

The Lost Chord.

BY ADLAID A. PROCTOR.

SEATED one day at the organ,
I was weary and ill at ease,
And my fingers wandered idly
Over the noisy keys;
I know not what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then;
But I struck one chord of music,
Like the sound of a great Amen.
It flooded the crimson twilight,
Like the close of an angel's psalm;
And it lay on my fever'd spirit
With a touch of infinite calm,
It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife;
It seem'd the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.
It link'd all perplexed meanings
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence
As if it were loath to cease.
I have sought, but I seek it vainly,
That one lost chord divine,
Which came from the soul of the organ,
And entered into mine;
It may be that Death's bright angel
Will speak in that chord again;
It may be that only in heaven
I shall hear that grand Amen.

On Her Majesty's Service.

THE post system of Great Britain and its dependencies, and indeed of the civilized world, is one of the most wonderful things of modern times. To think that for a penny I can have a post-card sent to Japan, or China, or India, or Persia, or Russia, or almost any place on the globe, is one of the greatest marvels of the age. And the post-office is one of the most beneficent institutions as well. The time was, and not so long ago either, when letters from their friends were luxuries that poor people could not afford. I remember when a letter from Nova Scotia to Toronto cost three shillings and four pence. This was really a tax on the affections. When the poor left home, they could not afford to keep up the tender tie of love by writing—even if they did not leave their native land. And as for the poor emigrant to Canada, the parting was almost like death. Sir Rowland Hill, by giving the boon of penny postage to the poor in Great Britain, did an incalculable good, enabling them to keep up the family tie; and added immeasurably to the sum of human happiness, and of human virtue as well. For, badly-written, badly spelled as the letter might be, no poem, no eloquence was half so dear to a father's or a mother's heart as news from Tom or Mary, at service in a distant city; and in the loneliness of their little garret, while writing home or hearing from home, Tom and Mary have the spell of home influence—of a mother's prayers and a father's blessing thrown around them.

To our young readers I would say, wherever you are, write often home. While my own dear mother was living, for years and years I wrote to her every week. When at college, when on a circuit, when I had a home of my own, and many cares, I always wrote home at least once a week. Often I had no news and little to say, but I

knew that it gladdened my mother's heart to hear from her boy, and so, no matter how busy, I found time to write. And do you suppose that I regret it now that I can write to her no more? No, a thousand times, No! And when I am away travelling, I try to send, at least, a post-card home every day. It costs only a cent, and takes but a minute, but these little love-tokens are worth a great deal. And oh! how glad the traveller, far from home, is to get tidings from the loved ones, and how bitter the disappointment when he fails to get his letters where he expected them! Some of the brightest memories to the writer of Rome, Venice, Milan, and other foreign cities, are the letters from home. And the way letters will follow one from place to place is wonderful. Some of those which missed me were re-directed over and over again, and some even followed me back to Canada.

Her Majesty's servant in the mail cart is driving over a bleak and snowy road in some remote and lonely place, but he is bearing his message of joy or mayhap of sorrow, to many an anxious heart. I wind up this rambling talk with Cowper's lines to the post-boy in Book IV. of the Task:

Hark! 'tis the twanging horn! o'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length,
Besides the wintry flood, in which the Moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and
frozen locks;

News from all nations lumbering at his back,
True to his charge, the close-packed load
behind,

Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn,
And, having dropped the expected bags,
pass on.

He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold, and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and joy to some;
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks;
Births, deaths, and marriages; epistles wet
With tears that trickled down the writer's
cheeks.

Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent
swains,

Or nymphs responsive—equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But O the important budget ushered in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? Have our troops
awaked?

Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,
Snore to the music of the Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once
again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

In the Alps trees cease to grow at an elevation of about six thousand four hundred feet.

When Days are Dark.

WHEN days are dark, remember
The brightness that is passed;
Call up the glad spring music
To mingle with the blast:
Think of the merry sunshine
And hosts of scented flowers,
Let memories of the summer
Take gloom from off sad hours.

