

bad people were buried. She had been reading the epitaphs in the graveyard, and found that everybody buried there had been good. A sudden accident, sickness, fire, flood, war, make their great appeal to our pity and we forget to be irritable and uncharitable. Why cannot we live on the grand scale every day? We could if we were great enough in ourselves. The commonplaceness is in us, not in our circumstances. Each day we live is a piece of eternity, brimful of opportunity. It has been said that if two angels were sent down from heaven, one to conduct an empire and the other to sweep a crossing, they would feel no inclination to change employments. The higher and purer the nature, the less do differences of place, power, appearance and possession signify. Let us be big enough to dispense with envy.

We may be sure that as Miriam grew older, wiser and saintlier she learned to look back upon that fearful seven days with

ever deepening gratitude. In her youth she had sung battle songs, but in her riper age she would sing psalms like this, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word." There is an old story of a pious Italian student whose peace of mind was greatly disturbed by the insults of his profligate companions. Walking in the city park one day he saw a fine pomegranate cut almost through the stem, near the root. On asking the gardener the reason of this, "Sir," said he, "this tree used to shoot so strong that it bore nothing but leaves. I was therefore obliged to cut it in this manner; and when it was almost cut through, then it began to bear plenty of fruit." The young man returned to his room comforted. He had learned what are the uses of adversity. Life, which has so many sorrows, is nowhere meaningless. The dark and perilous experiences of life are often its best investments,—the seedtime of preparation for its richest harvests.

### THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

#### For Teachers of Bible Classes

Begin by setting forth how common the sin of jealousy is in modern times, and how seriously it is hindering the work of God in the individual life and society. Throughout keep close to the fact that the sin of the Lesson is the sin of to-day. Lead the class into a discussion of the following:

1. *The Challenge of Miriam and Aaron*, vs. 1-3. Bring out two points in their charge: First, Moses' marriage. (See Ex. 2:16, 21.) Probably Moses' wife at this time came into the camp and shared the place Miriam had thus far occupied. Secondly, his preeminent exercise of the prophetic gift. Emphasize their particular thought which was to the effect that they should have equal footing in the matter of prophetic authority. It was jealousy, rather than religious objections to Moses' having married a foreign wife. Miriam and Aaron were seeking a pre-eminence, and claimed standing to which they were not entitled, and thus revealed a wrong spirit.

Discuss the criticism of Moses' choice in

his marriage. Even if he did unwisely, his sister and brother were not his lawful judges. See Rom. 14:3, 4 for guidance when we do not agree with the conduct of a fellow Christian. See Jude 8 as a warning against speaking evil of those whom God has called. Compare the sin of Miriam and Aaron with that of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, ch. 16:1-3. Point out that leaders are often the object of criticism by jealous minded people. One lesson to impress is, that good people may make sad mistakes.

2. *God's defence of Moses*, vs. 4-8. Bring out two points: (a) The vindication of Moses' superiority in the fact, that Moses was given special access to God, which gave him pre-eminence over all the prophets. For ordinary prophets, see Gen. 15:1; Ezek. 1:1; Dan. 8:1. For Moses see Ex. 33:11. (b) The punishment which fell upon Miriam. (Compare 2 Kgs. 5:27; 15:5; 2 Chron. 26:19-21.) Dwell upon the nature of leprosy and emphasize two things: first, that it symbolized sin, and second, that the punishment was to cure Miriam of her jealousy. Its very loathsomeness helped to do this. Take up the