

will confer a great favour by forwarding these small amounts, which are of great importance to "*The Deanery Magazine*."

By hard work and through the energy of one who is interested in our work, we hope next month to show an increased number of advertisements. If this can be done our burden will be much lightened, and we believe it will.

The Scillitan Martyrs.

A. D. 200.

AFRICA received Christianity at a very early date, how early is uncertain. When this is said there is no reference intended to Egypt. When Alexander, with the statesman's eye to situation, which was one of his powers, founded Alexandria at one of the mouths of the Nile, he invited the Jews to settle there by the offer of equal privileges with the Greeks. The result was that about one-third of the inhabitants were Jews. It was at Alexandria that the Old Testament was translated into Greek, which made the world the more ready to receive Christianity. For as S. James said: "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach, him being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day;"* and the reading was in Greek.

We are not surprised, therefore, to find that there were Alexandrians among the most earnest preachers of Christianity in the earliest times. Apollos, "the eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures,"† was born at Alexandria; and some have thought that S. Barnabas, who is said to have been "of Cyprus," was educated at the same place. A very ancient tradition names the Evangelist S. Mark as the first Bishop, if not the founder of the Alexandrian Church. Certainly some of those who were present at the first birthday of the Church at the feast of Pentecost were from Egypt; and even if they were not then converted and baptized they must have been prepared by what they saw and heard to receive the truth.

But though we now include Egypt in that quarter of the globe which we call Africa, it was not so in ancient times. Africa proper was the district round about Carthage, just as to this day the Arabs call the same district "Afygah." Indeed, the name seems to mean "a colony," and, therefore, would originally have been applied to the town which the Romans called Carthago. Carthage, as we know, was a colony of Tyre, and the language spoken there, as we learn from the come-

dian Plantus, who wrote in the third century before Christ, was very much like Hebrew, and this helps us to understand the name. When, therefore, it is said that it is not known when or how Christianity was introduced into Africa, that part of the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea is intended stretching westward from Carthage, or, as it is now called, from Tunis. This would be about fifteen hundred miles west of Alexandria.

A phrase of S. Augustine has been understood to mean that Africa was converted somewhat late; if so, the spread of Christianity must have been remarkably rapid, for towards the end of the second century we are told by a contemporary native and resident priest of Carthage, Tertullian, that Christians abounded everywhere, in every rank, in every place. Certain it is that the Scriptures were first translated into Latin in Africa, and some of the most important Christian writers in the first four centuries were African: for such were Tertullian, Cyprian, Victorinus, Optatus, Lactantius and Augustine. But before we speak of any of these, and give specimens of their writings, there will now be given a translation of the account of the martyrdom of twelve Scillitan Christians, seven men and five women, who lived not very far from Carthage. The narrative runs as follows:

When Claudius was Consul, on July the sixteenth, at Carthage, the metropolis, when the judgment was set, the magistrates ordered the following to be brought before them: Speratus, Narzales, Cittinus, Donata, Secunda and Vestina. When they appeared, Saturninus,* the proconsul, said: "You can easily procure pardon from our Lords the Emperors if with a good heart you turn to our gods."

Speratus answered: "We never at any time did any harm: nor do we practice wickedness, nor do wrong wilfully; nor have we ever cursed or slandered any one. But though we have been wrongly arrested we have always given thanks. Wherefore we adore the true Lord and King."

Saturninus, the proconsul, said: "We, too, are very particular, and our particular characteristic is excessive gentleness. And we swear by the genius of our Lord the Emperor, and pray for his safety. You ought to do the like."

Speratus said: "If you will give me quiet-audience I will teach you the mystery of meekness."

Saturninus, the proconsul, said: "While you are talking of the mystery I will do you no harm. Only in the mean time swear by the genius of our King."

*Acts xv., 21.

†Acts xviii., 24.

*This is the man who, according to Tertullian, was the first to persecute the Christians in Africa, and subsequently lost his eyesight.