

much gain by her sooth-saying," and it was not till they saw that the hope of their gain was gone, through her restoration to a normal condition, that they discovered how troublesome to their city the Apostles were, and how dangerous to the Government of Rome. In the narrative of the "Acts" St. Luke never dwells on the sufferings endured by Paul and his companions, and we are liable to pass them over even more lightly. Happily for us the methods of that time are so far removed, that we do not easily recognize them. Did you ever consider what these words represent—"thrice was I beaten with rods?" These were the rods of the lictors—the horrible Roman scourging—a torture so severe as sometimes to cause death. This was the sentence carried out at Philippi, for the claim of the Roman citizen to exemption from this punishment was either not made or was ignored: "and when they had laid many stripes upon them they cast them into prison."

That prison at Philippi may well act at once as a rebuke and an inspiration to any one smarting under a sense of injustice, or oppressed by any kind of physical disadvantage. The anguish of the lacerated body, the shock to the nervous system, the consequent fever and thirst, the constraint of the stocks, the noisome darkness—and out of this overwhelming combination of suffering, there rises the voice of prayer and praise. Here was a miracle far greater than the earthquake which loosed their bonds, and it had its due share in the conversion of the jailor. No wonder that the Philippian Church, called into being at this time, and granted so great a demonstration of the power and grace of the Lord, became and remained strong in the faith. No wonder that a strong personal affection sprang up between the Apostle and his first European converts, which notwithstanding the effects alike of time and separation, bridged over the distance between Philippi and the Roman prison of later years from which the Epistle to the Philippians was addressed.

The episode at Philippi is so striking, and the letter written some ten years afterwards is so personal as well as beautiful, that a desire arises in the reader's mind to know something of the people concerned. What sort of people were they? How did they live? How did they manage their church organization? How did they express themselves in their communications with each other, and with St. Paul, their "Father in God?" These are question