

the top, the man stamped the snow from his boots and rang the door-bell. I heard everything distinctly and expected to have a sick call. My old house-keeper, always on the alert, was usually the first to answer the door, but on this occasion, did not seem to hear any one. She slept on the other side of the hall next to the church. I did not hear the bolt drawn back nor the turning of the key in the lock, but heard the steps of some one passing from the front door towards my room. A moment later my door was opened. Provoked at the boldness of the supposed messenger, I sat up in bed and addressed him sharply :

“ What do you want ! ”

“ ‘ Reverend Father, I have a petition.

“ I now recognized my visitor, it was Mr. B..., the father of little Joseph, he stood before me in his working clothes. I asked him still somewhat abruptly :

“ Well, what is it, and why do you come at such a time ? ”

Reverend Father, I beg of you to permit my son Joseph to receive his first Holy Communion on Low Sunday.’ ”

“ The voice which I heard and the appearance of the man was that of Mr. B..., as I had often seen him, and yet his presence filled me with an indescribable fear. I felt the hair of my head stand upright, my breath seemed to stop, and a cold perspiration forced itself through every pore. I was not able to answer. — The moon shown brightly across the foot of my bed, and fell directly upon the figure of the man penetrating it without casting a shadow. I saw the man vividly before me, and through him I could see the door and the book-case. Noiselessly he withdrew, by the way he came. His steps resounded on the stone entrance and re-echoed on the frozen snow, as he returned to the village.

“ Sleep had fled from me entirely. My thoughts were with the man who had just appeared to me so mysteriously, and who had presented his petition in such an imploring, yet commanding a manner. Only a few days previously, he had been to church and received the sacraments.

At last the Angelus rang, and after a short pause, the bell tolled, announcing that some one had died. Upon