

should we not become tributaries to our ancestress in Jesus Christ ?

But the cares and merits of maternity are not limited to giving birth to a frail creature ; they only commence with its birth, they must be still further prolonged at the cost of many watchings and sacrifices. Is not devotedness the most beautiful crown of motherhood ? A mother is only half-deserving of the name, if she does not herself feed her child, if she does not herself direct her education with a tender solicitude. What mother fulfilled that pious duty more lovingly than St Anne ? Mary had cost her mother a whole life of prayers, of tears and of penance. But as soon as this tender Virgin, the " desired of nations ", was placed in her mother's arms, a new scope was given to the devotedness, and consequently, to the merits of St Anne.

What holiness was required to fulfil worthily this new mission, or at least to be the nurse and guardian of that child, since she was not to receive a human education ! Hardly was she created, when Mary was already greater in the eyes of her Creator than all the Saints, than all the Angels together. But during nine months, she had not been inactive ! Under the action of the sanctifying Spirit, her spouse, at each instant, she had doubled her merits. To touch, to handle that little Queen, to remove from her sight every picture, every association unworthy of her incomparable candor, with what mantle of purity must St Anne envelope herself ! With what discretion must she regulate according to strict propriety everything that concerned her general maintenance, the precautions recommended by an irreproachable modesty ! What enlightenment she required to demand nothing that might be imperfect, and to never hinder the divine will concerning that soul chosen among all others !

Christian mothers, forgive me this invitation, Christian mothers, imitate St Anne directing the first