SONGS BORN OF SORROW.

BY REV. F. B. MEYER, B. A.

The church owes many of her sweetest hymns to the profound anguish which wrung the hearts of her noblest children. The rough feet of trial and pain have stamped, as in the oil press, hearts whose life blood is preserved in matchless lyrics. There is no such raw material for songs that live from heart to heart as that furnished by sorrow.

It has been said by a modern writer that, to his thought, the mysterious beauty of music is more wonderful than the prodigality of form and color which overspreads the whole of nature; and he goes on to show that man only develops and liberates the music which is latent in almost all substances, waiting for his coming to give it expression. "Man only develops what was within them, just as the coal which is extracted from the earth, when set on fire, merely liberates the heat and light which in the forest is received from the sun." Is not there speechless music, locked within nature pleading to be let out in song or sound through the agency of man, part of the earnest expectation of the creature which waits for the manifestation of the sons of God?

It is remarkable how many of David's psalms date from those dark and sad days, when he was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. His path may be tracked through the Psalter, as well as in the sacred narrative of his wanderings. Keilah, Ziph, Maon, Engedi yielded themes for strains which will live forever. To this gifted singer the power was entrusted of eliciting the music that lay concealed in the least congenial haunts. It is not strange that those wild desolations are now immortal, and that each has contributed chords to the complete music of the soul?

While sheltering in the forest of Hareth, tidings came of a foray of the Philistines on one of the hapless border towns. "Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they rob the threshing floors." The year's harvest was at that time spread out for threshing; it was an opportune moment therefore for the plunderer. The labors of the year were being carried off, and the cattle "lifted" by Israel's bitter and relentless foes. Wrapped in these tidings there was probably a covert appeal for help from one who had often proved himself a wall of defense on the southern frontier. Saul was too far away, and perhaps too intent on his fancied personal wrongs, to be available for the rapid action that was required. David was alert, energetic, near at hand. The appeal to him was not in vain; especially as it was ratified by the Divine voice. He arose and went down from the hill country of Judah into the plains, met the marauders on their return journey, heavy laden with booty and impeded with cattle, smote them with great slaughter, and brought back all the spoil to the rejoicing townfolks, who, in return for all services, gladly lodged and entertained him and his men.

It was a brief spell of sunshine in a dark and cloudy day, and must have been very welcome to the weary little band. To be again in a town that had "gates and bars" was as welcome an exchange to life in the dens and caves of the earth, as the comforts of civilization are after the privations of the Tartar steppes. And this gleam of comfort probably elicited from the minstrel chieftain Psalm 31, "Blessed be the Lord, for he hath showed me His marvelous loving kindness in a strong city."

David's stay in Keilah was brought to a summary close by the tidings, given perhaps through Jonathan, that Saul was preparing an expedition to take him, like a trapped bird, even though he destroyed in the attempt the city that sheltered his rival. These tidings were confirmed through the ephod, by which David appealed to the God of Israel; and the further information was communicated that the cowardly and ungrateful towns folk, when forced to choose between the king and himself, would not scruple to save themselves by surrendering their deliverer. Then David and his men, in number about 600, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. Perhaps they broke up into small parties, whilst the leader, with the more intrepid and devoted of his followers, made his way to the neighborhood of Ziph, about three miles south of Hebron.

This was about the lowest ebb in David's fortunes. The king was searching for him every day with a malignity which made it evident that he had come out to seek his life. Beneath the expressions and formulas of devout religion which he carefully maintained (23:7-21), Saul secretly cherished the resolve of thwarting the Divine purpose. He knew, so Jonathan told his friend in a hurried interview the two noble youths arranged in the wood of Ziph, that David would be king over Israel. But this did not abate his determination to take his life if he could. What a desperate condition his soul had reached, as the result of turning itself to its own wild and evil way! And manifestly David had every reason to fear the outbursts of the hatred which, in proud defiance, had even set itself against the will of God.

In addition to this relentless hate there was the meditated treachery of the Ziphites, who sought to curry favor with the king by betraying David's lurking place. Tidings of their intended falseness came to David, and he moved further south to the wilderness of Maon, where a conical hill gives a far extended view of the surrounding country. Thither the men of Ziph conducted the king with such deadly accuracy that, before they could escape, the little beleagued band found the hill on which they gathered surrounded by the royal troops, and their escape rendered impossible. Well for them that a breathless messenger at this juncture burst in on Saul with the words, "Haste thee, and come, for the Philistines have made a raid on the land." Then David drew a long sigh of relief, and sang Psalm 54: "Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy might."

