The Lausiac History

Palladius of Galatia (c. AD 363–420)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Contents

Introduction 1

Introduction 14

CHAPTER I. -- ISIDORE 21

CHAPTER II. -- DOROTHEUS 23

CHAPTER III. -- POTAMIAENA 24

CHAPTER IV. -- DIDYMUS THE BLIND 25

CHAPTER V. -- ALEXANDRA 26

CHAPTER VI. -- THE RICH VIRGIN 27

CHAPTER VII. -- THE MONKS OF NITRIA 29

CHAPTER VIII. -- AMOUN OF NITRIA 31

CHAPTER IX. -- OR 33

CHAPTER X. -- PAMBO 34

CHAPTER XI. -- AMMONIUS 36

CHAPTER XII. -- BENJAMIN 37

CHAPTER XIII. -- APOLLONIUS 38

CHAPTER XIV. -- PAESIUS AND ISAIAS 39

CHAPTER XV. -- MACARIUS THE YOUNGER 41

CHAPTER XVI. -- NATHANAEL 42

CHAPTER XVII. -- MACARIUS OF EGYPT 44

CHAPTER XVIII. -- MACARIUS OF ALEXANDRIA 47

CHAPTER XIX. -- MOSES THE ROBBER 53

CHAPTER XX. -- PAUL 56

CHAPTER XXI. -- EULOGIUS AND THE CRIPPLE 57

CHAPTER XXII. -- PAUL THE SIMPLE 60

CHAPTER XXIII. -- PACHON 63

CHAPTER XXIV. -- STEPHEN 65

CHAPTER XXV. -- VALENS 66

CHAPTER XXVI. -- HERON 68

CHAPTER XXVII. -- PTOLEMY 69

CHAPTER XXVIII. -- A VIRGIN WHO FELL 70

CHAPTER XXIX. -- ELIAS 71

CHAPTER XXX. -- DOROTHEUS 72

CHAPTER XXXI. -- PIAMOUN 73

CHAPTER XXXII. -- PACHOMIUS AND THE TABENNESIOTS 74

CHAPTER XXXIII. -- THE TABENNESIOT NUNS 77

CHAPTER XXXIV. -- THE NUN WHO FEIGNED MADNESS 78

CHAPTER XXXV. -- JOHN OF LYCOPOLIS 80

CHAPTER XXXVI. -- POSIDONIUS 83

CHAPTER XXXVII. -- SARAPION THE SINDONITE 85

CHAPTER XXXVIII. -- EVAGRIUS PONTICUS 88

CHAPTER XXXIX. -- PIOR 91

CHAPTER XL. -- EPHRAIM 93

CHAPTER XLI. -- HOLY WOMEN 94

CHAPTER XLII. -- JULIAN 95

CHAPTER XLIII. -- ADOLIUS 96

CHAPTER XLIV. -- INNOCENT 97

CHAPTER XLV. -- PHILOROMUS 99

CHAPTER XLVI. -- MELANIA THE ELDER 100

CHAPTER XLVII. -- CHRONIUS AND PAPHNUTIUS 102

CHAPTER XLVIII. -- ELPIDIUS 106

CHAPTER XLIX. -- SISINNIUS 107

CHAPTER L. -- GADDANAS 108

CHAPTER LI. -- ELIAS 109

CHAPTER LII. -- SABAS 110

CHAPTER LIII. -- ABRAMIUS 111

CHAPTER LIV. -- THE ELDER MELANIA 112

CHAPTER LV. -- SILVANIA (MELANIA continued) 114

CHAPTER LVI. -- OLYMPIAS 115

CHAPTER LVII. -- CANDIDA 116

CHAPTER LVIII. -- THE MONKS OF ANTINOË 117

CHAPTER LIX. -- AMMA TALIS AND TAOR 119

CHAPTER LX. -- COLLYTHUS 120

CHAPTER LXI. -- MELANIA THE YOUNGER 121

CHAPTER LXII. -- PAMMACHIUS 123

CHAPTER LXIII. -- THE VIRGIN AND ATHANASIUS 124

CHAPTER LXIV. -- JULIANA 125

CHAPTER LXV. -- HIPPOLYTUS 126

CHAPTER LXVI. -- VERUS THE EX-COUNT 127

CHAPTER LXVII. -- MAGNA 128

CHAPTER LXVIII. -- THE COMPASSIONATE MONK 129

CHAPTER LXIX. -- THE NUN WHO FELL 130

CHAPTER LXX. -- A READER UNJUSTLY ACCUSED 131

CHAPTER LXXI. -- THE BROTHER WHO IS WITH THE WRITER 133

Introduction

TRANSLATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE. SERIES I GREEK TEXTS THE LAUSIAC HISTORY OF PALLADIUS By W.K.LOWTHER CLARKE B.D. SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE. London The Macmillan Company .New York First published 1918

PREFACE

MY interest in monasticism was first awakened in 1904, when I was a theological student at Cambridge, by the publication of the second volume of Abbot Cuthbert Butler's Lausiac History of Palladius. The appearance of a new work of scholarship, however excellent, would have meant little to me at that time, but my imagination was struck by the dinner which the theological teachers at Cambridge combined to give the author in honour of the completion of his arduous task. Somehow I had not associated monks with dinnerparties, and they appeared to me henceforward in a more human and attractive guise. In 1908 I began to study monasticism, taking Abbot Butler's works as my guide, and have never since lost interest in the subject. During the past year I have tried, during the few leisure hours which were alone possible under war conditions, to forget the tragedies of the time by making a translation of the Lausiac History. I do not know whether an ordinary critical text, where an editor merely gives the finishing touches to the labour of his predecessors, is copyright so far as the right of making a translation is concerned. But in this case the text belongs to Abbot Butler in a special way, since before him all was chaos. I am grateful therefore to him, and the Cambridge University Press his publisher, for readily granting permission to make the present version. There is nothing original in my book; if it succeeds in popularising the work of the Abbot of Downside, on whom the mantle of the great Benedictine scholars of old has descended, my purpose is accomplished.

To a lesser extent I am indebted to M. Lucot's excellent edition and translation. Occasionally he seems to me to have missed the meaning, but his French clarity of vision has frequently given me the clue to the right English rendering. Finally I must express my gratitude to the Society of which I have the honour to be Secretary

for undertaking the publication of this work at a time when it might have been tempted to postpone all such projects until a more convenient season. May 1918.

CONTENTS

PREFACE vii INTRODUCTION 15 I. THE AUTHOR AND HIS BOOK 15 II. THE TEXT OF THE HISTORY 17 III. EARLY MONASTICISM 20 IV. HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE BOOK 24 V. ITS SPIRITUAL VALUE 26 VI. THE PRESENT EDITION 32 VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY 33 VIII. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS 34 TEXT: INTRODUCTORY PIECES 35 PROLOGUE 39 I. ISIDORE . 47 II. DOROTHEUS 48 III. POTAMAENA 50 IV. DIDYMUS 51 V. ALEXANDRA 53 VI. THE RICH VIRGIN 54 VII. THE MONKS OF NITRIA 57 VIII. AMOUN OF NITRIA 59 IX. OR 61 X. PAMBO 62 XI. AMMONIUS 64 XII. BENJAMIN 66 XIII. APOLLONIUS 67 XIV. PAESIUS AND ISAIAS 67 XV. MACARIUS THE YOUNGER 69 XVI. NATHANAEL 70 XVII. MACARIUS OF EGYPT 73 XVIII. MACARIUS OF ALEXANDRIA 77 XIX. MOSES THE ROBBER 86 XX. PAUL 90 XXI. EULOGIUS AND THE CRIPPLE 91 XXII. PAUL THE SIMPLE 96 XXIII. PACHON 101 XXIV. STEPHEN 103 XXV. VALENS 104

XXVI. HERON 106 XXVII. PTOLEMY 107 XXVIII. A VIRGIN WHO FELL 108 XXIX. ELIAS 109 XXX. DOROTHEUS 110 XXXI. PIAMOUN 111 XXXII. PACHOMIUS AND THE TABENNESIOTS 112 XXXIII. THE TABENNESIOT NUNS 116 XXXIV. THE NUN WHO FEIGNED MADNESS 118 XXXV. JOHN OF LYCOPOLIS 120 XXXVI. POSIDONIUS 125 XXXVII. SARAPION THE SINDONITE 127 XXXVIII. EVAGRIUS 132 XXXIX. PIOR 138 XL. EPHRAIM 139 XLI. HOLY WOMEN 141 XLII JULIAN 142 XLIII. ADOLIUS 143 XLIV. INNOCENT 144 XLV. PHILOROMUS 145 XLVI. MELANIA THE ELDER 147 XLVII. CHRONIUS AND PAPHNUTIUS 149 XLVIII. ELPIDIUS 154 XLIX. SISINNIUS 156 L. GADDANAS 156 LI. ELIAS 157 LII. SABAS 157 LIII. ABRAMIUS 157 LIV. MELANIA THE ELDER 158 LV. SILVANIA (MELANIA continued) 160 LVI. OLYMPIAS 161 LVII. CANDIDA 162 LVIII. THE MONKS OF ANTINOË 163 LIX. AMMA TALIS AND TAOR 165 LX. COLLYTHUS 166 LXI. MELANIA THE YOUNGER 167 LXII. PAMMACHIUS 169 LXIII. THE VIRGIN AND ATHANASIUS 169

LXIV. JULIANA 171 LXV. HIPPOLYTUS 171 LXVI. VERUS THE EX-COUNT 173 LXVII. MAGNA 174 LXVIII. THE COMPASSIONATE MONK 174 LXIX. THE NUN WHO FELL 175 LXX. A READER UNJUSTLY ACCUSED 176 LXXI. THE BROTHER WHO IS WITH THE WRITER 178 INDICES (i) GENERAL 181 (ii) PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT 183 (iii) REFERENCES TO ANCIENT WRITERS 185 (iv) MODERN WRITERS 187 MAP OF MONASTIC EGYPT To face title [Blank page] HITHER, and with one accord Sing the servants of the Lord: Sing each great ascetic sire; Antony shall lead the choir. . . . . Egypt, hail, thou faithful strand! Hail, thou holy Libyan land! Nurturing for the realm on high Such a glorious company! . . . . . By what skill of mortal tongue Shall your wondrous acts be sung? All the conflicts of the soul, All your struggles to the goal; And your

virtue's prize immense, And your victories over sense, How perpetual watch ye kept Over passions, prayed and wept; Yea, like very angels came, Visible in earthly frame.

Hymn for the Friday before Quinquagesima. St. Theophanes. Translated by J. M. Neale.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE AUTHOR AND HIS BOOK IN the fourth and fifth centuries of our era Egypt had come to be regarded with great reverence throughout Christendom as a Holy Land of piety. Pilgrims came from all parts to visit the saints who lived there, and several wrote descriptions of what they saw and heard, which are among the most interesting documents of the early Church. Palestine was so near that it was usually included in their tour; the glamour of its sacred sites, which remains with us still when that of Egypt has faded into oblivion, was already potent. But Palestine was clearly second to Egypt in the affections of the pilgrims. The prevailing sentiment was expressed by Chrysostom with admirable clearness (Hom. in Matt. viii.). It was eminently appropriate, he explains, that the child Jesus should be taken to Egypt to escape Herod. Palestine persecutes Him, Egypt receives Him. This typifies the position Egypt was to occupy in the development of the Church. The land which had oppressed the children of Israel, had known a Pharaoh, had worshipped cats, was destined to be more fervent than any other, to have its towns and even its deserts peopled by armies of saints living the life of angels, and to boast the greatest, after the apostles, of all saints, the famous Antony.

Palladius, the author of our book, who was destined to be Chrysostom's devoted adherent, made a pilgrimage to this holy land, like so many others, and stayed there many years. The following is an outline of his life, with the dates as established by Butler. He was born in Galatia in 363 or 364, and dedicated himself to the monastic life in 386 or a little later. In 388 he went to Alexandria; as Paul went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, James, and John, so, he says in the Prologue, did he go to Egypt to see the saints for himself. About 390 he passed on to Nitria, and a year later to a district in the desert known as Cellia from the multitude of its cells, where he spent nine years, first with Macarius and then with Evagrius. At the end of the time, his health having broken down, he went to Palestine in search of a cooler climate. In 400 he was consecrated bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia, and soon became involved in the controversies which centred round St. John Chrysostom. The year 405 found him in Rome, whither he had gone to plead the cause of Chrysostom, his fidelity to whom resulted in his exile in the following year to Syene and the Thebaid, where he gained first-hand knowledge of another part of Egypt. In 412-413 he was restored, after a sojourn among the monks of the Mount of Olives. His great work was written in 419-420 and was called the Lausiac History, being composed for Lausus, chamberlain at the court of Theodosius II. Palladius

was also in all probability the author of the Dialogue on the Life of Chrysostom. He died some time in the decade 420-430.

The character of the man stands out clearly in the History, He was sincere, simple-minded and not a little credulous. His deep religious fervour, of the ascetic type, needless to say, appears throughout the book, and especially in the concluding chapter, which almost attains eloquence. But he had a fund of good sense, so we learn from the Prologue, which predisposes us to a favourable judgment on the rest of the book. What could be saner, for example, than his summing up of the question of teetotalism: "To drink wine with reason is better than to drink water with pride" (Prol. 10)? We need not attach much importance to the accusation of Origenism which has been the slur on his reputation. If he admired Origen, that great and original thinker, it will hardly redound to his discredit to-day. And he was in good company in his own day. Saints such as Basil, the two Gregories and Chrysostom shared his tendencies; if Chrysostom the master is forgiven his Origenism, Palladius the disciple may be forgiven also.

II. THE TEXT OF THE HISTORY It has been the lot of many a scholar to grapple with the difficulties of an ancient text so successfully that the result of his labours has been accepted as substantially representing the original work of the author: few editors indeed can be credited with an achievement equal to that of Abbot Butler, who brought order out of confusion and rescued for the historian a document which had been regarded with the utmost suspicion. His conclusions were at once recognized as correct, and much that had been written on early monasticism became obsolete, based as it was on an erroneous estimate of the original authorities. Butler was confronted by three main documents, each with its own textual history. A. The document which was accepted till recently as the Lausiac History, called by Butler the Long Recension. It appears in a Latin form in Rosweyd's Vitae Patrum (1615 and 1628), and includes the History of the Monks in Egypt (see C below). In 1624 a Greek text was published by du Duc purporting to be the original of Rosweyd's Latin, though in reality it was patched up from various sources. This is the text which, with some additions, is reprinted in Migne, Patrologia Graeca, xxxiv.

B. Butler's Short Recension, called originally Paradisus Heraclidis, printed by Rosweyd in his appendix. C. The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto, which was till recently supposed to have been written in Latin by Rufinus, but turns out to be Rufinus' translation of a Greek original compiled by an anonymous writer and describing a visit paid by a party of seven, in which Rufinus was not included, to the Egyptian ascetics in 394-395. The Greek text has been edited by Preuschen, and a text of Rufinus' Latin version forms part of the Long Recension, as stated above. Tillemont long ago had seen the lines on which the problem was to be solved, but subsequent investigators dismissed his suggestion as impossible, and

it was left for Butler to show with a wealth of argument the true relations of the documents. His solution is briefly this: A (the Long Recension) = B (the Short Recension) + C (Historia Monachorum). B is not an abridgment of A, nor is A Palladius' second edition of B. In Sozomen, who used the Lausiac History (see Hist. Eccl. I. 13 f., III. 14, VI. 28 ff., etc.), there are clear traces of B, also of C, none whatever of A. The early versions, especially the Latin and Syriac, confirm these results. There is no reason to think that Palladius used Greek documents, or that he translated from the Coptic.

Having established this fact, that the Latin version in Rosweyd's appendix represents substantially the work of Palladius, Butler proceeds to discuss which is the best text of the Greek original of this. He finds that the MSS. are divided as follows: (i) The B group, giving the Short Recension as hitherto printed. (ii) A shorter and simpler text, which he calls the G group. (iii) An A group, which is composite of B and G. Ruling out the A group according to the rules of textual criticism, as between B and G, he pronounces in favour of the latter, which is supported by Sozomen and the versions, and is superior intrinsically as well. B is a "metaphrastic" text, says Preuschen, and Butler styles it "rhetorical, turgid and overladen." It remains to discover the best examples of the G text. Butler finds these in a MS. in the National Library at Paris (P) and one at Christ Church, Oxford (W). The latter was not available until more than half of the text, had been printed, and therefore to get Butler's mature judgment on the text of the earlier part a number of readings from W given in the appendix must be substituted for those of the text. The two MSS. are the offspring of a common ancestor. "It is clear that P and W have to serve as the basis of the text, pre-eminently W where it is extant." Other MSS. are used in the main to eliminate the eccentricities of P and W. Occasionally neither are extant, and the printed text is Butler's critical reconstruction from the other sources.

III. EARLY MONASTICISM The story of Egyptian monasticism is inevitably an oft-told tale, and need not be repeated here, since summaries of it are readily accessible. All that will be attempted is the emphasising of some points that might be overlooked. Asceticism was inherent in Christianity from the first; it could hardly have been otherwise among the disciples of Him Who had not where to lay His head. In 1 Corinthians St. Paul teaches that in view of the shortness of the time before the end the unmarried state is preferable to the married. St. John, convinced that it was the last hour, bade his little children keep themselves from idols, a command which in practice involved renunciation of the world. We are therefore not surprised to find asceticism a strong force in the early post-apostolic age. There was as yet no formal separation from the world; devotees of both sexes lived at home and were described as bearing "the whole yoke of the Lord." When monasticism underwent its great development in the early part of the fourth century, it

was but a making explicit of what had been implicit in the Church from its early days, and even, so it would seem, in the teaching and example of our Saviour.

Two questions may be asked at this point: Why did monasticism begin when it did? Why did Egypt witness its beginning rather than some other land such as Asia Minor, which was perhaps the most Christian part of the empire at that time? In answering the first question one would be inclined to attach importance to the tradition which connects the origin of monasticism with the Decian persecution (c. 250), when many Christians fled from the settled parts of Egypt to the surrounding deserts and remained there for some time (Dionysius of Alexandria ap. Eus. H.E. VI. 42). Some at least of these must have been living the ascetic life at home, which they would naturally continue in the desert under more rigorous conditions. When a later tradition affirms that certain of these remained in the desert permanently and became the first Christian hermits, it is intrinsically so probable that one is justified in concluding that the Decian persecution was the historic occasion which led to the origin of monasticism.

Paradoxical as such an argument may seem at first sight, the cessation of persecutions may be adduced as a main cause of the great development of monasticism. The deliverance of the Church from this danger coincided with the adoption of Christianity as the State religion, the swamping of old landmarks by a flood of imperfectly instructed adherents, and the lowering of standards in the direction of worldliness. Monasticism in one of its aspects was the reaction of the sterner spirits against the secularisation of the fourth-century Church. Hitherto there had been an intermittent warfare of the State against the Church which expressed itself in persecution. When persecution ceased, a need was felt on the part of the Church for a ”moral equivalent for war”; this the Church found in monasticism, which represented the Church militant against worldliness within. If we turn to our second question, it is not hard to see why Egypt, rather than some other country, was the motherland of monasticism. The solitudes of Asia Minor with their rigorous winter climate were not suitable places for ascetic experiments. Egypt, however, was ideal for this purpose. The climate was warm and practically rainless, the desert was never far away from the narrow strip of cultivable land, and the neighbouring mountain ranges abounded in natural caves.

