

sacrifice of sorrow. But it was a sacrifice of joy. The act was retrospective, He made it prospective. She broke the box upon Him in gratitude for the fact that He had broken the gates of death and brought her brother back. He accepted it as a strengthening for His own last weariness and final strife. And so her love wrought better than it knew. That is Love's prerogative when love is pure and selfless. Love like that can even "gild refined gold" and "paint the lily" and "add a hue unto the violet." Love like that can impart a sweetness which outperfumes the distillations from a thousand flowers. Mary's love put something into the box of ointment far more precious than it contained when it was sealed by the apothecary's hand. Love is the alchemist of life. Love takes a book that you could buy for half a crown, writes your name and its own upon the fly-leaf, and instantly that book assumes a value in your eyes above the price of libraries bound in morocco. Love gives a simple flower, and long after it has crumbled into dust it blossoms in the soul, while its characteristic odour, wafted to you on some passing breeze, awakens a train of comforting reflections.