

He vested and went to the altar, but the faithful few alone were there and not the man. "Perhaps he is late" thought the priest, "I can give it to him in the Mass."

But when after the priest's Communion, he paused, expecting the "confiteor," the boy advanced with the cruets for the first ablution—he was not there. At breakfast he enquired most anxiously whether a gentleman was not lingering in the church. But no—one had called, and no one was in the building.

"It is the old story" said the priest to himself, "the old story of disappointment; but I was sure he was in earnest."

He could not rest, but set out for the now familiar Dash Street and almost ran up the steps of No. 15 with the bright knocker. He had not noticed the blinds of the house were all drawn down. The weeping maid met him at the door.

"Oh, Father!" she exclaimed, "I am so glad you have come—such an awful thing has happened. Master was found dead in his bed this morning."

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Yes, it was so. The doctor, who had been hastily summoned, declared he had been dead some hours—"An aneurism which must have taken him off quite suddenly, and probably without much pain."

A few days afterwards the priest was walking before his coffin, while the beautiful "In Paradisum" was being sung. "How wonderful are God's ways!" he thought. "How often have I found that those who wilfully neglect the sacraments of the living in health are deprived of them in the hour of death. And then we are a spectacle to men and angels! and we are come to an innumerable company of angels and spirits of the just made perfect! No wonder they burst in from behind the veil sometimes. The wonder is that they do not burst in oftener."

But the brightest thought that occupied the priest's breast was the everlasting text, "Whatever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven."

