

TWO IRISH PATRIOTS.

THE return of the patriot JOHN MITCHEL to the land of his birth, after an exile of more than a quarter of a century, has touched a sympathetic chord in every Irish breast, and brings us back once more to an almost forgotten page in Irish history. Since that dark and evil hour in which the lamp of hope was extinguished by the destruction of that galaxy of literary talent, whose soul-inspiring addresses to the nation so harassed the Government, a new generation has sprung into existence, to whom they will be only known by name, and their labors and love for their country be either matters of history or tradition. One by one each bright particular star, which once shone with such brilliancy, is slowly fading from the firmament, until of the half-score or so of those whose lives and liberties were staked for their country's sake, but a few remain. SMITH O'BRIEN, the descendant of the princely house of Thomond, who, in disregard of noble birth and ancient lineage,—with everything to lose and nothing to gain in the struggle—at the call of country and in defence of its liberty, enrolled his name on the people's banner, and threw down the gauntlet of defiance, he, alas! has long since passed away. MEAGHER, the patriot, orator, scholar, soldier, upon whom nature had showered favors with no niggard hand—after winning undying laurels in the service of his adopted country, found a watery grave in a far-off land, nevermore gladdened with a sight of that green isle for which his young life was offered as a sacrifice. D'ARCY MCGEE, whose undying love for Ireland breathes through every line of his exquisite poetry, lived to revisit the scenes of his childhood days, and the old love burned as brightly in the Canadian Minister as in the Irish rebel. He, too, has passed beyond recall, stricken foully down by the hand of the assassin. TERENCE BELLEW M'MANUS, although his last sigh was drawn in an alien land, and his dying pillow smoothed by stranger hands, yet his ashes borne across the broad Atlantic, reposes in that land he loved so well. EUGENE O'RIELLY, whose early life opened with such bright prospects and glowing hopes, sleeps beneath the shadow of the Crescent. To those who dearly love their fatherland, exile under any circumstances—even when the expatriation has been voluntary—is always fraught with sad memories and fond regrets; but to him whose every thought has been centred in the welfare of his native land; whose sole ambition has been to raise her up from her prostrate position, and place her amongst the nations of the earth, the decree that rudely snaps those ties, possesses a double sting. JOHN MITCHEL, bowed down with the weight of sixty years, has returned to the land from which in the pride of his manly strength and prime he was borne away a manacled felon, and by a strange coincidence a compatriot—though self-elected exile—has again revisited the scenes of former days. What a train of melancholy remembrances must have been inspired by this visit to the land in which a generation had been born, and a generation passed away since last he put foot upon its shores! 1848 sees JOHN MITCHEL and GAVAN DUFFY linked together with one common object, and placed in the felon's dock on the same charge—treason to the QUEEN and loyalty to their country. As in the long interval which has elapsed since then, fate at the outset proved more fortunate to the one than the other, and while MITCHEL was wearing his heart away in a penal settlement, DUFFY was still fighting his country's battles in the British Commons. Since then, how differently has time and fortune dealt with each! The one returns broken down in health, with the weight of his three-score years, telling none the lighter upon him for the life of activity and struggle he has led; the other, the recipient of honors, title, the possessor of wealth, the successful Minister, upon whom Fortune has smiled so benignly. And yet, although their paths in life have been so divergent; although the one, while free to labor for the old land, transferred his energies to the building up of a great country in the Southern Seas, the fire of his patriotism has never died out, and it may be that the walls of St. Stephen's will again re-echo with his voice, raised for the release of his country from the coercive measures under which she groans, and to aid in restoring her to her rightful rank as a free and self-governed nation. Thus far the Government have taken no steps with regard to Mr MITCHEL's return, but we learn that the Orange press have taken the matter in hand, and true to their instincts are clamorous that the Government should take action in

the matter. The 'Northern Whig,' a paper published in Mr MITCHEL's native county, says: "It will, of course, now become the duty of the Government to decide whether Mr MITCHEL be or be not an escaped convict. If he be not, there is, of course, nothing more to be said or done. But if he be, the Irish administration cannot hesitate to enforce the law. It is not to be supposed that in such a case they can have a discretionary power. If the law is against Mr MITCHEL, it must be put in force." It must be remembered, however, that, as its name implies, the journal which advocates this rather truculent mode of procedure, is a Whig organ, and consequently it is nothing but a mere party trick to embarrass the Government by calling on it to put the law in force. The Irish Executive, however, appear willing to let bye-gones be bye-gones. We have no doubt the wish will be endorsed by all Irishmen at home and abroad that the returned exile may live many years in that land so dear to all her sons, and for which he has proved his deep devotion by enduring so much.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

