

I do not believe Archibald knew the Colonel's character when he welcomed him as his guest. Perhaps, also, his better judgment was made dull and obscure by the stimulants he took daily—certainly, he left me much in his society and I fell.

Remorse seized me, as it always does the wrong-doer. In vain I tried to excuse my sin by remembering the time of its occurrence, a time when I was quite incapable of knowing right from wrong, through the drink my artful seducer had induced me to take, knowing, well as he did, my weakness. In vain I strove to forget my shame in intoxication. I was maddened by my own self-approaches. Sleep left me, or terrible dreams pursued me if I slept. I became reckless and careless of my life. My eyes were bloodshot, my flesh wasted away, an inward fever alone kept me up for awhile, and still I drank ever more and more to forget my misery.

At length I became seriously ill, my complaint, I believe, was called brain fever. I was delirious, outrageous, and endeavoured once or twice to end my miserable life. And now all was revealed to Archibald. My frenzy of intoxication, my wild unguarded words, the confessions of Juliette, who had long known more than she dared reveal, all enlightened him. He was inexpressibly shocked; he had loved, idolized, trusted me, and till this last month, when my wild manner and feverish craving for intoxicants had puzzled him, had suspected nothing. What was I now to him?

When I became sane, and saw his pale face and averted brow, I besought him to kill me, to let me die. I even pulled the bandages from my arm, where I had been bled, and prayed that I might be left to die thus, in my own guilty blood. And when not allowed to perish, I cursed the whole world, and my father and my mother, for having let me see the light, and more than all for having taught me the lust for wine. Ah, those were horrible moments. Yet the dreary secret was out that I had so carefully kept, the suspense was over that had been sapping the foundations of my life, and I could not, at all events, fall more deeply. So I thought.

With wonderful forbearance, Archibald forgave me, on my solemn promise that I would never again see or hear from the Colonel, and that I would never more touch wine or spirits. Gladly and eagerly I accepted both, and for awhile I kept both. The first was made easy to me. The Colonel was only too glad to leave the neighbourhood. He went abroad to India soon afterwards, and died of jungle fever. He and I never met again.

But the closet remained. My husband still drank his usual wine and whiskey, and his guests were still invited to partake of alcohol, and though now I passed much of my time in my own rooms, the scent of these insidious tempters reached me, and my promise fell before them.

Juliette had been dismissed, and in her place was a woman of mature age, who was to be at once lady's maid and guardian. It was my own desire it should be so, and yet, once having outwitted her, and tasted of drink, I lived for the future only to do the same again and again. Again and again I visited the closet, at midnight when she slept, at early morning, at twilight. I lied and robbed. I sold my wedding jewels, and stores of clothes, to obtain the coveted drink. There was at last no sin I was not willing to commit for it—there were few sins I did not commit. And now, in this lone house by the sea-shore, where I am dying of quickest consumption, I have a few hours of sober time to call my own, when I may look back with a shudder at the past, and give a hopeless stare into the future, the eternity, that beckons me. Through drink I am become a creature of ignominy and shame, spotted all over with sin, loathsome within

and without, without the love of a husband, the respect of friends; unlamented, unwept, I must go to the grave, a suicide in every deed. Let no holy words be said over my corpse, for I have not deserved them. Only let me die let me pass away. But, though dead, I would still speak, and tell my tale to the tempted. And should another wife sit beside the hearth where I sat so long as mistress, and writhed so long as slave, let me utter a warning word to her. To my husband I cannot speak. I have wronged him too much, but to her, all unknown as she is, I may say, beware of my temptation. *Lock up the fatal closet* where was shed my soul's blood, where I poured into my throat the sweet, seductive draught of hell. And touch not, taste not, handle not the unclean thing. When tempted to take only a little, remember my fate. I began with a little, I thought it would never be more, and yet here I am. \* \* \*

There were words missing, there were words misspelled, blots were on the paper, and many marks of tears on the apparently unfinished manuscript, yet I made it all out, as here I have written it, and underneath the last scratches of the trembling hand that is no more, I write, profoundly affected, "I am warned, and I obey, H. G." and "I intend when my husband comes home to get his signature underneath mine, and "Bluebeard's Closet" shall be a memory only.

