

**St. Andrews Scots Sr. Sec. School**  
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**Session 2024-2025 Notes**

**Class: IX**

**Subject: English**

**Topic: The Bishop Candlesticks (Play)**

**Q1. *Mere Gringoire indeed! Mere Gringoire. What, the old witch who lives at the top of the hill, and who says she is bed-ridden because she is too lazy to do any work?***

**(a) Identify the speaker. Why is she in a foul mood?**

**Ans)** Persome is the speaker. She is in a foul mood because she has found out that the Bishop has sold off their silver salt-cellar to help Mere Gringoire to pay her rent.

**(b) Why does Persome refer to Mere Gringoire as an old witch?**

**Ans)** Persome does so as she feels that Mere Gringoire is a wicked and selfish woman.

**(c) What has been done for Mere Gringoire?**

**Ans)** The Bishop has sent her money to pay her house rent by selling his silver salt-cellar.

**(d) What does this extract reveal about Persome's character?**

**Ans)** This extract reveals that Persome is short-tempered and narrow-minded. She is not generous like her brother.

**Q2. Why did the Convict call the prison a hell?**

**Ans)** The Convict was chained like a wild animal in the prison cells. He was fed on filth. He was made to sleep on boards. He was beaten mercilessly whenever he complained. In the jail, he was just a number not a human being, He was so ill-treated and tortured that he had lost all human dignity and individuality. All this suffering was nothing short to living in Hell.

**Q3. What brings about real transformation in the Convict?**

**Ans)** When the Bishop gives the Convict his silver candlesticks as a gift before he leaves for Paris, the Convict is speechless. He kneels down before the Bishop and weeps. The Bishop's kind-heartedness, generosity and compassion revived the convict's faith in church, religion and life itself. His tears are a symbol of transformation.

**Q4. Why does the Bishop call the Convict his friend in front of the sergeant?**

**Ans)** When the sergeant arrests the Convict and brings him to the Bishop, he promptly comes to his rescue. He does not want the Convict to go back to the prison hulks or hell. He calls him to be his friend and says he has gifted his candlesticks to him.

**Q5. Bring out the mental conflict of the Convict before stealing the candlesticks.**

**Ans)** The Convict looks at the silver candlesticks and is tempted to steal them. He wants to sell them at a high price for starting a new life. Then his mind experiences the conflict and he recalls the Bishop's statement that those candlesticks were a gift from his mother before she died. But

soon he sticks to his decision as nobody cared for his mother when he was sent to jail. He becomes hard and ignores the kindness of the Bishop towards him. He thinks that since he is a Bishop, its natural for him to be kind and benevolent. Finally, he flees with the candlesticks.

**Q6. " I am a number, number 15729". An individual's human identity is being degraded to a mere number. What does your conscience tell you about this?**

Ans) The Convict was once a normal human being. He was out of work and had no money to buy food for his sick wife. So he stole money to buy her food and was caught by the police. He tried to explain to the policemen why he had stolen. But they laughed at him and he was sentenced for ten years in the prison hulks.

The Convict was treated like a beast. He was chained and tortured. They took away his soul and made him a devil. They took away his name and gave him a number, number 15729. He was not a man, he was reduced to a mere number. He lost faith in the essential goodness of man. He considered himself devil and told the Bishop that he did not want any of his hope, faith and charity. He warned the Bishop not to convert him.

It is very natural, under such circumstances any person might lose faith in humanity, in church and religion. But it is the society which is at fault in making him what he is.