Another reason may be suggested. The recent discoveries of papyri have thrown a flood of light upon the conditions of life in ancient Egypt. We can trace the ever-tightening hold of the Government upon the people and the process by which the peasants became ascripti glebae. The process was at work in other provinces, but Egypt was in the main docile, had been paternally governed since the days of the Ptolemies, and was of great importance as the granary of Italy. Accordingly the pressure of taxes and public burdens was greatest in Egypt, and the temptation to escape from them by running away became very strong. In the second and third

centuries whole districts became depopulated by the flight of their inhabitants. Things became worse in the fourth century. In 312 the village of Theadelphia became ”utterly deserted”; so did that of Philadelphia in 359. The peasants ran away from their intolerable burdens. The word used for their retreat (ἀναχώρησις) is the same as that which describes the monks (ἀναχώρηταί, anchorites). What some did from economic, others could do from religious motives; doubtless in some cases both causes operated.

Such an explanation seems far more plausible than that which used to be given, according to which the pagan monasticism of Egypt was the model for the Christian institution. There is little to be said for such a theory, which is indeed now generally abandoned. The resemblance of the so-called monks of Sarapis to the later Christian monks is merely superficial. The solitary life, begun in the desert as described above, was organised about 305 by St. Antony, who is justly reckoned as the founder of Christian monachism. Through the efforts of him and his disciples great colonies of monks arose, the most famous of which were at Nitria and Scete. The cells were grouped round a central church, where services were held on Saturday and Sunday, devotions otherwise being said in the individual cells. The main feature of this type of monasticism was its voluntary character; each monk lived his own life, and the monastery had a number of solitary lives lived in common rather than a true common life.

The first coenobium, or monastery of the common life, was founded by Pachomius at Tabennisi sometime in the years 315-320. Here Palladius found a federation of monasteries constituting a true Order as understood subsequently in the West, with obedience to the Rule and the Superior as the main principle. There is no need to discuss the two systems here, since the reader will find both modes of life fully described in the text (see especially Chapters VII. and XXXII.). By the side of the monks there were nuns of various kinds. The purely solitary life was clearly inappropriate to women, though it was attempted, as may be seen from the story of Alexandra, who lived alone in a tomb for ten years (Ch. V.). When women were gathered into a monastery, the presence of men was necessary if only to administer the sacraments. Convents of the Antonian type existed, but the true common life for women was found in the Pachomian nunneries, over the first of which Pachomius’ sister was abbess. These were closely associated with the men’s houses in a system of double monasteries, which formed an economic whole, the women, for example, making the men’s clothes. This institution, carefully safeguarded as it was and providing protection for women in a rough age, fell into suspicion in the East and was forbidden by Justinian.

Little need be said about Palestine. The monastic life was introduced there early in the fourth century by Hilarion, a disciple of Antony; the original impulse continued, and the monasteries were mainly of the Antonian type. IV. HISTORICAL VALUE OF

THE BOOK No one would deny that Palladius reflects the age in which he lived, the more faithfully because of his simplicity and lack of originality. His casual allusions to Church observances are of great value. Note, for instance, the continued use of the Agape (XVI. 5), the importance attached to frequent communion, a five weeks' abstention being enough to deserve severe punishment (XVII. 9), the offering of the Eucharist for the dead (XXXIII. 4), the use of Holy Oil (XII. 1, XVIII. 11) and Holy Water (XVII. 9) to effect cures, the Invocation of Saints (LX. 2), the beginnings of the Rosary (XX. 1), and generally the great esteem in which the Bible was held, large portions being learned by heart.

But a novel may contain such historical data, and it has been claimed that Palladius' History is little better than a romance. We may disregard the earlier criticisms of this kind, since Abbot Butler has answered them satisfactorily, and confine ourselves to the most important of recent books on the subject, Reitzenstein's Hellenistischen Wundererzählungen (1906). He pays special attention to the Lausiac History, and tries to prove that some at least of the stories are old literary motives formerly attached to pagan characters. Thus the tale of Sarapion Sindonita was originally told of some Cynic philosopher. It may be so, though the arguments are not cogent, only this scholar is too ready to assume a literary connection where none is needed. If the same stories were told of Egyptian peasants, heathen and Christian, the simplest explanation is that Egyptian peasants behaved in much the same way, whether before or after conversion. The common background of life and thought is sufficient to explain the similarity of the stories.

Palladius then tells what he saw and heard, his reminiscences in fact of what happened in some cases over twenty years previously. Under such conditions the element of exaggeration and distortion cannot be excluded. But there is no reason to doubt his good faith when he describes what he saw for himself. Where he reports hearsay he is naturally at the mercy of his informants. Those who told him that a virgin hid Athanasius in her house for six years (Ch. LXIII.) were giving the exaggerated popular version of what had happened many years ago. There is one reason why Palladius' evidence has been distrusted which is not very creditable to nineteenth-century scholars, namely, his conviction that he had witnessed miraculous and supernatural events. It is coming to be recognised that a fifth-century Christian writer who did not believe in the miraculous would be a portent which required explanation. There would be little left of the history of the time if all the writers who believed in contemporary miracles were ruled out as unworthy of credence.

V. SPIRITUAL VALUE OF THE BOOK The modern reader has to contend with certain prejudices which hinder his proper appreciation of the people depicted in the Lausiac History. To begin with, there is the preoccupation with sexual temptations, which will offend some. Not that this is unfamiliar to the reader of modern litera-

ture, where there is enough and to spare of such topics. But the Christian to-day, resting upon the accumulated experience of the Church, has learned that solitude is the worst possible condition for a man troubled with such temptations, and is apt to be impatient with the struggles of the solitaries. Doubtless the monks were often morbid in this matter, and it requires an effort of sympathetic imagination to do them justice. The background of their lives must not, however, be forgotten. Their point of view is readily intelligible when it is regarded as a necessary reaction from the incredible corruption of the pagan society of their day, with which even the Church was infected. Thus the women who boasted that they had not had a bath for years are not to be laughed at or reproached for dirtiness. Their conduct appears in a new light when compared with that of those who did take a bath, the Christian ladies of Alexandria who defied all modesty in the public baths. They sacrificed physical cleanliness as a protest against moral uncleanness. And the monks who fought with their passions under the hot African sun and described their struggles with painful frankness were doing the right thing under conditions needlessly difficult. We who have a truer insight into the psychology of temptation must not reproach those who had not such knowledge.

Again, the demonology of the Lausiac History is at times grotesque to modern eyes. In his poem ”St. Simon Stylites” Tennyson shows a just appreciation of this side of early monachism. His description of the saints is fully borne out by the records. ”Devils pluck’d my sleeve, Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me. I smote them with the cross; they swarmed again. In bed like monstrous apes they crushed my chest: They flapped my light out as I read: I saw Their faces grow between me and my book: With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine They burst my prayer.” But the heroic nature of the warfare is easily missed. The ascetic went into the desert knowing that the demons were awaiting him on their own ground. The evil spirits had a special fondness for waterless places; they took up their abode among the animals which frequented ruins. They were also identified with the heathen gods, whose monuments and pictorial representations were to be found in the Egyptian desert. It argued therefore no small degree of moral courage if the monk went out alone to join battle with these potent forces of evil. We forget the squalor and shabbiness of the Middle Ages in our admiration of the chivalry and devotion which dared and accomplished great things, and though we laugh at Don Quixote it is with a pang of regret that the age of chivalry is giving place to the centuries of materialism. Now the monks went into the desert of Egypt to fight their battles in a spirit of chivalry. Maybe they tilted at windmills sometimes, but let us never forget that the battle few won, that their life was a successful protest against corruption in the Church, and that they handed the lamp of spirituality down to posterity through ages which apart from them were truly dark.

Tennyson was right in much of his poem, but surely he was mistaken in making his typical ascetic speak in so uniformly penitential a vein. The great monks must have

been very happy on the whole. Cold in winter, scorched in summer, always hungry, tortured by visions, yet they had the deep inward peace of knowing that they had obeyed the call and were doing God's Will. Dom Morin of Maredsous in Belgium, writing shortly before the Great War, pointed out that this is the special and inalienable happiness of the monk. "On pourra m'expulser, comme tant d'autres, des murs paisibles du cloître, on pourra me priver de toutes les consolations de la vie religieuse, on pourra disposer de moi de diverses façons imprévues; il est cependant une chose que jamais on ne pourra me ravir, c'est le bonheur d'obéir: celui-là, il m'accompagnera jusqu'à la mort."

The monk in an Order obeyed the Rule and its living exponent, the Superior; the solitaries in the desert obeyed an inward monitor. But for both obedience was the master-word, and in consequence beneath all their surface struggles they had a deep peace of the soul. Cardinal Newman's words about the Benedictines express better than anything else the true spirit of monasticism. "To the monk heaven was next door; he formed no plans, he had no cares; the ravens of his father Benedict were ever at his side. He 'went forth' in his youth 'to his work and to his labour' until the evening of life; if he lived a day longer, he did a day's work more; whether he lived many days or few, he laboured on to the end of them. He had no wish to see further in advance of his journey than where he was to make his next stage. He ploughed and sowed, he prayed, he meditated, he studied, he wrote, he taught, and then he died and went to heaven."

Some, while recognising the justice of what has been said above, will maintain that they are bound to pass an unfavourable judgment on a movement so anti-social and anti-national as monasticism. It is pitiful, they say, to see the elect spirits of their generation engaged in spiritual self-culture, a selfish endeavour to save their own souls. Why did they not marry and bring up children, throw themselves into the national life, and so strengthen the moral and economic fabric of the State that it might have had a fair chance of resisting the barbarian onslaught that was impending? "I can never forgive monasticism this wrong to civilisation," said a distinguished Cambridge resident to me once. At the time I felt that the objection was unhistorical, a judging of the men of bygone days by standards which would have been meaningless to them, resembling the criticisms of monasticism which Charles Kingsley puts into the mouths of his characters in Hypatia. But the objection was, after all, raised at the time, for Eusebius deals with this very difficulty in a passage of great interest.

Why, he asks, did the Old Testament Saints attach such importance to marriage and the begetting of children, while we neglect the duty? His answer is first that what was natural in the early days of the human race is unsuitable now when we are living in the last days----quoting St. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians vii. If the time was short in the apostle's day, how little is left now before the advent of the

new order. Then in the Old Testament the bulk of mankind were living a life akin to that of the beasts, and so the few who served God were obliged to have families if the holy seed was to be preserved at all; whereas now there is such a multitude of Christians that some can be spared for the ascetic life. He goes on to speak of spiritual children begotten by these holy men, and points out that after all for the great majority of men the New Testament does enjoin marriage.

Surely we can accept Eusebius' conclusions. There will always be enough to obey the primitive human instincts which lead men and women to marriage; there will certainly be enough children born from these marriages to carry on the race, if the Christian teaching on marriage is honoured. So we can but rejoice, if out of the great number who remain unmarried some do so in order to live a life separated from the world and devoted to unseen things. Let us exercise a little common sense. At this distance of time who can pretend to care whether a few little Egyptians more or less were born in the fourth century, to live dim, undistinguished lives, cultivating the soil in order to fill the grain-ships with bread-stuffs for Rome, or later, Constantinople? But it makes a good deal of difference to us that men and women were ready to forsake all for Christ and that the sweet savour of their example is still fragrant in our midst. Many of the monastic records are exquisitely beautiful. Take, for example, the deaths of two great nuns, Emmelia and Macrina, as described in the Life of the latter. Of Emmelia, the mother, it is said that "when she ceased to bless, she ceased to live." Of Macrina, her daughter: "As she approached her end, as if she discerned the beauty of the Bridegroom more clearly, she hastened towards the Beloved with the greater eagerness."

Or we may quote from Palladius the answer given him by Macarius, when he complained that he was making no progress: "Say, for Christ's sake I am guarding the walls." He means: Comfort yourselt with the thought that the people of Egypt are living their life in the world, exposed to so many temptations; as a protecting wall between them and the enemy the monasteries are interposed; you with your prayers are helping to guard that wall. Is not this the real point at issue? If we believe in prayer as the noblest and most fruitful activity of man's nature, we shall probably be led to believe that God separates some to a life of prayer, and that the mass of mankind dwell in greater security, thanks to the protecting wall of the prayers of these separated ones. It is because the monks of Egypt put spiritual things first, albeit sometimes in an exaggerated and strained fashion, and believed in the life of prayer, that their example is of permanent value to Christendom.

Finally, it is a commonplace to say that we live in a materialistic age. Riches are the pathway to power and influence over the lives of others. The Church itself is infected by materialism, in that finance absorbs so much of its energies. Great philanthropists, ecclesiastical statesmen, and missionaries all need money to carry out their schemes of benefiting mankind. Of course there is a good side to this; over

against our Lord's praises of poverty must be set His teaching about stewardship. Yet one suspects that English Christians have not so far learned all that is implied in His treatment of riches and poverty. And so it is a salutary experience to read the Lausiac History and live for a while in an age of the Church when renunciation of all possessions was the surest road to fame and widespread influence for good. VI. THE PRESENT EDITION I have followed Butler's text throughout, including the readings from W given in the Appendix, which are in some cases to be substituted for those which appear in the body of the book. Where a different text is followed, for example a reading suggested by C. H. Turner, the deviation from Butler is indicated in the notes. The paragraph divisions are those of Butler, the sections into which the chapters are divided are Lucot's.

In places I was confronted with language which could hardly be translated literally; Lucot manages to do so, but the traditions of English are different. To omit the passages would in some cases have spoiled the sense of a whole passage; besides, the book is intended for scholars, who have a right to know what the author said. I met the difficulty by toning down and employing euphemisms; the scholar will have no difficulty in seeing what is meant. I cannot pretend that the compromise is satisfactory. I have aimed at the combination of accuracy, not necessarily identical with literalness, and an easily-read English style. Only those who have tried know how hard it is to combine the two. Palladius, though not a stylist, is a clear and forcible writer, and the task of translating him into English presents no special difficulty. A feature of his style is the incessant use of the particle οὖν.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY (See also list of abbreviations.) Butler, E. C., Chapter on "Monasticism" in Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. I. Cambridge, 1911. Cabrol, F., art. on "Monasticism" in Encylopaedia of Religion and Ethics" Vol. VIII, Edinburgh, 1915. Clarke, W. K. L., St. Basil the Great: A Study in Monasticism. Cambridge, 1913. Duchesne, L., Chapter on "Les Moines d'Orient" in Histoire Ancienne de l'Église, Vol. II. Paris, 1907. Krottenthaler, S., Des Palladius von Helenopolis Leben der heiligen Väter (German translation of Butler's text). München, 1912. Ladeuze, F., Le Cènobitisme Pakhomien. Louvain, 1897. Leclercq, H., art. "Cènobitisme"in Dictionaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne. Paris, 1910. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, The: Athanasius, Cassian, Socrates, Sozomen. Oxford, various dates. Zöckler, O., Askese and Monchtum. Frankfurt-a-M., 1897. ABBREVIATIONS Budge = E. A. Wallis Budge, The Paradise of the Holy Fathers (Eng. trans, of the Syriac version). London, 1907. Butler = E. C. Butler, The Lausiac History of Palladius, Vol. I. 1898; Vol. II. 1904. Cambridge.

D.C.B. = Dictionary of Christian Biography. E.R.E. = Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Hist. Mon. ---- Historia Monachorum in Aegypto, Rufinus (?), Greek text in Preuschen, Palladius und Rufinus. Giessen, 1897. Lucot = Palladius, Histoire Lausiaque (French trans. of Butler's text). Paris, 1912. Turner ---- C. H. Turner,

review of Butler's Lausiac History in Journal of Theological Studies. 1905. (....)= matter not in the Greek added to complete the sense. [....] = (generally) translation not of the actual Greek text but of Butler's critically reconstructed text; but see notes. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end]

Introduction

PREFACE TO THE LIFE OF THE HOLY FATHERS COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY PALLADIUS THE BISHOP TO LAUSUS THE CHAMBERLAIN. PROLOGUE CHAPTER I -- ISIDORE CHAPTER II -- DOROTHEUS CHAPTER III -- POTAMIAENA CHAPTER IV -- DIDYMUS THE BLIND CHAPTER V -- ALEXANDRA CHAPTER VI -- THE RICH VIRGIN CHAPTER VII -- THE MONKS OF NITRIA CHAPTER VIII -- AMOUN OF NITRIA CHAPTER IX -- OR CHAPTER X -- PAMBO CHAPTER XI -- AMMONIUS CHAPTER XII -- BENJAMIN CHAPTER XIII -- APOLLONIUS CHAPTER XIV -- PAESIUS AND ISAIAS CHAPTER XV -- MACARIUS THE YOUNGER CHAPTER XVI -- NATHANAEL CHAPTER XVII -- MACARIUS OF EGYPT CHAPTER XVIII -- MACARIUS OF ALEXANDRIA CHAPTER XIX -- MOSES THE ROBBER CHAPTER XX -- PAUL CHAPTER XXI -- EULOGIUS AND THE CRIPPLE CHAPTER XXII -- PAUL THE SIMPLE CHAPTER XXIII -- PACHON CHAPTER XXIV -- STEPHEN CHAPTER XXV -- VALENS CHAPTER XXVI -- HERON

CHAPTER XXVII -- PTOLEMY CHAPTER XXVIII -- A VIRGIN WHO FELL CHAPTER XXIX -- ELIAS CHAPTER XXX -- DOROTHEUS CHAPTER XXXI -- PIAMOUN CHAPTER XXXII -- PACHOMIUS AND THE TABENNESIOTS CHAPTER XXXIII -- THE TABENNESIOT NUNS CHAPTER XXXIV -- THE NUN WHO FEIGNED MADNESS CHAPTER XXXV -- JOHN OF LYCOPOLIS CHAPTER XXXVI -- POSIDONIUS CHAPTER XXXVII -- SARAPION THE SINDONITE CHAPTER XXXVIII -- EVAGRIUS PONTICUS CHAPTER XXXIX -- PIOR CHAPTER XL . -- EPHRAIM CHAPTER XLI -- HOLY WOMEN CHAPTER XLII -- JULIAN CHAPTER XLIII -- ADOLIUS CHAPTER XLIV -- INNOCENT CHAPTER XLV -- PHILOROMUS CHAPTER XLVI -- MELANIA THE ELDER CHAPTER XLVII -- CHRONIUS AND PAPHNUTIUS CHAPTER XLVIII -- ELPIDIUS CHAPTER XLIX -- SISINNIUS CHAPTER L -- GADDANAS CHAPTER LI -- ELIAS CHAPTER LII -- SABAS CHAPTER LIII -- ABRAMIUS CHAPTER LIV -- THE ELDER MELANIA CHAPTER LV -- SILVANIA (MELANIA continued) CHAPTER LVI -- OLYMPIAS CHAPTER LVII -- CANDIDA

CHAPTER LVIII -- THE MONKS OF ANTINOË CHAPTER LIX -- AMMA TALIS AND TAOR CHAPTER LX -- COLLYTHUS CHAPTER LXI -- MELANIA THE YOUNGER CHAPTER LXII -- PAMMACHIUS CHAPTER LXIII -- THE VIRGIN AND ATHANA-

SIUS CHAPTER LXIV -- JULIANA CHAPTER LXV -- HIPPOLYTUS CHAPTER LXVI -- VERUS THE EX-COUNT CHAPTER LXVII -- MAGNA CHAPTER LXVIII -- THE COMPASSIONATE MONK CHAPTER LXIX -- THE NUN WHO FELL CHAPTER LXX -- A READER UNJUSTLY ACCUSED CHAPTER LXXI -- THE BROTHER WHO IS WITH THE WRITER

THE LAUSIAC HISTORY

INTRODUCTORY PIECES PREFACE TO THE LIFE OF THE HOLY FATHERS [1] THIS book is a record of the virtuous asceticism and marvellous manner of life of those blessed and holy fathers, the monks and anchorites which inhabit the desert, (written) with a view of stirring to rivalry and imitation those who wish to realize the heavenly mode of life and desire to tread the road which leads to the kingdom of heaven. It contains also memoirs of aged women and illustrious God-inspired matrons, who with masculine and perfect mind have successfully accomplished the struggles of virtuous aceticism, (which may serve) as a model and object of desire for those women who long to wear the crown of continence and chastity. [2] This is how the book came to be written. A man, admirable in every way, very learned, of peaceable disposition, religiously disposed and devout-minded, liberal towards those who lack the necessaries of life, in respect of high distinctions preferred above many men of rank owing to the excellence of his character, and with all this guarded continually by the power of the Divine Spirit----such is the man who commanded us to write, or rather, if one must tell the truth, aroused our slothful mind to the contemplation of better things, to imitate and attempt to rival the ascetic virtues of our holy and immortal spiritual fathers and all who have lived to please God with much mortification of the body. [3] And so, having described the lives of these invincible athletes, we have sent them to him, proclaiming the conspicuous virtues of each of these great persons. I am referring to Lausus, the best of men, who by the favour of God has been appointed guardian of our godly and religious empire; it is he who is inspired with this divine and spiritual passion.