ELSEWHERE will be found a lengthy and interesting account of the proceedings in connection with the opening of St. Mary's Branch of the Hibernian Society at Invercargill. When it is remembered how short is the time which has elapsed since the formation of St. Joseph's, Dunedin—the parent lodge of the colony—the success which has attended the introduction of the association has been something surprising. Although but eighteen months have elapsed since the first lodge was opened, already there are eighteen branches, or one for every month the Society has been in existence in New Zealand. In every city in both islands the association is represented, while almost every town—no matter how small—on the West Coast, has its branch. Of course when we take into consideration the admirable principles which are embodied in the Constitution of the Hibernian Society, bestowing as it does all the advantages to be derived from a benefit society, with the moral influence it exercises over its members,—it is scarcely to be wondered at that so many applications have been made to the Directory for the opening of branches.

THE Concert and Moonlight Excursion which had been unavoidably postponed from last month, has been definitely settled to take place on next Monday evening, the 26th inst. The programme, which appears in another column, is a most attractive one, the selections, with but few exceptions, being entirely different from those submitted on a previous occasion. We need not again advert to the praiseworthy object for which it is sought to raise a fund, and we are quite sure that the response to the appeal made will be a hearty and a generous one. We need scarcely state the tickets purchased some weeks since—though the date be incorrect—are still available for Monday evening. The steamer Golden Age will leave the old jetty at 6.45 p.m. for the purpose of conveying the Dunedin patrons, returning to town immediately at the termination of the concert. The entertainment will be under the patronage of His Lordship the Most Rev. Dr. Moran, who has kindly consented to preside on the occasion.

WE notice by the 'Coromandel News' that a meeting of the Church and School Committees was held on the 27th ult. with the view of effecting certain necessary improvements and arrangements in connection with both the church and school. The meeting resolved that the church should be thoroughly renovated and painted, and a subscription being opened, one fourth the estimated expense was subscribed by those present. It was resolved to open an account with the Bank of New Zealand in the name of the Treasurer, Father O'Reilly with whom all monies were to be lodged. The reverend pastor was authorised to engage a female teacher for the school at the rate of £70 per annum. It was reported that nearly four feet of the church property was encroached upon by the fence erected on Mr Randerson's property and it was decided to enquire into the same, and if possible settle the matter amicably. Other matters connected with the church and school were discussed, after which the committee adjourned.

A MEETING of the members of the Fourth Estate was held at the Provincial Hotel on Saturday evening with the view of establishing a Press Club in this city. A large number of the profession were present, Mr Leary, commercial manager of the 'Guardian,' being voted to the chair. Mr Humphries, of the 'Witness,' as one of the conveners, explained to the meeting the objects and aims of the proposed institution, in the course of which he stated that should the meeting be favorable to the idea, he had been offered premises and all requisites for its establishment on the most advantageous terms. It was proposed to enter into definite arrangements when the names of fifty members had been received. Forty names were handed in by those present, and from what we have since learned, a number far in excess of that proposed to start with has since been obtained. A meeting of all intending members takes place this evening at the Provincial Hotel, for the purpose of electing a committee, and making arrangements in connection with the movement.

It is a subject for remark that the accidents which have occurred of late throughout the Province, are in the generality of case the result of falls from vehicles. Not long since Mr Malaghan met his death in such a manner; accidents have befallen Messrs Hallenstein and Clarke; during the early portion of the week Dr. Hulme met with a serious mishap, from which he has not since recovered; and we also learn that Dr. Stewart of the Lawrence Hospital, has been seriously bruised through the capsizing of his buggy over a steep