

THE STORY OF MIRIAM.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Draws a Beautiful Lesson From It.

Brothers and Sisters Especially Should be Affectionate and Avoid Bickerings—They Have Much to Do With Each Other's Success in Life.

The touching incident of Pharaoh's daughter finding Moses in the bulrushes is used by the popular Washington divine as a subject for his latest discourse. His text was Exodus 2: 4: "And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him."

Princess Thermutis, daughter of Pharaoh, looking out through the lattice of her bathing house, on the banks of the Nile, saw a curious boat on the river. It had neither oar nor helm, and there would have been useless anyhow. There was only one passenger, and that a baby boy. But the Mayflower, that brought the Pilgrim Fathers to America, carried not so precious a load. The boat was made of broad leaves of papyrus, tightened together by bitumen. Boats were sometimes made of that material, as we learn from Pliny and Herodotus and Theophrastus. "Kill all the Hebrew children born," had been Pharaoh's order. To save her boy, Jochebed, the mother of little Moses, had put him in that queer boat and launched him! His sister, Miriam, stood on the bank watching that precious craft. She was far enough off not to draw attention to the boat, but near enough to offer protection. There she stands on the bank—Miriam; the poetess, Miriam the quick-witted, Miriam the faithful, though very human, for in after time she demonstrated it.

Miriam was a splendid sister, but had her faults, like all the rest of us. How carefully she watched the boat containing her brother! A strong wind might upset it. The buffaloes often found there might in a sudden plunge of their snout sink it. Some ravenous water fowl might swoop and pick his eyes out with iron beak. Some crocodile or hippopotamus crawling through the rushes might crush the babe. Miriam watched and watched until Princess Thermutis, a maiden on each side of her holding palm leaves over her head to shelter her from the sun, came down and entered her bathing house. When from the lattice she saw that boat she ordered it brought, and when the leaves were pulled back from the face of the child and the boy looked up he cried aloud, for he was hungry and frightened, and would not even let the princess take him. The infant would rather stay hungry than acknowledge any one of the court as mother. Now, Miriam, the sister, incognito, no one suspecting her relation to the child, leaps from the bank and rushes down and offers to get a nurse to pacify the child. Consent is given, and she brings Jochebed, the baby's mother, incognito, none of the court knowing that she was the mother; and when Jochebed arrived the child stopped crying, for its fright was calmed and its hunger appeased. You may admire Jochebed, the mother, and all the ages may admire Moses, but I clap my hands in applause at the behavior of Miriam, the faithful, brilliant and strategic sister.

"Go home," some one might have said to Miriam; "why risk yourself out there alone on the banks of the Nile, breathing the miasma, and in danger of being attacked of wild beast or ruffian; go home!" No; Miriam, the sister, more lovingly watched and bravely defended Moses, the brother. Is he worthy her care and courage? Oh, yes; the 60 centuries of the world's history have never had so much involved in the arrival of any ship at any port as in the landing of that papyrus boat caulked with bitumen! Its one passenger was to be a nonsuch in history—lawyer, statesman, politician, legislator, organizer, conqueror, deliverer.

His life was so unutterably grand, his burial must be on the same scale. God would let neither man nor saint nor archangel have anything to do with weaving for him a shroud or digging for him a grave. The omnipotent God left his throne in Heaven one day, and if the question was asked, "Whither is the King of the Universe going?" the answer was, "I am going down to bury Moses." And the Lord took this mightiest of men to the top of a hill, and the day was clear, and Moses ran his eye over the magnificent range of country. Here, the valley of Esdraelon, where the final battle of the nations is to be fought; and yonder, the mountains Hermon, and Lebanon, and Gerizim, and the hills of Judea; and the village of Bethlehem there, and the city of Jericho yonder, and the vast stretch of landscape that almost took the old lawyer's breath away as he looked at it. And then without a pang—as I learn from the statement that the eye of Moses was undimmed and his natural force unabated—God touched the great lawyer's eyes, and they closed; and his lungs, and they ceased; and his heart, and it stopped; and commanded, saying: "To the skies, thou immortal spirit!" And then one divine hand was put against the back of Moses, and the other hand against the pulseless breast, and God laid him softly down on Mount Nebo, and then the lawyer, lifted in the Almighty's arms, was carried to the opening of a cave and placed in a crypt, and one stroke of the divine hand smoothed the features into an everlasting calm, and a rock was rolled to the door, and the only obsequies, at which God did all the offices of priest, and undertaker, and gravedigger, and mourner, were ended.