[4] I then, who am clumsy in utterance and have but a superficial acquaintance with spiritual knowledge and am unworthy to draw up a list of the holy fathers of the spiritual life, fearing the infinite greatness of the task set me, so much above my capacity, found the command intolerable, requiring as it did so much worldly wisdom and spiritual understanding. Nevertheless, respecting in the first place the eager virtue of the man who urged us to obey the command, and considering the benefit accruing to the readers, and fearing also the danger of a refusal albeit with a reasonable excuse, I first commended the noble task to Providence and then applied myself diligently to it. Sustained, as if on wings, by the intercession of the holy fathers, I attended the contests of the arena. I have described in a kind of summary only the main contests and achievements of the noble athletes and great men----not only illustrious men who have realized the best manner of life, but also blessed and highborn women who have practised the highest life.

[5] I have been privileged to see with my own eyes the revered faces of some of these, but in the case of others, who had already been perfected in the arena of piety, I have learned their heavenly mode of life from inspired athletes of Christ. In the course of my journey on foot I visited many cities and very many villages, every cave and all the desert dwellings of monks, with all accuracy as befitted my pious intentions. Some things I wrote down after personal investigation, the rest I have heard from the holy fathers, and I have recorded in this book the combats of great men, and women more like men than nature would seem to allow, thanks to their hope in Christ. I now send the whole to you whose ears love divine oracles, to you, Lausus, who are the pride of excellent and God-beloved men, and the ornament of the most faithful and God-beloved empire, noble and Christ-loving servant of God. I have recorded to the best of my feeble powers the famous name of each of the athletes of Christ, male and female, describing a few short contests out of the many mighty ones engaged in by each, adding in most cases the family and city and place of residence.

[6] We have also told of men and women who have reached the highest stage of virtue, but owing to vainglory, as it is called, the mother of pride, have fallen into the lowest pit and abyss of hell, and the triumphs of asceticism, so earnestly desired and so strenuously fought for, acquired by them after long periods of time and many labours, have been dissipated in an instant by pride and self-conceit. But by the grace of our Saviour and the fore-knowledge of the holy fathers and the sympathy of spiritual affection they have been snatched from the nets of the devil and, helped by the prayers of the saints, have recovered their former life of virtue.
COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY PALLADIUS THE BISHOP TO LAUSUS THE CHAMBERLAIN.

[1] I congratulate you on your intention. Indeed I am justified in beginning my letter with congratulation, because, when all men are gaping after vain things and building their edifice with stones from which they got no joy, you yourself want to be taught words of edification. For only the God of all is untaught, since He is self-originate and has none other before Him. But all other things are taught, since they are made and created. The first orders (of angels) have the supreme Trinity as teacher, the second learn from the first, the third from the second, and so successively in order until the last. For those who are superior in judgment and virtue teach those who are inferior in knowledge. [2] So then men who think they do not need teachers, or do not obey those who teach them in love, suffer from the disease of ignorance, the mother of arrogance. Their leaders on the road to destruction are those who have fallen from the heavenly life, the demons who fly in the air having fled from their teachers in heaven. For teaching does not consist in words and syllables----sometimes men possess these who are as vile as can be----but in meritorious acts of character, cheerfulness, intrepidity, bravery, good temper; add to these unfailing boldness, which generates words like a flame of fire. [3]

For if this had not been so, the great Teacher would not have said to His disciples: ”Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.

He does not train the apostles with elegant language, but with care for character, distressing none save those who hate the word and hate teachers. For the soul that is being trained according to God’s purpose must be either learning faithfully what it does not know, or teaching clearly what it knows. But if it wants to do neither, though able to do them, then it is mad. For to be sated with teaching and unable to bear the word, for which the soul of him who loves God is always hungry, is the beginning of apostasy. Be strong then and of sound mind and play the man, and may God grant you to pursue closely the knowledge of Christ.

PROLOGUE

[1] Forasmuch as many have left behind for their age many and divers writings concerning different epochs, some of them by an inspiration of heavenly God-given grace (writing) for the edification and safety of those who follow with loyal purpose the teachings of the Saviour, others with sycophantic and corrupt intention having indulged in mad follies in order to encourage such as desire vain-glory, others again, inspired by a certain madness and the influence of the demon who hates good, and in their pride and wrath planning the destruction of light-minded men and the soiling of the immaculate Catholic Church, having attacked the minds of the foolish to make them dislike the saintly life, [2] it seemed good to me also, your humble servant, reverencing the command of your magnanimity, O man most eager to learn, a command issued with a view to spiritual progress, to publish this book in narrative form for your benefit, (telling my story) from the beginning. (When I thus decided), it was, I suppose, my thirty-third year in the society of the brethren and the twentieth year of my episcopate, and the fifty-sixth of my whole life. You were asking for accounts of the fathers, both male and female (saints), both those whom I had seen and those about whom I had heard and those with whom I lived in the Egyptian desert and Libya, the Thebaid and Syene, near which last are the so-called Tabennesiots, and again in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria, and the districts of the West----Rome and Campania and thereabouts.

[3] (My aim is) that you may have (in my book) for the benefit of your soul a solemn reminder, an unfailing cure for forgetfulness; and that you may drive away by its help all drowsiness proceeding from irrational lust, all indecision and pettiness in business affairs, all backwardness and pusillanimity in the domain of character, all resentment, worry, grief and irrational fear; and moreover the excitements of the world; and may with unfailing desire make progress in the purpose of piety, becoming a guide both to yourself, your companions, your subordinates, and the most religious Emperors. For by means of these meritorious works all lovers of Christ press on to be joined to God. Each day you will be expecting the departure of your soul, as it is written: [4] ”It is good to depart and be with Christ,” and

”Prepare thy works for thy departure and be ready in thy field. For he that keeps death always in mind, that it will come of necessity and will not tarry, shall not greatly fall. You will neither take amiss the guidance of my directions, nor will you despise the uncouthness and inelegance of my style; for indeed it is not the work of divine teaching to speak with studied elegance, but to persuade the mind with considerations of truth, as it is written: ”Open thy mouth to the word of God,” and again: ”Miss not the discourse of the aged, for they also learned of their fathers.”

[5] I then, O man of God most eager to learn, following in part this precept, have been in contact with many of the saints. Putting aside considerations of prudence, I have made journeys of thirty days, yes and twice as long. (I say it) as before God, traversing on foot in my journeys all the land of the Romans, I welcomed all the hardship of the way so long as I might meet some man that loved God, that I might gain what I had not got. [6] For if Paul, who was so far in advance of me, surpassing me in manner of life, knowledge, conscience and faith, undertook the journey from Tarsus to Judaea to meet Peter, James and John; and if he tells of it with a kind of boastfulness, recounting his toils in order to stir to emulation those who live in sloth and laziness, saying: ”I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas; if he was not satisfied with the report of Peter’s virtue, but longed for an actual meeting face to face----how much more was I, the debtor who owed ten thousand talents, bound to do this, not for any good I might do them, but for my own benefit? [7] For indeed those who wrote the lives of the Fathers, Abraham and his successors, Moses, Elijah and John, told their tale, not to glorify them, but to benefit their readers.

Knowing these things then, Lausus, most loyal servant of Christ, and impressing them on yourself, be patient with my folly, (which is designed) to preserve the pious disposition of your mind; for it is naturally exposed to waves of evil, both visible and invisible, and can enjoy calm only with the help of continuous prayer and spiritual self-culture. [8] For many of the brethren, pluming themselves both on their labours and charities and boasting of their celibacy or virginity and putting their trust in meditation on the divine oracles and acts of zeal, have yet failed to attain impassivity. Through lack of discernment, under the pretext of piety, they have fallen victim to a disease (which manifests itself) in acts of idle curiosity, from which spring officious or even evil activities, such as drive away good activities, the mother of spiritual self-culture.

[9] Play the man then, I beseech you, and do not increase your wealth. This policy you have already adopted, since of your own accord you have lessened it by distributing to those- in need owing to the supply of virtue which is thereby gained. Nor have you yielded to impulse and unreasonable premature decision and fettered your free choice with an oath to curry favour with men, as some have done who in a spirit of rivalry, that they may boast of not eating or drinking, have enslaved

their free will by the constraint of an oath and have succumbed again miserably to the love of this world and accidie and pleasure and so have suffered the pangs of perjury. For if you partake reasonably and abstain reasonably you will never sin. [10] For reason, of all the emotions within us, is divine, banishing what is harmful and welcoming what is beneficial. ”For the law is not made for a righteous man. For to drink wine with reason is better than to drink water with pride. And, please, look on those who drink wine with reason as holy men and those who drink water without reason as profane men, and no longer blame or praise the material, but count happy or wretched the minds of those who use the material well or ill. Joseph drank wine in Egypt long ago, but his mind suffered no harm, for he kept his thoughts under control, [11] But Pythagoras, Diogenes and Plato drank water;

so did the Manichaeans and the rest of the band of soi-disant philosophers, and yet they reached such a pitch of vain-glory in their intemperance that they failed to know God and worshipped idols. The apostle Peter and his companions used wine to some extent, so that their Master, our Saviour, was himself reproached on account of their participation, by the Jews’ saying: ”Why do not thy disciples fast as do the disciples of John? Again insulting the disciples with reproaches they said: ”Your Master eats and drinks with the publicans and sinners. Clearly they would not have attacked them over bread and water. [12] And again, when they were unreasonably admiring water-drinking and blaming wine-drinking, the Saviour said: ”John came in the way of righteousness, neither eating nor drinking”----obviously meat and wine, for apart from the other things he could not have lived----”and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners” ----because of his eating and drinking. What are we to do then? Let us follow neither those who blame nor those who praise, but let us either fast with John reasonably even if they say: ”They have a devil,” or let us drink wine wisely with Jesus, if the body needs it, even if they say: ”Behold men gluttonous and wine-bibbers. [13] For in truth neither is eating nor refraining anything, but faith extending itself in love to works.

For when faith accompanies every action, he that eateth and drinketh because of faith is uncondemned, ”for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. But when any one of those who sin says he partakes in faith or is doing anything else with unreasonable self-confidence and corrupted conscience, the Saviour has given express orders, saying: ”By their fruits ye shall know them. But that the fruit of those who live with reason and understanding, as the divine Apostle says, ”is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance,”----this is granted by all. [14] For Paul himself said: ”The fruit of the spirit is” so-and-so. But because he who sets himself to get such fruit will not eat meat or drink wine unreasonably or without definite aim or out of season, nor will he dwell with an uneasy conscience, again the same Paul says: ”Every man that striveth for the mastery

is temperate in all things. When the body is in health he abstains from fattening things, when it is weak or in pain or meets with griefs or misadventures, he will make use of foods or drinks as medicines to heal what grieves him, and he will abstain from all that harms the soul----anger, envy, vain-glory, accidie, detraction, and unreasonable suspicion----giving thanks to the Lord.

[15] Having then discussed the matter sufficiently above, I bring another exhortation to your desire of learning. Flee, as far as is in your power, encounters with men whose presence confers no benefit and who beautify their skin in unseemly fashion, even if they be orthodox----not to speak of heretics! They do you harm by their hypocrisy, even when they seem to be dragging out a great age with their grey hair and wrinkles. For, even supposing you come to no harm at their hands by reason of your noble character, you will suffer this lesser evil in becoming insolent and proud, and mocking at them, and this will do you harm. But go near a bright window and seek encounters with holy men and women, in order that by their help you may be able to see clearly also your own heart as it were a closely-written book, being able by comparison to discern your own slackness or neglect. [16] For the colour of their faces with the bloom of grey hairs and the arrangement of their clothes and the modesty of their language and the reverence of their conversation and the grace of their thoughts will strengthen you, even if you should happen to be in a mood of accidie. ”For a man’s attire and his gait and the laugh of his teeth will proclaim what he is like,” as Wisdom says.

So now I begin my tales. I shall leave unnoticed neither those in the cities nor those in the villages or deserts. For the object of our inquiry is not the place where they have settled but the fashion of their plan of life.

CHAPTER I. -- ISIDORE

[1] THE first time that I set foot in the city of the Alexandrians, in the second consulate of the great Emperor Theodosius, who now lives with the angels because of his faith in Christ, I met in the city a wonderful man, distinguished in every respect, both as regards character and knowledge, Isidore the priest, hospitaller of the Church of Alexandria. He was said to have fought successfully his first youthful contests in the desert, and I actually saw his cell in the mountain of Nitria. But when I met him, he was an old man seventy years of age, who lived another fifteen years and then died in peace. [2] Up to the very end of his life he wore no linen except a head-band, never had a bath, nor partook of meat. His slender frame was so well-knit by grace that all who did not know his manner of life expected that he lived in luxury. Time would fail me if I were to tell in detail the virtues of his soul. He was so benevolent and peaceable that even his enemies the unbelievers themselves reverenced his shadow because of his exceeding kindliness. [3] So great a knowledge had he of the holy scriptures and the divine precepts that even at the very meals of the brethren he would have periods of absent-mindedness and remain silent. And being urged to tell the details of his ecstasy he would say: ”I went away in thought on a journey, seized by contemplation.

For my part I often knew him weep at table, and when I asked the cause of the tears I heard him say: ”I shrink from partaking of irrational food, being myself rational and destined to live in a paradise of delight owing to the power given us by Christ. [4] He became known to all the Senate at Rome and to the wives of the nobles, when he paid his first visit in company with Athanasius the bishop, and on a second occasion with Demetrius the bishop; a man of great wealth and extensive property, he wrote no will when he came to die, and left neither money nor goods to his sisters, who were virgins. But he commended them to Christ, saying: ”He that created you will provide for your life, as He has done for me. Now there was with his sisters a community of seventy virgins.

When I visited him as a young rnan and besought that I might be trained in the solitary life, since I was in the full vigour of my age and needed, not discourse,

but bodily hardships, like a good tamer of colts he led me out from the city to the so-called Solitudes five miles away (and handed me over to Dorotheus).

CHAPTER II. -- DOROTHEUS

[1] HANDING me over to Dorotheus, a Theban ascetic who was spending the sixtieth year in his cave, he ordered me to complete three years with him in order to tame my passions----for he knew that the old man lived a life of great austerity----bidding me return to him afterwards for spiritual instruction. But being unable to complete the three years owing to a breakdown in health, I left Dorotheus before the three years were up, for living with him one got parched and all dried-up.For all day long in the burning heat he would collect stones in the desert by the sea and build with them continually and make cells, and then he would retire in favour of those who could not build for themselves. Each year he completed one cell. And once when I said to him: ”What do you mean, father, at your great age by trying to kill your poor body in these heats? he answered thus: ”It kills me, I kill it. For he used to eat (daily) six ounces of bread and a bunch of herbs, and drink water in proportion. God is my witness, I never knew him stretch his legs and go to sleep on a rush mat, or on a bed. But he would sit up all night long and weave ropes of palm leaves to provide himself with food.

[3] Then, supposing that he did this for my benefit, I made careful inquiries also from other disciples of his, who lived by themselves, and ascertained that this had been his manner of life from a youth, and that he had never deliberately gone to sleep, only when working or eating he closed his eyes overcome by sleep, so that often the piece of food fell from his mouth at the moment of eating, so great was his drowsiness. Once when I tried to constrain him to rest a little on the mat, he was annoyed and said: ”If you can persuade angels to sleep, you will also persuade the zealous man. [4] One day about the ninth hour he sent me to fill the jar at his well in view of a meal at the ninth hour. Well, as it happened, I went and saw an asp at the bottom of the well, and stopped drawing water and went away and said to him: ”We are dead men, father, for I saw an asp in the well. But he smiled gravely and looked at me for a time, and then shaking his head said: ”If the devil decides to become a serpent or tortoise in every well and to fall into our water-supply, will you refrain from drinking for ever? And he went out and drew the water himself, and was the first to swallow some of it, fasting, saying: ”Where the cross passes, the evil of anything is powerless.”

CHAPTER III. -- POTAMIAENA

[1] THIS blessed man Isidore, who had met Antony of blessed memory, told me a story which is worth recording, which he had heard from Antony. There lived in the time of Maximianus the persecutor a very beautiful maiden called Potamiaena, a certain man's slave. Her master failed to seduce her, though he besought her eagerly with many promises. [2] At last mad with rage he handed her over to the then prefect of Alexandria, giving her up as a Christian and one who abused the times and the Emperors because of the persecutions, and suggesting this to him with the help of money: "If she falls in with my design, keep her without punishment."' But if she should remain puritanical, he asked that she might be punished, lest continuing to live she should mock at his licentious ways. [3] She was brought before the tribunal and the fortress of her soul was attacked by various instruments of torture. For one of them, the judge had a great cauldron filled with pitch and ordered it to be heated. When the pitch was now bubbling and terribly hot, he gave her the choice: "Either go away and obey the wishes of your master, or know that I shall order you to be plunged into the cauldron." But she answered and said: "God forbid that there should be another such judge, who orders one to submit to licentiousness." [4] So in a fury he ordered her to be stripped and thrown into the cauldron; but she lifted up her voice and said: "By the head of your Emperor whom you fear, if you have decided to punish me thus, order me to be let down gradually into the cauldron that you may know what endurance the Christ, Whom you know not, bestows on me." And being let down gradually during a space of one hour she died when the pitch reached her neck.

