

With the sudden recalling from a musing mood by the remembrance of where she was, she slightly turned her head : and in doing so her eyes fell on the face of a man near her whose expression, as baffling as it was fascinating, held her captive. His gaze was fixed on the officiating priest with an intensity that was startling. She quailed before it. With an effort she removed her eyes and, crossing herself devoutly, recommenced her rosary. In vain she strove to keep her eyes from wandering to the man, and when she looked again she saw that the intensity in his gaze had deepened, the expression on his face had become more pronounced : it was like hatred fanned to maniacal rage.

“ He is a madman ! ” she thought, instinctively pushing from him into the crowd at her other side. It yielded slightly and she felt more secure. A hundred thoughts concerning him passed her mind without fashioning themselves into anything definite ; but he was unconscious of her gaze.

The tinkling of a bell aroused her, and, rising with the crowd, she passed down the aisle to the sanctuary railing. Never wholly divested of the nameless fear calling for the vigilant watch the man had inspired, her heart became calmer, her thoughts became prayerful, as she knelt to make that sublime act of faith and receive the sacramental Lord into her soul. Then she turned from the altar, but stopped short and all but shrieked out at the act she beheld. She saw the man take from his mouth the Sacred Host he had but a moment before received from the hands of the priest, and fold it in a handkerchief, which he placed carefully in his pocket. He darted through the crowd and was gone.

Had the dread abode of the eternally lost opened under her feet, the loyal Catholic heart of the woman could not have been more appalled. All the evil she had ever seen or heard of seemed shaped suddenly into that one act. She knew him now, an emissary of the Satan worshippers, and she knew the purpose of the awful theft. She forced a way through the dense crowd, in time to see him, as she left the church, turn a distant corner. After him she flew, possessed of but one thought, to rescue the