Oh, was not Miriam, the sister of Moses, doing a good thing, an important thing, a glorious thing, when she watched the boat woven of river plants and made watertight with asphaltum, carrying its one passenger? Did she not put all the ages of time and of a coming eternity under obligations when she defended her helpless brother from the perils aquatic, reptilian, and ravenous? She it was that brought that wonderful babe and his mother together, so that he was reared to be

the deliverer of his nation, when otherwise, if saved at all from the rushes of the Nile, he would have been only one more of the God-defying Pharaohs; for Princess Thermutis of the bathing house would have inherited the crown of Egypt; and as she had no child of her own, this adopted child would have come to coronation.

Had there been no Miriam there would have been no Moses. What a garland for faithful sisterhood! For how many a lawyer, and how many a hero, and how many a deliverer and how many a saint are the world and the church indebted to a watchful, loving, faithful, godly sister? Come up out of the farm houses, come up out of the inconspicuous homes, come up from the banks of the Hudson, and Penobscot, and the Savannah, and the Mobile, and the Mississippi, and all the other Niles of America, and let us see you, the Miriams who watched and protected the leaders in law, and medicine, and merchandise, and art, and agriculture, and mechanics, and religion! If I should ask all physicians, and attorneys, and merchants, and ministers of religion, and successful men of all professions and trades, who are indebted to an elder sister for good influences and perhaps for an education or a prosperous start, to let it be known, hundreds would testify. God knows how many of our Greek lexicons and how much of our schooling was paid for by the replenishment of a sister's wardrobe. While the brother sailed off for a resounding sphere, the sister watched him from the banks of self-denial.

Miriam was the eldest of the family; Moses and Aaron, her brothers, were younger. Oh the power of the elder sister to help decide the brother's character for usefulness and for Heaven! She can keep off her brother more evils than Miriam could have driven back waterfowl or crocodile from the ark of bulrushes. The older sister decides the direction in which the cradle-boat shall sail. By gentleness, by good sense, by Christian principles she can turn it toward the palace, not of a wicked Pharaoh, but of a holy God; and a brighter princess than Thermutis should lift him out of peril, even religion, whose ways are ways of peace-fulness, and all her paths are peaceful. The older sister, how much the world owes her! Born while yet the family was in limited circumstances, she had to hold and take care of her younger brothers.

If there is anything that excites my sympathy it is a little girl lugging round a great fat child and getting her ears boxed because she cannot keep him quiet. By the time she gets to young womanhood she is pale and worn out, and her attractiveness has been sacrificed on the altar of sisterly fidelity, and she is consigned to celibacy, and society calls her by an unfair name; but in Heaven they call her Miriam. In most families, the two most undesirable places in the record of births are the first and the last; the first because she is worn out with the cares of a home that cannot afford to hire help, and the last because she is spoiled as a pet. Among the grandest equipages that sweep through the streets of Heaven will be those occupied by sisters who sacrificed themselves for brothers. They will have the finest of the Apocalyptic white horses, and many who on earth looked down upon them will have to turn out to let them pass, the charioter crying: "Clear the way! A queen is coming!"

Let sisters not begrudge the time and care bestowed on a brother. It is hard to believe that any boy that you know so well as your brother can ever turn out anything very useful. Well, he may not be a Moses. There is only one of that kind needed for 6,000 years. But I will tell you what your brother will be—either a blessing or a curse to society, and a candidate for happiness or wretchedness. What you do for your brothers will come back to you again. If you set him an ill-natured, censorious, unaccommodating example, it will recoil upon you from his own irritability and despoiled nature. If you, by patience with his infirmities and by nobility of character, dwell with him in the few years of your companionship, you will have your counsel reflected back upon you some day by his splendor of behavior in some crisis where he would have failed but for you.

Don't snub him. Don't deprecate his ability. Don't talk discouragingly about his future. Don't let Miriam get down off the bank of the Nile and wade out and upset the ark in the bulrushes. Don't tease him. Brothers and sisters do not consider it any harm to tease. That spirit aboard in a family is one of the meanest and most devilish. There is a teasing that is pleasurable and is only another form of innocent raillery; but that which provokes and irritates and makes the eye flash with anger is to be reprehended. It would be less blemeworthy to take a bunch of thorns and draw them across your sister's cheek, or take a knife and draw its sharp edge across your brother's hand till the blood spurts, for that would damage only the body, but teasing is the thorn and the knife scratching and lacerating the disposition and the soul. It is the curse of innumerable households that the brothers tease the sisters, and the sisters the brothers. Sometimes it is the color of the hair or the shape of the features, or an affair of the heart. Sometimes it is by revealing a secret or by a suggestive look, or a guffaw, or an "Ahem." Tease! Tease! Tease! For mercy's sake, quit it. Christ says: "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." Now, when you, by teasing, make your brother or sister hate, you turn him or her into a murderer or murderer.