From Maon, when the heat of the pursuit was over, David removed his quarters eastward to the stronghold of the wild goat on the shores of the Dead Sea. On the western shore, midway between north and south, there is a little piece of level ground covered with the rich luxuriance of tropical vegetation. It is jealously fenced in by giant cliffs, jutting out into the dark waters of the lake, but its beauty is maintained by a tepid stream which, issuing from the limestone rock, four hundred feet above the glen, "rushes down the deep descent, fretted by many a rugged crag, and raining its spray over verdant borders of acacias, mimosas and lotus." It is said that gray weather-beaten stones mark the site of an ancient city, and traces of palms have been discovered encrusted in the limestone. But the tangle of a tropical jungle now reigns supreme. This was David's next resort—En-gedi, the haunt of the wild goat—where deep caverns in the steep cliffs, and the abundance of water supply, furnishes two of the most important items in his sparse and fragal program. Here, again, the Psalmist sets his experience to music in two priceless songs. Psalm 57, "Be merciful unto me, O God, for my soul taketh refuge in Thee," and Psalm 42, "I cry with my voice unto the Lord, with my voice unto the Lord do I make supplication."

Wilderness experiences also gave rise to other psalms, all of them marked by a recurrence of the same metaphors borrowed from the wilderness and rocky scenery, of the same protestations of innocence, of the same appeals for the overshadowing wing of the Most High, of the same delicately worded references to Saul. Among these are Psalms 11, 17, 22, 25, 64.

I cannot deal with these in detail, but one or two features arrest the most superficial glance. Men are as lions. "My soul is among lions, I lie among them that are set on fire." His soul take refuge in God, hiding in the shadow of His wings, as he had often seen the eaglets do beneath the broad pinion of the parent bird. God is his Rock he hides in Him, as his fugitive band in the strong deep sides of the cave. His divine Helper will not let his enemies triumph over him; it shall happen to them, as so often happened to hunters in those very wilds, when they fell down the crumbling sides of pits dug to trap the creatures of the forest. At night he shelters in God; with his psaltery he awakes the dawn. All these psalms are bathed in image and metaphors like these.

His conscience was void of offence towards God and man. If challenged as to his absolute sinlessness, he would have been the first to deprecate anything of the sort; instantly he would have acknowledged that in his rough soldier life he was constantly in need of the propitiating sacrifices, which should plead for him with God. But, in respect to Saul or to any treachery against him or his house, or to any crime deserving such treatment as that with which he was threatened, he protested his absolute innocence, and turned confidently to God, with clean hands and a pure heart, as one who had not lifted up his soul unto vanity, or sworn deceitfully. (Pss. 7:3, 4, 5; 24.)

Pain is attributable to four distinct sources: To the direct agency of Satan, under God's permission. To the results of their own wrongdoing. To the Providence of God for high moral ends. To the malignity and malevolence of our fellows. Of all these, there is none so hard to bear, that stings so sharply, and strikes its poison fangs so deeply, as the last. To his highly sensitive spirit it was the acutest form of torture, that though he was willing to give himself to prayer and ministry on their behalf, yet his caluminiators pursued him with such unrelenting malice—"Their teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."

"Save me by thy name.
Judge me by thy might."
"Behold, God is my helper."

"I will cry unto God most high;
Unto God that performeth all things unto me.
He shall send from heaven, and save me.
God shall send forth His mercy and truth."

"Refuge hath failed me, no man careth for my soul.
I cried unto thee, O Lord.
I said, thou art my refuge."

What depths of pathos lie in these stanzas of petition! He does not seek to retaliate or avenge his wrong; but commits himself to him who judgeth righteously, assured that the Righteous One will shelter him during the time of trial, and ultimately bring out His righteousness as the light, and His judgment as noonday.

If any should read these lines who is unjustly maligned and persecuted, let them rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Some little time may elapse before the hour of deliverance may strike, during which they must wear white robes of stainless innocence and purity (Rev. 6:11), but presently God will arise, and lift the poor out of dust, the needy from the dunghill, to make them sit with princes and inherit the throne of glory. For the needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor perish forever.
—London, England.

IN SWITZERLAND.

