

ness, and spend his life in prayer and the humble labor of making mats. Does not this seem opposed to prudence and wisdom? We may ask ourselves: What good did Arsenius to himself, what to the world? Could he not have saved his soul in the world, and there practiced the highest virtue? The answer to this question we find in the voice Arsenius heard. It is not so certain that he could have saved his soul with equal facility at the Court of Constantinople. But supposing he could, we must remember that God needs no one, and if God wanted him in the desert, it was his duty to obey. For, after all, man is the servant of God, and his highest perfection consists in doing the will of his creator.

But would it not have been better, you ask, if Arsenius had remained at the Court, where he might have done so much good by word and example, especially as the world is in need of good men? What good did he effect by going into solitude; what influence did he exercise upon society; what mark has he made upon the history of the world? Ah! children of men, reflect, reflect. Once more; God needs no one; it was in His power to give the world a hundred Arseniuses; but He wanted Arsenius in the desert. You say he could have done more good by remaining in the world; but by what standard do you measure the amount of good done? You might also say that God could have done more good by creating more than He did create. It is certain that the Almighty beholds in His mind an immense number of possible creatures, which shall never behold the light of existence. Can anyone blame the Eternal Wisdom for not creating them? Thus, also, it was the will of God, that all the possible good that Arsenius might have done in the world should not be effected. This perfection lay in another direction.

But is it true that Arsenius did nothing for the world, that he exercised no influence on society? Had he remained where he was, his name might never have been heard of. Of how many tutors of kings and princes do we know the names to-day? Arsenius plunged into obscurity, and this very obscurity rescued his name from oblivion, and that name shall be remembered as long as the Roman martyr-

ology exists. History speaks of many of contemporaries who were greater than ; what mark did they make upon tory? The consequences of their tions still exist; for the effects of the actions of even the most insignificant individual continue in the history of the world. But who can trace them? Who can show to-day any special existing benefit for society that ensued from the reign of Theodosius the Great, or his son, Arcadius? The very empire of which they were the rulers, has passed away, and only the keen eye of the most observant historian could still detect any consequence of their lives in that Constantinople which was once their pride and their glory.

But it is not thus with Arsenius. It is true he built no cities, he led no armies to battle, he erected no monuments, he wrote no books, he only made mats, but he has left behind an influence which will continue to be felt as long as time itself exists. During his lifetime the fame of the silent solitary of Scete was spread over a great portion of the Roman Empire, and it no doubt drew many to the practice of virtue. Since his death he has been looked upon by the most eminent monks of succeeding ages as a most illustrious pattern of their state, and he shines to-day before the church as a brilliant example of virtue. How many have not read the life of St. Arsenius who have been drawn to virtue by its perusal? Can such a life, then, be said to have been useless?

One thing which strikes us in the life of this holy servant of God, was his utter disregard for the opinion of the world. In the desert he lived truly as a solitary, for not only had he fled from the world, but he prevented it from reaching him. This was not the courtesy of a Saint Francis de Sales which welcomed all men with sweetness; no, he rather forbade them to approach him. His former pupil, Arcadius, having succeeded to the empire after the death of Theodosius in 395, desired to call back to court his holy master Arsenius. Being informed that he was in the desert of Scete, he wrote to him, offering to him the disposal of all the tribute of Egypt, that he might make a provision for the monasteries and the poor at his discretion. His only reply was: "God grant us all the pardon of our sins; as to the distribution of