CHAPTER IV. -- DIDYMUS THE BLIND

[1] VERY many indeed of the men and women who reached perfection in the Church of Alexandria were worthy (to inherit) the land of the meek. Among these was Didymus the blind author. I met him four times in all, visiting him at intervals during a period of ten years. He was 85 years old when he died. He was blind, having lost his sight at the age of four, so he told me, and he had never learned to read nor gone to school.[2] (This was not necessary) for he had nature's teacher ----his own conscience----strongly developed. He was adorned with such a gift of knowledge, that, so it was said, the passage of scripture was fulfilled in him: "The Lord maketh the blind wise. For he interpreted the Old and New Testament word by word, and such attention did he pay to doctrine, setting out his exposition of it subtly yet surely, that he surpassed all the ancients in knowledge. [3] Once when he tried to make me say a prayer in his cell and I was unwilling, he told me this story: "Into this cell Antony entered for the third time on a visit to me. I besought him to say a prayer and he instantly knelt down in the cell and did not make me repeat my words, giving me by his action a lesson in obedience.

So if you want to follow in the steps of his life, as you seem to, since you are a solitary and living away from home to acquire virtue, lay aside your contentiousness. And he told me this also: "As I was thinking one day about the life of the wretched Emperor Julian, how he was a persecutor, and was feeling dejected ----and by reason of my thoughts I had not tasted bread even up to late evening----it happened that as I sat in my seat I was overcome by sleep and I saw in a trance white horses running with riders and proclaiming: 'Tell Didymus, to-day at the seventh hour Julian died. Rise then and eat,' they said, 'and send to Athanasius the bishop, that he too may know,' And I marked," he said, "the hour and month and week and day, and it was found to be so."

CHAPTER V. -- ALEXANDRA

[1] HE told me also of a maid-servant named Alexandra, who having left the city and shut herself up in a tomb, received the necessaries of life through an opening, seeing neither women nor men face to face for ten years. And in the tenth year she fell asleep, having arrayed herself (for death): and so the woman who went as usual to see her and got no answer informed us.So we broke down the door and entering in found her fallen asleep. [2] Concerning her also the thrice-blessed Melania, about whom I shall speak later, used to say: ”I never saw her face to face, but standing by the opening I urged her to say the reason why she shut herself up in a tomb. And she called out to me through the opening: ’A man was distressed in mind because of me and, lest I should seem to afflict or disparage him, I chose to betake myself alive into the tomb rather than cause a soul made in the image of God to stumble.’ [3] When I said,” she continued, ”’How then do you endure never meeting any one, but struggling with accidie?’ she replied: ’From early morn to the ninth hour I pray hour by hour, spinning flax the while. During the remaining hours I meditate on the holy patriarchs and prophets and apostles and martyrs. And having eaten my bread I remain in patience for the other hours, waiting for my end with cheerful hope.’ ”

CHAPTER VI. -- THE RICH VIRGIN

[1] BUT I must not omit from my story those also whose life has been characterized by pride, that I may praise those who have remained true and ensure the safety of my readers. There was a virgin at Alexandria of humble exterior but haughty inward disposition, exceedingly wealthy, but never giving an obol either to a stranger or a virgin or a church or a poor man. In spite of the frequent exhortations of the fathers she was not weaning herself from material things. [2] Now she had relations living, one of whom, her sister's daughter, she adopted, and night and day she kept promising the girl should have her money, having fallen away from her aspirations after heaven. For this is a form of the deceit of the devil, who afflicts us with pangs of avarice under the pretext of family affection. For it is common knowledge that he cares nothing about family ties, since he teaches men to murder brothers and mothers and fathers. [3] But even if he seems to inspire anxiety for relations, he does not do so from benevolent feelings towards them, but to practise the soul in unrighteousness, knowing the decree: "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Now it is quite possible for a man without neglecting his own soul to be influenced by a godly consideration and give assistance to his kinsfolk if they are in want.

But when a man subordinates his whole soul to the interests of his relations, he comes under this law, reckoning his soul "unto vanity. [4] But the sacred psalmist sings thus concerning those who care for their soul with fear: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? "----meaning (it is) rarely (any one does) ---- "or who shall stand up in his holy place? He that has clean hands and is pure in heart, who did not lift up his soul unto vanity. For as many as neglect the virtues, these lift up the soul unto vanity, believing that it is dissolved with the body.

[5] Wishing to bleed this virgin, so the story goes, and thus relieve her of her avarice, the most holy Macarius, the priest and superintendent of the hospital for cripples, devises this expedient. In his youth he had been a worker in precious stones ---- what they call a lapidary. So he goes and says to her: "Some precious

stones, emeralds and sapphires, have fallen by fate into my hands, and I cannot say whether they are treasure-trove or stolen property. They have not been valued, since they are beyond price, but any one who has the money can buy them for five hundred pounds. [6] If you decide to take them, you can get back your five hundred pounds from one stone and use the rest for the adornment of your niece. Excited (by his words) the virgin is caught by the bait and falls at his feet. ”By your feet,” she says, ”let no one else get them. Then he invites her: ”Come to my house and look at them. But she had not the patience (for this), but flings down the five hundred pounds before him, saying: ”You want them, take them. For I do not want to see the man who sells them. [7] But he takes the five hundred pounds and gives them for the needs of the hospital.

Time sped along and she was shy of reminding him (of the matter), for Macarius clearly had a great reputation in Alexandria, being a lover of God and charitable----he remained vigorous until he was a hundred, and we too passed some time with him. Finally, having found him in the church, she says to him: ”I beg you, what decision have you come to about those stones for which I gave the five hundred pounds? [8] But he answered thus: ”The moment you gave me the money, I deposited it for the price of the stones. And if you would like to come and see them in the hospital----for there they are----come and look if they please you. If not, take back your money. So she came, very willingly. Now the hospital had women on the first floor and men on the ground floor. And having taken her there he brings her into the porch and says to her: ”Which do you want to see first, the sapphires or the emeralds? She says to him: ”As you please. [9] He takes her to the upper floor and shows her the women disabled in hand or feet with their disfigured faces and says to her: ”Behold your sapphires! Then he takes her down again and says to her, showing her the men: ”Behold your emeralds! Do they please you? If not, take back your money.

So she turned and went out, and returning home fell ill from excess of grief, because she had not done this thing in a godly fashion. ’Afterwards she thanked the priest, when the maid for whom she was planning died childless after marriage.

CHAPTER VII. -- THE MONKS OF NITRIA

[1] So then, after my visit to the monasteries round Alexandria with their 2000 or so most noble and zealous members and my three years sojourn there, I left them and went to the mountain of Nitria. Between this mountain and Alexandria lies the lake called Mariaseventy miles in extent. Having sailed across this I came to the mountain on its south side in a day and a half. [2] Next to this mountain lies the great desert which stretches as far as Ethiopia and the Mazicae and Mauretania. On the mountain live some 5000 men with different modes of life, each living in accordance with his own powers and wishes, so that it is allowed to live alone, or with another, or with a number of others. There are seven bakeries in the mountain, which serve the needs both of these men and also of the anchorites of the great desert, 600 in all. [3] So, having dwelt on the mountain for a year and having received much benefit from the blessed fathers Arsisius the Great and Poutoubastes and Asion and Cronius and Sarapion,and having been spurred on by hearing their many tales about the fathers, I penetrated into the innermost desert. In this mountain of Nitria there is a great church, by which stand three palm-trees, each with a whip suspended from it. One is intended for the solitaries who transgress, one for robbers if any pass that way, and one for chance comers;

so that all who transgress and are judged worthy of blows are tied to the palm-tree and receive on the back the appointed (number of stripes) and are then released. [4] Next to the church is a guest-house, where they receive the stranger who has arrived, until he goes away of his own accord, without limit of time, even if he remains two or three years. Having allowed him to spend one week in idleness, the rest of his stay they occupy with work either in the garden, or bakery, or kitchen. If he should be an important person, they give him a book, not allowing him to talk to any one before the hour. In this mountain there also live doctors and confectioners. And they use wine and wine is on sale. [5] All these men work with their hands at linen-manufacture, so that all are self-supporting. And indeed at the ninth hour it is possible to stand and hear how the strains of psalmody rise from each habitation so that one believes that one is high above the world in Paradise. They occupy the

church only on Saturday and Sunday. There are eight priests who serve the church, in which, so long as the senior priest lives, no one else celebrates, or preaches, or gives decisions, but they all just sit quietly by his side.

[6] This Arsisius and many other old men with him whom we saw were contemporaries of the blessed Antony. Some among them, they told me, had also known Amoun of Nitria, whose soul Antony saw being taken up and conducted to heaven by angels. Arsisius used to say that he also knew Pachomius of Tabennisi, a prophet and archimandrite over 3000 men, of whom I shall speak later.

CHAPTER VIII. -- AMOUN OF NITRIA

[1] (ARSISIUS) used to say that Amoun lived in this wise. When he was a young man of about twenty-two he was constrained by his uncle to marry a wife----he (himself) was an orphan. Being unable to resist the pressure of his uncle, he thought it best to be crowned and take his seat in the nuptial chamber and undergo all the marriage rites. When all (the guests) were gone out, after settling the pair to sleep on the couch in the bridal chamber, Amoun gets up and locks the door, then he sits down and calls his blessed companion to him and says to her: [2] ”Come here, lady, and then I will explain the matter to you. The marriage which we have contracted has no special virtue. Let us then do well by sleeping in future each of us separately, that we may please God by keeping our virginity intact. And drawing from his bosom a little book, he read to the girl, who could not read at all, in the words of the apostle and the Saviour, and to most of what he read he added all that was in his mind and explained the principles of virginity and chastity; so that convinced by the grace of God she said: [3] ”I too am convinced, my lord. And what further commands have you now? ”I command,” he said, ”that each of us lives alone in future. But she could not endure this, saying: ”Let us dwell in the same house, but in different beds.

So he lived in the same house with her eighteen years. During each day he occupied himself with his garden and balsam-grove----for he prepared balsam. Balsam grows like a vine, requiring cultivation and pruning and much hard work. Then in the evening he would enter the house and offer prayers and eat with his wife; and then having said the night prayers would go out. [4] Such was their practice, and both having attained impassivity, the prayers of Amoun prevailed, and she says to him at last: ”I have something to say to you, my lord; that, if you hearken to me, I may be convinced that you love me in a godly way. He says to her: ”Say what you wish. She says to him: ”It is just that we should live apart----you being a man and practising righteousness, and I also eagerly following the same way as you. For it is absurd that you should live with me in chastity and yet conceal such virtue as this of yours. [5] But he, thanking God, says to her: ”Then you keep this house; but

I will make myself another house. And he went out and settled in the inner part of the mount of Nitria----for there were no monasteries there yet----and he made himself two round cells. And having lived twenty-two years more in the desert he died, or rather fell asleep. He used to see that blessed lady his wife twice each year.

The blessed Athanasius the bishop in his life of Antony told a marvellous story about this man, how that he came to the bank of the river Lycus with his disciple Theodoras, and shrinking from removing his clothes lest he should see him naked, he was found on the other side, having been carried across by angels without using the ferry. Such then was the life of the blessed Amoun and such his perfection that the blessed Antony saw his soul carried to heaven by angels. I crossed this river once in a ferry, but with fear; for it is a canal leading from the great Nile.

CHAPTER IX. -- OR

[1] IN this mountain of Nitria there was an ascetic named Or, to whose great virtue the whole brotherhood bore witness, and especially Melania, that woman of God, who came to the mountain before me. For my part, I never saw him alive. And they used to say this of him in their stories, that he never lied, nor swore, nor abused any one, nor spoke without necessity.

CHAPTER X. -- PAMBO

[1] To this mountain also belonged the blessed Pambo, teacher of Dioscorus the bishop and Ammonius and Eusebius and Euthymius, ”the (Tall) Brethren,” also of Origen the nephew of Dracontius, a wonderful man. This Pambo possessed heroic virtues and great qualities, one of which was this: he was very suspicious of gold and silver, as Scripture demands. [2] For the blessed Melania told me this story: ”In early days, when I came to Alexandria from Rome, I heard of his virtue and----the blessed Isidore having told me of him and having conducted me to him in the desert----I brought him a casket of silver containing silver to the weight of three hundred pounds and besought him to take a part of my goods. But he sitting still and weaving palm-leaves merely blessed me in a sentence and said: ’May God give you your reward.’ [3] And he said to his steward Origen: ’Take it and distribute it to all the brethren who live in Libya and the islands, for these monasteries are poorer (than the rest)’; instructing him to give to none of those in Egypt, because their country was more fertile. But I,” she said, ”remained standing, expecting to be honoured or glorified by him because of my gift, but hearing nothing from him I said to him: ’That you may know, Sir, how much there is, it amounts to three hundred pounds.’ [4] But he without even raising his head answered me: ’The One to Whom you brought them, my child, has no need of weights.

For He Who weighs the mountains, much more does He know the weight of the silver. If you had given it to me, you would have done well to tell me; but if it was to God, Who did not scorn the two obols, then be silent.’ So,” said she, ”did the Lord manifest His power when I came to the mountain. [5] After a little while the man of God fell asleep, not from an attack of fever, nor from any illness, but while he was stitching up a basket, at the age of seventy. He had sent for me and----the last stitch being ready to be completed----he said to me when about to die: ’Receive the basket at my hands to remember me by, for I have nothing else to leave you.’” Having prepared the body for burial and wrapped it in linen cloths she buried him, and then returned from the desert, keeping the basket with her till her death.

[6] This Pambo on his death-bed, at the very moment of his passing, is reported to have said this to the bystanders, Origen the priest and steward and Ammonius----

famous men, both of them----and the rest of the brethren: ”From the day that I came to this place in the desert and built my cell and inhabited it, I cannot remember having eaten ’bread for nought,’ not earned by my hands. I have not had to repent of any word that I have spoken up to the present hour. And so I go to God, as one who has not even begun to be pious.” [7] Prominent men, Origen and Ammonius, testified further to us, saying: ”When he was asked about a word of Scripture or other practical matter never did he answer at once, but would say: ’I have not yet found (the answer).’ Often he went three months even and gave no answer, saying he had not put his hand on it. Accordingly men received his answers as come from God, so carefully were they framed, as God would approve them. For this one virtue he was said to possess even above the great Antony and above all others, namely exactness of language.”

[8] The following incident is told of Pambo. Pior the ascetic came to see him, bringing his own bread, and being accused by Pambo, ”Why have you done this?” answered: ”Lest I should burden you.” Pambo gave him a silent lesson expressly. For after a while he went to see Pior and took with him his bread, having first moistened it, and when asked why he said: ”I moistened it as well, lest I should burden you.”

CHAPTER XI. -- AMMONIUS

[1] THIS Ammonius, Pambo's disciple, with his three brothers and two sisters, having reached the perfection of the love of God, made their home in the desert, the women living separately by themselves, and the men by themselves, so as to have a sufficient distance between them. But since Ammonius was exceedingly learned and a certain city coveted him for its bishop, a deputation waited on the blessed Timothy, beseeching him to ordain him as their bishop. [2] And he said to them: "Bring him to me and I will ordain him." When therefore they had gone with a force and he saw that he was caught, he besought them and swore that he would not accept ordination, nor depart from the desert. And they would not give way to him. So before their eyes he took scissors and cut off his left ear to the base, saying to them: "Well, be convinced now that it is impossible for me to be ordained, since the law forbids a man with ear cut off to be raised to the priesthood." [3] So then they left him and departed and went and told the bishop. And he said to them: "Let the Jews observe this law. For my part, if you bring a man with his nose cut off worthy in character, I'll ordain him." So they went off again and implored Ammonius. And he swore to them: "If you use force to me, I'll cut off my tongue." So then they left him and went their way.

[4] About this Ammonius the following marvellous story was told. When desire arose in him, he never spared his poor body, but heating an iron in the fire he would apply it to his members, so that he became a mass of ulcers. Now his table from youth until death contained raw food only. For he never ate anything that had passed through the fire except bread. Having learned by heart the Old and New Testaments and (passages) in the writings of the famous authors Origen, Didymus, Pierius and Stephen, he could repeat 6,000,000 (lines), as the fathers of the desert testify. [5] He was a comforter to the brethren in the desert beyond all others. To him the blessed Evagrius, an inspired and discerning man, gave testimony, saying: "never have I seen a man of more impassivity than he." [Having been obliged on one occasion to visit Constantinople . . . after a little while he fell asleep and was buried in the martyr's chapel called Rufinianae. His tomb is said to cure all sufferers from shivering fever.]

CHAPTER XII. -- BENJAMIN

[1] IN this mountain of Nitria there was a man called Benjamin who at the age of eighty years having reached the perfection of asceticism was counted worthy of the gift of healing, so that every one on whom he laid his hands or to whom he gave oil after blessing it was cured of every ailment. Now this man who was accounted worthy of such a gift, eight months before his death developed dropsy, and his body swelled so greatly that he seemed a second Job. So Dioscorus the Bishop, at that time a priest of Mount Nitria, took us----the blessed Evagrius, that is, and me----and said to us: [2] ”Come, see a new Job, who with so great swelling of body and incurable suffering yet maintains ”an unbounded thankfulness.” So we went and saw his body so greatly swollen that another man’s fingers could not get round one finger of his hand. We turned our eyes away, being unable to look owing to the terrible nature of the affliction. Then that blessed Benjamin said to us: ”Pray, children, that my inner man may not become dropsical. For my outer man neither benefited me when it was well, nor harmed me when it was ill.” [3] During these eight months a seat was arranged for him, very wide, in which he sat continually, being no longer able to lie down owing to the other requirements of his body. But while he was in this state of affliction he healed others. I have felt bound to describe this affliction, lest we should be surprised when some untoward fate befalls righteous men. When he died, the lintels and door-posts were removed, that his body might be carried out of the house, so great was the swelling.

CHAPTER XIII. -- APOLLONIUS

[1] A MAN named Apollonius, a merchant, who had renounced the world and come to live on Mount Nitria, being unable owing to advanced years either to learn a craft or work as a scribe, had this occupation during his twenty years' life on the mountain. From his private money and from (the produce of) his own labours he bought in Alexandria all kinds of drugs and things needed for the cells, and provided all the brotherhood with them in their illnesses. [2] And one might see him from early morn until the ninth hour going the round of the monasteries and entering in at each door in case there should be any one ill in bed, taking with him dried grapes, pomegranates, eggs, and bread made of fine flour, the things which such people need. This plan he had devised for a profitable life in his old age. When he died he left his stores to one like-minded with himself, exhorting him to carry on this ministration. For with 5000 monks inhabiting the mountain there was need of this visiting, since the place was desert.

CHAPTER XIV. -- PAESIUS AND ISAIAS

[1] THERE were two brothers called Paesius and Isaias, sons of a Spanish merchant. On their father's death they divided the real property which they got, also the personal property consisting of 5000 pieces of money and clothes and slaves. They considered with each other and took counsel together saying: "What mode of life shall we adopt, brother? If we adopt the merchant career which our father followed, then we shall have to die and leave our labours to others. [2] Perhaps we may even succumb to dangers from robbers or on the sea. Come, then, let us embrace the monastic life, that we may make a profitable use of our father's riches and not lose our own souls." So the ideal of the monastic life pleased them. But they found themselves at variance, differing from each other in their views. For having divided the property, they applied themselves each to his purpose of pleasing God, but by different tactics. [3] For the one bestowed everything on the monasteries and churches and prisons, and having learned a trade by which to earn his bread applied himself to asceticism and prayer. But the other parted with nothing, but making himself a monastery and getting together a few brethren welcomed every stranger, every invalid, every old man, every poor man, preparing three or four tables every Sunday and Saturday. In this way he spent his money.