Don't let jealousy ever touch a sister's soul, as it so often does, because her brother gets more honor or more means. Even Miriam, the heroine of the text, was struck by that evil passion of jealousy. She had possessed unlimited influence over Moses, and now he married, and not only so, but marries a black woman from Ethiopia, and Miriam is so disgusted and outraged at Moses, first, because he had married at all, and next, because he had married

miscegenation, that she is drawn into a frenzy, and then begins to turn white and get white as a corpse. Her complexion is like chalk, the fact is, she has the Egyptian leprosy. And now the brother whom she had defended on the Nile comes to her rescue in a prayer that brings her restoration. Let there be no room in all your house for jealousy either to sit or stand. It is a leprovous abomination. Your brother's success, O sister, is your success. His victories will be your victories. For while Moses, the brother, led the vocal music after the crossing of the Red sea, Miriam, the sister, with two sheets of shining brass uplifted and glittering in the sun, led the instrumental music, clapping the cymbals till the last frightened neigh of pursuing cavalry horse was smothered in the wave, and the last Egyptian helmet was under.

How strong it makes a family when all the sisters and brothers stand together, and what an awful wreck when they disintegrate, quarreling about a father's will and making the surrogate's office horrible with their wrangle! Better, when you were little children in the nursery, that with your playhouse mallets you had accidentally killed each other fighting across your cradle, than that, having come to the age of maturity and having in your veins and arteries the blood of the same father and mother, you fight each other across the parental grave in the cemetery.

When father and mother are gone—and they soon will be, if they have not already made exit—the sisterly and fraternal bond will be the only ligament that will hold the family together. How many reasons for your deep and unflinching affection for each other! Rocked in the same cradle, bent over by the same motherly tenderness, toiled for by the same father's weary arm and aching brow, with common inheritance of all the family secrets, and with names given you by parents who started you with the highest hopes for your happiness and prosperity, I charge you for loving and kind and forgiving. If the sister sees that the brother never wants a sympathizer, the brother will see that the sister never wants an escort. Oh, if the sister of a household knew through what terrific and damning temptations their brother goes in city life they would hardly sleep nights in anxiety for his salvation! And if you would make a holy conspiracy of kind words and gentle attentions and earnest prayers, you might save his soul from death and hide a multitude of sins. But let the sister dash off in one direct in discipleship of the world, and the brother flee off in another direction in dissipation, and it will not be long before they will meet again at the iron gate of Despair, their blistered feet in the hot ashes of a consumed lifetime. Alas! that brothers and sisters, though living together for years, very often do not know each other, and that they see only the imperfections and none of the virtues.

Brother and sister, you need as much of an introduction to each other as they did. You do not know each other. You think your brother is grumpy and cross and queer, and he thinks you are selfish and proud and unlovely. Both wrong! That brother will be a prince in some one's eyes, and that sister a queen in the estimation of some man. That brother is a magnificent fellow, and that sister is a morning in June. Come, let me introduce you: "Moses, this is Miriam." "Miriam, this is Moses." Add 75 per cent to your present appreciation of each other, and when you kiss good morning do not stick up your cold cheek, wet from the recent washing, as though you hate to touch each other's lips in affectionate caress. Let it have all the fondness and cordiality of a loving sister's kiss.

Make yourself as agreeable and helpful to each other as possible, remembering that soon you part. The few years of boyhood and girlhood will soon slip by, and you will go out to homes of your own, and into the battle with the world, and amid ever-changing vicissitudes, and on paths crossed with graves, and steeply hard to climb, and through shadowy ravines. But, O my God, and my Saviour! may the terminus of the journey be the same as the start—namely, at father's and mother's knee, if they have inherited the kingdom. Then, as in boyhood and girlhood days, we rushed in after the day's absence, with much to tell of exciting adventure, and father and mother enjoyed the recital as much as we who made it, so we shall on the hillside of Heaven rehearse to them all the scenes of our earthly expedition, and they shall welcome us home, as we say: "Father and mother, we have come and brought our children with us." The old revival hymn described it with glorious repetition:

Brothers and sisters there will meet,
Brothers and sisters there will meet,
Brothers and sisters there will meet,
Brothers and sisters there will meet,
Will meet to part no more.

