

First Communion of a Child.



T was just two days before First Communion, and the exercises of the retreat were going on. The children were quietly gathered for the instruction. A pious priest was breaking to them the bread of God, thus preparing them to feed upon the Bread of Angels. The children were listening attentively. Suddenly, a man in laborer's dress, a scowl of rage on his face, fury in his eyes, rushed into the midst of the little assembly. He strode right and left, looking into the faces of the children, as if searching for some one. The curé gently accosted him : " My friend, for whom are you seeking ? " In a rough voice, he answered : " I want my boy." This answer, loud and rude, attracted general attention. The curé was forced to interrupt his instruction, and all waited in anxiety for what was to come.

" I want my boy at once. His mother is a Catholic, but I am not, and no child of mine shall ever be one." " You astonish me," replied the curé. " There must be some mistake. We admit the child to First Communion only on a genuine certificate of Baptism. Was not your child baptized in the Church ? " " Yes." " Were his god-parents Catholics ? " " Yes." " Had you given your consent ? " " Certainly ! I was present at the ceremony." " Then, my friend, your child is already a Catholic." " Up to the present, I grant, he was of the religion of his mother. But to-day I intend him to be of mine."

At these words, he seized his child violently by the arm, and said to him in a commanding tone : " Walk before me ! It is with me you have to deal."

The poor child turned toward the curé, his eyes full of tears, and said : " Oh, please, do not abandon me ! " The good curé endeavored to interpose affectionately and gently, between the son and the infuriated father. The