

## Choice Literature.

### TO A MUSICIAN.

Nature hath shower'd her blessings on thy head  
And touch'd thy soul with music. By thy hand  
The trembling strings ring out in raptures grand

Rare songs of joyous love that wake the dead,  
Dull space with echoing sounds and shed  
Their beauty o'er our hearts. The little band  
Who wear the crown of genius in the land  
Of Arts call thee their brother. All is said.

Live long thy power that such sweet music  
brings

To soothe life's cares and make the heart forget  
Its share of this world's pain. All nature sings  
To drown the cry of death that ringeth yet  
In every ear, and summer's garland flings  
To outlive time, like thoughts to music set.

—Sarepta, in *The Week*.

### THE OLD LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPER.

It is a beautiful day on which I write this story, sunshiny and warm; so warm, that the fact that the writer will be here in but two months, seems impossible. Yarmouth just now looks its best, with blossoming hedges, green lawns, and gardens blooming with flowers of every hue.

It is not a very large town, but it is a very pretty one. There are rivers and lakes in plenty for fishing and boating; and lovely drives through wooded country roads; but, unlike almost all sea-port towns of its importance, there is no place of particular interest to tourists, apart from its beauty of scenery; no home where Evangeline was born, such as Grand Pré can boast of; no old fort visited by travellers, as Annapolis contains; nor has it even, like Halifax, a Public Garden, although there is much talk and planning about having one. Take, however, a person with a very ordinary amount of life and spirit, and a mind capable of appreciating the beauties of nature, and Yarmouth would be to them a very pleasant spot in which to pass the summer months. Such a person would enjoy a row through the three beautiful lakes of Milton, a drive through its suburbs, Carleton and Tusket, and if his time permitted, a sail from Yarmouth across to Cape Fourchu, not far distant from the shore of the town. Here he would be shown the lighthouse, a short description of which will here be given, for this lighthouse, and its resident keeper are the subject of my story.

On one side of the Cape is Yarmouth Harbour; on the other, the water running inland, ends in what is called False Harbour, on account of the obstruction to navigation by a bank of sand and small rocks. And it is to distinguish the one from the other, that the light was placed at this particular spot.

On a beautiful day in July, I, with a party of friends, old and young, visited the lighthouse for the first time, at least to me. Owing to the ebb of the tide we were obliged to spend several hours there, and thus it was that we came to hear the following story, told by the keeper, then an old man of perhaps seventy-five years of age, whose bent form, snow-white hair and careworn face, told a tale of loneliness and sorrow. I can see him now, sitting in an old arm chair amid half-worn cushions, one arm resting on the table beside him, as he began:

It is thirty-five years since I first came to this place, and thirty-five years is a long time to live in such a place, as this. I was a young man then, father of one of the most beautiful little girls in all Nova Scotia, at least, so she was to me. She had long, shining hair, and such brown eyes, and, although six years old, she knew how to read and spell as well as most children of nine or ten. She was the last of four children, the others having been carried off by fever, and then their mother went, too. How Mary came to be left, I do not know; but, as soon as she pulled through and I recovered my senses, which came near leaving me during that dreadful time of loss, I looked around for some place where I could live in solitude with my child and forget my sorrows. The doctors

thought a change of air would be the best for Mary, as she was never the same child after her sickness, so, when the position of lighthouse-keeper was offered me, I accepted it without hesitation. I was poor, and unaccustomed to work hard for my daily bread, and the position seemed a good one to me.

At the time I moved into the building it was about completed, with the exception of the light itself, which was to be put in on the following spring. During that time I was to live here free, my only duty being the charge of two large lamps, which, when trimmed and lighted, were to be placed in the two windows of the tower every night, until the new year, when the machinery of the revolving light would be in working order.