[4] When the two were dead, various eulogies were pronounced over them, as if both had reached perfection. And some preferred Paesius, others Isaias. But a contention having arisen in the brotherhood over their praises, they went to the blessed Pambo and referred the decision to him, imploring that they might learn which was the better method. But he said to them: "Both are perfect; for one showed the works of an Abraham, the other those of an Elijah." [5] And when one party said: "By your feet (we ask), how can they possibly be equal?" and preferred the ascetic and said: "He performed an Evangelical work selling all and giving to the poor, and every hour both by day and night bearing the cross and following the Saviour and his prayers." But the other side contended with them and said: "Our man showed such great mercy to the needy that he even sat in the roads and collected the afflicted. And not only did he refresh his own soul but the souls of

many others, treating their diseases and helping them." [6] Then blessed Pambo said to them: "Once again I tell you, they are both equal. I assure each of you that the one, unless he had been so great an ascetic, was not worthy to be compared with the benevolence of the other, while the second again, refreshing the stranger, was himself refreshed, and though he seemed to carry the burden of toil, yet had the refreshing that follows it. But wait until I receive a revelation from God, and after that come and you shall learn." So they came again a few days after and he said to them: "I saw both standing in Paradise, as it were in the presence of God."

CHAPTER XV. -- MACARIUS THE YOUNGER

[1] A YOUTH named Macarius, when he was about eighteen years old, as he played with his comrades by the lake called Maria, being in charge of animals, unwittingly committed a murder. And saying nothing about it to any one he took to the desert and became so afraid both of God and man that he lost all feeling and remained three years in the desert without a roof to his head. The land in these parts is rainless, and all men know this, some from hearsay, others from personal experience. [2] This man afterwards built himself a cell. And having lived a further twenty-five years in that cell he was counted worthy of the gift of blowing away demons; all his pleasure he found in solitude. Having spent a long while with him, I inquired how he felt on the subject of his sin of murder. He declared that so far from grieving he actually gave thanks for the murder, since the murder unwittingly committed proved the occasion of his salvation. [3] And, bringing testimony from the Scriptures, he used to say that Moses would not have been accounted worthy of the divine vision and so great a gift and the writing of the holy words, unless he had fled to Mount Sinai in fear of Pharaoh owing to the murder which he had committed in Egypt. I say this, not to lead any one to commit murder, but to show that there are virtues due to circumstances, when a man does not come to the good of his own accord. For some virtues are chosen voluntarily, others are due to circumstances.

CHAPTER XVI. -- NATHANAEL

[1] THERE was another of the old (monks) called Nathanael. I did not visit him during his lifetime, since he had fallen asleep fifteen years before my arrival. But when I met the men who lived with him and shared his life of asceticism, I made a point of inquiring about the virtues of this man. They showed me his cell, wherein no one dwelt any longer because it was too near the world; he had made it when the anchorites were few in number. They told this story about him as specially characteristic, that he stopped in his cell so perseveringly as not to be shaken from his purpose. [2] Among other things, having been mocked at the outset by the demon who mocks all men and deceives them, he seemed to feel a distaste for his first cell and went off and built another nearer a village. So when he had completed the cell and occupied it, three or four months after the demon came by night, holding a whip of ox-hide like the executioners, and having the appearance of a ragged soldier, and began cracking his whip. Then the blessed Nathanael answered and said: ”Who are you who do such things in my dwelling? The demon answered: ”I am he who drove you from that cell. I have come to chase you out of this too.

[3] Knowing that he was the victim of an illusion, he returned again to the first cell, and in a period of thirty-seven years in all did not cross the threshold, having a quarrel with the demon; who showed him such wonders, trying to force him out, as it is impossible to relate. This is one of them. Having watched for a visit from seven holy bishops----either arranged by God’s providence or being one of his own temptations----the demon very nearly turned him from his purpose. For when the bishops went out after prayer, he did not escort them even one step. [4] The deacons said to him: ”This is an act of pride, Father, not escorting the bishops. But he said to them: ”I am dead both to my lords the bishops and to all the world. For I have a hidden design and God knows my heart. Wherefore I do not escort them. Having failed in this affair, the demon disguised himself nine months before Nathanael’s death and became a lad about ten years old, driving an ass laden with loaves in a basket. And having arrived late in the evening near his cell he made it seem that the ass was fallen and the boy crying: [5] ”Father Nathanael, pity me and give me a hand. Hearing the voice of the supposed boy and opening the door,

he stood within and said to him: ”Who are you and what do you want me to do for you? He said:

”I am so-and-so’s little servant and I am carrying loaves, for it is this brother’s agape, and to-morrow when Saturday dawns offerings will be wanted. I beseech you, do not neglect me, lest perchance I be eaten by hyaenas. For many hyaenas are found in those places. So blessed Nathanael stood in silence with his brain in a whirl and his heart sore troubled and argued thus with himself: ”Either I must give up the commandment, or my purpose. Afterwards, however, considering that it was better for the confusion of the devil not to disturb the purpose of so many years, he prayed and said to the supposed boy that spoke to him: ”Listen, boy! I believe in the God Whom I serve, that if you are in need God will send you help and neither will hyaenas harm you nor any one else. But if you are a temptation, God will reveal the matter now. And he shut the door and went in. But the demon, put to confusion at the defeat, dissolved into a dust-storm and into wild-asses jumping and fleeing and emitting yells. This was the conflict of the blessed Nathanael, this his manner of life, this his end.

CHAPTER XVII. -- MACARIUS OF EGYPT

[1] I HESITATE either to speak or write the many great and incredible events that happened in connection with those famous men, the two Macarii, lest I should incur the suspicion of being a liar; indeed the Holy Spirit has declared that ”the Lord destroys all them that speak falsehood.” So do not disbelieve me, most believing one, for I am not lying. Of these Macarii the one was an Egyptian by race, the other an Alexandrian, a seller of sweetmeats. [2] First of all I will tell of the Egyptian, who lived a full ninety years. Of these he spent sixty in the desert, having retired there as a young man of thirty. And he was counted worthy to possess such great discernment that he was called the ”aged youth.” Because of this also he made the quicker progress. For when he was forty years old he received grace to contend against the evil spirits both by healing and forecasting the future. Also he was counted worthy of the priesthood.

[3] He had two disciples with him in the inner desert called Scete. There was always one of them at his service near at hand because of those that came to be healed, while the other rested in an adjoining cell. After some time had elapsed, having seen into the future with prophetic eye, he said to the man who waited on him, named John, who afterwards became a priest in the place of Macarius himself: ”Listen to me, brother John, and bear with my warning; for you are being tempted and the spirit of covetousness is tempting you. [4] I have seen this, and I know that if you will bear with me you will be perfected in this place and glorified, ’neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling’; but if you will not listen to me, the end of Gehazi shall come upon you, of whose illness you are even now sick.” Now it came to pass when fifteen or twenty years had elapsed after the death of Macarius that he disobeyed, and accordingly after robbing the poor fund contracted elephantiasis, so that there was not found on his body a whole part, on which one could put his finger. So this is what the holy Macarius prophesied. [5] Now concerning eating and drinking it is superfluous to relate, seeing that not even among the indolent is it possible to find gluttony or carelessness in these regions, owing both to the scarcity of necessaries and the zeal of the inhabitants. But concerning the rest of

his asceticism I do speak, for he was said to be in a continual ecstasy and to spend a far longer time with God than with things sublunary. The following marvels are told of him.

[6] A certain Egyptian, enamoured of a lady married to a husband, and being unable to seduce her, consulted a magician, saying: ”Lead her to love me, or contrive that her husband reject her. And the magician having received a sufficient sum, used magic spells and arranged for her to take the form of a mare. The husband having come in and seen her was surprised that a mare lay on his bed. He weeps and laments; he talks to the animal, but gets no reply. He calls in the priests of the village. [7] He brings them in, shows her to them, but does not discover what has happened. During three days she neither took fodder as a mare nor bread as a human being, thus deprived of both forms of nourishment. Finally, that God might be glorified and the virtue of the holy Macarius appear, it entered into her husband’s heart to take her into the desert. And having put a halter on her as upon a horse, he led her into the desert. When they came near, the brethren stood by the cell of Macarius, struggling with the woman’s husband and saying: [8] ”Why did you bring this mare here? He said to them: ”That she may receive mercy. They said to him: ”What is the matter? The husband answered them: ”She was my wife and was turned into a mare, and to-day is the third day that she has tasted nothing. They referred the matter to the saint, who was praying within.

For God had revealed the matter to him and he was praying for her. The holy Macarius therefore answered the brethren and said to them: ”You are horses, since you have the eyes of horses. [9] For she is a woman and has not been transformed, except in the eyes of deluded men. And he blessed water, and pouring it from the head downwards on to her bare skin he prayed. And immediately he made her appear to all as a woman. Then giving her food he made her eat and sent her away with her husband thanking the Lord. And he advised her thus: ”Never give up the church, never stay away from the Communion. For these things happened to you because you did not attend the mysteries for five weeks.”

[10] Here is another example of his asceticism. He made in the course of time a tunnel running under the ground from his cell for half a stade and finished it off at the end with a cave. And if ever a crowd of people troubled him, he would leave his cell secretly and go away to the cave and no one would find him. Now one of his zealous disciples told us this, and said that he used to say twenty-four prayers on his way to the cave and twenty-four as he returned. [11] A report was prevalent concerning him that he raised a dead man, in order to persuade a heretic who did not acknowledge that there was a bodily resurrection. And this report was current in the desert.

Once a young man possessed with a devil was brought to him by his lamenting mother, bound to two young men. And the devil had this method of working. After

eating three bushels of bread and drinking a beaker of water, he would belch out the food and dissolve it into vapour, for in this way what had been eaten and drunk was dissolved as it were by fire. [12] For there is a class (of demons) called fiery. Since there are differences among demons, as also among men, not of nature but of character. This young man then, not receiving enough food from his mother, often ate his own dirt and drank his own water. As then his mother wept and implored the saint, he took the lad and prayed over him beseeching God. And after a day or two, the malady having eased a little, the holy Macarius said to her: [13] ”How much do you want him to eat?” She replied: ”Ten pounds of bread.” So having rebuked her, saying this was too much, and having prayed over him with fasting for seven days, he put him on to (a regime) of three pounds, with obligation to work. And so having cured him he restored him to his mother. And this wonder God wrought through Macarius. I never met him, for he had fallen asleep a year before my entry into the desert.

CHAPTER XVIII. -- MACARIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

[1] BUT I did meet the other Macarius, the Alexandrian, a priest of the place called Cellia. I sojourned in this Cellia nine years. He survived for three years of my stay there. And some things I saw (for myself), some I heard from him, and some things again I heard from others. This then was the method of his asceticism. If ever he heard of any feat, he did the same thing, perfectly. For instance, having heard from some that the monks of Tabennisi all through Lent eat (only) food that has not been near the fire, he decided for seven years to eat nothing that had been through the fire, and except for raw vegetables, if any such were found, and moistened pulse he tasted nothing. [2] Having practised this virtue to perfection, he heard about another man, that he ate a pound of bread. And having broken up his ration-biscuit and put it into a vessel with a narrow mouth, he decided to eat just as much as his hand brought out. And he would tell the story thus in a joking manner: ”I seized hold of a number of pieces, but I could not extract them all at once by reason of the narrowness of the opening, for like a tax-gatherer it would not let me.” So for three years he kept up this practice of asceticism, eating four or five ounces of bread and drinking as much water, and a pint of oil in the year.

[3] Here is another practice of his. He determined to dispense with sleep, and he told us how he did not go under a roof for twenty days, that he might conquer sleep, being burnt up by the sun’s heat and shrivelled up with cold by night. And he used to say this: ”Unless I had soon gone under a roof and got some sleep, my brain would have so dried up as to drive me into delirium for ever alter. And I conquered so far as depended on me, but I gave way so far as depended on my nature that had need of sleep.” [4] As he sat early in the morning in his cell, a mosquito settled on his foot and stung him. And feeling the pain he squashed it with his hand after it was full of blood. So, accusing himself for having taken vengeance, he condemned himself to sit naked for six months in the marsh of Scete, which is in the great desert. The mosquitos there are like wasps, and even pierce the hides of wild boars. So then he was bitten all over and developed so many swellings that some thought

he had elephantiasis. Returning to his cell after six months, he was recognized by his voice that it was Macarius himself.

[5] Once he desired to enter the garden-tomb of Jannes and Jambres, so he told us. But this garden-tomb had once belonged to the magicians who had great power long ago with Pharaoh. Forasmuch then as they had the power for long periods, they built their work with stones faced four-square, and made their tomb there, and stored away much gold. They also planted trees, for the place is rather damp, and they dug a well besides. [6] Since therefore the saint did not know the way, he followed the stars by a kind of guesswork, crossing the desert, as one does at sea. Taking a bundle of reeds he planted them one each mile as landmarks in order to find his way as he returned. So having travelled nearly nine days he approached the place. Then the demon, who always withstands the athletes of Christ, collected all the reeds and put them at his head as he slept about a mile from the garden-tomb. [7] So he arose and found the reeds, God having allowed this perhaps to try him further, that he might not trust in reeds, but in the pillar of cloud that led Israel forty years in the desert. He used to say: ”Seventy demons came out from the garden-tomb to meet me, shouting and fluttering like crows against my face and saying: ’What do you want, Macarius? What do you want, monk? Why have you come to our place?

You can’t stay here.’ I told them,” he said, ”’Let me just go in and look round and go away.’ [8] So,” he said, ”I went in and found a little brazen jar suspended and an iron chain against the well, rusted already by time, and some pomegranates with nothing inside because they had been dried up by the sun. So then he turned back and went on his way for twenty days. But when the water which he was carrying failed him and also the loaves, he was in great distress. And when he was nearly collapsing there appeared to him a maiden, so he declared, wearing a pure white robe and holding a cruse dripping with water. [9] He said she was some distance, about a stade, away from him, and he went on for three days, gazing at her as she stood with the vessel and being unable to catch her up, as happens in dreams; but he lasted out sustained by the hope of drinking. After her appeared a herd of antelopes, one of which with a calf stopped----there are many in those regions. And he said that her udder was flowing with milk. So, creeping under her and sucking, he was satisfied. And the antelope went as far as his cell, giving him milk, but not allowing her own calf to suck.

[10] On another occasion, while digging a well near to some vegetable shoots, he was bitten by an asp. Now this beast is able to cause death. And having taken it with both hands he seized it by the jaws and pulled it in pieces, saying to it: ”When God did not send you, how did you dare to come?” Now he had several cells in the desert: one in Scete, the great interior desert, and one in the Libyan desert, and one at the so-called Cellia, and one on Mount Nitria. Some of these are without

windows, and in these he was said to sit during Lent in darkness. Another was too narrow for him to stretch out his feet in it. Another, in which he met his visitors, was more spacious. [11] He healed so great a crowd of demoniacs that they cannot be counted. When we were there a highborn maiden was brought from Thessalonica, paralyzed for many years. He rubbed her for twenty days with holy oil with his own hands, praying the while, and sent her back to her city restored to health. After she had gone she sent him many generous gifts.

[12] Having heard that the monks of Tabennisi had a splendid rule of life, he changed his clothes and put on the secular garments of a workman, and went a fifteen days' journey to the Thebaid, travelling through the desert. And having come to the monastery of the Tabennesiots he asked for their archimandrite, Pachomius by name, a man of great reputation and possessing the gift of prophecy----though the story of Macarius had not been revealed to him. So meeting him he said: "I pray you, receive me into your monastery that I may become a monk. [13] Pachomius said to him: "You have already reached old age, and you cannot be an ascetic. The brethren are ascetics and you cannot endure their labours. You will be offended and will depart, cursing them. And he did not receive him either the first day or the second, till seven days had passed. But he persisted in waiting, fasting (all the time), and at last he said to him: "Receive me, father, and if I do not fast as they do and work, order me to be driven out. He persuaded the brethren to admit him; now the total number (of the occupants) of the first monastery was 1,400 men and remains so up to this day. [14] Well, he entered. When a little time had passed, Lent came on and he saw each man practising different ways of asceticism----one eating in the evening only, another every two days, another every five, another again standing all night but sitting down by day.

So having moistened palm-leaves in large numbers, he stood in a corner and until the forty days were completed and Easter had come, ate no bread and drank no water, neither knelt down nor reclined, and apart from a few cabbage leaves took nothing, and them only on Sunday, that he might appear to eat. [15] And if ever he went out in obedience to nature, he quickly came in again and took his stand, speaking to no one and not opening his mouth but standing in silence. And, apart from prayer in his heart and the palm-leaves in his hands, he was doing nothing. All the ascetics therefore, seeing this, raised a revolt against the superior, saying: "Where did you get this fleshless man from, to condemn us? Either drive him out, or know that we are all going. Pachomius, therefore, having heard the details of his observance, prayed to God that the identity of the stranger might be revealed to him. [16] And it was revealed; and he took him by the hand and led him to the house of prayer, where the altar was, and said to him, "Here, good old man, you are Macarius and you hid it from me. For many years I have been longing to see you. I thank you for letting my children feel your fist, lest they should be proud of

their ascetic achievements. Now go away to your own place, for you have edified us sufficiently. And pray for us. Then he went away, as asked.

[17] On another occasion he told us this story: ”Having perfected every kind of life that I desired, then I had another desire. I desired to keep my mind for five days only undistracted from (the contemplation of) God. And, having determined this, I barred the cell and enclosure, so as not to have to answer any man, and I took my stand, beginning at the second hour. So I gave this commandment to my mind: ”Do not descend from heaven. There you have angels, archangels, the powers on high, the God of all; do not descend below heaven.” [18] And having lasted out two days and two nights, I exasperated the demon so that he became a flame of fire and burned up all the things in the cell, so that even the little mat on which I stood was consumed with fire and I thought I was being all burned up. Finally, stricken with fear, I left off on the third day, being unable to keep my mind free from distraction, but I descended to contemplation of the world, lest vanity should be imputed to me.”

[19] Once I visited this holy Macarius and found a village priest lying just outside his cell, whose head was all eaten away by the disease called cancer, and the actual bone appeared on the crown of his head. He had come to be healed and Macarius would not grant him an interview. So I besought him: ”I pray you, pity him and give him his answer.” [20] And he said to me: ”He does not deserve to be healed, for it has been sent him as a punishment. But if you want him to be healed, persuade him to give up taking services. For he was taking services, though living in fornication, and for this reason he is being punished and God is healing his soul.” So when I said this to the afflicted man he consented, and swore that he would no longer exercise his priesthood. Then he received him and said: ”Do you believe that God is?” He said to him: ”Yes.” [21] ”Were you able to mock God?” ”No,” he answered. He said: ”If you recognize your sin and the chastening of God, on account of which you suffered this, reform yourself henceforward.” So he confessed his fault and gave a promise that he would sin no more nor take the service, but embrace the position of a layman. Then he laid his hands on him and in a few days he was cured and the hair grew and he went away healed.

[22] Before my eyes a young lad was brought to him possessed by an evil spirit. So, putting one hand on his head and the other on his heart, he prayed so much that he made him hang in mid-air. Then the boy swelled like a wine-skin and festered so that he became a mass of erysipelas. And having cried out suddenly, he produced water through all his senses, and calming down returned to his original size. So he anointed him with holy oil and handed him to his father, and having poured water upon him ordered that he should touch neither flesh nor wine for forty days. And so he healed him.

