

what your father was to have had; so after all you will be able to help.'

Gabriel tried to grasp the greatness of the moment. He must be dreaming! But it was all very real, and an hour later all arrangements had been made, and he and Mr. Johnson were being whirled rapidly away in Mr. Durland's cab, after the best dinner they had ever eaten.

During the first part of the concert, Gabriel and Mr. Johnson found a corner in one of the dressing-rooms where, unnoticed, they could await Gabriel's turn to sing. Just before the time came for his number, Mr. Ludwig claimed the attention of the audience for a moment, and in a few brief words explained the change in the programme, at the same time begging their indulgence for the little cripple who would try to take his father's place.

Mechanically Gabriel swung himself on his crutch across the wide stage, until he had reached the centre, where Mr. Ludwig had told him to stand. Then he turned and faced—what? A vast sea of strange, terrifying faces that seemed to his startled fancy to extend on and on as far as the eye could reach, while in front of him were long rows of dazzling lights that bewildered and confused him. He had not been prepared for them, and a sickening fear swept over him. He felt weak and faint; and what was that dull pounding in his ears? Far, far away sounded the music of the orchestra. It was playing his accompaniment, he knew, yet he could not sing. Try as he would no sound would come from his parched throat. It was of no use!

The audience thought that the child was ill, and a murmur of pity and apprehension ran through the house.

If there were but one friendly, familiar face, Gabriel thought. He felt so utterly alone. Even Mr. Ludwig was nowhere to be seen. Just then there came the sound of a slight scuffle in the wings, and the next instant Mr. Johnson trotted triumphantly across the stage and sat down by Gabriel's side. He had recognised the signs of trouble and knew that his place was by his comrade.

The diversion broke the tension. The people laughed delightedly at the unexpected reinforcement; while Gabriel, looking down into the loving eyes raised so encouragingly to his, and feeling the warm little body rub protectively against him, felt all the numbing leave his heart. He was not alone. Here was the friend who had never failed him yet, begging him with all his love in his eyes, for dad's sake and his, not to fail them now. He would not. He would sing as he had never sung before, and his whole body glowed with a warm, responsive courage that overcame all consciousness of self and the great audience before him.

When the orchestra again began its accompaniment Gabriel was ready, and when the wonderful voice burst forth in all its glorious, throbbing beauty, it seemed to the breathless people as if an angel indeed had come among them.

Like an embodied spirit the child stood there. His very soul in ecstatic relief seemed to pour forth all the pent-up longing, all the passionate, hungry craving of the thwarted little life for the fulness and freedom and joy that could never be his. It wrung the hearts of the men and women who listened, then swept them irresistibly onward and upward to the sublime heights of self-renunciation.

When it was over, and the last note had died away, there followed for a moment a silence as tense and still as death, while Gabriel wondered vaguely why the people were crying. Then, with one accord the great audience rose to its feet, and the applause burst resistlessly in an overwhelming storm. The air fairly rang with cheers, and showers of his beloved violets and great fragrant roses came until the child and his faithful little guardian stood literally upon a bed of flowers.

Again and again did they make him sing, until Mr. Ludwig, seeing the exhaustion in the child's face, would let him give them no more. Then Gabriel came before them again and smiled his thanks. He was not afraid now. These people were his friends—his and Mr. Johnson's.

Then Mr. Durland took him home, where later he was pouring the whole wonderful story into dad's astonished ears.

'And you know, dad, it was really Mr. Johnson who did it all,' he ended, gratefully stroking the shaggy head resting near him, 'because he went on ahead, you see, and sort of prepared the way for me.'

His father with misty eyes nodded comprehendingly. 'I think,' he said, smiling, 'that we shall have to call him in future your "advance agent."'

If you want to enjoy ironing use Lily starch, which makes linen stiff and glossy, and does not stick or clog. It will give the highest satisfaction to the laundress and housewife....

GREYMOUTH

(From our own correspondent.)

