

the island, gathered round touched with feelings of kindness, kindled for them a fire and received every one of them, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.' As I tried to picture to myself the apostle of the Gentiles standing before that fire kindled on the shore, his apparel dripping with the briny waters of the sea, I thought of all the perils of his eventful life, and of all he endured for the love of Christ and the salvation of a dying world.—J. A. Clark.

PAUL'S PROMISE FULFILLED.

LESSON XXIV.

DECEMBER 9.] PAUL AT MELITA. [About 60-61 A. D.]

READ Acts xxviii. 1-10. RECITE vs. 3-6. DAILY READINGS.—M.—Rom. i. 14-25. T.—Luke x. 19-37. W.—Acts xiv. 7-18. Th.—James v. 10-20. F.—Matt. viii. 5-17. Sa.—Mark xvi. 9-20. S.—Acts xxviii. 1-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.—Rom. i. 14.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Lord's servants are safe.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Note that "barbarous people"—i.e. foreigners—as well as Greeks and Romans, were made to feel a respect for Paul the Christian.

NOTES.—Mel'ita, the island of Malta, 58 miles south of Sicily; 17 1/2 miles long, 9 1/4 wide; colonized by the Phoenicians, and afterward by the Greeks; at the time of the shipwreck under the Dominion of Rome; now a dependency of Great Britain, highly cultivated and having 1,200 inhabitants to the square mile. Seven miles from Valetta, the present capital, is a bay called St. Paul's Bay, which is supposed to have been the scene of the shipwreck. Viper, probably the Vipera aspis, or "Mediterranean viper," found in almost all the islands of that sea. Sometimes this viper leaps several feet. It has been claimed that there are now no vipers in Malta; but Lewin saw a snake like a viper which escaped among some bundles of sticks put up for firewood. Pub'li-us, the resident Roman governor of the island, and called the primate or "chief man." Tradition says that he became a Christian convert and was the first bishop of Malta.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE ISLANDERS' KINDNESS. (II.) PAUL AND THE VIPER. (III.) PAUL HEALING THE SICK.

I. THE ISLANDERS' KINDNESS. (1.) THEY KNEW, ascertained, compare Acts xxvii. 39; MELITA, Malta, see Notes. (2.) BARBAROUS PEOPLE—i.e. natives, a word indicating not necessarily that they were uncivilized, but only that they spoke some other language than Greek or Latin; they were of Phœnician origin; NO LITTLE, no ordinary; PRESENT RAIN, then falling upon us; THE COLD, this was probably about the 20th of November.

I. QUESTIONS.—To what place had they escaped? Describe Malta. What are the natives called? Meaning of "barbarous"? What did they show to the wrecked ones? How try to make them comfortable? What was the state of the weather? The season of the year?

II. PAUL AND THE VIPER. (3.) PAUL, everywhere and always active in doing good; VIPER, see Notes; OUT OF THE HEAT, vipers are soon made torpid by the cold, and quickly warmed into activity by the heat. (4.) A MURDERER, they may have seen his chains; VENGEANCE, retribution, justice. (5.) FELT NO HARM, comp. Mark xvi. 18; Luke x. 19. (6.) A GOD, comp. xiv. 11.

II. QUESTIONS.—What did Paul do? What fastened upon him? Describe the "viper"? What did the barbarians conclude? How might they have known that Paul was a prisoner? How did he rid himself of the viper? What did the barbarians expect? Why? How did they change their minds? Why?

III. PAUL HEALING THE SICK. (7.) SAME QUARTERS, he neighborhood of the wreck; POSSESSIONS, landed estates; CHIEF MAN, Roman governor or primate; PUB-LI-US, see Notes. (8.) BLOODY FLUX, dysentery; LAID HANDS ON HIM, Mark xvi. 18. (9.) OTHERS ALSO, the rest. (10.) HONORS, presents.

III. QUESTIONS.—Whose estates were near? What was the rank of Publius? How did he receive the voyagers? For how long? Who was sick? Of what disease? State how Paul healed him. What did other diseased ones do? With what effect? How did they show their gratitude?

What does this lesson teach us—

- (1.) As to the kindness sometimes shown by the heathen?
(2.) As to the heathen conception of retribution?
(3.) As to the safety of God's servants?
(4.) As to the folly and fickleness of the popular judgment?
(5.) As to the benefits received for kindness shown?

LOST SHIP LIVES SAVED.

LESSON XXV.

DECEMBER 16.] PAUL AT ROME. [About 61-63 A.D.]

READ Acts xxviii. 16-31. RECITE vs. 29-31. DAILY READINGS.—M.—Eph. vi. 10-24. T.—Heb.

xii. 1-15. W.—Isa. vi. Th.—2 Thess. ii. 3-17. F.—Isa. xli. 6-29. Sa.—Phil. i. 14-30. S.—Acts xxviii. 16-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.—Rom. i. 15. 16.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Christ's servants preach him wherever they are.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—After spending three winter months at Melita, the voyage was resumed. Paul and his company went by ship to Puteoli, and from thence by land to Rome.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Having journeyed with Paul to Rome, find out all that you can about the condition of the imperial city at that period, especially in matters of religion. Learn what Epistles Paul wrote while at Rome.