[23] One day vainglorious thoughts troubled him, driving him out from the cell and suggesting to him as if by a divine dispensation that he should visit the city of the Romans to cure the sick. For grace acted powerfully in him against (evil) spirits. And when for a long while he would not obey, but was being vehemently pressed, falling on the doorstep of his cell, he put his feet outside and said: ”Drag me, demons, pull me. For I am not going with my feet. If you can take me, then I will go.” He swore to them: ”Here I lie until evening. Unless you shake me, I will not listen to you.” [24] So, having lain there a long while, he got up, but when night came on they attacked him again, and having filled a two-bushel basket with sand and put it on his shoulders, he tramped about in the desert. Theosebius the Cosmetor, an Antiochian by race, met him and said to him: ”What are you carrying, father? Give me the burden and don’t trouble yourself.” But he said to him: ”I trouble my troubler. For he is insatiable and tempts me to go out.” So having tramped about for a long time he went into his cell, having punished his body.

[25] This holy Macarius told me the following----for he was a priest. ”I noticed at the time of distributing the mysteries that it was never I which gave the oblation to Marcus the ascetic, but an angel used to give it him from the altar. I saw only the knuckle of the donor’s hand.” Now this Marcus was a young man, who learned by heart the Old and New Testaments, exceedingly meek and continent beyond all others. [26] One day having leisure----Macarius then being in extreme old age----I went off and sat by his door, thinking him superhuman, seeing that he was so old, and listened to what he said and what he did. He was quite alone inside; being already a hundred years old and having lost his teeth, he was righting with himself and the devil and saying: ”What do you want, bad old man? See, you have had oil and have taken some wine. What do you want more, you white-haired glutton?”----scolding himself. Then to the devil: ”Do I owe you anything now? You won’t find anything. Go away from me.” And, as if humming to himself, he was saying: ”Here, you white-haired glutton, how long shall I be with you? ”

[27] Paphnutius his disciple told us, that one day a hyaena took her whelp, which was blind, and brought it to Macarius. And having knocked with her head at the door of the enclosure, she entered, Macarius sitting outside (his cell), and threw the young one down at his feet. And he took it and spat on its eyes and prayed, and immediately it recovered its sight. And its mother having suckled it took it and went away. [28] And on the next day she brought the saint the fleece of a large sheep. And the blessed Melania said this to me: ”I got that fleece from Macarius as a gift to a visitor. And what marvel, if He who tamed the lions for Daniel, also made the hyaena intelligent?” And he said, that from the day he was baptized he never spat on the ground, it being then sixty years from his baptism. [29] As to his bodily form, he was rather short, and beardless, having no hairs except on his lips and the tip of his chin. For owing to the excess of his asceticism the hairs of his beard did not even sprout.

One day, when I was suffering from accidie, I went to him and said: ”Father, what shall I do? Since my thoughts afflict me saying, ’You are making no progress, go away from here.’” And he said to me: ”Tell them, ’For Christ’s sake I am guarding the walls’ ” I have told you these few stories out of many relating to the holy Macarius.

CHAPTER XIX. -- MOSES THE ROBBER

[1] A CERTAIN Moses----this was his name----an Ethiopian by race and black, was house-servant to a government official. His own master drove him out because of his immorality and brigandage. For he was said to go even the length of murder. I am compelled to tell his wicked acts in order to show the virtue of his repentance. Anyhow they used to say that he was leader of a robber-band, and among his acts of brigandage one stood out specially, that once he plotted vengeance against a shepherd who had one night with his dogs impeded him in a project. [2] Desirous to kill him, he looked about to find the place where the shepherd kept his sheep. And he was informed that it was on the opposite bank of the Nile. And, since the river was in flood and about a mile in extent, he grasped his sword in his mouth and put his shirt on his head and so got over, swimming the river. While he was swimming over, the shepherd was able to escape him by burying himself in the sand. So, having killed the four best rams and tied them together with a cord, he swam back again. [3] And having come to a little homestead he flayed the sheep, and having eaten the best of the flesh and sold the skins in exchange for wine, he drank a quart, that is eighteen Italian pints, and went off fifty miles further to where he had his band.

In the end this abandoned man, conscience-stricken as a result of one of his adventures, gave himself up to a monastery and to such practising of asceticism that he brought publicly to the knowledge of Christ even his accomplice in crime from his youth, the demon who had sinned with him. Among other tales this is told of him. One day robbers attacked him as he sat in his cell, not knowing who it was. They were four in number. [4] He tied them all together and, putting them on his back like a truss of straw, brought them to the church of the brethren, saying: ”Since I am not allowed to hurt anyone, what do you bid me do with these?” Then these robbers, having confessed their sins and recognized that it was Moses the erstwhile renowned and far-famed robber, themselves also glorified God and renounced the world because of his conversion, saying to themselves: ”If he who was so great and powerful in brigandage has feared God, why should we defer our salvation?”

[5] This Moses was attacked by demons, who tried to plunge him into his old habit of sexual incontinence. He was tempted so greatly, as he himself testified, that he almost relinquished his purpose. So, having come to the great Isidore, the one who lived in Scete, he told him about his conflict. And he said to him: ”Do not be grieved. These are the beginnings, and therefore they have attacked you the more vehemently, seeking out your old habit. [6] For just as a dog in a butcher’s shop owing to his habits cannot tear himself away, but if the shop is closed and no one gives him anything, he no longer comes near it. So also with you; if you endure, the demon gets discouraged and has to leave you. So he returned and from that hour practised asceticism more vehemently, and especially refrained from food, taking nothing except dry bread to the extent of twelve ounces, accomplishing a great deal of work and completing fifty prayers (a day). Thus he mortified his body, but he still continued to burn and be troubled by dreams. [7] Again he went to another one of the saints and said to him: ”What am I to do, seeing that the dreams of my soul darken my reason, by reason of my sinful habits? He said to him: ”Because you have not withdrawn your mind from imagining these things, that is why you endure this. Give yourself to watching and pray with fasting and you will quickly be delivered from them.

Listening to this advice also he went away to his cell and gave his word that he would not sleep all night nor bend his knees. [8] So he remained in his cell for six years and every night he stood in the middle of the cell praying and not closing his eyes. And he could not master the thing. So he suggested to himself yet another plan, and going out by night he would visit the cells of the older and more ascetic (monks), and taking their water-pots secretly would fill them with water. For they fetch their water from a distance, some from two miles off, some five miles, others half a mile. [9] So one night the demon watched for him, having lost his patience, and as he stooped down at the well gave him a blow with a cudgel across the loins and left him (apparently) dead, with no perception of what he had suffered or from whom. So the next day a man came to draw water and found him lying there, and told the great Isidore, the priest of Scete. He therefore picked him up and brought him to the church, and for a year he was so ill that with difficulty did his body and soul recover strength. [10] So the great Isidore said to him: ”Moses, stop struggling with the demons, and do not provoke them. But he said to him: ”I will never cease until the appearance of the demons ceases. So he said to him:

”In the name of Jesus Christ your dreams have ceased. Come to Communion then with confidence, for, that you should not boast of having overcome passion, this is why you have been oppressed, for your good. [11] And he went away again to his cell. Afterwards when asked by Isidore, some two months later, he said that he no longer suffered anything. Indeed, he was counted worthy of such a gift (of power) over demons that we fear these flies more than he feared demons. This was the manner of life of Moses the Ethiopian; he too was numbered among the great ones

of the fathers. So he died in Scete seventy-five years old, having become a priest; and he left seventy disciples.

CHAPTER XX. -- PAUL

[1] THERE is a mountain in Egypt called Pherme, which borders on the great desert of Scete. On this mountain dwell some 500 men, devotees of asceticism. One of them, a man named Paul, had this manner of life: he touched no work, and no business, nor did he receive anything from any man beyond what he ate. But his work and his asceticism consisted in ceaseless prayer. So he had 300 set prayers, and he collected as many pebbles and kept them in his lap and threw out of his lap one pebble at each prayer. [2] Having gone for an interview with Macarius, the one known as Citizen, he said to him: ”Father Macarius, I am afflicted.” So he compelled him to say for what reason. But he said to him: ”In a certain village there dwells a virgin who has lived the ascetic life for thirty years. They have told me of her that except on Saturday and Sunday she never eats. But all the while dragging out the long weeks and eating at intervals of five days she makes 700 prayers. And when I learned this I despaired of myself because I could not make more than 300.” [3] The holy Macarius answered him: ”I am now sixty years old; I make 100 set prayers and produce my food by my own work, and give the brethren the interviews that are their due, and my reason does not condemn me as having neglected my duty. But if you say 300 and are condemned by your conscience, you are clearly not praying them with purity, or else you could pray more and do not.”

CHAPTER XXI. -- EULOGIUS AND THE CRIPPLE

[1] CRONIUS the priest of Nitria told me this: When I was young and because of accidie fled from the monastery of my archimandrite, I came in my wanderings to the mountain of the holy Antony. It lay between Babylon and Heracles in the great desert that leads to the Red Sea, about thirty miles from the River. So having come to Antony's monastery by the River where his two disciples dwelt at the place called Pispir----I mean Macarius and Amatas, who also buried him when he died----I waited five days for an interview with the holy Antony. [2] For he was said to visit this monastery at intervals now of ten days, now of twenty, now of five, as God led him, to do good to those who happened to visit the monastery. So a number of brethren were assembled, one with this need, another with that. Among them was a certain Eulogius, a monk of Alexandria, and another man, a cripple, who had come for the following reason.

[3] This Eulogius was a learned man, having had a good all-round education, who smitten with a love of immortality renounced the clamours (of the world), and disposing of all his goods left himself a little money, since he was unable to work. Well, suffering from accidie and wishing neither to enter a convent nor to reach perfection alone, he found a man lying in the market-place, a cripple, with neither hands nor feet. His tongue was the only part of his body that was undamaged, and was used to appeal to the passer-by. [4] So Eulogius stood and gazed at him and prayed to God and made a covenant with God (saying): "Lord, in Thy name I take this cripple and comfort him until death, that I also may be saved through him. Grant me patience to serve him! And approaching the crippled man he said to him: "Would you like me, great one, to take you to my house and comfort you? He said to him: "Yes, indeed. "Then shall I get an ass and take you? He agreed. So he fetched an ass and carried him and brought him to his own guest-chamber and took care of him. [5] Well, the cripple lasted on for fifteen years and was nursed by him, being washed and tended by the hands of Eulogius, and fed in a way suitable to his malady. But after the fifteen years a demon attacked him, and he rebelled against Eulogius.

And he began to dress the man down with great abuse and reviling, adding: ”Assassin, deserter, you stole other folk’s property, and you want to be saved through me. Throw me into the market-place. I want meat. He brought him meat. [6] Again he cried out: ”I am not satisfied. I want crowds. I want to be in the market-place. Oh the violence! Put me where you found me. If he had had hands he would have quickly strangled him, to such an extent had the demon infuriated him. So Eulogius went off to the neighbouring ascetics and said to them: ”What shall I do, because this cripple has brought me to despair? Am I to cast him out? I pledged myself to God and I am afraid. But am I not to cast him out? He gives me bad days and nights, so that I do not know what to do to him. [7] But they said to him: ”While the great one is still alive”----for so they called Antony----” put the cripple in a boat and go to him, and take him to the monastery and wait till Antony comes out from the cave and refer the case to him. And whatever he says to you, go by his decision, for God speaks to you by him. And he heard them patiently, and putting the cripple into a rustic boat went out by night from the city and took him to the monastery of the disciples of the holy Antony.

[8] Now it happened that the great man came the next day in the late evening, as Cronius had said, wrapped in a cloak of skin. When he reached the monastery, this was his custom, to summon Macarius and ask him: ”Brother Macarius, have any brethren come here? He answered ”Yes. ”Egyptians or from Jerusalem? And he had given him a sign: ”If you see them inclined to be careless, say Egyptians; but when they are more serious and studious, say from Jerusalem. [9] So he asked him as usual: ”Are the brethren Egyptians or from Jerusalem? Macarius answered and said to him: ”A mixture. Now when he said to him ”They are Egyptians,” the holy Antony would say to him: ”Prepare some lentils and give them a meal,” and he would utter a prayer for them and say good-bye. But when he said ”from Jerusalem,” he would sit up all night, talking to them about salvation. [10] So that night he sat down, (Cronius) says, and called them all to him and, though none had told him what name he bore, called out in the dark and said ”Eulogius, Eulogius, Eulogius”----three times. He, the learned man I mean, did not answer, thinking that another Eulogius was being called. He said to him again: ”I am speaking to you, Eulogius, the man who came from Alexandria. Eulogius said to him: ”What are your commands, I pray? ”Why have you come? Eulogius answered and said to him: ”He that revealed to you my name, hath also revealed to you my business.

[11] Antony said to him: ”I know why you came. But speak before all the brethren, that they also may hear. Eulogius said to him: ”I found this cripple in the market-place and I pledged myself to God that I would nurse him and so be saved through him and he through me. So since after all these years he torments me to distraction, and I contemplated casting him out; on this account I came to your holiness, in order that you might counsel me what I ought to do and pray for me, for I am terribly distressed. [12] Antony said to him with angry and stern voice: ”Cast him

out? But He Who made him does not cast him out. Will you cast him out? God will raise up a man better than you, and he will succour him. Eulogius, who had been calm up till now, trembled. And Antony leaving Eulogius began to castigate the cripple with his tongue and cry: ”You crippled and maimed man, deserving neither earth nor heaven, will you not cease fighting against God? Do you not know that it is Christ Who is serving you? How dare you utter such words against Christ? Was it not for Christ’s sake that he made himself a slave to minister to you? So having reprimanded him, he left him alone too. And having conversed with all the rest about their needs he returned to Eulogius and the cripple and said to them: ”Do not wander about any more, go away.

Do not be separated from one another, except in your cell in which you have dwelt so long. For already God is sending for you. For this temptation has come upon you because you are both near your end and are about to be counted worthy of crowns. Do nothing else therefore, and may the angel when he comes not find you here. So they journeyed in haste and came to their cell, and within forty days Eulogius died, and in three days more the cripple died too.

[15] But Cronius, after staying in the regions round the Thebaid, came down to the monasteries of Alexandria. And it happened that the services for the fortieth day of the one and the third day of the other were being celebrated by the brethren. Cronius learned this and was amazed, and having taken a gospel and put it before the brethren took an oath, after telling what had happened, and said: ”I was blessed Antony’s interpreter in these conversations, since he does not know Greek; for I know both tongues and interpreted to them, speaking to these two in Greek, to Antony in Egyptian. [16] And Cronius told this story also: ”In that night blessed Antony told me this: ’For a whole year I prayed that the place of the just and of sinners might be revealed to me. And I saw a tall giant reaching to the clouds, black, with his hands stretched up to heaven, and under him a lake as vast as the sea, and I saw souls flying like birds. [17] And as many as flew over his hands and head were saved. But as many as were struck by his hands fell into the lake. Then came a voice to me saying, These souls of the righteous which thou seest flying are the souls which are saved for Paradise. But the others are those which are drawn down to hell, having followed the desires of the flesh and revenge.’ ”

CHAPTER XXII. -- PAUL THE SIMPLE

[1] CRONIUS and the holy Hierax and a number of others, about whom I shall presently speak, told me this tale also. A certain Paul, a rustic peasant, exceedingly guileless and simple, was wedded to a most beautiful woman of depraved character, who for a very long while concealed her sins from him. However, Paul came in suddenly from work and found his wife and her lover behaving shamefully, Providence thus guiding Paul to what was best for himself. And laughing discreetly he called to them and said: ”Good, good. I don’t mind, truly. By Jesus, I’ll take her no longer. Go, you have her and her children, for I am going to become a monk. [2] And saying nothing to anyone he hastened along the eight stages and went to the blessed Antony and knocked at the door. He came out and asked him: ”What do you want? He said to him: ”I want to become a monk. Antony answered and said to him: ”You are an old man, sixty years old; you cannot become a monk here. But rather go back to your village and work and live an active life giving thanks to God, for you cannot endure the tribulations of the desert. The old man answered again and said: ”Whatever you teach me, I will do it. [3] Antony said to him: ”I have told you that you are an old man and cannot stand it.

If you really want to become a monk, go to a cenobium with a number of brethren, who can support your weakness. For I live here alone, eating after a five days’ fast, and that without satisfying my hunger. With these and such-like words he tried to frighten Paul away and, since he could not endure him, Antony shut the door and did not go out for three days because of him, not even for necessary purposes. But Paul did not go away. [4] But on the fourth day necessity compelling him he opened the door and went out and said to him again: ”Go away from here, old man. Why do you annoy me? You cannot stay here. Paul said to him: ”It is impossible for me to die elsewhere than here. So Antony looked about and noticed that he had not with him any form of nourishment, neither bread nor water, and that he was now in the fourth day of his fast, and saying: ”Lest perchance you die and stain my soul,” he received him. And Antony adopted in those days a regime which he had never tried in his youth. [5] And having moistened some palm-leaves he said to

him: ”Take these, weave them into mats, as I do. The old man wove until the ninth hour, laboriously completing ninety feet. So Antony looked and was displeased and said to him:

”You have woven badly, unpick them and weave them over again” ----imposing this nauseous task upon him, though he was hungry and aged, in order that he might be disgusted and flee away from Antony. But he both unpicked and wove again the same leaves, though it was more difficult, because they were all shrivelled up.And Antony, seeing that he neither murmured nor was discouraged nor angry, felt compunction. [6] And after sunset he said to him: ”Would you like us to eat a piece of bread? Paul said to him: ”As you please, father. And this again moved Antony, that he did not rush eagerly at the mention of food, but had thrown the power (of choice) upon him. So he laid the table and brought in bread. And Antony, having put out the biscuits, weighing six ounces each, moistened one for himself----for they were dry----and three for Paul. And Antony struck up a psalm which he knew, and after singing it twelve times he prayed twelve times, to test Paul. [7] But he eagerly joined in the prayer, for he would have preferred being eaten by scorpions, so I think, to living with an adulterous woman. But after the twelve prayers they sat down to eat late in the evening. Now Antony, having eaten the one biscuit, did not touch another. But the old man, eating more slowly, was still at his little biscuit. Antony was waiting for him to finish and says to him: ”Eat, father, a second biscuit. Paul says to him:

”If you will eat, I will too; if you do not eat, I will not. Antony says: ”I have had enough, for I am a monk. [8] Paul says to him: ”I too have had enough, for I too want to become a monk. He rises again and prays twelve prayers and chants twelve psalms. Antony sleeps a little of his first sleep and then gets up to sing psalms at midnight until day. So when he saw the old man eagerly following his mode of life he said to him: ”If you can do thus every day, stay with me. Paul said to him: ”If there is anything more, I do not know; for I can do easily these things which I have seen. Antony said to him the next day: ”Behold, you have become a monk.”