My uncle adds, "Would that in all England I could believe there was no other wife killer than the old cerulean barbed Turk, and that "Bluebeard's Closet" was only to be found in the nursery tale. But alas! poor Adeline Grant is not the only one that has met her death by closet-tipping. An old schoolfellow of my father's, who told him her tale of woe in after-life, said, "Ah, sir, I have supped sorrow by spoonfuls." How many have supped death by glassfuls? When will the world be wiser?"

## INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.

Sunday, July 11

The Coming Deliverer, Ex. ii: 5-15.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Heb. xi. 24. Commit, vs. 9, 10.

### INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

The cruelty of the Egyptians toward the Hebrews, which constituted a portion of our last lesson, culminated in an order that all their male children should be destroyed at birth. This is, probably, not to be understood of the entire Hebrew nation, but rather of the more prominent and influential families in and around the capital and chief cities. But this failing, another order was given—probably in this case to the captains and chief officers—to see to it that the male children were cast into the river.

We cannot suppose that in either case the king's orders were universal in respect to the Israelites; for that would have meant the extermination of the race in a short time. This plan seems also to have failed in a short time, there being no reason to suppose that any were sacrificed after the adoption of Moses by the king's daughter.

The history of Moses' birth, his being hidden in the bulrush ark among the flags by the river near the place where the princess was accustomed to bathe, the stationing of his sister to watch what would be done with him, was given in the opening portion of this chapter.

### LESSON NOTES.

(5.) *The daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself.* That the bathing of ladies in the Nile was frequent, is proved by the representations found on some of the ancient monuments of Egypt; and as the Nile was held in great reverence, bathing in its waters was an act of religious devotion. That part of the river which flowed near the temple was, we are told, esteemed peculiarly sacred and fenced off, to protect those who resorted to it from the attacks of crocodiles. It was probably in one of these comparatively secure places

that Moses was left; and, doubtless, too, with the knowledge, on the part of the mother, of the princess's custom to resort thither for the purpose of religious washings. *Her maidens* (while the princess was otherwise engaged) *walked along the river bank.* And when she (the princess) saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid (her one special attendant) to bring it.

(6.) *And when she had opened it, she saw the child, and behold the babe wept, and she had compassion on him, and said, this is one of the Hebrews' children—* one of the death-doomed little ones. No wonder her woman's heart was stirred with pity for the innocent babe! This story is too naturally and artlessly told to require or admit of comment.

(7.) *Then said his sister.* This, doubtless, was Miriam, mentioned later in the history. She had been stationed by her mother to watch, and had, undoubtedly, been instructed to hasten forward as soon as she saw the child was noticed, and ask—*shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?* All this had been carefully planned by the mother, and seems the work simply of her human wisdom; but in it all her mind and thought were guided by the Spirit of God: and it was because He would have it so that the heart of this heathen woman was disposed not only to pity, but to love and cherish the little babe, and adopt him as her own; thus putting him in a position to be trained for the highest distinction ever before or since enjoyed by man.

(8, 9.) *And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, go, and she went, and called the child's mother.* And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee wages. Thus the mother's plan had succeeded as God would have it, the child was not only rescued from destruction, but in effect adopted into the royal family of Egypt; and to the mother was afforded the most desirable privilege of not only caring for her boy, but of training him up in the knowledge of God and of His promises to Israel.

(10.) *And he became her son.* At what age Moses became permanently one of the royal household, we know not; it is probable, however, that it was not until he had been thoroughly taught in the Hebrew religion. Subsequently, he would, doubtless, have frequent opportunities to visit his nurse (mother), who would be constantly keeping him in mind of the truths she had already taught him; and, perhaps impressing upon him the importance of using his high station and great opportunities for learning in preparing himself for future usefulness towards his own nation.

