

acceptable to God, It will serve to increase their devotion to Mary. It may also shed a ray of light on the minds and instill confidence into the hearts of those who have prayed so long and seemingly without result for relatives who do not serve God as they ought. There are persons who sometimes feel tempted to think, because they do not see any sign of change for the better in those concerning whose spiritual welfare they are anxious; such may have been the case with the widow referred to in the foregoing narrative. At all events according to her own statement she had prayed for her husband and given him advice, and all seemingly to no purpose. But who can say that her prayers were fruitless? Who can say that her husband's devotion to Mary, which drew down upon him the mercy of God, was not due to her prayers.

Again, there may be persons who fret because they can do nothing great or wonderful for God; let such persons bear in mind, that most people are called to sanctify themselves by the faithful performance of their daily duties, hidden though their life may be to all but God alone, and that the smallest actions done with a view to please God are as acceptable to Him as was the widow's mite of old, the charm of their virtues may be felt only by the few whom they have occasion to meet, but their meritorious deeds are from first to last faithfully entered in the Book of life.

The incident related above may serve to soothe the anxious heart of those who grieve over the waywardness of some loved parent, or sister, or brother, for it will remind them that a soul is never beyond divine mercy, until it has separated itself for ever from God by refusing His mercy unto the very end. The prayers, alms deeds; and acts of self-denial offered by these anxious persons, for the spiritual wellbeing of others may appear to be unnoticed by heaven, but they may rest assured that not a prayer ascends above from a well disposed heart without being heard, and answered in some way or other; for a flash of light from the throne of mercy can enable a sinful, negligent, and worldly person to repent sincerely of their evil deeds, even when their eyes are about to close in the long sleep of death. Such is the confidence with which God's own promise should inspire us! "ask, and you shall receive."