



The Communicant



S the intending communicant opens his eyes betimes, the words of the angel will occur to him appropriately, "Arise and eat!"—a simple thought that fills the minds with the weightiness of what is before it. This may ring profitably in the ear as we dress and take our road to the church. We can hear, also, the invitation to Zaccheus: "Make haste and come down, for on this day I shall lodge in thy house." Nothing indeed is more expressive of true devotion than that ever-recurring scene of the communion: a peaceful tranquillity, modesty, humility, retirement, displayed in its quintessence.

At early morning, in some tranquil church, when the busy world without is hurrying to the storm and stress of the long day, the sight of the faithful pressing forward to the railings is itself (to vary Steele's phrase) "a pious education." There is shown a gentle ardour, a modest approach; while the faces of those who have received are illumined with a sort of divine inspiration. "If to behold the divine beauty of the human countenance," says the author of *Mores Catholici*, "be at all times sweet to minds contemplative, where can this pleasure be enjoyed so fully as in the church! Those raptures of love mixed with sorrow at the solemn moment of communion give a su-