



THE MESSAGE OF THE FIR-TREES.

BY E. M. UTTERTON.

ONE quiet Sunday afternoon, when the world seemed hushed, and the silence was only broken by the music of the wind as it soughed through the fir-trees, I lay on a soft bank of purple heather and green moss, under the dark pines, which were here and there interspersed by a tall spruce or stately larch. Above me was the deep-blue sky and great, fleecy clouds slowly moving across the heavens, which seemed as if they only veiled the brightness of the angelic host by just a soft white film which now and again parted to let a ray of glory through.

Below me lay a little loch reflecting the heavenly blue on its peaceful surface, and which was surrounded by the purple hills in their restful strength.

While I thought and dreamily gazed before me it seemed as if the wind playing in the branches spoke to me; and yet I could not understand its voice.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth:

so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Yes, I thought, and how often do we *feel* the influence of those whose lives are led by God's Spirit without being conscious of it or able to understand its secret!

Looking up I said half aloud, as if speaking to the fir-trees,—

"Tell me your message—why you are so different from other trees, and what is the secret of your life?"

Then as I listened the sound of the wind seemed to frame the answer:—

"Wouldst thou know the message God sends through us? 'Seek, and ye shall find.' *Look up—straight up—to God alone.* Other trees are beautiful; other trees have great spreading branches, which give shelter and shade from the noonday sun; others bear good fruit; but none point like we do straight to God. As the spire of a church, from the rocky sides of the mountains or from the deep glades of the valley, our message is the same: neither to the right hand nor to the left, but straight up to Heaven.

"Again, other trees turn colour and shed their leaves when autumn winds