

people. Who was Haman? Why did he seek revenge? (ch. 3: 1-5). What does this show regarding his character? Trace the scheme of Haman (ch. 3: 8-15), the bribe offered (v. 9), the effect on Mordecai (ch. 4: 1), the people (ch. 4: 2), and the queen (ch. 4: 4). Note her inquiry, ch. 4: 5-9.

In considering the Lesson, observe the following points:

1. The queen's appreciation of her dangerous task, v. 11. Unless the king should be favorable, it was death. Cite similar instances, as Herod, Matt. 14: 3-12. His regard for Esther was evidently cooling, v. 11. Make the danger real.

2. Recall Mordecai's argument for her action, vs. 13, 14. Note his four reasons, and discuss their power as motives.

3. Observe Esther's decision to act, vs. 15-17. She chose the dangerous way, in the interests of her people. Note her religious zeal, her thoughtfulness in approaching the king, her common sense methods.

4. Her success (ch. 5: 1-3) in securing a favorable hearing, and her delay in order to secure a favorable opportunity and to gain time to mature plans. Follow her method, consider the saving of her people, and its influence upon the Jews, ch. 9: 1-13. Discuss her sanguinary temper and its ethical bearing.

This Lesson is an illustration of how much one can do by using his or her influence in the interests of the oppressed. As a model in wise, careful handling of a trying situation, Esther deserves special attention.

The lesson to be emphasized, is the value of heroic service on behalf of our country. The foes are many—name some of them. Show the dangers assailing our land. Show how great lives have blessed the country, and the need there is for heroic service. The basis of public heroism is the heroic spirit in daily life. It is seen in small, as in great, actions. The heart of it is Christian faith and love. Its ideal is Jesus. The teacher should take advantage of the opportunity for dealing with the common duties of life, which, in many instances, lack the heroic spirit.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

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Practically a whole book of ten chapters in one short half hour. Be jealous therefore of the minutes; select very carefully the points of emphasis.

Chapter I.—A queen, Vashti, deposed.

Chapter II.—A new queen, Esther, chosen, young and beautiful; her cousin Mordecai—they were both Jews—disclosing the plot against the king's life.

Chapter III.—Proud Haman winning a decree from the king for the slaughter of all the Jews, because this Mordecai had refused to do honor to him.

Chapter IV., vs. 1-9—Mordecai's message to Esther, that *She* must intercede with the king for her people. What a task for a young girl perhaps not more than out of her teens.

And here the Lesson takes up. Be sure you have all the figures distinct—King Ahasuerus, Mordecai the Jew, Esther the Queen, Hatach the messenger.

What is the message? Have the scholars disentangle it from v. 11. Question about the sceptre: what it was, and what it signified (see cut. HOME STUDY QUARTERLY); and about the power of kings in those olden times. Ask for other like instances. Question also as to the king's thirty days' coolness towards Esther and the additional peril this was. Was Esther a coward? We shall see. Just now she was bewildered, as if some fierce goblin had sprung up from the earth and confronted her. It was a peril sudden and appalling. The value of a wise friend to whom we may appeal in our times of difficulty, is brought out in v. 12.

Verses 13, 14 contain Mordecai's reply. He was a friend worth having. He spoke plain truths. Go over his arguments with Esther. The first? V. 13, an appeal to self-preservation, as if he had said, "It is your only chance: do this, or die." A very proper and natural motive. His second argument? V. 14, first part, "If you do not save the people, some one else will, and his will be the glory." How did Mordecai know? The only answer is, He trusted in God that He would not fail His people. The third appeal? Esther would be the destroyer of her father's house. The fourth appeal?