

bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of (R. V., by reason of) the heat, and fastened on his hand. The snake had been torpid on account of the cold, but the heat of the fire revived it. There are now no vipers in Malta, but they have doubtless become exterminated by the dense human population (1,200 to the square mile). Venomous serpents are abundant in Cyprus and the islands of the Mediterranean.

4. And when the barbarians saw the venomous (R. V. omits venomous) beast hang on his hand (R. V., hanging from his hand), they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance (R. V., justice) suffereth not to live. They could see that he was a prisoner, and rushed to the conclusion that he must be specially deserving of divine punishment, when he seems rescued from the waves only to meet a more horrible death on shore. It is evident that Paul was really bitten, for the viper hung from his hand by its fangs.

5. And (R. V., howbeit) he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt (R. V., took) no harm. The idea is that Paul was quite composed in what he did, and that the beast was no cause of alarm to him (Lumby). He knew that he "must stand before Cæsar," and serpents could no more prevent him than stormy waves (ch. 27:24). This was what Christ had promised (Mark 16: 18).

6. Howbeit they looked when (R. V., but they expected that) he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while (R. V., when they were long in expectation), and saw no harm come to him (R. V., and beheld nothing amiss come to him), they changed their minds, and said that he was a god. Paul would be reminded of the people of Lystra (ch. 14: 11). If not a god, he was "a man of God," and under the protection of the only living and true God. The word for "looked" is properly "expected"; indeed, that is the meaning of "looked" in our version.

7. In the same quarters were possessions of (R. V., now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to) the chief man of the island, whose name was Pub'lius; who received us,

and lodged (R. V., entertained) us three days courteously. Inscriptions prove that Luke, with his usual scholarly accuracy, gives Publius his correct official title of "Primus," chief, or head-man. Some think that the rank was honorary, not official. According to tradition Publius became first pastor, or bishop, of Malta, and afterwards died a martyr. The nearest town to the scene of the shipwreck is Alta Vecchia. Here Publius probably resided, and the castaways were housed for the winter. The centurion, with Paul, Luke and Aristarchus are, no doubt, the persons referred to, not the whole 176 (Heb. 13: 2). At the end of the three days their winter quarters would be ready. Luke notes carefully any act of courtesy shown to Paul (1 Pet. 3: 8).

8. And it came to pass, that the father of Pub'lius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux (R. V., and dysentery): to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. "Fever" is in the plural and implies an "intermittent fever," or ague. The terms used are such as a physician would employ. Christ had said that His disciples would be able to heal diseases in this way (Mark 16: 18), and the efficacy of prayer in restoring to health is recognized in the New Testament (Jas. 5: 14, 15), but cures wrought by Luke, or any other physician, using the proper remedies, are just as really God's work as those of Paul. By such miracles of mercy prejudices were removed from the minds of the people, and a favorable reception was secured for the gospel.

9. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed. R. V. "The rest also." It was not a few who came, but during the three months of their stay all the others who were in sickness, and heard of what had been done for the father of the the magistrate, came to be cured (Lumby).

10. Who also honored us with many honors; and when we departed (R. V., sailed), they laded us with (R. V., put on board) such things as were necessary. Christ had forbidden His disciples to take pay for what they did by supernatural power (Matt. 10: 8), but the people showed their gratitude in every possible way. We should understand the word "honors" in the broadest sense—not only gifts, but marks of respect publicly conferred. Besides these tokens of