

"Yes, but how shall we reach the church?"

"By the main road, of course, though we must be very cautious and not give an inkling of what we're after."

Claude waited till they had gone some little distance; then screened by the hedge, he broke into a light trot, picking each step as he went. Faith, love and the desire to prevent an awful sacrilege lent him wings.

Breathlessly he reached the church, found the key, made a genuflexion as acceptable to the unseen Watcher as Séraph's ardor, mounted the altar steps and opened the tabernacle door.

A priest who after years of preparation ascends the altar for the first time trembles when he touches the body and blood, the soul and divinity of Christ. What, then, must have been Claude's feelings as he gazed upon the Sacred Host, he who only the previous evening had given way to a burst of anger and who after a hurried preparation was about to take in his hands the Creator of heaven and earth and receive Him into his heart.

But love casteth out fear and uncovering the Ciborium he looked down into its golden cup and saw twelve consecrated hosts. Bowing his head while tears, born of many and varied emotions, started to his eyes, he murmured reverently:

"Lord, I am not worthy" and with the words he took the hosts into his trembling fingers and placed them in his mouth. Folding his hands in prayer, and turning upon the kneeling prie-dieu so as to face the door, he waited—He had made his First Communion.

Shortly afterwards the church door opened cautiously.

"My God!" cried the foremost, starting back, "What's that?"

No wonder he was startled. For there within the radiance of the sanctuary lamp his eyes fell upon an upturned face, fair, beautiful, sweet, composed the calm eyes looking straight at him shining with a sorrow and a light as might an angel in human form standing guard at a desecrated shrine.

"It's only a human being!" whispered one of his confederates. "I saw tears on his face, so it can't be a ghost."