

the cause of the Holy Childhood as any European children. They are poor, extremely poor, and their poverty makes it very difficult and almost impossible for them to raise the usual contribution; but if faith can remove mountains, charity converts things of little value into gold, and the orphans above-mentioned are in possession of the secret. In order to gain money they lie in wait for rats and mice. They receive a halfpenny for every one they kill, and the money thus obtained is given to the Holy Childhood. This ingenious device may excite a smile, but it deserves admiration!

In the preparatory school of Montbrison, a boy between seven and eight years old, having read in the *Annals* that a little girl had sold her dessert to pay her monthly subscription, said to the *religieuse* under whose care he was, "Sister, I will also sell my dessert and become a member of the Holy Childhood, and I will begin by selling my chocolate." "But my good boy," said the sister, "your health requires you to eat it." "Well then I will sell my figs." "But you cannot spare them either, for you must not eat dry bread." \* "What can I do then? I have nothing more, and yet I wish to become a member of the Holy Childhood." The sister wishing to try him, said, "I know very well what you might do." "What is that?" "You have a pretty red fish." The child reflected for a moment; he was passionately fond of his fish, he kept it carefully in a glass, and took great pleasure in giving it small crumbs of bread to eat. But charity gained the victory, and he cried out, "You are right, I will sell my fish; but who will buy it?" He found a purchaser, and sold his fish for three halfpence. It was his first sacrifice, and he was heard to exclaim, "Oh! I shall have something else to sell in three months." Admirable child, if you grow up, your hand will never be closed to the poor.

The little children of Fontanges, not content with the regular payment of their yearly subscription, scrupulously devote all the money that they receive from their friends as a reward for their attention and good conduct, to the Holy Childhood, and they increase this amount by the sale of many things which are so frequently destroyed or spoiled at their age, when economy is an empty word. They were very anxious to possess a banner of the Holy Childhood, and they enjoyed by anticipation the delight of seeing it waving at their head in their solemn processions; but knowing that the purchase of it would diminish the amount destined to the purchase of the poor orphans, they hesitated, and would have given up the banner, had not the children of the schools found out a means of

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\* It is customary in France to give children fruit or chocolate to eat with their bread in the afternoon, and sometimes also for breakfast.