Across the Brunig Pass, with its entrancing views, the pilgrims dropped down on one of those curious cog-railroads that now enable the tourist to surmount the most arduous of mountain climbing in Switzerland, to the lovely Lake Brienz. Passing Giessbach's wonderful waterfall, which the schoolmaster Kehrli, of Brienz, prophesied in the early decades of the century would yet charm the world, it rushes down its steep and sinuous descent of nine hundred feet, now like a lady's lace scarf, and now like a screen of sculptured alabaster, and now when the wind shakes it glows, transformed with flashing jewels.

At Interlaken the Pilgrims divided into two parties, some went by St. Gothard Pass to Milan. The largest company passed the Sabbath amid the splendours of the snow-capped peaks that shut in the beautiful village of Interlaken. Here the Scotch Presbyterians maintain a service in the sacristy of the ancient castle, which has been transformed into a quaint Presbyterian Kirk.

It was our good fortune to listen to the Rev. Dr. Dods, of Edinburgh, now famous on both sides of the Atlantic. He preached a magnificently simple and practical discourse, founded on the scene where Jesus washed the disciples' feet just before the supper in the upper room. The clergymen of the party were enthusiasts in their praises for its helpful spiritual power. It was eminently a Bible sermon. One lay brother wanted to know if that devout spiritually minded dominie could be the man so much talked of in connection with higher criticism, for he didn't display any great scholarship, but was just crammed full of the Bible. Would that we had in America more such Bible preaching and less display in the pulpit of pyrotechnic scholarship!

It was a wonderful thing for these pilgrims from beyond the sea, to watch the sun set on these peaks of everlasting snow. Some climbed the pass to Grindenwald, and from the foot of towering glaciers, formed, for the first time, a practical idea of how these mountains of perpetual snow turn into the stupendous ice cliffs that sink towards the valleys, and dissolving nourish the unfailing streams of Switzerland. It is this feature of glacier action that makes the river Rhine a stream that fails not in the dryest summer season, but is always full. Looking on that uplifted splendor we recalled Coleridge's immortal poem:

"Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven,
Beneath the keen full moon? who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows, who with flowers of loveliest blue
Spreads garlands at your feet? God!"

How close God comes to us in these mountains? As we walked back through the village, the peasants are drinking and dancing in their summer parks and gardens. We thought of our beloved America. And how many want to take from us the sanctity of the day as devoted to God, to church, to home and sacred fellowship, and make its afternoon and evening a time of thoughtless, godless revelry. From Interlaken we journeyed by boat and rail to the city of Berne, a strange, old, beautiful city, where the shores of the olden time are receding before the new life of the new Switzerland. As a Swiss gentleman remarked to the writer the spirit of America is, here, and is witnessed in the new style of architecture and the rush of busy life.

With what delight the American strolls through the quaint arcades and narrow streets, the gables of whose tall houses almost touch each other. A girl is washing some clothes at the public fountain, or the butcher is cleansing his bloody hands at the same running stream. Many of the household tasks are done in the open air beneath the shade of the arcades, and here, too, the carpenter, the upholsterer and the shoemaker are plying their trade. Here are the Parliament Houses of the Swiss Federation, beautiful modern buildings speaking of the present age. In the evening, from the terrace that looks down from a hundred feet on the swift river, and across it to the new suburbs in the glow of sunset, we took our last look at the snow peaks, white, golden, and now faint in the twilight with the soft Alpine glow. The long gloaming softly, almost imperceptibly, fades. The Alps are gone to some of us forever only to live in our pleasant memories of Switzerland.

In the shadows we enter the ancient church that borders the terrace. Here is a great organ, which the natives boast as only second to Freyburg. We enjoyed a fine concert. But the organ is not the equal of the one at Lucerne, whose mellow tones and wonderful vox humana stop captivated us all. At the close of the concert, in compliment to the large party, the organist played "America." To-morrow we turn our faces westward.—The Presbyterian.

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AN AUTUMN.

The verdure now is little seen
Of fields and trees which were so green.
The lovely flowers, too, have gone,
Their beauty and their fragrance flown.

Summer, with all her charms, has passed away; and the earth is disrobed of her beautiful garments. The sweet notes of the feathered songsters, which warbled their Maker's praises, and animated our spirits, as we perambulated fields and groves, are now no longer heard.

The birds have flown to a more congenial climate, not to return until the earth shall have been warmed again by the benign influence of spring.

