

II

Even if this purity were not so expressly demanded, simple propriety would make it a duty. Communion is a banquet, the nuptial feast of the Lamb. Jesus Christ receives us at His own table, and feeds us with His own Flesh. He is both the host and the feast : *cibus et conviva*. Would we enter there in a dress unsuited to the occasion ? Who would dare answer such an invitation in soiled raiment ?—No one ! Let us, then, do for Our Lord what we would do for any guest. It is a royal feast. The angels surround their King. In spite of their purity, they cannot sit at this Banquet. Although you have not their dazzling whiteness, have at least the purity of conscience that Jesus Christ demands as the condition of admission to His Table.

III

In the Eucharist, everything invites us to purity. Have you ever seen First Communicants ? How pure and beautiful are those children who follow one another in long rows !

What purity in the bread of the altar ! It is pure wheat. It has been despoiled of its husks, and converted into flour, and what more pure than white flour ? It is made up without leaven, for leaven gives to bread a germ of corruption. The Lord could have chosen some other material, some other color ; but we should not have found therein all these lessons of purity.

Purity is so natural when there is question of Communion that, if I should tell you to communicate in the state of mortal sin, you should recoil with horror, you would rather die !

If you found even a deliberate venial sin on your conscience, you would not dare approach Communion. And yet you might do so. Venial sin is not a radical obstacle to Communion. But you would not dare ; you feel not suitably prepared, your garments are not what you wish, and you ask pardon.—That is well, for it testifies to your delicacy of conscience, and shows how inseparable is purity from Holy Communion.