

down near me and get married, that I may see my grandsons around me before I get too old and stiff to play with them.'

Gabriel grew paler than before, but he pressed his lips together, and when he spoke his voice was firm enough.

'Father, I am sorry, so sorry to disappoint you, but—I want to be a priest.'

'A priest!' Anger, amazement, incredulity strove to find utterance in that one word. 'Gabriel, are you mad? You, the last of our race, the only Sweynson left in the male line; the only heir of the family! You cannot speak seriously—you are only jesting!'

'Jesting on such a subject! No. The way seems clear before me; I feel that I am called to a religious life. Father, do not look at me so sternly. I sometimes wish, although I know it to be a sin, that God had not chosen me for this high office—that I could serve Him in the world. But it cannot be, I must follow Him in the way that He has appointed.'

'Have your masters—?'

'No, never—quite the contrary. The rector spoke to me last year. He put everything before me; my duty to you, my position as only son; the hardships of a priest's life, the ignorance, coarseness, and vice which he has to encounter. He told me to reflect well, and to pray for guidance, not to mention the matter to anyone for twelve months, that perhaps during that time my ideas would alter. Now, however, he recognises the reality of my vocation, and he said that I must speak at once to you and to my mother. That was before I came home this time, and all the vacation I have been trying to get courage to tell you, but I could not.'

'It would have been better if you never had told me—if you had never troubled me by alluding to this insane project.' He put his hands on his son's shoulders and turned him towards the window. 'Look at these old trees, these woods, these meadows, these lands stretching far as your eyes can see, before Norman William set foot in England your ancestors hunted in these woods, were lords of this wide domain. Will you wish all this to pass to strangers? Will you give up this fair inheritance?'

'Heaven is a fairer inheritance, father.'

'Heaven? And cannot you win it by doing your duty here as your ancestors have done before you? Is heaven only for priests? Is the taking of religious vows the only way to gain admission to it?'

'The only way for me, father. There are many pathways, but the choice does not rest with us. God has shown me the manner in which I must follow him.'

'This is follymadness! I will not hear any more of it. You are my son and you shall obey me. I wish you to enter Sandhurst. Will you do as I desire you?'

'I cannot.'

'You cannot! But I tell you that you can and shall! If you do not, if you care to disobey, my curse—'

As the youth sprang forward with an imploring cry, the door of the library opened and Lady Gertrude entered. At a glance she understood what had happened.

'You have told your father, Gabriel?' she said.

'You knew it, then? You were aware of his mad scheme and you concealed it from me?'

'No, Eric, he only told me of it yesterday evening. I said that he must speak to you at once.'

'It would have been better if you had advised him not to trouble me with his insane folly, but to forget it. You knew that I should never consent, that I would not listen for an instant to such a plan.'

'I knew that you would not be pleased.'

'Would not be pleased! Is that all you say? Is it possible that you do not understand what this means? It would be the extinction of my race, the end of the Sweynsons. My God! I cannot think of it with patience. I shall try to forget it, to fancy that it was a dream. You, Gabriel, you shall go to Sandhurst, and as soon as possible. You shall not return to college. You have no right to dispose of yourself—you belong to me, to our family. I shall disown you, cast you off, load you—before God I swear it—with my heaviest curse. Have I not a right to dispose of the life which I gave? Are you not mine?'

'No; not yours alone and altogether, Eric,' said Lady Gertrude, coming forward and putting her arms round her son. 'You remember that when Gabriel was born I would not accept the diamond coronet which you offered me, because it seemed to me as if I should be selling some part of my rights over my child. Gabriel is my boy—mine more than ever now—my life, my darling, and I will give him to God.'

Sir Eric paused. He looked at his wife and son standing before him, the sunset light shining through the window behind them, and making a halo, like that which surrounded the fair locks of his angelic patron's pictured image in the oratory, round the youth's head.

'Father,' said Gabriel, 'will you not consent? Will you not join with my mother in her gift?'

Sir Eric did not reply. Out beyond these two he gazed. The sun sank below the horizon and a cold grey mist seemed to gather over the lawn and the trees, and to envelop them, so that the color and substance died out of them and they looked like the mere ghosts of dead far-off things. He turned his eyes upwards towards the sky, and it was flecked with islands of purple and gold, swimming in an azure sea. 'Heaven is fairer than earth,' the young neophyte had said.

