

his folly on the day of the painful separation? Shall he who has known no joy for years which seemed like centuries on account of his rejected love, shall he pardon the child who spurned his affection, who compared him to his companions of debauchery and gave them preference? Shall the father, surrounded with wealth and possessions, receive the Prodigal who returns simply because he is disenchanted, because he is unhappy and dying of hunger?

Justice and mercy, retaliation and love, clamor for their rights. Should the father receive him, it will undoubtedly be only after the Prodigal will have done penance; he will make him atone for his years of absence and contempt by as many years of refusal and disdain? Will the repentant son not deem it a blessing to be permitted to eat with the dogs *of the crumbs that fall from the table of their master?* (Matt. xv.) Who has ever understood the power of a father's love? Who has ever sounded the depth of his heart? Love is all the more heroic that it has more injuries, greater offenses to pardon, it is all the stronger and greater the lower it must descend to lend a helping hand to an ever ungrateful wretch; it is all the more noble and sublime that it wilfully forgets an enemy's wrong, and shares its riches with him. Such was the father's love for the long lost son!

The night preceding his son's arrival, the father was sleeping, but his rest was uneasy. His manly features bore an imprint of sorrow. Alternately they appeared dark and pained, radiant and beaming with joy. He was dreaming of his boy; he saw him weak and extenuated, staggering along the roadside. He saw him laughed at, buffeted by those who passed him by the way and refused to assist him. When the morning had come, the father strolled forth from his beautiful residence; he could not account for the strange feeling that had come over him; he appeared more forlorn than ever. He instinctively gazed over the landscape toward the point where the horizon floats uncertain between the desert sand and the blue sky of heaven. . . Suddenly he began to thrill with emotion, his eye recovered its lost brilliancy, his pale features flushed, his heart throbbed, he leant forward, gazing intently,