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SCILLITAN MARTYRS, a company of early North African Christians who suffered under Marcus Aurelius in a.d. 180, and whose *Acta* are at once the earliest documents of the Church of Africa and the earliest specimen of Christian Latin. The martyrs take their name from Scilla (or Scillium), a town in Numidia. Their trial and execution took place in Carthage under the Pro-consul Vigellius Saturninus, whom Tertullian declares to have been the first persecutor of the Christians in Africa. The date of their martyrdom is the 17th of July a.d. 180. It is thus the concluding scene of the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, which is best known from the sufferings of the churches of Vienne and Lyons in South Gaul. Marcus Aurelius died on the 17th of March of the year in question, and persecution ceased almost immediately upon the accession of Commodus. A group of sufferers called the Madaurian martyrs seems to belong to the same period: for in the correspondence of St Augustine, Namphamo, one of their number, is spoken of as “ archimartyr,” which appears to mean protomartyr of Africa. We have in this martyrdom an excellent example of “ Acts of Martyrs ” properly so called. The document is in brief legal form, beginning with the date and the names of the accused, and giving the actual dialogue between them and their judge. It closes with the sentence, based on “ obstinate ” persistency in an illicit cult, and with the proclamation by the herald of the names of the offenders and the penalty. All this may quite well be a transcript of the *Acla,* or official report of the proceedings. A Christian appends the words: “ And so they all together were crowned with martyrdom; and they reign with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.’’

The Scillitan sufferers were twelve in all—seven men and five women. Two of these bear Punic names (Nartzalus, Cintinus), but the rest Latin names. Six had already been tried: of the remainder, to whom these *Acla* primarily relate, Speratus is the principal spokesman. He claims for himself and his companions that they have lived a quiet and moral life, paying their dues and doing no wrong to their neighbours. But when called upon to swear by the genius of the emperor, he replies: “ I recognize not the empire of this world; but rather do I serve that God whom no man hath seen, nor with these eyes can see.” Here he uses the language of 1 Tim. vi. 16; and it is interesting also to note that in reply to the question, “ What are the things in your satchel? ” he says, “ Books and letters of Paul, a just man.” The martyrs are offered a delay of thirty days to reconsider their decision, but this they all alike refuse. These Acts have been long known in an expanded form, or rather in a variety of later recensions. The fame of the martyrs led to the building of a basilica in their honour at Carthage; and their annual com­memoration required that the brevity and obscurity of their Acts should be supplemented and explained, to make them suitable for public recitation.

The historical questions connected with these martyrs are treated by Lightfoot, *Ignatius* (1889, 2nd ed.), i. 524 ff. The Latin text, together with later recensions and a Greek version, is published in *Texts and Studies,* i. 2 (Passion of Perpetua, 1890) ; see also *Analecta Bollandiana* (1889), viii. 5; H. M. Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers,* where, as in *Ante·Nicene Fathers,* ix. 285, there is an English translation. (J. A. R.)

SCILLY ISLES, a group of small islands, belonging to Cornwall, England, 25 m. W. by S. of Land’s End. (For map, see England, Section VI.) They form an outlying portion of the granite high­lands of Cornwall; and contain a few metalliferous veins or lodes, which could never have yielded much ore. An old theory that the Scilly Isles could be identified with the “ Cassiterides ” or “ Tin Islands ’’ of Herodotus is abandoned, and the origin of

their name has never been authoritatively settled. The islands are wild and picturesque, with sheer cliffs and many large caves hollowed out by the Atlantic. Owing to the reefs and shoals by which these shores are surrounded, navigation becomes perilous in rough weather, and many disasters have occurred. In 1707 Sir Cloudesley Shovel perished in the shipwreck of his flagship and two other men-of-war, while two fireships of his squadron were driven aground, and the remainder only narrowly escaped. The graveyard of an old Puritan church on St Mary’s contains the bodies of 311 persons, drowned in the wreck of the “ Schiller ” in 1875; and a local proverb tells that for every man who dies a natural death on the islands the sea takes nine. Much, how- ever, has been done to minimise the danger, especially by lighting the coast. On St Agnes there is a lighthouse, and on an outlying rock to the south-west is the lonely Bishop Light, constructed with infinite difficulty in 1858, and rebuilt thirty years later.

The islands are composed wholly of granite—outliers of the granite highlands of Cornwall. Most of the granite is coarse and porphyritic, but towards the centre of the original igneous mass it is finer and non-porphyritic. The finer granite occurs on the north-west side of St Mary’s, the southern part of Tresco, Bryher and Samson and the north-west side of Annet. Elvans of quartz-porphyry are found in the granite. On the north-east end of White Island a fragment of the altered killas, which once covered the whole area, is still visible. A gravel deposit with chalk flints and Greensand cherts which caps some of the higher ground on St Mary’s may possibly be of Eocene age. Raised beach, blown sand, fragmental granitic waste or “ head” and an iron-cemented glacial deposit are found resting upon the granite.

The climate of the islands is unusually mild, snow being rarely seen, and the temperature varying from about 46° F. in winter to 58° in summer. As a result, vegetation is luxuriant; fuchsias, geraniums and myrtles attain an immense size, and aloes, cactus and prickly pear flourish in the open. All these, together with palms, may be seen in the gardens of the governor on Tresco Island, which are quite subtropical in character, and, therefore, unique in the British Isles. Great flocks of sea-birds haunt the remoter parts, and on some of the islands there arc deer. On Tean there is a warren of white rabbits; and some of the rarer land-birds occasionally visit the islands, such as the golden oriole, which has been known to breed here.

The islands are served by steamers from Penzance, and telephone and telegraph communication is established with the mainland. The raising of early asparagus and other spring vegetables, and of flowers, has taken the place of potato culture as the principal industry. In spring the fields of narcissus and other flowers add greatly to the beauty of the islands. There is also a small coasting trade; and fishing is carried on to some extent, its most important branch being the taking of lobsters for the London market.

The islands which may be distinguished from mere rocks number about 40, and the group has a total area of 4041 acres; but only five islands arc inhabited—St Mary’s, Trcsco, St Martin’s, St Agnes and Bryher. The total population in 1901 was 2092. Hugh Town in St Mary’s is the capital, occupying a sandy peninsula crowned by the height known as the Garrison, with Star Castle, dating from the days of Elizabeth. The town possesses a harbour, which is used by the Penzance steamers, and a roadstead where large vessels can lie at anchor. The government of the islands is vested in a county council created in 1890, consisting of a chairman, vice-chairman, 4 aldermen, and 18 councillors. For parliamentary purposes the isles are included in the St Ives division of Cornwall.

On Tresco there are the ruins of an abbey, and of two fortifica­tions called Oliver Cromwell’s Tower and King Charles’s Tower; and here also is a church built in 1882 and dedicated to St Nicholas. Numerous rude pillars and circles of stones, resembling those of Cornwall, are to be noticed; and barrows are common, the most remarkable of these prehistoric remains being a barrow on the Isle of Samson, 58 ft. in girth, and containing,