In looking abroad, we behold a variety of autumnal tints, on the grass and foliage; and as long nights, and chilling winds are approaching, we are warned to prepare for autumn's successor. But autumn affords us many sources of enjoyment. It gives us the delicious fruits for refreshment, that are so well adapted to the most delicate taste. There are also many other things belonging to this season of the year, which are calculated to fill the mind with gratitude and delight toward the Almighty God. The hearts of the husbandmen are doubtless cheered as they gather in the productions of our American climate, so receiving the rewards of their long and arduous toils.

While viewing the leaves that have withered and fallen to the ground scattered by the chilling winds, we are solemnly reminded of the close of mortal life; when mankind being divested of beauty, vigor, and health, is swept away by the ruthless hand of death to return to mother earth, there to await the morning of the resurrection. As seeds that have long remained buried are again restored to vegetation so will the bodies of mortals be raised to a spiritual existence.

Oct. 12. E. A. S. Rice.

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In the bottom of a lake a slender blade of green pushed its way up through the ooze and mud. By and by it touched the surface. The sunshine warmed it, and its leaves spread out on the water. Then came a fair, sweet morning when the bud opened and became a flower, and "lay on the lake as white and stainless as a baby's soul, and the breath of it was sweeter than any perfume." The flower was very glad, but soon it began to sigh: "I am very sweet and beautiful, but why am I out in this lonely place where no one comes to see me and admire me?" Then that very day a poet came and saw the lily, and was inspired by it to write a sweet song which went forth in a book and sang itself into many a heart. Next day an artist came that way, and when he saw the flower he made a sketch of it, and in his studio in the city he painted it, and hundreds saw his picture and caught a thought of purity from it. The lily was blessing the world though it lay there in such obscurity. Still it sighed, "I am of no use here, though I am so lovely. Ugly weeds sometimes heal the sick, but I am doing no good." Then another visitor came that way. He was neither poet nor artist, but in his eyes there was a soft tenderness which told of a loving heart. He bent down and plucked the lily. A shudder ran through it as it felt itself torn up by the roots and lifted out of the water, and it fainted away. By and by it awoke, and now it was in a long, narrow room with rows of beds, and in every bed a sick child. As the flower opened the children's eyes turned toward it in wonder and its perfume poured out and filled the ward. The lily at last had found its place of usefulness and blessing through sacrifice. It had been torn up by the roots to become a blessing in the children's ward. You understand my little parable. Many a life grows up in some obscure place and sighs because of the gloom and the hard circumstances. But at length it bursts into beauty, overcoming the hindrances, like the lily on the water. Yet it sighs because no one sees its loveliness. It longs to be of use. Then one catches a glimpse of the fair young life and goes away to live more purely, more unselfishly. Still rises from the heart the sigh to do some work. God hears the sigh, and the lovely life is transplanted—perhaps into some place of service where the beauty will be a benediction to weary ones and where the gentle hands will minister to pain or sorrow; or perhaps to a place where the alabaster box of love must needs be broken to fill a home or a community with its fragrance. There are many consecrated lives whose sigh and prayer for usefulness have led to missions of self-sacrifice.—J. R. Miller, D. D.

As Jacob lay dying in his hieroglyphed chamber, not far from the Pyramids, his face shadowed by approaching death, but aglow with the light of the world to which he was going, he told how Shiloh, the Peaceful One, the Peace-giver, should come to give peace to men. Weary generations passed by and still He came not, until at length there stood among men One whose outward life was full of sorrow and toil, but whose sweet, calm face mirrored the unbroken peace that reigned within His breast. He was the promised Peace-giver. He had peace in Himself; for he said: "My peace." He had the power of passing that peace on to others; for He said: "My peace I give unto you." Why should not each reader of these lines receive the peace which Jesus had Himself, and which He waits to give to every longing and recipient heart? A poor woman timidly asked the gardner of a gentleman's hothouse if he would sell her just one bunch of grapes for her dying child. He gruffly threatened to summon the police unless she quickly left the place. But as she sadly turned away, she was recalled by a girlish voice bidding her stay, asking her story, and insisting on her having as many bunches as she could carry with her. And when she offered her few half-pence in return, she was met by the sweet, laughing answer: "Nay, my poor woman, this is my father's hothouse; we don't sell grapes here, but we are very pleased to give them. Take them and welcome for your dying child." It is so that Jesus gives His peace to all weary tired ones. Why not to you?—F. B. Meyer.

