

Then, they being thus equipped for the work, He will start a blaze of spiritual enthusiasm among them, that will carry them by thousands into the Kingdom of Heaven, and carry them by many hundreds to the perishing nations of heathendom! O, I'm glad there are so many *Doctors* getting ready! They are being 'led by a way they know not.' I should despair of this great need of the missionary work being ever filled in our day, if I did not see the Medical Colleges filling up! God has his hand in it."

Editorial Articles.

THE PRODIGAL SON IN A NEW SETTING.

The Rev. Ghosn Branch Howi, a native of Mount Lebanon, educated at Edinburgh, preached lately at Newmarket and we of the INDEPENDENT were among his hearers. He "read," that is to say he repeated, the parable of the Prodigal Son—for he is entirely blind—with great correctness; making one little change which was not a blemish, "And put rings on his fingers and shoes on his feet," and then began:

If I should repeat to you this passage, without naming the verse, nor the chapter, nor the book, you would all say, Oh, that is the parable of the Prodigal Son," even though a considerable number might not be able to tell exactly the place where it might be found. And some may be surprised to hear me say that the "Prodigal Son" is not found in the scriptures. You may find the phrase at the top of the page or in the heading of the chapter, but not in the writings of St. Luke. Two or three centuries after St. Luke was dead, Western Christians began to name it the "Prodigal Son"; and that is the name by which the parable is known in Western Europe.

But Eastern Christians have another name for it, they call it the "Wise Son." When my dear old grandmother was praying on her death-bed, she pleaded for the one she was making intercessions for, "Make him like the *Wise Son*." Now, you might at first think there was here such a divergence, a contradiction, that it could never be reconciled. But let us see. You look at the father's beautiful house, the abode of love, and peace, and comfort and plenty; and then you follow the foolish, disobedient youth who leaves

all this and his father's love—and goes off; wanders hither and thither, always going lower and lower, until he lands among the swine, in the field of misery, degradation and hunger. And you say, "What a prodigal—a waster, a foolish, foolish son!"

But the "Wise Son" is, I think, a still more appropriate name, and it is taken from quite another standpoint. The Eastern Christians seem first to go to the field of misery and find the younger son helpless, hopeless, starving, dirty and friendless. At the entrance of that field might be written, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." No possibility of escape. The man seemed doomed. They said, "This man is far away from home. Had he his liberty could he find his way back, or would his father receive him?" But the first thing they admire is the man's soliloquizing, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, but I perish with hunger." "Ah," they say, "you should have thought of that *before*." But he comes further to himself, "I will arise and go to my father." "Excellent! Wise! Prudent! But can it be done?"

Their next point of view was, that in spite of all obstacles in the way, he *did* arise and go to his father, and escaped from the field of misery and despair. And his father received him, forgave him, restored him. So they concluded that the man who showed such wisdom, such prudence in such a crisis of his affairs, was wise and did the only wise thing possible, and they named the story "The Parable of the *Wise Son*."

And though "Prodigal Son" is a good name, "Wise Son" is a better. We are all prodigal sons and daughters; all! And if this man is to be taken as a type of the sinner, since *all* have wandered away and wasted God's gifts, the name is too general. Just as if every man in the world was named John; the name would distinguish no one man from another. But if you speak of him as the "wise son," though there may be many, indeed, in misery and feeding the swine, yet *all* did not "come to themselves," all did not return; only they who are "wise—prudent." It is true that all are prodigals; it is *not* true that all are "wise—prudent."

But to me it seems there is a better name than