

ara. She says some of God's prodigal sons do that; do you think many do, uncle?"

"I daresay."  
"And Tommy said, though he wanted to see his home again dreadfully, he had a great fight with himself to come at all. I didn't know prodigal sons found it so difficult—the one in the Bible didn't, not when he once made up his mind. Well, and so Tommy got out at the station—I'm sorry he came by train, but Jack's uncle paid for his ticket—I would rather he had run the whole way."

"Why would you?" asked Sir Edward, with a smile.

"I think it would have been more proper if he had," said the child slowly, her head a little on one side, as she gazed thoughtfully into the fire. "I always run or walk the whole way when I play the prodigal son. I begin rather slowly, because it looks a long way off, but when I come near I hurry. I'm wanting to be there when I see my home. The prodigal son didn't have a train in the Bible, and I think Tommy might have tried to do without it!"

The tone of reproach at the end of her speech was too much for her uncle's gravity, and he laughed aloud. "I am afraid Tommy has sadly disappointed you. Did he take a cab from the station?"

"No, he didn't do that. He got home in the afternoon, and Maxwell was he saw a shadow, and he looked up and cleaning his gun on the door-step when there he was! Oh! I should like to have been there, but I'm sorry to say Maxwell didn't fall on his neck and kiss him. I asked Tommy very carefully about it, and he said he took hold of both of his hands and squeezed them tight, and he gave a shout, and Mrs. Maxwell was doing her washing in the back-yard, and she heard it, and she shook all over so that she could hardly walk. She cried so much when she saw Tommy that Maxwell had to pat her on the back and give her a glass of water; and Tommy he sat down on the little seat inside the porch, and he said—these were his very words, uncle—I ain't fit to come home, father. I'm a disgrace to your name," and Mrs. Maxwell—Tommy told me—she just took his head between her two hands, and drew it to rest on her shoulder, and then she bent down and kissed him all over, and she said,—

"My boy, who should you come to when you are in disgrace and trouble but your own father and mother?"

"Tommy said, when he told me this, it fair broke my heart, miss, and then he gave a great sob, and I began to cry, and then Mrs. Maxwell came up, and her hands were all floury, for she was making an apple pudding, and she cried too, and then we all cried together—at least, Tommy turned his head away, and pretended he didn't, but I saw he did."

Milly paused for breath, and her eyes looked wistfully into the glowing coals before her.

"I didn't know prodigal sons were sad when they came back, but Tommy seemed so sad that he made me sad too, Why do you think Tommy cried, uncle?"

Sir Edward did not reply; he was gazing dreamily into the fire, and something of the wistfulness in his little niece's face seemed to be reflected in his. He gave a start after a moment's silence.

"Eh, child? What are you saying? Have you finished your story?"

"Why, no, uncle, not nearly. Are you tired? Nurse said I must not tire you too much."

Sir Edward laughed, but it was not a happy laugh.

"Oh, finish your story by all means, little woman," he said, and Milly continued,—

"We all cheered up when Mrs. Maxwell asked me if I'd like to stay to dinner. I asked if it was the feast, and she laughed and said, 'Yes.' She had a roast leg of pork in the oven, with some stuffing and apple sauce, and, uncle, it was lovely! Maxwell came in just in time, and he looked so happy, and then we all sat down to dinner, but I asked Maxwell to say first before we began: 'Let us eat, and be merry, for this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found.' He folded his hands and said it like grace, and Mrs. Maxwell said 'Amen' when he had finished, and wiped her eyes with her apron. I told them we must all be very merry, but Tommy wasn't, I'm afraid. He kept looking first at Mrs. Maxwell and then all round the kitchen, and then at Maxwell, and then he sighed very big sighs. He said he couldn't believe he was at home, but he told me, when I asked him quietly afterwards, that he was really very happy, he only sighed and looked sad because he thought how foolish he had been to stay away so long. I was very sorry for one thing about him, uncle. He wasn't in

his best clothes, they were all too small for him, and the slippers wouldn't fit him, but Maxwell says he will buy him some new ones to-morrow. And Tommy told me he wouldn't wear a ring if he had one. He asked me why he should, so I told him about the prodigal son in the Bible—he seemed to like hearing about it, and he said he thought he was very like him. And then I asked about the music and dancing. I wanted to have that, but we couldn't manage it. Mrs. Maxwell said we had music in our hearts; how can we have that, uncle? I didn't hear any in mine, for I kept quite silent and listened for it."

