

## \* English \*

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### THIRD READER.

#### BURIAL OF MOSES.\*

BY MISS CHRISTINA ROSE.

THE subject of Literature is an important one, and in presenting it one must aim at creating an interest in, and a love for the subject in the mind of the child. He who can do this affects beneficially not only the future of the child, but that of the whole race. Aware of its importance, I regret that our Committee were not more fortunate in their choice of a teacher to present this beautiful lesson, but since they have chosen me, though "more honored than happy," I have, in response, like Hubert, "done my best."

With a Third Class, merely the name and nationality of the author are taken, unless there are other selections from his pen in the Reader, in which case I revert to them.

This poem, though a description of a Burial, includes an interesting biography, and before touching the lesson proper, and without intimating the connection between them, I would make my pupils familiar with the career of Moses, whom someone has beautifully called the "inspired legislator."

To this I would devote a part of our Friday afternoon, and this for a two-fold reason: (1) the novelty of the procedure may stimulate interest and attention; (2) the interval between Friday and Monday affords an excellent opportunity for looking up the references given them.

Keeping in view the points in his career alluded to in the poem, I begin the lesson on his Biography by showing, on the map, the place of his birth, which they name—Egypt.

"The Children of Israel," descendants of Jacob, lived in Egypt, in the capacity of slaves to the Egyptians, but were increasing in numbers so rapidly that Pharaoh, king of Egypt, fearing they might rise in rebellion, made a decree, by which all the male Hebrew children were to be put to death. Moses was born while this law was in force.

The pupils will likely be familiar with his early history, and questions will elicit an account of his preservation and his residence from infancy to manhood at court, from which he was obliged to flee, having got into trouble by defending an Israelite against an Egyptian. While doing the duty of a shepherd in the far-off land to which he had fled, God called him to his life-work, viz.: The leading of the Israelites, who were now very grievously oppressed, out of Egypt, the land of bondage, into Canaan, the land of promise. Here I use the board, writing "Call to Life-work"—Exodus iii.

Touching briefly on the many signs and wonders which, God being with him, he performed in Egypt, we find his mission successful, for he led the Israelites out of Egypt by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea (which is shown on the map), God going before them, by day in a pillar of a cloud and by night in a pillar of fire.

Questioning will again draw forth an account of the wonderful deliverance at the Red Sea. Here passages of Moses' song are read or quoted for them and questions elicit the fact that he was a poet, and on the board is written, "Moses' song of praise and triumph for deliverance at Red Sea."—Exodus xv.

Mount Sinai is next shown on the map, and questioning may draw from them that God here gave the people, through the agency of Moses, the Ten Commandments, by which they were to be governed. This is followed by a short judicious talk on the wisdom and ability of Moses as a ruler or governor of the people, and on the board is written, "Moses the Lawgiver, Statesman, Sage." Exodus xx. Book of Leviticus.

Referring briefly to the removings and encampings of the Israelites, we come to the Desert Zin, where, at the waters of Meribah, Moses being impatient at the constant murmurings of the people, in order to get water for them, struck the rock

twice, instead of speaking to it as directed by God, who tells him that for this he may not enter Canaan. Using the board again we write, "At Meribah, God tells Moses that he may not enter Canaan." Numbers xx. 1-13.

Continuing their journeyings, the Israelites encounter Sihon, King of the Amorites, who refuses them permission to pass through his land, and under their leader, Moses, they utterly defeat his troops, and also those of Og, king of Bashan, who comes out against them.

Here, pupils when questioned tell that Moses was a warrior, and on the board is written, "Israelites, under Moses, defeat Amorites and Bashanites." Numbers xxi.

Just here, the pupils may be impressed with the idea that Moses, as well as being a warrior in the commonly accepted sense, was a warrior in a higher and nobler sense, for he led a mighty people from bondage to freedom, fighting against and overcoming their weaknesses, not with the sword, but with weapons provided by his omnipotent Captain. This done, to the last item on the board we add, "Jehovah's chosen warrior."

Following the journeyings of the Israelites, we find them encamped in the plains of Moab, east of the river Jordan, which now separated them from the Canaan of promise. Here Moses, who is the author of the 90th Psalm, wrote another of his inspired songs, his subject being God's mercy and vengeance. On the board is now written—"Author of 90th Psalm, writes inspired song on God's mercy and vengeance." Deut. xxxii.

And now Moses, the man of God, after bestowing in lofty and figurative language his farewell blessing on the Twelve Tribes of Israel, is commanded, by God, to ascend Mount Nebo, and view from the top of Pisgah the promised land, which he may not enter. On this Mount, Nebo, he dies. Nebo, Pisgah and river Jordan are, if possible, shown on the map, and on the board is written the final item, "Moses' farewell blessing." Deut. xxxiii.

Moses views the promised land, dies on Mount Nebo and is buried by God in a grave unknown to man. Deut. xxxiv.

After a short review of the events narrated, pupils take notes of what is on the board, and are requested to look up the references.

We are now ready for the lesson proper, and the pupils, being acquainted with the history of Moses, readily answer introductory questions, and are able to locate Mount Nebo and river Jordan.

