

Salmonetta, from Malta. *The forepart stuck fast*; in the muddy clay. The Greek word for "stuck fast" is a strong one, "planted itself firmly."

III. A Happy Result, 42-44.

Vs. 42-44. *The soldiers' counsel.* A Roman soldier was responsible with his own life for

the escape of a prisoner in his charge; hence their thought of killing the prisoners on the ship, v. 1. *The centurion, willing.* The Greek word expresses a strong desire. Paul's character and conduct on the voyage had deeply impressed this officer. *They escaped all safe to land*; a happy ending of a perilous experience by a marvelous deliverance.

APPLICATION

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While the day was coming on, v. 33. The night may be dark and stormy, but the dawn will surely come. We may be surrounded now by difficulties which put the severest strain on our pluck and patience. But if we go steadily on, with a stout heart, and above all, with a firm confidence in God, the success that will surely come to us, will be all the sweeter because it has been so hardly won.

Paul besought them, v. 33. A storm is a time that tests faith and courage. We sometimes wonder if we would be strong enough to endure the hardships of the former persecutions, or if we could be bold in the day of calamity. The best preparation for any severe test is, to become strong in faith, and to be true to our small duties, during the present period of ease. Faithfulness to God in the time of calm promotes courage in the moments of danger.

For your health, v. 34. Health is a factor in the religious life. Lack of exercise, and carelessness as to what is eaten, result sometimes in depression and rob us of the joy which belongs to us as Christians by right. The "neglecting of the body" is a sin to be avoided, Col. 2: 23. We do much better work when well, and hence it is our duty to do what is in our power to keep well. Strength is needed, too, for the storms of life.

There shall not an hair fall, v. 34. What a helpful promise to have, in the face of those wild breakers that threatened every moment to overwhelm them! Every lurch the boat made might be the last, and yet a hair of their head could not fall.

"Trembled the mariners,

Peril was nigh:

Then said the God of gods,

'Peace! it is I.'"

Gave thanks to God, v. 35. Rescue from any great danger ought to be the ground for returning praise to God. The recovery of friends or of oneself from sickness, success in work—these may well be celebrated by some additional act of love to our Father, from whom comes every good and perfect gift.

Was not the precious ointment (John 12: 3), in part at least, Mary's way of expressing her gratitude to her Lord for the restoration of her brother Lazarus? In the stimulating Life of Bishop Patteson, it is told, that after his brother was saved from a serious accident, he wrote to his sister thus, "I would like to join you in showing gratitude to God by some deed of charity."

In the presence of them all, v. 35. Open confession of their faith is the duty of all who believe in Christ. We are marching through a country thick with the enemies of our Lord and of His cause. There is need that each of His loyal followers should boldly display His banner, and march in step with those who are fighting His battles.

He began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, vs. 35, 36. Paul's good spirits revived a ship full, so great is the influence of one upon another, and so much may one hopeful, courageous spirit do. The whole matter of personal influence is a wonder. If a person comes into a room, however silently, you at once feel that some one is near. How a little child, even, may sway a great man, as the helm, the ship! There is no greater power in the spreading abroad of Christ's kingdom than that of personal influence.

They discovered a certain creek, v. 39. Children of God learn much of His love here, but it will be an employment that will last through a blissful eternity to explore its still