Those first summer months were pleasant ones to us both. The little one seemed to pick up wonderfully. We spent whole mornings on the seashore with no other companions, for our nearest neighbour lived four miles away. I occupied the time with sewing sails for a factory across the harbour, and talking to Mary. Such happy hours as she spent making sand-houses, only to see them swept away by the cruel waves, just as death swept her from me soon afterwards. Often she would call me from my work to examine some curious shell or bit of rock, which she had come across in her rambles along the shore, and I always had some wonderful story to tell, of the fishes and mermaids that hid under the waves, to which she would listen for hours at a time. But those days passed all too soon. As winter drew near, she seemed to droop and lose all her colour and health. I wanted to take her across on the mainland, but the doctor said she would be "All right when the warm weather came round again." And much against my own convictions, I believed him, at least for a time. Then she grew too weak to walk, and would lie day after day on a couch by the window, gazing out over the sea, and it just seemed to me as if she pined for some other life beyond the old lighthouse.

At last the conviction came to me gradually, that it would not be many weeks, perhaps days, before she would leave me; and I spent as much time as I could possibly spare with her.

The day which I knew would be her last, came. It was the twenty-second day of November, a day never to be forgotten. Early in the morning a messenger came from the town with orders for me to have the light lighted early in the evening, as there were every indications of a violent storm before midnight, and there were several small vessels hourly expected. I received the message as one in a dream, bearing the message, but not taking in the real substance of it.

The storm anticipated, came about noon that day. All the afternoon it raged, and by five o'clock complete darkness had set in. The waves lashed the lighthouse in all their fury, and the wind blew with a violence that threatened every minute to tear down the staging that surrounded the tower. Leaving my little one's couch, I hurried up the long flight of steps, and, without trimming, lighted the two lamps, and placed one in each window. Then, without a backward glance, I hurried down again, and took up my watch by the window, beside the couch of my dying child.

She was very weak, and her breath came and went in short gasps. Twice when an unusual gust blew, she shuddered, and I thought she had gone, but she opened her eyes, and smiled reassuringly at me. Perhaps she anticipated my loneliness, for although so near death, she must have realized how much we had been to each other during the months that had passed.

Suddenly, while sitting there, the report of a gun reached my ears, borne through the storm, sounding almost beneath the window of the room where I was sitting, and almost at the same moment, the light, which all along I had seen reflecting from the tower on the

waters below, flickered for a moment, and then disappeared. What had happened? The report was surely from some vessel in distress, not more than a quarter of a mile away, and the oil must have all burned out of the lamp, else why had the light suddenly gone out. I saw it all now in a new light. In my selfishness regarding my own troubles, I had neglected my duty. In my endeavour to spend as much of my remaining time as possible with the only companion left me, I had given scarcely a thought to the oil of lamps. Only that morning the man who brought me supplies, had inquired if there was plenty of oil, and I had replied, "Yes," scarcely heeding his question, or my reply.

Was there plenty?

I was as one bewildered. Could I leave her, alone and dying, on such a night as this? Was I responsible for that vessel? Then this thought; were there not other lives exposed to the dreadful perils of the night as dear to some, as this one life to me. All this passed through my brain like a flash. As in a vision, I saw the anxious, tearful faces of mothers gleam with joy as they welcomed back their sailor boys. Then I hesitated no longer, but dashed from the room, stopping not for one farewell glance, although I felt that when I returned she would be gone.

"Oh, God help me to hurry," I cried and in less time than it takes to tell it, I had the feeder in my hand. It was empty, so I knew was the cask, as I had drawn the last off into the feeder two days before.

What should I do? Seizing a package of matches, I almost flew over the steps, each one seeming to have a mesmerizing power of holding me back, as they sometimes do in dreams. When I reached the top of the last step, I saw my surmises were correct. One had died out; the other flickering feebly. The latter I seized. It was half full, but the wick was too short to reach the oil. I had no time to lose, not a minute in which to change the wick.

Already I could see by the light of the distressed vessel, that she was almost into False Harbour, and I knew, once in, no human aid could avail.

I tore open a window, and stepped out on the staging which yet remained around the building. The wind had no effect on the blaze, as the chimney was constructed for out-door purposes.

Holding on to the ladder with one hand, I shook the lamp wildly backward and forward. The oil thus reached the wick, and the blaze brightened and threw its yellow light over the black water below. I could see the vessel now almost on the rocks. Did they see the light I wondered, for, unmindful of its warning signal, they were making straight for the sands and rocks.

