

## ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

What boy, or what girl, does not know the delight of having a favorite companion, to whom thoughts and wishes are confided, and in concert with whom plans are laid and undertakings ventured upon? The Bible gives us several instances of such companionship. We have Daniel and his three friends; we have Peter and John; we have Paul and Barnabas. And in the lesson for to-day we have, perhaps, the most striking instance of all; for Moses and Aaron were not companions only, but brothers, of nearly the same age, who worked together for forty years.

And yet during the longest period of their lives they must have been almost strangers to one another. A few years they spent together at their mother's knee, and then there came a long separation. Moses, the Egyptian prince, the "son of Pharaoh's daughter," could have had little to do with Aaron, the Hebrew slave. We may suppose that at the time his great choice was made Moses sought out his family, and that during his exile in Midian he found means of holding some communication with them. Still, it was not until the one was eighty, and the other eighty-three years of age that they became actual companions, associated together in one common work and interest.

Leaving his home and his father-in-law, sending back his wife and children after they had accompanied him a little way, Moses was proceeding on his journey toward Egypt alone. Then God sent to him his brother, to be his companion and helper until the hour of death.

The passage appointed for the lesson brings before us three scenes of interest at the outset of the two brothers' career. We have their meeting together at Sinai, their meeting in Egypt with the elders of Israel, and their meeting with Pharaoh in his royal audience chamber.

1. *The meeting together at Sinai.* I suppose there is no meeting recorded in history, not even the gathering of Swiss citizens so beautifully pictured by Schiller in "William Tell," that can compare with this in interest. For Moses and Aaron met together to overthrow the power of Egypt, and deliver from slavery that nation which was to be God's witness in the ancient world, and the guardian of his word and his truth.

And of what was their converse? "Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him." They had met with no selfish or frivolous purpose, but as the Lord's servants, about to enter on the work he had entrusted to them. Up to this moment we know nothing of Aaron's life or character,

but we now find him receiving by faith the message of Moses, and ready obediently to follow it. Moses met with no difficulty here. Aaron believed the word of God at the mouth of his brother, and accepted the call. The two found themselves *companions in faith and purpose.*

And how necessary is this to true and profitable companionship! That which a man truly and practically believes will mold his purpose and direct his life. And where there is divergence in this there can be no real harmony between soul and soul. It is a dangerous thing for a Christian to choose as his intimate companion one who has no practical belief in the things of God, who has never yet accepted the Saviour's call, nor set his heart to walk in the way of life. Such a companionship can, at the best, only result in uncertainty and unsteadiness of walk. And there is need even for Christian friends and companions to remember their calling. How often are the meetings and the converse between such purposeless and frivolous! If they are indeed companions in faith and purpose, should not their meeting show some trace of it, in mutual encouragement and edification? "I had a little friend," said a lady, "when I was eight years old, who was the same age as myself. We both loved God, and we agreed that when we met we would talk of him sometimes, instead of always talking of our dolls." Here is an example for our young people.

2. *The meeting in Egypt with the elders of Israel.* This was the outcome of the meeting at Sinai. On that occasion Aaron had heard that he was to be his brother's "prophet," to speak the words Moses told him, and do the signs Moses commanded him. And first they were to go to the elders of Israel and bring them a message from the "Lord God of their Fathers." This was no light errand. From a people so crushed, so desponding, so unbelieving, as the Israelites, what reception could be naturally looked for? But among the "words of the Lord" which Moses repeated unto Aaron were those precious words, "*Certainly I will be with thee*"—the talisman through which they were to succeed. The entrusting of a talisman to any person presupposes that that person has some real work to accomplish, some actual difficulty to overcome, or some danger to escape. Thus, when Joseph was about to take into his hands the welfare of the Egyptian people and their deliverance from starvation, the king's ring was placed on his hand with the seal of authority that required obedience wherever it came.—And Moses and Aaron had a really great work to do in rousing the minds of their nation and inspiring them with faith in the word of Jehovah. We see them next as *companions in labor.*