Sir Eric stretched out his hand and silently laid it on his son's bowed head. Then, sinking on his knees by the library table, he buried his face in his hands.—The 'Catholic Press.'

Catholic World

CHINA.—Empress and Bishop.

Mgr. Xavier, the Catholic Bishop of Peking, has lately had an audience of the Emperor and Dowager Empress of China, of which he sends the following account.—'After expressing regret for the troubles of the last few years, the Dowager Empress said: "I believe that the doctrine you teach is excellent, and that your bishops and missionaries do a great deal of good to the people. All my mandarins have told me that you especially were a fair and just man, that you knew Chinese affairs well, and that in your dealings with Chinese officials you had always shown yourself equitable and peace-loving. I knew you by reputation for a long time, and I am now pleased to make your personal acquaintance. You know that in China there are good and bad people. It may be also that among your followers, in spite of the excellence of your doctrine and of your teaching, there are some bad people. You should look closely after them." I replied that I would look still more closely after my people, and I told the Empress that Chinese converts were not admitted into the Church on their asking, but had to undergo a probation for two years so that their moral worth might be appreciated. The Empress then assured me that she would protect us, and expressed the hope that peace would be no more broken. The Emperor did not intervene in the conversation, but contented himself with approving with

his head whenever he desired to emphasise some declaration of the Dowager Empress. On the following day I received the high distinction of the Peacock's Feathers, and my coadjutor was raised to the rank of the Red Button.'

ENGLAND.—Consecration.

The consecration of Dr. Burton, Bishop-elect of Clifton, was to take place at the Pro-Cathedral, Clifton, on May 1, the Feast of SS. Philip and James. Cardinal Vaughan was to be consecrating prelate, assisted by Bishop Riddell, of Northampton, and Bishop Preston, of Phoea (auxiliary Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle).

Diocese of Clifton.

The Right Rev. Dr. Burton, Bishop-elect of Clifton, after taking possession of the See, appointed Mgr. Provost Russell to be Vicar-General of the diocese.

Death of a Priest.

We ('Catholic Times') announce with sincere regret the death of the Rev. Father Livius, C.S.S.R., who passed away peacefully at St. Mary's Clapham, London. The deceased Redemptorist was an M.A. of Oriel College, Oxford, and a convert to the Catholic Church. He wrote several well-known volumes, the most popular of which are his work on St. Peter, and his beautiful book on devotion to the Blessed Virgin, compiled from the Fathers of the Church during the first six centuries. Father Livius had many friends and admirers in London, Liverpool and Limerick, and other parts of these countries.

Catholic Death Roll.

The death roll in the South African war (says the London 'Monitor') has passed 22,000 on the British side including the names of 6000 Catholics. It is proposed to build a church at Aldershot in memory of the Catholic dead.

Scholastic Success.

A brilliant success has just fallen to the Jesuit students at Clark's Hall, Oxford. At the recent examination for Classical Moderations, three of its members presented themselves, and of these three, two (Mr. Latter and Mr. Scoles) obtained the coveted distinctions of 'firsts,' and the other (Mr. Plater) a 'second.' The Hall, which Father Richard Clarke founded in 1896, has had a unique record, for it has since 1898 sent up candidates each year for the Classical and Mathematical honors' schools, and each year has had several successes to record.

ROME.—The Holy Father.

On Thursday, April 17 (writes a Rome correspondent), the Holy Father descended from his private apartments into the Vatican Basilica in order to receive the homage of nearly 12,000 pilgrims, for the most part Italians. His Holiness was escorted by the Noble Guards and surrounded by 10 Cardinals and a great number of Bishops and Archbishops, and as the imposing procession swept slowly up the central aisle, and the venerable Pontiff, standing erect on the Sedia Gestatoria, held up his right hand in benediction and smiled gratefully and benevolently upon the kneeling thousands, deafening cheers and cries of 'Viva Leone XIII!' rang out again and again. On arriving at the altar of the Confession, near which the throne had been placed, the Pontiff descended from the Sedia Gestatoria and listened to an address which was read by Cardinal Sarto, Patriarch of Venice. After replying in a few eloquent words and thanking the pilgrims, with evident emotion, for their imposing manifestations of filial loyalty to the Holy See, Leo XIII. bestowed the Apostolic Benediction on all present, and re-ascending the Sedia Gestatoria, returned to his private apartments amidst an enthusiastic ovation. His Holiness continues to grant numer-