

CHILDREN'S GREAT BIBLE TEXTS

VOLUME II



THE BOOK OF  
EXODUS

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**THE BOOK OF EXODUS**

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## **A STORY OF GOD'S CARE.**

His sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. — Exod, ii. 4.

About three thousand years ago there was a kingdom that was very famous. It was one of the most powerful in the world, and its people were the learned of the earth. We are only now finding out how much they knew. Travellers from all over the world go to see the ruined temples, the great statues, and the pyramids which were built by them; and clever men and women are full of eager interest over fragments of their writings which have been discovered. That ancient country of Egypt seems almost to be living again for us; and because of its connexion with the Bible, we want to know more and more about it.

Settled on its eastern frontier was a people of quite a different race from the Egyptians. They were not specially learned, having originally been just flock-owners and shepherds. In temperament they remind us somewhat of our own Highlanders. A family affection had originally drawn them down into Egypt from Palestine. They were the descendants of Joseph and his brethren. You remember

how, for Joseph's sake, Pharaoh welcomed Joseph's father and his eleven brothers and their families, and how he gave them a fertile spot on which to settle.

But the years passed; Joseph and his generation died and were forgotten. Another king arose who disliked the shepherd settlers. He, with an eye to the future of his country, became alarmed at the great increase in their numbers. They had multiplied until — says the Bible story — "the land was full of them." From the point of view of the Egyptian king, this was serious ; for, thought he, in the event of an invasion, those Hebrews may join the enemy and outnumber the Egyptians. He set himself to crush them, treating them like slaves. Under great oppression they built cities for him, made bricks, and dug canals.

You see, they were no longer merely shepherds ; they had learnt a great deal by their sojourn in Egypt. Some amongst them were weavers, others were carpenters or potters ; and besides their great stretches of pasture land they had now gardens where they grew cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. That sounds quite homelike, doesn't it ? But the Israelites could not feel happy in their little homes ; they were not free men and women, but slaves.

All the same, Pharaoh's scheme of oppression was baffled : they continued to grow and multiply. So he made a decree charging all his people to cast every Hebrew male child into the river.

In one Hebrew household, this decree of the king's caused great consternation and perplexity. The family consisted of father, mother, a girl, a boy, and a tiny baby. The mother, with the help of the little girl, had hidden this baby for three months. But you know how difficult it is to hide a baby. Miriam — for that was the girl's name — had,

however, a wonderful imagination. She said to her mother — " If the king's daughter only saw our baby she would love him. She is beautiful and kind, mother. I see her every day ; she goes to bathe at one particular spot in the river."

So, with Miriam urging her on, the mother constructed a little ark of bulrushes — or rather a basket of the papyrus reeds with which the Egyptians built their light boats. Then she coated this little basket with asphalt and pitch to make it water-tight, and laid the baby into it. She carried the precious burden down to the river, and Miriam ran alongside. She placed it in a creek, where the princess came daily to bathe ; and Miriam, her heart panting with excitement, was set to keep watch. While she concealed herself among the water-reeds, she prayed that the great God would take care of her little baby brother.

" They're coming," she whispered loudly to her mother, who stood back a little way. " Mother ! they've seen the little ark . . . they've drawn it out of the water. . . . not the princess, mother, but the maids ! I'll go. . . . They've opened it and . . . baby's crying ! " She darted out of her hiding-place and ran forward. " One of the Hebrew children," she heard the princess say. " How beautiful he is ! I'll take this boy for my own. . . . He cries because he is away from his mother."

Miriam ventured near, and curtsied. "The baby would perhaps not be frightened if you got a Hebrew mother to nurse him for you," she said eagerly. " I think I know of one who would do it." "Get that woman for me," the princess said; and Miriam ran back — the little feet could scarcely carry her fast enough — to where the mother stood, and brought her forward. You can imagine how joyful she felt when she heard the princess say, " Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

" Clever little Miriam ! " you say. We say the same. But it was God who cared all the time for little Moses in his basket cradle. And God was caring for the poor oppressed Hebrews too. His time for delivering them was at hand, and this baby was to be the man to lead them out of the land of slavery. God had a great piece of work in store for that tiny Hebrew child.

And God still cares for His children, and He still has some special bit of work in store for each. That bit of work is waiting for you, children, and it is you, and you only, who can do it. What is it to be ? I wonder. It may be something very great in the world's eyes. It may be something which to other people seems quite ordinary. But in God's sight it is great whatever it may be. And He expects you to do it with all your might.

Boys and girls, never in all its history has the world needed men and women, great in God's sense of the word, more than it needs them to-day. The world is longing for them, crying for them, praying for them. Are you going to be, like Moses and Miriam, of the number of God's great men and women?

## **A KNIGHT OF OLD.**

And the shepherds came and drove them away : but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. — Exod. ii. 17.

I wonder how many of you like to hear stories about the brave knights of old. I think most of us do. When we visit old castles we picture some brave warrior setting forth on his war-steed to fight for the right or defend the honour of a fair lady. We can see his armour glistening and hear his