

tree in an adjoining field, about two minutes walk seems to offer shelter. Ready to hasten thither, he hears the bell in the village sound the moment of elevation.

It is an edifying custom in many Catholic countries that when the church bell announces the elevation, the devout country folk—whether at home, on the street, or in the field—unite themselves with the priest at the moment of consecration. Devoutly they fall on their knees and in spirit adore the Sacred Host which the priest holds in his hands.

Our farmer hears the bell and kneels down. A voice says to him, "Why, you can pray just as well after you get to the tree. Our Lord does not expect that you kneel down now and get all wet." And this consideration seems to him very reasonable. But today—he knows not why—he feels a special impulse to recommend himself in the Holy Sacrifice. "Ah, well," he thinks, "what does it matter if I get wet a little more or less." He kneels down, blesses himself and adores the Sacred Host in the hands of the priest, offering it up to the Heavenly Father.

Suddenly—a terrible crash! The people in the church, as they related later on, were greatly frightened. They supposed the lightning had struck somewhere in the village and expected every moment to hear the fire-alarm. But still more terrified was our farmer. While absorbed in his devotion he was dazzled and envelopped by a sudden flash of lightning accompanied by a deafening crash as though the earth had been cleft before him. He closed his eyes in horror, but it seemed the glare was written in them. When he opened his eyes, he saw what had happened.

The lightning had struck the tree where he had meant to seek shelter, and rent it asunder from top to bottom. The cold perspiration stood on his forehead when he realized the danger. Had he not followed the interior warning, what would his fate have been? He thanked God from his heart for the good inspiration and the grace to follow it. The prayer at the elevation saved his life.