

The Island of Malta.

By Mrs. Julia A. Symington.

The island of Malta differs in so many respects from any other place in the world that it seems a waste of space and time to connote an account of it to the limits of a tourist's eye and pen. I should think myself very stupid indeed, after hearing so much, to not know so little of Malta, were it not that I had "there are others." We landed at Valetta, which is the entrepot and port of the island. It is perhaps the best fortified place in the world. It would seem as if every point of attack was as securely guarded as human ingenuity could suggest. Not only are the fortifications extensive, but additional precautions are taken against siege by storing vast amounts of provisions in especially prepared vaults or "caches," somewhat after the manner employed by the American Indians.

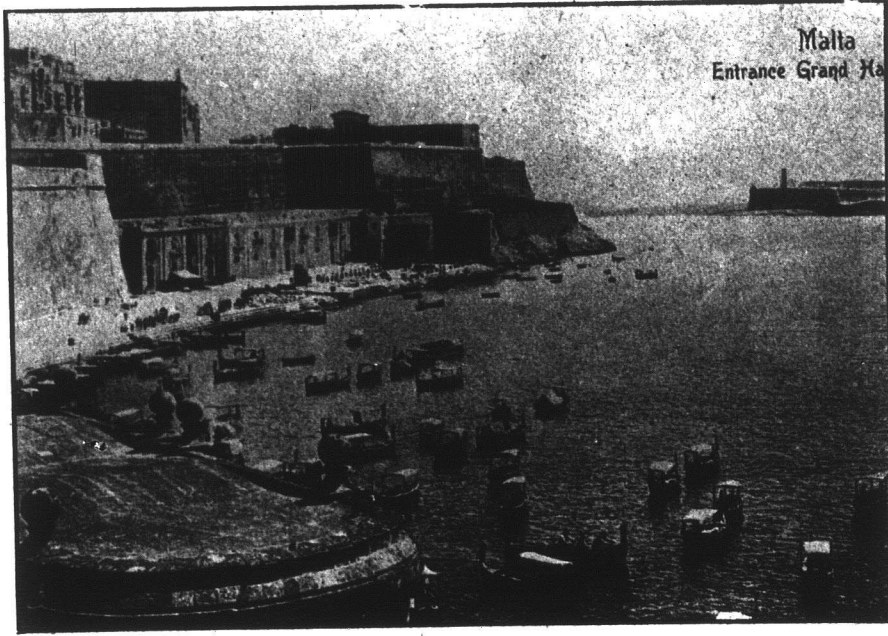
The island is seventeen miles long and eight wide, and has a population of between 2,000 or 3,000 to the square mile. Valetta is compactly built, beautiful and massive. The buildings as a whole are the best I ever saw anywhere, and partake somewhat in massiveness of the fortifications which surround them. Everything is stone—houses, fences, walls, walks and roads. Since anything like a detailed description is rather impracticable, I must confine myself chiefly to the two features which give the city its interest to tourists—the Knights of Malta and the place where St. Paul the Apostle was shipwrecked. It seems to be well authenticated that Paul was cast ashore, with those accompanying him, at a point just outside the city of Valetta. The spot is marked by a monument and chapel.

The Knights of Malta (or St. John, as they were originally known) have a most romantic history. The Order was founded in the eleventh century and confirmed as a military order by the pope of Rome. After defeating the Turks at Antioch they moved to Smyrna, later to Cyprus, and finally to Rhodes, where they remained for 200 years; hence are sometimes called the Knights of Rhodes. They successfully repelled the Ottoman invasion of Europe until 1522, when they were overpowered by vastly superior numbers. After this defeat, Charles V. of Spain gave them the island of Malta, where the Turks again attempted to dislodge them, but without success. Their gallantry in this notable struggle elicited the admiration of the Christian world. Under the leadership of Valetta, the famous Grand Master, the City of Valetta was founded and the present fortifications begun. Subsequently they maintained piratical expeditions against the Mohammedans, and their success resulted in a moral and religious decay, as was inevitable. With the growth of luxury and vice, their vows of temperance and chastity were disregarded, and the most abandoned fast livers of Europe flocked to their standard. Thus passed the golden age of these most illustrious knights, to whom the world is indebted for preventing the overrunning of Europe by the Mohammedans at a time when that continent could not protect itself, which, had it occurred, would have made the free institutions of our own land an impossibility.

Aside from the fortifications, the places of chief interest are the government house, where a large hall is devoted to the trophies of the Knights of Malta, and the parliament house, where the Maltese council sits. The governor-general's chair is 300 years old, and the walls are hung with the richest Gobelin tapestries in the world. These are immense pieces, allegorical representations of Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America. These tapestries are said to be 200 years old, and worth \$400,000. Age has not

dimmed the figures and coloring, they being distinct and bright as the best oil paintings. Some of them have been repaired, while others have never been, two being in Paris now for that purpose. We thought ourselves honored when asked, "Would you like to sit a moment in the governor's chair and rest?" "Yes; thank you very much for the privilege, if I may." "You may now," and I was politely shown into the august chair of state, all crimson and gold.

