included in the ordinary prayers of the Faithful, I ordain that, in the place of the passage: 'Protect all the German military forces,' the priest shall say: 'Protect the royal army and all the forces of earth and sea of the German Empire.'"

An Anarchist periodical effusively welcomes the aesthetic and millionaire Socialists, Andrew Carnegie and Cortlandt Palmer, as men and brothers. Theory, however, is one thing, and practice another; and if their Socialism were taken too seriously, those elegant gentlemen might feel like the fine lady who, when a grateful beggar at the church door prayed she might meet her in Heaven, replied: "Dear me I hope not. Drive on, Thomas."—*New York Evening Telegram.*