"I expect she meant you were so happy that you did not want any music to make you happier."

"I was very happy. Oh, Uncle Edward, why won't all the prodigal sons go home? I can't think why they like staying away. It is so lovely to think of Tommy now! And every one would be just as happy, wouldn't they?"

"I don't think all young men have such fond parents as your friend Tommy has," said Sir Edward gravely.

"Haven't they? Well, God's prodigal sons couldn't have a nicer father. I lie and think of them when I'm in bed sometimes, and I talk to God about them. I was so glad when Jack went back to him. I think it is worst of all to stay a long way off from God, because he does love them so. I wonder if it is that they don't know whether God will take them back. Tommy seemed half afraid till he came, that his father would be angry with him. I should like to see a prodigal son running back into God's arms so much! But I suppose he does it very quietly, and only the angels look down and see it!"

"And what is this young scapegrace going to do now? Live on his father and mother, or is he going to try and do some honest work?"

Sir Edward's tone was rather impatient. Milly looked up surprised.

"Do you mean Tommy, uncle? Are you angry with him? He told me he was going to look for work directly, and Maxwell is coming up to speak to you about him to-morrow."

"Ah! I daresay—wants him to take the place of under-keeper, I suppose," and Sir Edward gave a little grunt of dissatisfaction at the thought.

(To be continued.)

Canada.

Canada! mapland, land of great mountains,  
Lakeland and riverland, land 'twixt the seas—  
Grant us, God, hearts that are large as our heritage,  
Spirits as free as the breeze.

Grant us thy fear, that we walk in humility,  
Fear that is reverent, not fear that is base;  
Grant to us righteousness, wisdom, prosperity,  
Peace, if unstained by disgrace.

Grant us thy love, and the love of our country,  
Grant us thy strength, for our strength's in thy name;  
Shield us from danger, from every adversity,  
Shield us, O Father, from shame.

Last born of nations. The offspring of freedom,  
Heir to wide prairies, thick forests, red gold—  
God grant us wisdom to value our birth-right,  
Courage to guard what we hold."

THE PIANO.

Would it be a comfort when practicing scales before breakfast on a cold morning to reflect that, during the past hundred and fifty years, there is no musical instrument which has so advanced from the original idea as the piano?

In its infancy the piano was but a harp with two or three strings. Not much scope for scales there! From time to time more strings were added, until the Cithera, in the shape of the letter P, and owning ten strings, was formed. Somewhere about the year 1200 an inventive genius conceived the idea of stretching these strings across an open box, and so the Dulcimer made its appearance, the strings being struck with hammers. For another hundred years these hammers were handled by the player, but about the year 1300 somebody invented a keyboard, by means of which the hammers could be moved. Our piano having developed thus far is known as Clavicytherium, or keyed cithera. Quite a grown-up name!

In Queen Elizabeth's time it was called a Virginal, next a Spinnet, on account of the hammers being covered with spines or quills to catch the wires. Known as the Harpsichord from 1700 to 1800, it was much enlarged and improved. In 1710, Bartolomeo Cristofoli, an Italian, invented a keyboard such as we have now, causing hammers to strike the wires from above, and thus developing the Pianoforte, commonly shortened into the one word, piano.

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

LESSON I.—JULY 4.

FIRST CONVERTS IN EUROPE.

Acts 16. 6-15. Memory verses, 13-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The entrance of thy words giveth light.—Psalm 119. 130.

OUTLINE.

- 1. A New Field, v. 6-8.
- 2. A New Call, v. 9-12.
- 3. A New Convert, v. 13-15.

Time.—A.D. 51 and 52.  
Places.—Various points in Asia Minor; Macedonia in Europe.

Paul was now about fifty years of age, and had been a Christian for sixteen years.

HOME READINGS.