Drawing as much as possible upon their knowledge, we proceed to find meanings for words, phrases, lines, etc.

It is, however, now wholly unnecessary to go into minute details, suitable for class purposes, and I shall dwell only upon particular points.

"On this side Jordan's wave."—The east side. An allusion to the fact that Moses was not permitted to cross to the other side and enter Canaan.

"No man knows that sepulchre."—Man does not know the exact spot where Moses was buried. Another allusion which the pupils will readily explain. Deut. xxxiv. 6.

Sepulchre—A grave or tomb.

"The Angels of God upturned the sod."—Pupils already know that Moses was buried by God, and reading that "Angels of God" buried him, may give rise to confusion which may be removed by telling them that God was often represented by His Angelic Messengers, and no doubt God and angels both were present.

"That was the grandest funeral."—We consider a funeral grand, when it is attended by kings and princes and by the rich and great of earth, whose power and pomp are fleeting and who flourish but for a season. There was present at this funeral the King of Kings, the Lord of Hosts, the ever omnipotent God, and the poet is therefore justified in speaking of it as "the grandest."

"No man heard the trampling nor saw the train." Man did not hear the procession as it moved down the mountain side.

Then follows the beautiful comparison of the noiselessness of the procession to the silence with which light follows darkness; to the silence in which the red line which heralds the morning, grows into the sun; to the silence in which nature renews the earth, clothing it with verdure in the spring-time.

"The crimson streak."—A thin red line.

"Ocean's cheek."—The surface face or bosom of the water.

The word "grows" implies a gradual develop-

ment of the "crimson streak" into the "great sun," though some maintain that on the sea or ocean the sun bursts at once into view, and does not "rise" gradually, as we commonly say it does on land.

Pupils are asked to name other great works or changes that God performs in silence. Sun, moon and stars at His command illumine the world. Impress upon them the majesty of silence. In perfect silence God's presence may be felt.

This funeral represented perfect power allied with a perfect silence which added to its grandeur.

"Without sound or music or voice of them that wept."—No beating of drums, no funeral march, and no noise of weeping; silence both solemn and sublime. Note the dignity of movement implied in the word "swept." In the next stanza the poet intimates that perhaps bird and beast saw what man was not privileged to behold.

"Perchance the lion stalking still shuns the hallowed spot."—Allusion is made to the fear which the lower animals are reputed to have of the supernatural. The place where birds of prey—such as the eagle mentioned—build and hatch is called an eyrie. The pronunciation of this word and "stalking" is taught from the board.

The lion stalking or roaming about in search of prey avoids the sacred spot. The graves of all dead are more less sacred, but this one eminently so, being the resting-place of a man so honored as to have been buried by his Maker. Not only is it therefore hallowed as the resting-place of Moses, but being visited by the "Most High" it is doubly so.

Next follows, by way of contrast, a description of a soldier's funeral. The car or carriage bearing his body, is followed by fellow-soldiers carrying their guns, with their muzzles behind them, pointing downward in token of sorrow. The drums are muffled to produce a subdued sound; and, as at other funerals, the church bell tolls every minute, so at this a gun is fired every minute, hence the word "peals" is used. His horse, now riderless, is led after the bier on which are placed the flags taken by the warrior. The contrast is continued in the next stanza, and allusion is made to Westminster Abbey, where Britain's great and illustrious dead are buried. Here is the resting-place of the sage, who may be defined to be a learned and very wise man—a philosopher. Here, too, is the tomb of the bard or poet, fitly adorned with costly marble, which is, no doubt, a magnificent tablet bearing an inscription.

The transept of the great minster or cathedral is an aisle projecting at right angles to either the altar or the body of the church, and though written in the singular, may mean more than one of such projections.

"Lights like glories fall."—The light streaming through the stained glass of the windows seems like the halos which are seen around the sun before a storm, or like the gleams that are seen in paintings around the heads of saints. Pupils will have observed both of these and will readily comprehend.

"The emblazoned wall."—The walls adjoining the tombs are decorated with shields having different devices, and with flags and other trophies of the sleeping heroes.

The contrast is concluded by the statement that, notwithstanding the absence of surroundings such as these, Moses was a warrior, poet and philosopher. From what they have already been told, pupils understand why he is called the truest warrior that ever clasped on sword. They also know something of his powers as a poet, and as God particularly endowed him with his power he is justly called "gifted."

It is the duty of philosophers to teach others; this they do by writing books containing the truths they wish to impress. These teachings are precious, hence the expression "golden pen." It is not the pen but that which it writes that is golden or precious. Good books—that is books containing excellent matter, live after their authors moulder in the grave, and there are books which on account of their excellence shall always live. We thus see the suitability of the term "deathless page," more especially as the truths that Moses taught live in the "book of books."

The many statutes, judgments and precepts written by him for the teaching of the Israelites entitle him to the name philosopher.

Though he was not honored, as we honor our illustrious dead, there was much real grandeur in connection with his funeral. Nature supplied pall, plumes and tapers and heaven attendants.

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