(11, 12.) *And it came to pass when Moses was grown—* not only in age and in stature, but in learning, and renown (see Acts vii. 23, also Josephus' Antiquities b. 2, ch. 10, *that he went out unto his brethren.* It would seem from Heb. ix. 24-26, that Moses, previous to this time, had formally renounced his dignities and prospects as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and resolved to cast in his lot with his own nation. It is likely that he had already received some intimation of God's purpose in regard to himself, (Acts vii. 25,) but without waiting for any assurance that God's time to deliver Israel had arrived, interfered in their behalf, supposing that his brethren would have understood that God by his hand would deliver them. This supposing was a great mistake on Moses' part; subsequently he waited till he knew God's will; and even then went forward timidly and with great hesitation (ch. iv. 1-12. *And he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew—one of his brethren.* And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. Attempts have not been wanting to justify this act of Moses, but as the scriptures neither justify nor condemn it we can only judge of it by the principles of morality as they were then revealed and understood and by the light of its results. That he made a mistake is clear from Acts vii. 25. That his act was rash and ill advised, if not, indeed, sinful, is evident from what followed—he had to flee from Egypt, and remained a fugitive in the land of Midian for forty years.

(13-14.) *Two men of the Hebrews strove together.* Acting still upon the supposition that he would be recognized by his brethren as their deliverer, Moses interfered between the combatants, but met an unexpected rebuff—*who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared.* He saw that his deed of the

previous day was known; he knew that, in all human probability, his life would pay the forfeit, since even his own people whom in his warm-hearted zeal, he had sought to serve, were ready to turn against him; he had virtually raised the standard of rebellion, but no one was ready to rally to his support; and he fled from the face of Pharaoh, v. 15. This act of Moses is called (Heb. xi. 27) an act of faith, and we are there told that he took Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king. This seeming discrepancy is easily removed. His faith rose superior to his disappointed hopes and the difficulties that for the time had baffled him. While he feared the wrath of the king for himself, and fled accordingly, he did not fear the wrath of the king should ultimately defeat God's purpose in regard to Israel. He had faith, notwithstanding his own disappointment and discomfiture, that God was stronger than Pharaoh, and would fulfil all His promises. He ceased to look upon himself as essential to the deliverance of Israel, and fled in faith that God would, in His own time, defeat the wrath of the king by setting His people free. Moses was a warrior, and probably supposed that it was by the sword they were to conquer their oppressors. God was to teach him that it was not by the sword of man, but by His own arm that deliverance was to be achieved. Neither Moses nor Israel was at this time ready—forty long years were still needed to make them so.

### SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.

Moses made the common mistake of ardent and zealous souls, of supposing himself essential to God's work, and God set him aside for forty years. This setting aside was just what was needful to the maturing of his faith and the developing his humility. Self-confidence gave place to confidence in God and thus faith achieved in him a signal triumph. God casts His people down from self-confidence, that He may lift up into the confidence of faith. Humility is the soil in which faith flourishes best. Forty years of prosperity had not fitted Moses for his work—forty years of adversity must needs be added before his preparation was complete.

### QUESTION SUMMARY.

5.) What river is meant here? Who came down to the river? For what purpose? What did she see among the flags? Had any one put it there? What was in it? Can you describe this ark? Why did the mother put her baby in it? Did she expect God would take care of her baby? What would you say she had then? (6.) What happened when the lady opened the ark? What did she say? What is meant by *had compassion*? (7.) Who came up just at this moment? What did the little girl say? What was her name? (See note.) Do you think her mother had told her what to say? (8.) Did the princess give her leave to call a nurse for the baby? Whom did she call? (9.) What did the princess say to her? Was that just what the mother wanted her to say? (10.) What did the princess name him? Why? Did she adopt him? What do you mean by *adopt*? (11, 12.) What did Moses do when he grew to be a man? Had he made up his mind not to be the princess's son any longer? (See Heb. xi. 24.) Why did he kill the Egyptian? (13.) What did he see when he went out the next day? What did he say to them? (14.) Were the Hebrews pleased with Moses trying to get them to stop quarrelling? What did they say? How did Moses feel? What mistake had Moses made? The mistake of supposing that the people would accept him then as their deliverer. Why did they not? Because God's time had not come. Moses wanted to get the people free in his own way, but God made him wait until He should show him His way? Is God's way always better than ours.

**FEAR OF CONSCIENCE.** In the commission of evil, fear no man so much as thyself—another is but one witness against thee, thou art a thousand, another thou mayest avoid, thyself thou canst not. Wickedness is its own punishment.

**A CHRISTIAN.**—A Christian should look upon himself as something sacred and devoted, so that what involves but an ordinary degree of criminality in others, in him partakes of the nature of sacrilege; what is a breach of trust in others, is in him the profanation of a temple.