[9] So Antony, convinced after the required number of months that Paul had a perfect soul, being very simple and grace co-operating with him, made him a cell, three or four miles away, and said to him: ”Behold, you have become a monk; remain alone in order that you may be tried by demons. So Paul dwelt there one year and was counted worthy of grace over demons and diseases. Among other cases, a demoniac was once brought to Antony, exceedingly terrifying, possessed by a spirit of high rank, who cursed even heaven itself. [10] So Antony, having examined him, said to those who brought him: ”This is not my work, for I have not yet been counted worthy of power over this order of high rank, but this is Paul’s business. So Antony went off and led them to Paul, and said to him: ”Father Paul, cast out this demon from the man that he may go away cured to his home. Said

Paul to him: ”What are you doing? Antony said to him: ”I have no leisure, I have something else to do. And Antony left him and went again to his own cell. [11] So the old man got up, and having prayed an effective prayer, addressed the demoniac: ”Father Antony has said, ’Go out from the man.’” But the demon cried out, saying with blasphemies: ”I am not going out, bad old man. So Paul took his sheep-skin coat and struck the man on the back with it saying:

”Father Antony has said, ’Go out.’ ” Again the demon cursed with some violence both Antony and him. Finally he said to him: ”You are going out; or else I’ll go and tell Christ. By Jesus, if you don’t go out I am going this very minute to tell Christ, and He will do you harm. [12] Again the demon cursed yet more, saying: ”I am not going out. So Paul got angry with the demon and went outside his dwelling at high noon. But the heat of the Egyptians is akin to the furnace of Babylonia. And standing on a rock on the mountain he prayed and said: ”O Jesus Christ, Who wast crucified under Pontius Pilate, thou seest that I will not descend from the rock, I will not eat nor drink till I die, unless Thou drive out the spirit from the man and free the man. [13] But before the words were out of his mouth the demon cried out, saying: ”Oh violence! I am being driven away. The simplicity of Paul drives me away, and where am I to go? And immediately the spirit went out and was turned into a great dragon seventy cubits long and was swept away to the Red Sea, that the saying might be fulfilled: ”The righteous will declare the faith that is shown. This is the marvellous tale of Paul who was surnamed Simple by all the brotherhood.

CHAPTER XXIII. -- PACHON

[1] THERE dwelt in Scete a man named Pachon, who had reached his sixtieth year or thereabouts. Now I happened to be dejected, having been tormented by the love of women, both in my (waking) thoughts and my nocturnal visions. And I was nearly leaving the desert, passion driving me, yet I did not refer the matter to my neighbours, nor to my teacher Evagrius. But I journeyed secretly into the great desert and spent fifteen days in meeting the fathers who had grown old in the desert at Scete. [2] Among others I met Pachon. Well, finding him more guileless and better versed in asceticism than the rest, I was bold to refer to him the state of my mind. And he said to me: ”Let not the affair disconcert you, for you are not suffering this from negligence. For the place is a witness in your favour, both because of the lack of necessaries and the absence of facilities for meeting women. But rather it comes from your zeal. For the war against impurity is triple. At one time the flesh attacks us because it is vigorous; at another the passions attack us through our thoughts; at another the demon himself in malice. I have found this after much observation. [3] Look how you see me, an old man now. I have spent forty years in this cell caring for my own salvation, and growing to be as old as this I have been tempted all the while. And he said this, confirming it with an oath:

”For twelve years after my fiftieth year the demon gave me no respite in his attacks by night and day. Supposing therefore that God had left me and on this account I was under his power, I preferred to die in an irrational manner rather than act improperly through bodily passion. And having gone out and explored the desert I found a hyaena’s cave. In which cave I laid myself down naked in the daytime, in order that the beasts when they came out might eat me. [4] So, when evening came, as it is written: ’Thou madest darkness and night came: in it all the beasts of the forest will roam’ ----the beasts came out, male and female, and smelt me, licking me from head to foot. And when I was expecting to be eaten up, they left me. So having lain down all night, I was not eaten. But reckoning that God had spared me, I returned again to the cell. Well, the demon, having restrained himself a few days, then attacked me again more vehemently than at first, so that I very nearly blasphemed. [5] He changed himself into an Ethiopian maiden, whom I had once seen in my youth in the summer-time picking reeds, and sat on my knee. So

in a fury I gave her a blow and she disappeared. Well, for two years I could not bear the evil smell of my hand! So I went out into the great desert, wandering up and down discouraged and in despair.

And having found a little asp, I picked it up and applied it to my flesh, in order that I might die, even though it were by a bite of this kind. And I rubbed the beast's head on my flesh, as the cause of my temptation, but I was not bitten. [6] Then I heard a voice saying in my thoughts: 'Go, Pachon, struggle on. For this is why I have left you to be tyrannized over, that you should not be proud, as if you had any strength, but recognizing your weakness should not trust in your manner of life, but run for the help of God.' Thus convinced I returned and dwelt in confidence, and no longer troubling about the war I was in peace the rest of my days. But he, knowing how I despised him, no longer came near me."

CHAPTER XXIV. -- STEPHEN

[1] ONE Stephen, a Libyan by race, dwelt on the shores of Marmarica and the Mareotis for sixty years. He became an ascetic of great eminence with a gift of discernment, and was counted worthy of such a gift of grace that every afflicted man, whatever his affliction, went away free from affliction after meeting him. Now he was known to the blessed Antony; and he lived on also to our own days. I never met him, because his place was so far away. [2] But the holy Ammonius and Evagrius and their companions, who met him, told me the following: ”We found him suffering from an illness like this, having developed an ulcer of the sort called cancerous. We discovered him being treated by a doctor, and working with his hands and weaving palm-leaves and talking to us, while the rest of his body was being operated on. He was behaving just as if another man were being cut. Though the flesh was cut away like hair, he was insensible, thanks to the greatness of his religious preparation. [3] But while we were on the one hand grieving and on the other hand feeling disgusted that such a life had ended in such suffering and such surgical operations, he said to us: ’Children, do not be troubled by this affair. For God does nothing of what He does for malice, but for a good end. For perhaps my flesh deserves chastisement, and it is fitting that it should pay the penalty now rather than when I have quitted the arena.’ So he edified us with his exhortations and encouragements,” But I have told this lest we should be disconcerted when we see saints suffering such afflictions.

CHAPTER XXV. -- VALENS

[1] THERE was a man named Valens, a Palestinian by race, but Corinthian in his character----for St. Paul attributed the vice of presumption to the Corinthians. Having taken to the desert he dwelt with us for a number of years. He reached such a pitch of arrogance that he was deceived by demons. For by deceiving him little by little they induced him to be very proud, supposing that angels met him. [2] One day at least, so they told the tale, as he was working in the dark he let drop the needle with which he was stitching the basket. And when he did not find it, the demon made a lamp, and he found the needle. Again, puffed up at this, he waxed proud and in fact was so greatly puffed up that he despised the communion of the mysteries. Now it happened that certain strangers came and brought sweetmeats to the Church for the brethren. [3] So the holy Macarius our priest received them and sent a handful or so to each of us in his cell, among the rest also to Valens. When Valens received the bearer he insulted him and struck him and said to him: ”Go and tell Macarius, ’I am not worse than you, that you should send me a blessing.’ ” So Macarius, knowing that he was the victim of illusion, went the next day to exhort him and said to him: ”Valens, you are the victim of illusions. Stop it. And when he would not listen to his exhortations, he retired.

[4] So the demon, convinced that he was completely persuaded by his deception, went away and disguised himself as the Saviour, and came by night in a vision of a thousand angels bearing lamps and a fiery wheel, in which it seemed that the Saviour appeared, and one came in front of the others and said: ”Christ has loved you because of your conduct and the freedom of your life, and He has come to see you. So go out of the cell, do nothing else but look at his face from afar, stoop down and worship, and then go to your cell. [5] So he went out and saw them in ranks carrying lamps, and antichrist about a stade away, and he fell down and worshipped. Then the next day again he became so mad that he entered into the church and before the assembled brotherhood said: ”I have no need of Communion, for I have seen Christ to-day. Then the fathers bound him and put him in irons for a year and so cured him, destroying his pride by their prayers and indifference and calmer mode of life. As it is said, ”Diseases are cured by their opposites.”

[6] But it is necessary to insert in this little book the lives of men like this, for the safety of the readers, in the same way as there was the tree of knowledge of good and evil among the holy trees of paradise; in order that, if ever a righteous act should be achieved by them, they may not be proud of their virtue. For often even virtue becomes the cause of a fall, whenever it is not accomplished with upright intention. For it is written: ”I saw a just man destroyed in his just act; and this thing is indeed vanity.”

CHAPTER XXVI. -- HERON

[1] THERE was a certain Heron, a neighbour of mine, an Alexandrian by race, an excellent young man, of good natural ability and pure in his life. He also after many toils was attacked by pride and flung off all restraints and cherished presumptuous sentiments against the fathers, insulting even the blessed Evagrius by saying: "Those who obey your teaching are dupes; for one should not pay heed to any teachers except Christ. He even abused Scripture to serve the purpose of his folly and would say: "The Saviour Himself said, 'Call no man teacher upon the earth.'" [2] His mind became so darkened that he too was afterwards put in irons, since he was unwilling even to attend the mysteries----truth is dear. He was excessively abstemious in his mode of life, so that many who knew him intimately declared that he frequently went three months without eating, being content with the communion of the mysteries and any wild herbs that might be found. And I too had an experience of him when I went to Scete with the blessed Albanius. [3] Scete was forty miles away from us. In the course of those forty miles we ate twice and drank water three times, but he without eating anything went on foot and said by heart fifteen psalms, then the long psalm, then the Epistle to the Hebrews, then Isaiah and part of Jeremiah, then Luke the Evangelist, then the Proverbs. And things being so, yet we could not keep up with him as he walked.

[4] Finally, driven as it were by fire, he could not remain in his cell, but went off to Alexandria, by (divine) dispensation, and, as the saying goes, "knocked out one nail with another. For of his own free will he fell into indifference, but afterwards found salvation involuntarily. For he frequented the theatre and circuses and enjoyed the diversions of the taverns. And thus, eating and drinking immoderately, he fell into a mire of concupiscence. [5] And when he was resolving to sin he met an actress and had converse with her. In consequence a carbuncle developed on his private parts, and for six months he was so ill that the parts rotted away and fell off. Later, restored to health without those parts and returned to a religious frame of mind, he came and confessed all these things to the fathers. A few days after he fell asleep before he had returned to work.

CHAPTER XXVII. -- PTOLEMY

[1] AGAIN another monk, Ptolemy by name, lived a life difficult, even impossible, to describe. He dwelt beyond Scete in a place called Climax. The place which bears this name is one in which no one can live because the well of the brethren is eighteen miles away. He then, carrying a number of pots brought them there, and collecting the dew with a sponge from the rocks during the months of December and January----for there is a plentiful fall of dew then in those parts----he made this suffice during the fifteen years he lived there. [2] And he became a stranger to the teaching of holy men and intercourse with them, and the benefit derived therefrom, and the constant communion of the mysteries, and diverged so greatly from the straight way that he declared these things were nothing; but they say he is wandering about in Egypt up to the present day all puffed up with pride, and has given himself over to gluttony and drunkenness, speaking no (edifying) word to anyone.And this disaster fell on Ptolemy from his irrational conceit, as it is written: ”They who have no directing influence fall like leaves.”’

CHAPTER XXVIII. -- A VIRGIN WHO FELL

AGAIN, I knew a virgin in Jerusalem who wore sackcloth for six years and shut herself up in a cell, taking none of the things that bestow pleasure. In the end she fell, abandoned (by God) because of her excessive arrogance. She opened the window and admitted the man who waited on her and sinned with him, because she had practised asceticism not with a religious motive and for the love of God, but with human ostentation, which springs from vain-glory and corrupt intention. For, her thoughts being engrossed in condemning others, the guardian of her chastity was absent.

CHAPTER XXIX. -- ELIAS

[1] ELIAS, an ascetic, was a great friend of the virgins. For there are some souls like this, whose virtuous aims testify to their goodness. He had compassion on the class of women ascetics, and having property in the city of Athribé built a great monastery and brought into the monastery all the dispersed women, caring for them consistently (with his purpose), and procured them every kind of refreshment, and gardens and utensils and whatever their life required. These ladies, brought from different sorts of lives, had continual fights with one another. [2] Now since he was obliged to listen to them and make peace----for he collected some 300 of them----he found it necessary to remain in their midst for two years. Being still young, for he was some thirty to forty years old, he was tempted by desire. And having left the monastery he wandered fasting in the desert for two days, making this request in his prayer: ”Lord, either kill me, that I may not see these women in trouble, or take away my passion that I may care for them in a rational way. [3] When evening had come, he fell asleep in the desert, and three angels came to him----so he told the story----and caught hold of him and said: ”Why did you leave the monastery of the women? He explained the matter to them. ”Because I was afraid I might harm both them and myself. They said to him: ”Then if we relieve you of the passion, will you go and care for them?

He agreed to this. They made him swear an oath. [4] He said this was the oath: ”Swear to us, by Him Who cares for me I will care for them. And he swore to them. Then one of them seized his hands, and another his feet, and a third taking a razor unmanned him, not really but in the vision. So he seemed to himself to have been cured, so to say, in the trance. They asked him: ”Do you feel any benefit? He said to them: ”I feel greatly lightened and am persuaded that I am relieved of my passion. [5] They said to him: ”Go away, then. And he returned after five days, the monastery mourning for him the while, and went in and remained inside henceforward, in an adjoining cell, from which being near at hand he corrected them continually so far as he could. But he lived forty years more, always assuring the fathers: ”Passion comes no more into my mind. Such was the gift of grace of that holy man who thus looked after the monastery.

CHAPTER XXX. -- DOROTHEUS

HE was succeeded by Dorotheus, a well-tried man who had grown old in a good and active life. Not being able to stay in the monastery itself, as Elias had done, he shut himself up in an upper chamber and made a window looking on to the women’s monastery, which he used to shut and open. So he would sit continually at the window reminding them to keep the peace. And so he grew old up there in the upper chamber, without either the women going up to him or himself being able to come down to them. For there was no ladder fixed.

CHAPTER XXXI. -- PIAMOUN

[1] PIAMOUN was a virgin who lived the years of her life with her mother, eating every other day in the evening and spinning flax. She was accounted worthy of the gift of prophecy, of which this is an example. It happened once in Egypt during the overflow (of the Nile) that one village attacked another. For they fight over the distribution of the water, so that murders and woundings ensue. Well, a stronger village attacked her village, and men came in a crowd with spears and clubs to destroy her village. [2] But an angel appeared to her, revealing to her their attack. And, sending for the elders of the village, she said: ”Go out and meet the men who are coming against you from that village, lest you also perish with the village, and urge them to cease from their malice.” But the elders were afraid and fell at her feet beseeching her and saying to her: ”We dare not meet them; for we know their drunkenness and madness. [3] But if you have pity both on the whole village and your own house, go out yourself and meet them.” Not agreeing to this, she went up to her own cottage----it was night at the time----and stood continually in prayer, not kneeling down, and beseeching God thus: ”O Lord, Who judgest the earth, to Whom no unjust act is pleasing, when this prayer reaches Thee, let Thy power nail these men to the spot where-ever .it finds them.” [4] And about the first hour, when they were about three miles away, they were nailed to the ground and could not move. And it was revealed also to them that this hindrance had come to them through her petitions. And they sent to the village and asked for peace, declaring: ”Give thanks to God and the prayers of Piamoun, for they hindered us.”

CHAPTER XXXII. -- PACHOMIUS AND THE TABENNESIOTS

[1] TABENNISI is a place, so-called, in the Thebaid, in which there lived a certain Pachomius, one of those who have lived in the straight way, so that he was counted worthy both of prophecies and angelic visions. He was exceedingly devoted both to his fellow-men and his brethren. Accordingly, to him as he sat in his cave an angel appeared and said: ”You have successfully ordered your own life. So it is superfluous to remain sitting in your cave. Up! go out and collect all the young monks and dwell with them, and according to the model which I now give you, so legislate for them;” and he gave him a brass tablet on which this was inscribed----

[2] ”Thou shalt allow each man to eat and drink according to his strength; and proportionately to the strength of the eaters appoint to them their labours. And prevent no man either from fasting or eating. However, appoint the tasks that need strength to those who are stronger and eat, and to the weaker and more ascetic such as the weak can manage. Make a number of cells within the enclosure and let three dwell in each cell. But let them all go to one building for their food. [3] Let them sleep not lying down full length, but let them make sloping chairs easily constructed and put their rugs on them and thus sleep in a sitting posture. And let them wear at night linen lebitons and a girdle. Let each of them have a worked goatskin cloak, without which they are not to eat. When they go to Communion on Saturday and Sunday, let them loosen their girdles and lay aside the skin cloak and go in with the cowl only. And he prescribed for them napless cowls, as for children, on which he ordered an imprint, the mark of a cross, to be worked in dark red. [4] And he ordered that there should be twenty-four sections, and to each order he assigned a letter of the Greek alphabet----alpha, beta, gamma, delta, and so on. So when the Superior asked questions, or busied himself with the affairs of the great multitude, he asked the second: ”How is the Alpha section? or, ”How is the Zeta? or again:

”Greet the Rho,” and they followed a private meaning assigned to the letters. ”And to the simpler and more unworldly thou shalt give the Iota, and to the more difficult

and perverse thou shalt assign the Xi. [5] And so, in correspondence with the nature of their dispositions and manners and lives, he fitted the letters to each section, only the spiritual knowing what was meant. And it was written on the tablet: ”A stranger of another monastery which has a different rule is not to eat with them, nor drink, nor enter into the monastery, unless he happens to be on a (genuine) journey. However, the man who has come to remain with them they do not allow to enter into the sanctuary for three years. But after a three years’ probation and performance of the more toilsome labours, then he enters. [6] ”As they eat let them cover their heads with their cowls lest one brother see another chewing. A monk is not allowed to talk at meals nor let his eye wander beyond his plate or the table. And he ordered them during the whole day to make twelve prayers, and twelve at the lamp-lighting, and twelve at the night-vigils, and three at the ninth hour. But when a group was about to eat he ordered a psalm to be sung before each prayer.

[7] When Pachomius objected to the angel that the prayers were few, the angel said to him: ”I gave this rule so as to make sure in advance that even the little ones keep the rule and are not afflicted. But the perfect have no need of legislation, for by themselves in their cells they have surrendered the whole of their life to the contemplation of God. But I have legislated for as many as have not a discerning mind, in order that they, like house-servants fulfilling the duties of their station, may live a life of freedom.”

Now there are a number of these monasteries which have observed this rule, amounting to 7000 men. But the first and great monastery is that where Pachomius himself dwelt, which itself also is the parent of the other monasteries; it has 1300 members. [8] Among them there was also the noble Aphthonius, who became my intimate friend, and is now second in the monastery. Him they send to Alexandria, since nothing can make him stumble, in order to sell their produce and buy necessaries. [9] But there are also other monasteries two hundred or three hundred strong. One of these, with 300 monks, I found when I entered the city of Panopolis. [In the monastery I found fifteen tailors, seven smiths, four carpenters, twelve camel-drivers, and fifteen fullers. But they work at every kind of craft and with their surplus output they provide for the needs both of the women’s convents and the prisons. [10] [They keep pigs too, and when I blamed the practice, they said: ”In our tradition we have received this, that they are to be kept because of the chaff, and the refuse of the vegetables and other scraps that one throws away, lest they be wasted. And the pigs are to be killed and their meat sold, but the tit-bits are to be devoted to the sick and aged, because the neighbourhood is poor and populous; for the tribe of the Blemmyes live near.

