

to this day, according to her wish, that her daughter Falconilla may live for ever.' "

It is curious that, in spite of the wildly improbable incidents in the Acts of Paul and Thecla, so sober a critic as Sir W. M. Ramsay believes that the story has an historical foundation, at least in so far as that there was a real person of the name of Thecla who embraced the teaching of the Apostle St. Paul.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, to this day St. Thecla is commemorated throughout the Western Church in "the recommendation of a Departing Soul." Together with Enoch and Elias, Noah, Abraham, Job, Isaac, Lot, Moses, Daniel, the Three Children, Susanna, David and the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul, St. Thecla has a long paragraph to herself in the kind of litany recited by the priest beside the bedside of the dying man, being the only name included in all the series which is later than the time of Christ or which is not taken from Holy Writ. The passage as we still read it in the latest edition of the *Rituale Romanum*, runs thus :

And as Thou deliveredst that blessed Virgin and martyr, Saint Thecla, from three most cruel torments, so vouchsafe to deliver the soul of this Thy

<sup>1</sup> Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*. Harnack, p. 414, holds that the Acts of Paul and Thecla were at one time regarded in Southern Gaul as forming part of the Canonical Scriptures. See *Texte und Untersuchungen*, N.F., iv, 3, p. 17