NOTES.—Cap'tain of the guard, the commander of the Prætorian camp, north of the city, where the emperor's body-guard was quartered; supposed to have been Burrus Afranius, a distinguished general and a very upright man, afterward poisoned at the instigation of Nero. Rome, the capital of the Roman empire, situated on the River Tiber, 16 miles from its mouth; supposed to have contained two millions of inhabitants at that time.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) PAUL EXPLAINS HIS ARREST. (II.) PAUL PREACHES THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

PAUL EXPLAINS HIS ARREST. (16.) CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD, see Notes; BY HIMSELF, instead of being confined in the Prætorium; WITH A SOLDIER, to whom he was secured by a chain. Eph. vi. 20; Col. iv. 3, 18; perhaps some of those were converted. Phil. i. 13. (18.) WOULD HAVE LET ME GO, xxvi. 32. (19.) TO APPEAL IN SELF-DEFENCE, not to accuse my nation. (20.) HOPE OF ISRAEL, hope of the Messiah, xxvi. 6. (21.) BRETHREN, the Jews. (22.) SECT, literally "heresy," xxiv. 5, 14; SPOKEN AGAINST, 1 Pet. ii. 12; iv. 14.

I. QUESTIONS.—Give an account of the journey from Melita to Rome, vs. 11-15. At Rome what was done with the prisoners? What with Paul? How was he secured? Mention some of the allusions to this in his Epistles. Whom did he call together? For what purpose? How did he prove that he was an innocent man? Why had he appealed to Cæsar? For what was he in bonds? State the Jews' reply. Their desire. How was Christianity regarded.

II. PAUL PREACHES THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (23.) PERSUADING, trying to convince them; LAW . . . AND PROPHETS, the Old Testament. (25.) ONE WORD, one parting testimony; WELL, appropriately; ESAIAS, Isaiah, Matt. xiii. 14, 15. (26.) SHALL, will. (28.) GENTILES, as at Antioch, xii. 46, and Corinth, xviii. 6. (30.) HIRED HOUSE, supported probably by the contributions of Christians, Phil. iv. 10-14. [While at Rome, Paul probably wrote his Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon.]

II. QUESTIONS.—What did Paul preach to those who came to him? What did he say? For how long? State the effect. His parting words. How were the Jews described? To whom should the gospel be sent? How long did Paul continue at Rome? Preaching what?

What verses in this lesson teach us—

- (1.) Paul's wish to clear away prejudices?
(2.) His love for his own people?
(3.) The different effects produced on different hearers by the same preaching of the gospel?

ILLUSTRATION.—Paul's apartments. "Paul's friends now procured suitable apartments for the apostle. The principal room we may conjecture was of sufficient dimensions to enable Paul in the exercise of his apostolic office to assemble an audience about him; and the abode must, for the convenience of the Prætorians in relieving guard, have been either within the precincts of the palace itself, at the house of one of the officials about the court, or in the immediate vicinity. The pecuniary means for providing a lodging were not improbably furnished by the zealous Roman Christians. As a prisoner, he was disabled from maintaining himself by his usual occupation."—Lewin.

CAMPAIGN NOTES.

ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND is a pretty large circulation. That is the number we would like the MESSENGER to begin the year with. That should not be a very difficult matter, only one new subscriber each. There is not a boy or girl or man or woman who reads this paper who could not get another subscriber. If they think so just let them try it and write us the result.

There can be no doubt that the skate premium is a complete success. Some one thousand letters which we have already received this year from those intending to win them proves this, as well as the fact that over four hundred pairs were sent away as premiums, and the receiver in nearly every case sent a letter of thanks expressing surprise that the prize was such a good one, much better even than they expected. It is a remarkable but very pleasing fact in connection with it that quite a number of those who obtained the skates last year are working for them again, perhaps for a sister, brother or friend; a fact which may be construed into an evidence of the completest satisfaction, while amongst other enthusiastic workers are those whose relatives or friends have won a pair. A little girl writing from New Glasgow, N.S., says: "I will try this

"year to get a pair of skates; those that got them last year were very well pleased with them." A boy writes from Woodstock, O.: "My brother got a pair last year, and they are so fine I want a pair like them." A last year's winner of the skates writes from Cornet, O.: "I got a pair of skates from you last year, and they were the best I had ever seen," and another hailing from Prince Albert, O., says of his: "I think them splendid." The latter two are determined to win another pair each. We hope they may, and many hundred others.

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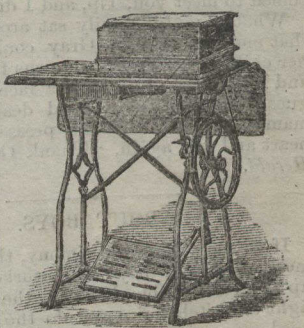
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