

many years ago. Surely his mother was not dead, but was she still at the old home?

The widow came to the door to bid the stranger in. The eyes that had watched so long for his coming did not know him now. He was only a boy when he ran away; years of hardship and exposure to sun and storm had made him strange even to his mother.

"Will you come in?" said she, in her courteous and kindly way.

But the stranger did not move or speak. He stood there humbly and penitently, in the presence of her whose love he had slighted, and whose heart he had broken, and, as a sense of his ingratitude began to overwhelm him, the big tears began to find their way over his weather-beaten face.

By those tears the mother recognized her son. He had come at last! There was so much of the old home in him that he could not always stay away. But he would not cross its threshold till he had confessed his sin against it, and heard from the same lips which had prayed for him so often and so long, the sweet assurance that he was forgiven.

"No! no!" said he; "I cannot come in till my mother forgives me."

Weeping upon his neck, forgetting all the sorrow he had caused her in the joy of seeing him once more, she forgave him because he asked it, and because she loved him.

"And that is just the way," says Moody,—who some times tells the story to his great congregations,—"that is just the way God forgives all the prodigal sons who come back to Him. Do you think mother kept her long-lost boy out there in the porch till he had gone through with a string of apologies, and done a list of penances, and said ever-so-many prayers? Not at all! She took him to her heart at once. She made him come right in. She forgave him all,