

**A Young Lark's Flight.**

A pretty fancy, put into charming words is that of a young lark's flight, told by J. M. Barrie, in Scribner's Magazine: A baby lark had got out of its nest sideways, a fall of a foot only, but a dreadful drop for a baby. "You can get this way," its mother said, and showed it the way. But when the baby tried to leap, it fell on its back. Then the mother marked out lines on the ground, on which it was to practise hopping, and it got along beautifully so long as the mother was there every moment, to say, "How wonderfully you hop!" Now teach me to hop up," said the little lark, meaning that it wanted to fly; and the mother tried to do it in vain. She would soar up, up, very bravely, but she could not explain how she did it. "Wait till the sun comes out after rain," she said, half remembering. "What is the sun? What is rain?" the little bird asked. "If you cannot teach me to fly, teach me to sing." "When the sun comes out after rain," the mother replied, "then you will know how to sing." The rain came, and glued the little bird's wings together. "I shall never be able to fly not to sing?" it wailed. Then, of a sudden, it had to blink its eyes, for a glorious light had spread over the world, catching every leaf and twig and blade of grass in tears, and putting a smile into every tear. The baby bird's breast swelled, it did not know why; it fluttered from the ground, it did not know why. "The sun has come out after the rain!" it trilled. "Thank you, sun! Thank you! thank you! O mother! Did you hear me? I can sing!" Then it floated up, up, calling, "Thank you! thank you! thank you!" to the sun. "O mother, do you see me? I am flying!"

**The Tower of Babel.**

A French scholar, M de Mely, has published a hitherto unknown Greek manuscript which gives some curious details about the Babylonian temple now represented by the ruins called Birs Nimrod, and identified by some with the Tower of Babel. This venerable building, which was restored by Nebuchadnezzar the great in the sixth century, B.C., forty-two generations, according to him, after its first erection, was not only standing, we learn from the newly found document, but was used as a place of worship, as late as the fourth century, B.C. As seen and measured by Harpocracion, the temple rested on an enormous sub structure of seventy-five feet in height. In the centre rose a square tower consisting of six stories one above the other. Each story was twenty eight feet high, and at the top there was a small shrine rising fifteen feet more. It was ascended by an outside staircase with 365 steps, 300 of which are said to have been of silver and the remainder of gold. The number of steps evidently answered to the days of the solar year, and the seven stages or stories to the days of the week. These statements of a Greek observer of the fourth century B.C. confirm the suppositions of the French Assyriologist, M. Oppert, based on modern research.

**The Towers of Silence.**

Julian Ralph, writing of India, says that when a Parsi dies his people leave the death chamber as it fear of the awful presence impelled them, and from that time on will have no more to do with the body. It is taken to the ground floor, where every Parsi must be born and every one must lie in death—in token of humility—and the friends and relatives kneel and pray outside the door of the chamber where it lies. Then it is turned

over to the menials, who carry it to the Towers of Silence, where it becomes the property of the great fat bodied vultures which sit around the circular top of each tower, as close together as they can press their hideous bodies upon the tower which may be in use. The largest of these towers is eighty feet in diameter and only twenty-five feet high. The grating on which the dead are delivered to the horrible birds slants downward toward the center and has a large circular opening in the middle. The vultures work quickly. In two or three hours only the skeleton remains. Death is silence to all except to those who have hope in Him who went down into the grave and burst asunder its bonds and is alive for ever more.

**The Value of Good Cheer.**

BY GEORGE MATHESON, D.D.

"Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance," Psalm xxxii: 7.

Why "songs of deliverance?" Why not "deliverance" itself? Because the best way to deliver a man from calamity is to put a song in his heart. There are some who sink under their calamity, and there are some who swim through it. I think you will find that the difference between these lies in the comparative amount of their previous cheer. The balance generally turns on the hearing or not hearing of yesterday's song. They who have the song already in their heart pass over the Red Sea; they who have heard no previous music are submerged in the wave. We speak of the physical strength for bearing an operation. Are we aware how much of the strength required is not physical? I had a letter lately from one at a far distance. She was about to undergo a severe physical operation. She stated the day and hour when it was to take place. She said she would like at that day and hour to have the knowledge that some one was thinking of her, that some one was praying for her, that some one was, spiritually, holding her hand. She recovered. Will anybody say that the strength by which she bore the strain was purely physical? Will anybody say that the song in the heart went for nothing? In any crisis moment I should say it would turn the scale. Sometimes my physical chances seem equally balanced between life and death. At such moments a previous song in the heart will give the vote for the prolonging of my days.

My Father, compass me with Thy songs! It is not the songs after the battle that I ask; my own heart will give me these. What I need is a song *before* the battle. I can easily get the song of Moses; what I require is the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses came after the triumph; it was the psalm of victory. But the song of the Lamb is previous to the conflict. It was sung ere Gethsemane was entered. It preceded the hour of sacrifice. Before the sweat-drops fell, before the struggle woke, before the perils of the night arose, Thou didst send to Jesus Thy voice from heaven—Thy promise of glory. Thou didst compass Him before the battle with songs of deliverance. He took a light with Him into the valley. Not joyless did He meet the foe. He stood by the warm fire ere he went out into the cold. He felt the pressure of a hand ere He faced the silence. Thy song was with him in the *night*; it waited not for the morning. The flower got into the heart earlier than the thorn, and it deadened the thorn. Be mine this song of the Lamb—this song before deliverance! The song of Moses can be delayed till the conflict is over; but I cannot dispense with that other music—the song *before* the sacrifice—the song of the Lamb!

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