- Mo. First converts in Europe.—Acts 16. 6-15.
- Tu. The journey referred to.—2 Cor. 2. 12-17.
- W. Letter to Philippi.—Phil. 1. 1-11.
- Th. Fellow-labourers.—Phil. 4. 1-9.
- F. Desire for worship.—Psalm 84.
- S. Jesus at the well.—John 4. 5-15.
- Su. A heart opened.—Luke 19. 1-10.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

- 1. A New Field, v. 6-8.  
Through what provinces had Paul journeyed?  
Why did he not tarry in Asia?  
Who hindered his going into Bithynia?  
Where then did he go?
- 2. A New Call, v. 9-12.  
To whom did the vision appear?  
What did Paul see in the vision?  
What did the man say to him?  
What did Paul think the vision meant?  
What did he at once try to do?  
To what place did Paul first sail?  
Where the next day?  
Where did he go from Neapolis?  
What shows that Philippi was a place of importance?
- 3. A New Convert, v. 13-15.  
Where did Paul go on the Sabbath?  
To whom did he preach?  
What woman heard the message favourably?  
What did the Lord do for Lydia?  
What shows that she became a Christian?  
What kindness did she show to Paul?  
What says Peter about the grace of hospitality? 1 Peter 4. 9.  
What is our Golden Text?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

- Where in this lesson are we taught—
- 1. That God guides those who trust him?
- 2. That God blesses those who worship him?
- 3. That God honours those who work for him?

THE DANGERS OF MEDDLING.

The following woeful tale will suggest a moral to more minds than one. It is not more dangerous to fool with a caged lion in a menagerie than it is with some things outside of one. Let the boys beware of lions:

The man sitting on a salt barrel had a right hand on which only two fingers were left, and sizing him up for a veteran of the war, I asked him if he hadn't been wounded by an exploding shell.

"No, not as I remembers of," he replied, as he held up his hand and turned it over and over.

"I thought that might have been the case, but you probably got it caught in some sort of machinery?"

"No, not exactly machinery, sir."

"Gun explode in your hands?"

"No, no gun didn't explode."

I gave up at last, but after a few minutes the man looked up and said:  
"Stranger, you've seen a lion, I reckon?"

"Oh, yes!"  
"Seen 'em caged and lookin' as harmless as cats?"  
"Yes; they generally look that way."

"That's the way I sized one up in a cage in a show. He lay there, looking so sleepy and good-natured and harmless that I thought it was a swindle on the public and I'd try to rouse him a bit."

"And so you poked him?" I queried.

"No, sir, no pokin'. I jest calculated to gin his tail about three twists and make him feel that life wasn't all beef and bones and sunshine. I waited for my chance, and then reached my hand in. How far is it from a lion's mouth to the middle of his tail?"

"Several feet, at least."

"I thought it was about a rod, but I know better now. I hadn't more'n got hold of his tail when he got hold of me and was gulpin' down them missein' fingers. He wanted the hull hand and arm, but they beat him off. I thought at first I wouldn't explain matters, but then I thought I would. I look a good deal like a fool, don't I?"

"Hardly that."

"Well, you do, and that's why I explained. I was fool 'nuff to want to twist a lion's tail, and you may be fool 'nuff to want to poke one in the eye, and so my advice is—don't!"

Canada.

Our Queen reigns over a sixth of the earth,

And half of that sixth is here,  
Owning the sign of the Maple Leaf,  
And holding the old flag dear.  
With room for a mightier Britain  
Than the Britain we know to-day,  
With ample plenty to keep them all,  
In the most luxurious way.

A thousand leagues from east to west,  
Nearly as many from lakes to pole,  
The sunny as well as the frigid zone,  
'Round which three oceans roll,  
Of course we have abundance of snow,  
But we have something beside;  
A climate that breeds the sort of men  
That build up nations strong and wide.

Mountains and streams on a grander scale,  
Than those of the Mother Land;  
Rugged and stern as those that guard  
The homes of Scotia's strand,  
Millions of acres as rich as those  
That 'round the homes of England smile,  
A million meadows greener far  
Than those of the Emerald Isle.

Forests grand, unmeasured as yet,  
Because of their broad expanse,  
Where flowers bloom as bright and fair  
As in the vales of France,  
And everywhere in this wide domain  
Are mines of wealth untold,  
The miner is sure of a rich reward  
In iron and silver and gold.

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