He comforts in bereavement by showing us what death is to a Christian. If we could see what dying means to our beloved one, we would not weep. There is a beautiful story of a boy whose young sister was dying. He had heard that if he could secure but a single leaf from the tree of life, that grew in the garden of God, the illness could be healed. He set out to find the garden, and implore the angel sentinel to let him have one leaf. The angel asked the boy if he could promise that his sister should never be sick any more, if his request were granted, and that she should never be unhappy, nor do wrong, nor be cold or hungry, nor be treated harshly. The boy said he could not promise. Then the angel opened the gate a little way, bidding the child to look into the garden for a moment, to have one glimpse of the garden. "Then, if you still wish it," said the angel, "I will myself ask the King for a leaf from the tree of life to heal your sister." The child looked in, and, after seeing all the wondrous beauty and blessedness, he said softly to the angel, "I will not ask for the leaf now. There is no place in all this world so beautiful as that. There is no friend so kind as the Angel of Death. I wish he would take me too."

If we could look in at the gate through which our loved ones pass, when they leave us, we should be comforted. "Absent from the body," they are "at home with the Lord." Dying is translation. It is passing into blessed life.

"Life, like a door of many colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments."
—S. S. Times.

Too many people regard religion as a luxury rather than a necessity—as something that can be dispensed with rather than that which is absolutely needful for man's present happiness and his eternal salvation.

Literary Notes.

AMERICA OR ROME, WHICH? by John T. Christian, A. M., D. D. Cloth. Illustrated, 280 pp. Price $1.00. Louisville, Ky.: The Baptist Book Concern.

This well known author in this book is at his best. Throbbing through every line are the words of a patriot. It is a patriotic plea for the continuation of American liberty, and the perpetuation of American institutions. The arrangement of Rome is fearful; but every statement is fortified by the highest Roman Catholic authority. He argues vigorously that Rome has made a murderous assault upon morals, seeks to overthrow our liberties, declares our marriage, in the language of the pope himself, to be a "filthy concubinage," opposes the free circulation of the Bible in the vernacular of the people, and seeks to destroy our public schools. He claims that the Romish system has enslaved human thought, been the steadfast foe of letters and science, the persistent enemy of all enlightenment, and in every war a traitor to the United States government. The themes discussed are the burning issues of the day. Dr. Christian does not stop to discuss dead issues. If he refers to the history and decrees of the past, it is because they contain the living law of Rome and illustrates the polity of that system which professes never to change. The following table of contents will convince one that the book is a live issue: 1. Was Peter a Pope? 2. Rome and Morals; 3. Rome and Civil Liberty; 4. Rome and Religous Liberty; 5. Rome and Marriage; 6. Rome and the Bible; 7. Rome and the Public Schools; 8. Rome and the Freedom of the Press; 9. Rome and Secret Societies.

The November number of the DELINEATOR is called the "Thanksgiving Number," and illustrates a bewildering wealth of Autumn and Winter Fashions, the collection of Stylish and Becoming Garments being particularly complete. A novel departure in Millinery is noted, and the colors and combinations in the Season's Dress Goods and the glint and glitter of their Spangled and Jewelled Trimmings are attractively described. Mrs. Roger A. Pryor furnishes a gossipy and circumstantial account of Dinner Giving in Society, and Juliet Corson writes interestingly on Domestic Service as an Employment. The best kind of a Thanksgiving Dinner is described, with recipes for all its dishes; and a timely article on Carving tells just how to gracefully dismember the Noble Bird that occupies the place of honor in the menu given. Helen Marshall North details the varied industrial instruction to be had at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn. Both children and adults will be delighted to learn just how the Crepe-Paper Brownies are made, and with the pictures of these amusing little figures. Harriet Keith Fobes shows how Burnt Work Decorations may be applied to Friezes, Portieres and Furniture, and Sarah Miller Kirby describes and defends Froebel's Own Manual of Kindergarten Work. J. Bell Landfear gives illustrated instruction for a beautiful Greek Pantomime Drill. There is the usual entertaining Tea-Table Chat, as well as Papers on Oriental Rugs, some Artistic Screens, Floral Work for the Month, a Novel Entertainment and the latest ideas in Knitting, Tatting, Lace-Making, etc. Address all communications to The Delineator Publishing Co. of Toronto, Limited, 33 Richmond St. West, Toronto, Ont. Subscription price of the DELINEATOR $1.00 per year, or 15 cents per single copy.

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