

A second or two afterwards Balandreau, who has quietly slipped from his hiding — place and followed the two men into the church, literally falls against a pillar stunned by the most unexpected sight imaginable. His two plotters he recognizes one as a skilled mechanic and the other a retired merchant devoted to charitable works, kneeling there on prie dieux close to the altar, absorbed in prayer...

And it is dark night !...

Dark night outside, dark night in the old cathedral, dark night in the aisles, dark night everywhere, except on the altar where a few candles glimmer and glow.

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And high up on the altar's summit shines the golden Ostensorium in which is enclosed the God, that he, Balandreau, will not acknowledge !

What a tempest sweeps over his soul !... His astonished gaze wanders from the golden Ostensorium to the prostrate adorers and from the prostrate adorers back to the golden Ostensorium again. So it is really true that there are people who sincerely believe !...

Hypocrites, those kneeling forms ? Not likely. Where is the crowd to watch and applaud ? At this hour, when no one can see them, they kneel even more devoutly than in daylight. And besides hypocrisy consenting to pass a sleepless night in prayer ? Not likely !...

Then they are sincere and that Catholic faith making them so noble and unselfish must be sublime indeed....

At the next meeting of the Lodge, to the great surprise of the members the Grand Master read the following brief notice, which needs no comment.

X. April 8, 1896.

To the President of the Lodge of United Hearts.

I have the honor of placing my resignation in your hands. From this day forward I am no longer a member, active or passive, of the Lodge of United Hearts.

Kindly inform the members of my decision. Whatever construction you may put upon my conduct, you will admit I always act on principle.

Yours etc,...

BALANDREAU.