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THE PRODIGAL FATHER

A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father: "Father, give me the portion of thy time, and thy attention, and thy companionship, and thy counsel and guidance which falleth to me." And he divided unto them his living in that he paid the boy's bills, and sent him to a select preparatory school, and to dancing schools and to college; and tried to believe that he was doing his full duty . . .

And not many days after the father gathered all his interest and aspirations and ambitions and took his journey into a far country, into a land of stocks and bonds and securities, and other things that do not interest a boy, and there he wasted his precious opportunities of being a chum to his own son. And when he had spent the very best of his life and had gained money, but had failed to find satisfaction, there arose a mighty famine in his heart, and he began to be in want of sympathy and real companionship. And he went and joined himself to one of the clubs of that country, and they elected him chairman of the house committee, and president of the club, and sent him to the legislature. And he fain would have satisfied himself with the husks that other men did eat, and no man gave unto him any real friendship.

But when he came to himself, he said:

"How many men of my acquaintance have boys whom they understand and who understand them, who talk about their boys and associate with their boys, and seem perfectly happy in the comradeship of their sons, and I perish with hearthunger? I will arise and go to my son and say unto him: 'Son, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy father. Make me as one of thine acquaintances."

And he arose and came to his son. But while he was yet afar off his son saw him and was moved with astonishment, and instead of running and falling on his nesk, he drew back and was ill at ease. And the father said unto him: "Son, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. I have not done my duty by thee, and I am not worthy to be called thy father. Forgive me now and let me be thy chum."

But the son said: "Not so. I wish it were possible, but it is too late. There was a time when I wanted to know things, when I wanted companionship and advice and counsel, but you were too busy. I got the information, and I got the companionship, but I got the wrong kind, and now, alas! I am wrecked in soul and body, and there nothing you can do for me."-Blake W. Godfreu.