

he has forgotten the manuscript of his sermon. From a seat near the front he summons his only son, a lad of twelve years, and we can divine that he is telling the boy to run to the study, which is only a short distance away, and get the precious document. Meantime he himself engages in prayer. Miss Pringle, old Mr. Johnston, Henry Perkins and perhaps half of the congregation turn round and kneel with bowed heads. Lizzie and Susie and I, who maybe are not quite so devout as the others, merely lean forward, looking at the floor. We have gathered, however, from motions that have been made, that it is the minister's purpose to pray until the boy arrives with the manuscript. Already he has gone through the usual routine and is fairly wallowing in pleas. He has called for blessings on the Queen, her ministers, plenipotentiaries, ambassadors, and all the Royal Family. He has included the Parliament at Ottawa, the Legislature at Toronto, and now he is coming nearer home. From where we sit, at our elevation, looking through our fingers, we can see the boy peeping in at the side door, afraid to enter while his father, who is intolerant of interruption, is still praying; while the father, thinking the son will come in with the document the moment he arrives, is afraid to stop, fearing he will not have any sermon to deliver. Thus we see the minister, waiting for the boy's return, praying away for anything and everything, and the boy waiting for his dad to stop, peeping in at the door. Miss Pringle, who never has been known to move during prayer, now actually turns her head to see whether there is any visible cause for this unusual outburst. Others, in the congregation, look around slyly, wondering what is the matter. At length the minister, obviously perturbed, ends the prayer with the plea that our pilgrimage here below may lead us all at the last to a better land up above. And as he sits down, wiping his brow, the boy enters and places the precious document in his hand. Apparently much relieved, he rises and announces the text of his sermon, which he reads from the thirty-third verse of the twelfth chapter of St. Luke: "Sell that ye have, and give alms".

Giving alms never has been practised by us to excess, but nevertheless we are pretty fair listeners, even if the effect on us of such exhortations is, as the blacksmith has expressed it, "Like water off a duck's back, in one ear and out the other". I have to confess that I never enjoy sermons on giving, and on this occasion I fear my interest is wandering to the names of the tunes Lizzie is considering as she turns over the leaves of the book in front of her: "Ajalon", "Winchester", "Dennis",

*He engages
in Prayer*

*A Sermon
on Giving*