I strained my eyes into the blackness. I even tried to scream to them, but the sound reached no farther than my lips. This one little blaze was of no use. My help seemed of no avail compared with the wild element working against me. And my child I could help. For one moment I allowed the temptation to remain; but only for a moment. With a cry for strength, I shut out all thoughts of her, and shook my lamp once more.

Suddenly a flash of lightning illumined the whole place, and showed them their danger. Almost on the instant, the vessel changed her course, and steered for the right harbour. During the flash, instantaneous as it was, I had time to see plainly the shape of the vessel, and knew it to be the Raven, a packet, running weekly between Boston and Yarmouth, carrying both passengers and freight.

The lamp had given its last flicker, a sudden gust forced it from my hand, and it was dashed into a thousand pieces on the rocks below. But it made no sound, nor could I have heard it, had it been the report of a gun. They were safe, for I knew the beacon lighted them on the other side. I had done my duty, cost what it had.

Then my courage failed me. I dared not descend, for I knew what awaited me.

It must have been half an hour that I stood, half paralyzed with cold and dread, leaning against the window frame, gazing vacantly over the sea, seeing and hearing nothing.

Then I aroused myself, and began mechanically to descend the one hundred steps between me and the sitting room below.

It was as I expected; all was over. No trace of the storm raging without was shown within that room.

Since then I have lived on and on. One year has been the same as another to me, only each brings me nearer to her. I am an old man now, but for thirty-five years I have done my duty. Only that once did I neglect it, and my punishment was bitter enough. The light that streams every night from yonder window has saved many a life from the very jaws of death, but never did it do its duty more faithfully than did that one feeble blaze fed by those few drops of oil.

The old man ceased speaking, and dropped his face in his hands. We all started as from a dream. Was it a bright sunny day? We had forgotten the sun shone, and we were a pleasure party, so forcibly had the old man's story carried us into the past, back to that far-off night where all was darkness and storm.

We knew it was time to go. So quietly and reverently we took our leave, and left him standing there by the table; a picture never to be forgotten, with the last rays of sun-light streaming over his white hair, and lighting up the once bright colours of the cushions in the old arm chair.—*Frances L. Allan, in The Week*.

### A BEAUTIFUL INCIDENT.

A man blind from his birth, a man of much intellectual vigour and many engaging social qualities, found a woman who, appreciating his worth, was willing to cast in her lot with him, and become his wife. Several bright, beautiful children became theirs, who tenderly and equally loved both their parents.

An eminent French surgeon while in this country, called upon them, and examining the blind man with much interest and care, said to him: "Your blindness is wholly artificial; your eyes are naturally good, and could I have operated upon them twenty years ago, I think I could have given you sight. It is barely possible that I can do it now, though it will cost you great pain."

"I can bear that," was the reply; "so you but enable me to see."

The surgeon operated upon him, and was gradually successful; first there were faint glimmerings of light, then more distinct vision. The blind father was handed a rose, he had smelt one before, but had never seen one; then he looked upon the face of his wife, who had been so true and faithful to him; and then his children were brought, whom he had so often fondled, and whose charming prattle had so frequently fallen upon his ears.

He then exclaimed: "Oh, why have I seen all these before inquiring for the man by whose skill I have been enabled to behold them! Show me the doctor." And when he was pointed out to him, he embraced him, with tears of gratitude and joy.

So, when we reach heaven, and with unclouded eyes look upon its glories, we shall not be content with a view of these. No, we shall say, "Where is Christ? He to whom I am indebted for what heaven is; show me Him, that with all my soul I may adore and praise Him through endless ages."

The telephone is now used by deep-water divers. A receiver and transmitter combined is affixed to the inside of the helmet near the diver's ear. By a slight turn of his head he can speak into the 'phone, and he can hear readily from it at all times. Its value in deep-sea work for reporting progress or receiving instructions is clear. Formerly the only communication was by a system of pulls at a cord.