The Church of St. John is the most conspicuous object in Malta, and is one of the most remarkable in Europe. It is located on the supposed site of the Mount Publius, mentioned in the New Testament. The decorations of the walls, ceilings and columns consist of elaborate carvings in the stone of which the building is constructed. These are variously colored, the chief coloring being gold. The effect is novel, striking, and indescribable, as it is so different from any other church we saw. Pictures even, could not, to our mind, portray the effect. The Church of the Monks, or Church of Ecnes, as it is also called, is an object of interest. It is a chapel decorated



Principal Harbor of Malta

with the well preserved bones of the early monks who belonged to the order, but is not equal in size or variety of ornamentation to the cells and burying ground of the Capuchin Monks in Rome, now a thing of the past. Of the people of Malta only one-tenth, it is said, can read or write; although they seem naturally bright and susceptible of educational advancement, judging from the street display of the children dressed for a carnival, they might be taught anything that any child should know to make them useful citizens in any country, as well as Malta. Wages are very low and the population overcrowded, necessarily resulting in much beggary. Pedlars and beggars are persistently plentiful. The natives are a mixture of the Arabic and Italian, with a language which is a cross between the two nationalities. They are industrious and temperate. The men are goldsmiths and artificers and stone-cutters, while the women make beautiful hand-made lace which is almost, if not quite, the equal of that made in Brussels, and very much cheaper. Fully 90 per cent. of the people are Roman Catholics, if the soldiers, now numbering 10,000 or 11,000, are excluded.

The climate is equable for the greater part of the year, but is quite hot in summer. There are many fine gardens, vineyards and orange groves, but they seem small in extent. It is a great health resort, and the boast is that "chronic invalids have to leave the

island to die." From Valetta, the port of call, famous for its harbor, we visited Citta Vecchia by sail. This city gives evidence of age, claims to have been founded 700 B.C., was once the ancient capital city of stately palaces and crumbling old-world fortifications. How often we were brought to the scenes of New Testament story of Paul's shipwreck. We were shown the grotto in which he lived during his stay. It was late in autumn, and the northeast rain is very chilly still, even when the thermometer is not very low.

The people of Malta are still kind to strangers, as they were to the shipwrecked mariners. A fire was kindled; foremost among those who gathered sticks was Paul. "the noblest Roman of them all." His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him "that nature might stand up and say to all the world, this was a man!" Among the fagots a semi-dormant viper sprang forth and fastened on his hand. In warm climates it is deadly, and this may have been the asp, that is twelve or eighteen inches long, such as caused the death of Cleopatra. This must have been deadly, or the people would not have expected him to die. There are now no venomous serpents in Malta. The natives inferred that Paul was a murderer, although he had escaped from the sea, vengeance had followed. The first instinct of religion seemed to have been, with these natives, a connection between guilt and retribution; the sleepless, never-dying of wrong; the Nemesis who presides over retribution; the vengeance that



MEN OF ALL AGES

suffering from the effects of early folly quickly restored to robust health, manhood and vigor. Lost Manhood, Premature Decay, Weak Memory, Errors of Youth, Night Losses, Varicose, forever cured.

\$1.00 BOX OF MEDICINE FREE.

OLD DR. GORDON'S REMEDY FOR MEN in a few days will make an old man of 60 feel 20 years younger. Sent sealed on receipt of 12 cents to pay postage, full regular one dollar box, with valuable medical book rules for health, what to eat and what to avoid. No duty, no inspection by Custom House, reliable Canadian Company. Write at once; if we could not help you we would not make this honest offer.

QUEEN MEDICINE CO.
P. O. Box C. 947, MONTREAL.

When writing advertisers please mention The Western Home Monthly.

lect composure, Paul shook the repulse from his hand, and let no man. The natives quickly changed their minds and looked upon Paul now as a god. For three days they received courteous treatment from the governor, until they could make other arrangements for their three-months stay on the island. In return for this kindness, Paul was the instrument in God's hand of the cure of the governor's father. Navigation opening in February, they again embarked in an Alexandrian ship for Rome, which he entered, not so much a criminal as an apostle, with hosts of friends. Later on in our cruise we were shown the spot where Paul stood to plead his own case before the Casarian ruler at Rome, 29 or 30, A.D.

Malta is so curiously marked by the history of this apostle's visit that it seems fitting to close this sketch by the traditional account of the spot where he met his death. It is marked by one of the most lovely churches of Christendom, St. Paul's without the walls of Rome. Close to this church is the Convent of the Three Mountains, where Paul, according to the tradition, was beheaded, the three strokes of bursting forth at the three strokes of Paul's head upon the ground. Oh! what is death? 'Tis life's shore, Where vanities are vain no more; Where all pursuits their goal obtain And life is all retouched again; Where, in their bright result, shall rise Thoughts, virtues, friendships, griefs and joys.

After visiting the governor's palace and grounds, which was a delightful picture of elegance combined with comfort, and an education in fine art, coupled with a wonderful military display, we purchased pictures of St. Paul's Bay, and a little Maltese lace, and at four o'clock were conducted back to our good ship Moltke, well pleased with our visit to the Island of Malta, short though it had been.

MOLES WARTS AND SUPER- FLUOUS HAIR

SKILLFULLY AND PERMANENTLY REMOVED BY ELECTROLYSIS. SKIN AND SCALP DISEASES SUCCESSFULLY TREATED AND CURED.

THE best Facial Massage and Manicuring done in the city, and the purest and finest Toilet Preparations manufactured and sold.

Static Electricity thoroughly applied for Nervousness, Insomnia, Sciatica, Muscular Rheumatism, etc.

Consultation Free.

Office hours from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Mrs. E. Coates Coleman

SPECIALIST IN ELECTRO-THERAPEUTICS AND DERMATOLOGY

282 ELlice Ave.

WINNIPEG

Tel. phone 290.