I read of a child in the country who was detained at a neighbor's house on a stormy night by some fascinating stories that were being told him, and then looked out and saw it was so dark he did not dare go home. The incident impressed me the more because in my childhood I had much the same experience. The boy asked his comrades to go with him, but they dared not. It got later and later—7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock. "Oh," he said, "I wish I were home!" As he opened the door the last time a blinding flash of lightning and a deafening roar overcame him. But after awhile he saw in the distance a lantern, and lo, his brother was coming to fetch him home, and the lad stepped out, and with swift feet hastened on to his brother, who took him home, where they were so glad to greet him, and for a long time supper had been waiting. So may it be when the night of death comes, and our earthly friends cannot go with us, and we dare not go alone; may our Brother, our Elder Brother, our Friend closer than a brother, come out to meet us with the light of the promises, which shall be a lantern to our feet; and then we will go in to join our loved ones waiting for us, supper all ready, the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Getting Things Mixed.
It is said that an English—not an Irish—judge was not long ago heard to address a frequently-convicted prisoner in these terms: "Are you aware that in these repeated breaches of the law it is in my power to sentence you to a term of penal servitude far exceeding your natural life? And, what is more, I feel very much inclined to do it."—Tit-Bits.

Trial of an Artist.
Sympathizing Friend—I am awfully sorry to hear that your work was rejected.
Poster Artist—I don't mind disclosing the secret to you; I know you will keep it. The fact is I am color blind by gaslight, and I painted a group of green trees, thinking all the time that I was using pure red.—Odds and Ends.

An Efficacious Monarchy.
"My mind to me a kingdom is,"
And very badly governed, too;
It's overtaxed to make display
By far beyond its modest due.
—Chicago Journal.

PIECE OF RESISTANCE.

—Harlem Life.

A Toast.
Here's hoping every breeze that blows
Across the world so sunny,
Will blow a bee toward a rose
Whose heart is sweet with honey!
—Chicago Times-Herald.

The Count's Mistake.
"So Gwendolyn is not to marry the count after all?"
"No, poor man! He tried to tell her that her singing was something that made one glad to live, and his pronunciation was so broken that she thought he said it made one glad to leave."—Indianapolis Journal.

Even More Solemn.
A thoughtful old Scotchman exhorted his daughter in this fashion: "Jennie, my lass, it's a vera solemn thing to be married." "I ken that weel, father," replied Jennie, promptly, "but it's a great deal solemner not to be."—The Rival.

Out of Season.
Mrs. Shopper—Have you any remnants of silk ribbon?
Saleslady—Yes, mum, we have quite a large selection of remnants of silk ribbon. There is no demand for them now to make bathing suits.—Tammany Times.

His Start in Life.
"They tell me, sir, that you had very little capital when you started out to build your fortune."
"The only capital I had," said the self-made man, with a degree of pride, "was capital I."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

The Brave Deserve the Fair.
"Kitty never hangs up any mistletoe in her parlor."
"Why not?"
"She says it is a poor imitation of a man who has to get help from an old weed like that."—Detroit Free Press.

Almost, But Not Quite.
Broadway—I always like to dine with a man who knows how to order a dinner.
Manhattan—Yes; it's almost as good as dining with a man who knows how to pay for one.—Town Topics.

A Tender-Hearted Girl.
Old Million—My dear Miss Youngthing, if you'd only marry me I could die happy.
Miss Youngthing—Why, Mr. Million, if you were dying, I'd marry you in a minute.—N. Y. Weekly.

Unlucky.
Clancy—Do yes, think it's unlucky to raise an umbrella in the house?
Dooley—I know it is. I raised wan lash night, an' before I eud stroke wid it me wife tumped me wid a rollin' pin.—N. Y. World.

In the Front Row.
"I see," said the first bald-headed man, cheerfully, "that we are here, as usual."
"Oh, yes," said the other bald-headed man, "beauty draws us by a single hair."—Town Topics.

Incapacitate.
"Squallinger, what has become of your carriage and span of bays?"
"Had to sell them, Fleckinger. I'm keeping a baby carriage and span of twigs."—Chicago Tribune.

He Wouldn't Do.
Friend—Wouldn't you like to have me sit here and shoot at poets when they come in?
Editor—No. You are too poor a shot.
—Harlem Life.

Why Johnny Objected.
Johnny—I don't like this neighborhood at all. It's too refined.
Mamma—Too what?
Johnny—Too refined. A fellow can't have any fun.—Town Topics.

Proof Positive.
She—Do you think Miss Sweetier is so strikingly handsome?
He—I know it. All the other women put in their time picking her to pieces.
—Detroit Free Press.

Toil vs. Toilet.
Mabel wears fine silken hose
Purchased with her papa's rocks;
But the old man always goes
Around in ten-cent cotton socks.
—Chicago Daily News.

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