Among the successful candidates in the teachers' examinations held last January was Miss Honora B. Trowland, who succeeded in obtaining the full certificate for class C. Miss Trowland was presented for examination by the Sisters of Mercy, Greymouth.

During the past month a series of most successful missions has been given by the Redemptorist Fathers. The outlying districts of Brunner, Runanga, and Barrytown were favored with one week each, whilst in Greymouth one week was devoted to the children alone, and a fortnight to the adults of the congregation. The Rev. Fathers Creagh, Whelan, and Gilmartin labored earnestly for all sections of the community, with the result that upwards of 1600 approached the Holy Table. The attendance both morning and evening during the mission was exceptionally good. The closing exercises on last Sunday were impressive and edifying. Father Creagh was especially pleased with the general Communion of the St. Columba Club and Hibernian Society. On last Sunday evening the largest congregation ever assembled in the church was present.

On last Sunday morning, at 8 o'clock Mass, the members of the St. Columba Club and Hibernian Society approached the Holy Table. The members of both societies, to the number of about 150, marched in regalia from the St. Columba Club rooms to St. Patrick's Church. As it was the last day of the mission it was made the occasion of a general Communion for all the men of the parish. It was a most edifying sight to see upwards of three hundred men in a body approach the Holy Table. After Mass the members of the club and Hibernian Society marched to the St. Columba Club rooms, where the ladies' committee had provided breakfast. Mr. E. A. Casey (president of the club) occupied the chair, and Mr. T. P. Fogarty (president of the Hibernian Society) was in the vice-chair. The chairman congratulated the members of both societies on turning out in such large numbers, thus giving public manifestation of their faith. Rev. Father Creagh said he had always heard a good deal about the warm-hearted West Coast, and that morning they had more than kept up their reputation. In all his travels he had not seen a finer body of men with such practical faith, not even in dear old Ireland. He could not conclude without a special word of praise to the ladies who had gone to so much trouble in preparing the breakfast, and called for a hearty vote of thanks to them, which was carried with acclamation.

The annual general meeting of the St. Columba Catholic Club was held in the club rooms last Monday evening, when there were about fifty members present, including Very Rev. Dean Carew and Rev. Fathers Creagh, Gilmartin, and Taylor. The president (Mr. E. Casey) occupied the chair. The secretary was instructed to write to the widow and family of the late Mr. D. Sheedy, expressing the club's sympathy with them in their recent bereavement. The president, on behalf of members, extended a hearty welcome to Rev. Fathers Creagh and Gilmartin, and congratulated them on the successful termination of the mission. In the course of an eloquent reply, Rev. Father Creagh complimented the members on their excellent rooms, and remarked that the St. Columba Club was the finest institution for young men he had seen. An invitation from St. Canice's Club (Westport) to arrange an inter-club visit at Easter was left in the hands of a sub-committee to make arrangements. Messrs. E. Casey and P. J. Smyth were appointed to represent the St. Columba Club at the conference of the Federated Catholic Clubs to be held at Wellington during Easter-week. The annual report and balance sheet were read and adopted, and showed the finances to be in a flourishing state. The balance of assets over liabilities amounted to the sum of £511. The expenses during the year amounted to £146 14s 10d, and there was a credit balance for the year of £234 11d, which was considered most satisfactory. The election of officers resulted as follows:—President, Mr. R. C. Heffernan; vice-presidents, Rev. Bro. Arthur and Messrs. E. Casey and W. H. Duffy; spiritual director, Rev. Father Taylor; hon. secretary, Mr. P. J. Smyth; vice-secretary, Mr. C. A. Carmine; treasurer, Mr. B. J. Phillips; librarian, Mr. A. F. O'Donoghue; committee, Messrs. J. Quinlan and D. O'Neill. Mr. R. C. Heffernan, in returning thanks for his election as president, urged on all members to use their influence to induce every Catholic young man in the parish to become a member of the club; and he promised to present a gold medal to the member introducing the most new members during the session.

Holiday excursion tickets will be issued on the Government Railways in connection with the Easter holidays from April 6 to April 12.