When days are dark, be cheerful;
Because the leaves must fade,
Thy hopes need not be cast away,
Nor thy heart be dismayed.
This is the time for laughter
And happy household song,
Hours that are filled with cheerfulness
Are never sad and long.

When days are dark and trustful,
The sun shines after rain;
And joy goes not so far away
But it returns again.
Life is not ruled by sorrow,
But blessings reign o'er all,
And we can sing of mercy,
In spite of pain and thrall.

When days are dark, be busy,
For there is much to do,
And the ministries are many
Which kindly hands pursue!
The need of love is always great,
For grief is everywhere;
O lighten thou some burden,
And lessen thou some care!

When days are dark, be thankful,
Light is not always best,
And useful are the shadows,
The silence and the rest.
God gives what'er is good to come,
The day and then the night,
And those who find their joy in him
Live always in the light.

—Christian World.

Curious Trees.

BY REV. JESSE S. GILBERT, A.M.

TREES are useful to man in many ways. They afford him wood for fuel and for building, they screen the earth from the hot rays of the sun, they furnish a dwelling to multitudes of feathered songsters, and many of them supply us with choice and healthful fruits.

One of the most useful and beautiful of trees is the palm, or date-tree, as it is sometimes called. It often rises, graceful and beautiful, to the height of one hundred feet. It is very common in Bible lands. David said, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree," and the multitude scattered palm branches in the pathway of Jesus upon his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. The date is the fruit of one species of the palm-tree.

There are said to be three hundred and sixty uses to which the trunk, branches, leaves, fibres and fruit are applied by the natives. Many people in the East subsist almost entirely upon its fruit. The camels feed upon the date-stone; from the leaves they make couches, baskets, bags, mats, and brushes; from the branches, cages for poultry and fences for gardens, and from the fibres of the trunk are made thread, rope, and rigging.

Another very useful and curious tree is the bread-fruit tree. It grows upon the island of the Pacific Ocean and of the Indian Archipelago. Its

fruit is the principal food of the inhabitants of those islands, hence its name. The fruit is generally oval, and about the size of a child's head. It contains a somewhat fibrous pulp, which, when ripe, becomes juicy and yellow. At an earlier stage of its growth, and when the fruit is gathered for use, the pulp is white and mealy and of a consistence resembling that of new bread. It is to many thousands of our race the only sort of bread they use.

Another very curious and useful tree is the cow-tree. It grows in tropical countries, and is called the cow-tree because by piercing it the natives obtain a juice so much like milk that they use it instead of milk.

The banyan-tree is a native of India. It is remarkable for its vast rooting branches. They send shoots downward, which take root and become stems. The tree in that manner spreads over a great surface and lasts for ages. One has been described as having no fewer than 350 stems equal to large oaks, and more than 3,000 smaller ones, covering a space sufficient to contain 7,000 persons. The branches are usually covered with monkeys, birds, and enormous bats.

Many of my readers have seen growing in gardens and upon lawns the odd-appearing tree called the umbrella-tree, so named because in shape it very much resembles an umbrella. Some who read this article may have seen the gigantic trees of California, and I am sure that they can never forget the sight. How kind and good our heavenly Father has been to create so many useful and beautiful trees, giving us fruit, shade, and wood for fuel and for building. Even the coal we burn is the result of forests that flourished and died many ages ago. The psalmist represented the trees as praising God. What a beautiful idea! Certainly we can praise him, and if we do not the very trees will rebuke us.

Truth.

TRUTH is beautiful as well as safe and mighty. In the incident related below a boy twelve years old, with only truth as a weapon, conquered a smart and shrewd lawyer who was fighting for a bad cause.

Walter was the important witness in a lawsuit. One of the lawyers, after cross-questioning him severely, said:

"Your father has been talking to you and telling you how to testify, hasn't he?"

"Yes," said the boy.

"Now," said the lawyer, "just tell us how your father told you to testify."

"Well," said the boy, modestly, "father told me that the lawyers would try and tangle me in my testimony; but, if I would just be careful and tell the truth, I could tell the same thing every time."

The lawyer didn't try to tangle up that boy any more.