[11] But those who are to serve that day rise early and get to their work, some to the kitchen, others to the tables. They spend their time then until the meal-hour

in arranging and preparing the tables, putting loaves on each, and charlock, preserved olives, cheese of cows' milk, [the tit-bits of the meat], and chopped herbs. Some come in at the sixth hour and eat, others at the seventh, others at the eighth, others at the ninth, others at the eleventh, others in the late evening, others every other day, so that each letter knows its own hour.[12] So also is it with their work. One works on the land as a labourer, another in the garden, another at the forge, another in the bakery, another in the carpenter's" shop, another in the fuller's shop, another weaving the big baskets, another in the tannery, another in the shoemaker's shop, another in the scriptorium, another weaving the young reeds. And they learn all the scriptures by heart.

CHAPTER XXXIII. -- THE TABENNESIOT NUNS

[1] THEY also had a monastery of women with some 400 members; it had the same constitution and the same manner of life, except for the sheep-skin coat. And the women are on the far side of the river, the men opposite them. So when a virgin dies, the (other) virgins, having prepared her body for burial, act as bearers and lay it on the river bank. But the brethren, having crossed in a ferry boat, with palm-leaves and olive-branches, take the body across, singing psalms the while, and bury it in their own cemetery. But apart from the priest and the deacon no man goes across to the women's monastery, and they only on Sunday.

[2] In this women's monastery the following thing happened. A tailor, living in the world, crossed the river in ignorance and sought work. A young sister came out----the place was deserted ----and met him involuntarily and gave him the answer: "We have our own tailors." [3] Another sister saw the meeting; and when some time had elapsed and a contention arose, actuated by diabolic motives inspired by great wickedness and an outburst of temper, she denounced the other before the sisterhood. A few others also joined her from malice. So that sister, distressed at having endured a calumny of a kind that had never even entered her thoughts, and being unable to bear it, flung herself into the river secretly and lost her life. [4] Likewise the calumniator, recognizing that her calumny was wicked, and that she had committed this abomination, went and hung herself, she too being unable to bear (the shame of) the affair. So when the priest came the rest of the sisters told him the affair. And he ordered first that the sacrifice should not be offered for either of them; and as for those who had not kept the peace, since they had been accomplices of the calumniator and had believed the scandal, he separated them (from the rest) for seven years, depriving them of Communion.

CHAPTER XXXIV. -- THE NUN WHO FEIGNED MADNESS

[1] IN this monastery there was another virgin who feigned madness and possession by a demon. And they detested her so much that they would not even eat with her, she preferring this. She would wander about in the kitchen and do every kind of menial work, and she was, as they say, ”the monastery sponge,” fulfilling in fact the words of Scripture: ”If any one seem to be wise among you in this world, let him become foolish that he may be wise.” She fastened some rags on her head----all the rest had the tonsure and wore cowls----and served in this guise. [2] None of the 400 sisters ever saw her chewing during the years of her life. She never sat at table, nor partook of a piece of bread, but wiping up the crumbs from the tables and washing the kitchen pots she was content with what she got in this way. Never did she insult any one nor grumble nor talk either little or much, although she was cuffed and insulted and cursed and execrated.

[3] Now an angel appeared to the holy Piteroum, an anchorite of high reputation who dwelt in Porphyrites, and said to him: ”Why are you proud of yourself for being religious and dwelling in a place like this? Do you want to see a woman who is more religious than you? Go to the monastery of the Tabennesiot women and there you will find a woman wearing a crown on her head. She is better than you. [4] For though she spars with so great a crowd, she has never let her heart go away from God. But you sit here and wander in imagination through the different cities. And he who had never gone out went off to that monastery and besought the masters to let him go to the monastery of the women. They were emboldened to let him in, since he was famous and advanced in years. [5] And having gone in he demanded to see them all. But she did not appear. At last he said to them: ”Bring me all, for there is one lacking. They said to him: ”We have one within in the kitchen, a sale. For thus they style the mentally afflicted. He said to them: ”Bring her also to me. Let me see her. They went off to call her. She did not answer, perhaps perceiving what was the matter, or even having had a revelation. They drag her forcibly and say to her: ”The holy Piteroum wants to see you”; for he was famous.

[6] When she came, he perceived the rag on her forehead and fell at her feet and said to her: ”Bless me. She also fell at his feet in like manner, saying: ”Do you bless me, Master. They were all amazed and said to him: ”Father, do not let her insult you, she is sale. Said Piteroum to them all: ”You are sale. For she is mother both of me and you”----for thus they call the spiritual women----”and I pray to be found worthy of her in the day of judgment. [7] Having heard these words they fell at his feet, all confessing in different ways: one that she had poured the rinsings of the plate over her; another that she had beaten her with her fist; another that she had applied a mustard-plaster to her nose. And, in a word, all confessed outrages of one kind or another. So after praying for them he went away. And after a few days, unable to bear her glory and the honour bestowed by the sisters, and burdened by their apologies, she left the monastery. And where she went, or where she disappeared to, or how she died, no one knows.

CHAPTER XXXV. -- JOHN OF LYCOPOLIS

[1] THERE was a certain John in Lycopolis, who in his childhood learned the trade of carpentering----he had a brother a dyer. Later, when he was about twenty-five years old, he renounced the world. And having lived in various monasteries for five years he retired by himself to the mountain of Lyco, where he made himself three cells on the actual summit and went in and immured himself. One chamber was for his bodily needs, and another where he worked and ate, and the third where he prayed. [2] Having completed thirty years thus immured, and receiving the necessaries of life through a window from one who ministered to him, he was counted worthy of the gift of predictions. Among other instances he sent various predictions to the blessed emperor Theodosius, one concerning Maximus the tyrant, that he would conquer him and return from the Gauls; similarly also he gave him good news about the tyrant Eugenius. His reputation as a virtuous man was widespread.

[3] When we were in the desert of Nitria----by we I mean myself and the blessed Evagrius and his companions----we were anxious to find out accurately, in what his virtue consisted. Then said the blessed Evagrius: ”Gladly would I be learning what kind of man he is, from some one who knows how to test character and speech. For if I am unable to see him myself, but can hear accurately from another’s description the details of his manner of life, then I will not go so far as the mountain. I heard, and saying nothing to anyone kept silence for one day; but the next day, having closed my cell and committed myself and it to God, I hastened away to the Thebaid. [4] And I arrived after eighteen days, having gone partly on foot, and partly by boat on the river. But it was the time of the flood, when many are ill; which was also my experience. Well, I went and found the vestibule of his cell closed; for the brethren built on later a very large vestibule holding about 100 men, and shutting it with a key they opened it on Saturday and Sunday. So, having learned the reason why it was closed, I waited quietly till the Saturday. And having come at the second hour for an interview I found him sitting by the window, through which he seemed to be exhorting his visitors. [5] So, after greeting me, he said through an interpreter : ”Whence are you? and why have you come?

For I conjecture that you belong to the convent of Evagrius. I said: ”I am a stranger who started out from Galatia. And I confessed that I belonged to Evagrius’ society. Meanwhile, as we talked, the ruler of the district came up, Alypius by name. He turned to him and left off talking with me. So I retired a little and gave way to them, standing some way off. As their conversation lasted a long time, I became disgusted, and in my disgust I murmured against the good old man, since he despised me and honoured him. [6] And annoyed in mind at this, I formed the plan of going away, disdaining him. But having called his interpreter, named Theodore, he said to him: ”Go, tell that brother, ’Do not be petty-minded. I am just going to dismiss the ruler and talk to you.’ ” So I resolved to wait patiently, attending to him as a spiritual man. And when the ruler had gone, he called me and said to me: ”Why are you vexed with me? What did you find worthy of blame, that you thought those things that neither applied to me nor befitted you? Or do you not know that it is written: ’They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick’? I find you when I want you, and you me. And if I do not console you, there are other brethren to console you and other fathers.

But this man is delivered up to the devil through his worldly affairs and, having respite for a brief hour, like a servant run away from his master, he has come to receive benefit. It would have been absurd that we should leave him and attend to you, when you have uninterrupted leisure to attend to your salvation. So I exhorted him to pray for me and was fully convinced that he was a spiritual man. [8] Then, having affectionately slapped my left cheek gently with his right hand, he said to me: ”Many afflictions are in store for you, and many times have you been tempted to leave the desert. And you have been timid and have deferred (a decision). But the demon by providing you with pious and specious excuses unsettles you. For he suggested to you both a longing to see your father, and the instruction of your brother and sister with a view to the monastic life. [9] Behold then, I give you good news: both are saved, for both have renounced the world. And as regards your father, at this very moment he still has other years to live. So continue in the desert and do not wish on their account to go home to your native land, for it is written: ’No man having put his hand to the plough and turning back is fit for the kingdom of heaven.’” So, benefited by these words and sufficiently corrected, I thanked God, having learned that the pretexts which were driving me were finished with.

[10] Then again he said to me graciously: ”Do you want to become a bishop?” I said to him: ”I am one.” He said to me: Where?” I said: ”(I am bishop) over the kitchens, the shops, the tables and the pots. I am their bishop, and if there is any sharp wine I excommunicate it, but I drink the good. Similarly, I am bishop over the pot too; and if salt or any seasoning is lacking, I throw it in and season (the pot) and then I eat it. This is my bishopric, for gluttony ordained me.” [11] He said to me with a smile: ”Stop your jokes. You have to be ordained bishop, and toil much

and be afflicted. If then you would escape afflictions, depart not from the desert. For in the desert no man can ordain you bishop."

So I left him and went into the desert to my accustomed place, and told these things to the blessed fathers, who after two months went by boat and met him. But I forgot his words, for after three years I fell ill with an illness of the spleen and stomach. [12] I was sent by the brethren from the monastery to Alexandria, under treatment for dropsy. The doctors advised me to betake myself from Alexandria to Palestine for the sake of the air. For (Palestine) has light airs, such as befit our constitution. From Palestine I came to Bithynia, and there----I know not how, whether from human zeal or from the good pleasure of Him Who is more powerful, God would know----I was counted worthy of the laying-on of hands, so much above my deserts, having become embroiled in the disturbance connected with the blessed John. [13] And for eleven months hidden in a gloomy cell I remembered that blessed man, that he had foretold these things which I endured. And indeed he told me this, designing by his tale to lead me to endure the desert. "Forty years have I spent in the cell. I have not seen the face of woman nor the appearance of money. I have seen no one chewing, nor has any one seen me eating or drinking."

[14] When Poemenia the servant of God came to interview him, he did not meet her, but he had a number of secret matters told to her. And he enjoined her, when she went down from the Thebaid not to turn aside to Alexandria, "for you will fall into temptation." But she, thinking differently, or forgetting, turned aside to Alexandria to see the city. But on the way she moored her boats near Niciopolis to rest. [15] So her servants went on shore and after some disorderly behaviour had a fight with the people of the place, who were desperate characters. They cut off the finger of one eunuch and murdered another, and even threw Dionysius the most holy bishop into the river, not recognizing him, and after wounding all the other servants, loaded the lady herself with insults and threats.

CHAPTER XXXVI. -- POSIDONIUS

[1] THE stories about Posidonius the Theban are many and hard to relate, how meek he was and how exceedingly ascetic, and what great innocence of soul he possessed----I do not know if I have met any such. For I lived with him at Bethlehem for one year when he dwelt beyond Poemenion, and I beheld his many virtues. [2] Among other things he himself told me this one day: ”Living for a year in the Porphyrites district, the whole year I met no man, heard no talk, touched no bread. I merely subsisted on a few dates and any wild herbs I found. This happened one day. My food failing, I went out from the cave to go back to the world. [3] And having walked all the day with difficulty did I get two miles from the cave. Well, looking round I saw a horseman with the appearance of a soldier, having on his head a helmet in the shape of a tiara. And expecting him to be a soldier, I ran to the cave and found (on the way) a basket of grapes and newly-picked figs. I picked it up and went to the cave overjoyed, and had that food as my comfort for two months. [4] And this was the miracle he did in Bethlehem. A certain woman approaching her confinement had an unclean spirit and, when she was actually about to be delivered, she had difficult labour, the spirit tormenting her.

The husband, therefore, since his wife was suffering from the demon, came and besought that holy man to come. So he stood up----we were present, having come at the same time to pray----and prayed, and after kneeling down for the second time he drove out the spirit. [5] So he stood up and said to us: ”Pray, for at this moment the unclean spirit is going out, and there should be a sign, that we may be convinced. So the demon on his way out of her threw down the whole wall of the precincts, foundations and all. Now the woman had been six years without speech. After the demon had gone out she gave birth to a child and spoke.

[6] I knew also the following prophecy spoken by this man. A certain Jerome, a priest, distinguished Latin writer and cultivated scholar as he was, showed qualities of temper so disastrous that they threw into the shade his splendid achievements. Well, Posidonius, who had lived with him many days, said in my ear: ”The

noble Paula, who looks after him, will die first and be freed from his bad temper, so I think. [7] And because of this man no holy man will dwell in these parts, but his envy will include even his own brother." The thing happened as he said. For, in fact, he drove out the blessed Oxyperentius the Italian, and another man Peter, an Egyptian, and Simeon, admirable men, whom I noticed with approval at the time. This Posidonius told me that he had not tried bread for forty years, nor indeed had he borne malice for half a day.

CHAPTER XXXVII. -- SARAPION THE SINDONITE

[1] THERE was another monk, Sarapion, and he was surnamed the Sindonite, for apart from a sindon (loincloth) he never wore clothes. He practised great detachment from possessions and, being well educated, knew all the Scriptures by heart. And through his great detachment and his meditation on the Scriptures he was unable to remain calmly in the cell; not because he was distracted by material things, yet none the less he travelled up and down the world and perfected this type of asceticism. For he was born with this nature; for there are differences of natures, not of substances.

[2] The fathers used to relate how, taking an ascetic as his accomplice, he sold himself to some Greek actors in a certain city for twenty pieces of money. And having sealed up the money he kept it on his person. Then he stayed a long while and served as slave to the actors who had bought him, until he both made them Christians and induced them to leave the stage. All the time he took nothing except bread and water, nor did his lips rest from expounding the Scriptures. [3] After a long period, first the man was stricken with compunction, then the actress, then the whole house. But it was said that as long as they did not know him he washed the feet of them both. So both were baptized and gave up the stage, and applying themselves to an honourable and pious life they revered the man exceedingly and said to him: ”Here, brother, let us free you, since you yourself have freed us from disgraceful slavery.” He said to them: ”Since God has wrought this, and your soul is saved, let me tell you the mystery of my conduct. [4] I pitied your soul, being myself an ascetic, a free man, an Egyptian by race, and I sold myself for this reason, that I might save you. But since God has done this, and your soul has been saved through my humiliation, take back your money, that I may go away and help others.” But they used many entreaties and assured him: ”We will have you as father and master, only stay with us.” But they could not persuade him. Then they said to him: ”Give the money to the poor, for it has been our first payment for salvation; but come and see us, if only once a year.”

[5] In the course of his incessant wanderings he came to Greece, and during a three days' stay at Athens no one thought fit to give him bread; he carried no money, no purse, no sheep-skin coat----nothing of the kind. So when the fourth day came he was very hungry; for hunger unwillingly endured is terrible, if it has an ally in the fact that no one believes you. And standing on an eminence in the city, where the authorities were collecting, he began to lament violently, clapping his hands, and to call out: "Men of Athens, help!" [6] And all ran to him, wearers of the philosopher's cloak and labourer's smock alike, and said to him: "What is the matter? Whence are you? What ails you?" Said he to them: "By race I am an Egyptian. After I left my real country I fell in with three usurers. And two left me having got their debt in full, with no accusation to make. But one does not leave me." So, inquiring minutely about the usurers in order that they might satisfy them, they asked him: "Where are they? and who are they? Who is it that troubles you? Show him to us that we may help you." [7] Then he said to them: "From my youth covetousness and gluttony and fornication have troubled me. From two am I freed, covetousness and fornication; they trouble me no longer. But I cannot get free from gluttony. For this is the fourth day that I have not eaten, and my stomach continues troubling me and seeking its habitual debt without which I cannot live." Then certain of the philosophers, supposing it to be acting, gave him money. And having received it he put it down in a baker's shop, and having got one loaf he resumed his journey and left the city at once and never more returned to it.

[8] Then the philosophers recognized that he was truly virtuous, and giving the baker the price of the bread they took the piece of money. But having come to the country where the Spartans live, he heard that one of the first men of the city was a Manichaean with all his house, though virtuous in other respects. To him again he sold himself as he had done at first; and within two years he induced him to forsake his heresy, and brought him to the Church and his wife also. Then they loved him no longer as a servant, but treated him as a true brother or father and glorified God.

[9] One day he flung himself into a vessel as if he had a right to sail to Rome. The sailors, thinking that either he had paid his fare or had the price of it in cash, received him without trouble, each thinking that another had taken his luggage. But when they had sailed away and got 500 stades from Alexandria the passengers began to eat about sundown, the sailors having eaten first. [10] They saw that he did not eat the first day, and expected it was because of the voyage; similarly on the second, third and fourth days. On the fifth day they saw him sitting quietly while all ate and said to him: "Why are you not eating, man?" He said to them: "Because I have nothing." So they inquired one of another: "Who received his luggage or his fare? " [11] And when they found that no one had they began to attack him and say: "How did you come on without paying? From what source can you give us the fare? Or from what source can you get fed?" He said to them: "I have nothing.

Pick me up and throw me where you found me." But they would not willingly have relinquished their voyage, even for 100 gold pieces, but they wanted to get to their destination. So he remained in the ship and found that they fed him until (they got to) Rome.

[12] So having come to Rome he inquired who was a great ascetic in the city, man or woman. Among others he met also a certain Domninus, a disciple of Origen, whose bed healed sick persons after his death. So he met him and was benefited, for he was a man of refined manners and liberal education, and learning from him what other ascetics there were, male or female, he was told of a certain virgin who cultivated solitude and would meet no one. [13] And having learned where she lived he went off and said to the old woman who attended her: "Tell the virgin, 'I must meet you, for God has sent me.' " So after waiting two or three days at last he met her, and said to her: "Why do you remain stationary? She said to him: "I do not remain stationary, I am on a journey. He said to her: "Where are you journeying? Said she to him: "To God. He said to her: "Are you alive or dead? She said to him: "I trust in God that I am dead, for no one who lives to the flesh shall make that journey. He said to her: "Then do what I do, that you may convince me that you are dead. She said to him: "Order me possible things, and I will do them. [14] He answered her: "All things are possible to a dead person except impiety. Then he said to her: "Go out and appear in public. She answered him:

"This is the twenty-fifth year that has passed without my appearing in public. And why should I appear? "If you are dead to the world," said he to her, "and the world to you, it is all the same to you whether you appear or appear not. So appear in public. She did so, and after she had appeared outside and gone as far as a church, he said to her in the church: "Now then, if you wish to convince me that you are dead and no longer live pleasing men, do what I do and I shall know that you are dead. [15] Follow my example and take off all your clothes, put them on your shoulders, go through the middle of the city with me leading the way in this fashion. She said to him: "I should scandalize many by the unseemliness of the thing and they would be able to say, 'She is mad and possessed by a demon.' "He answered her: "What does it concern you if they say, 'She is mad and possessed by a demon?' For you are dead to them. Then she said to him: "If you want anything else I will do it; for I do not profess to have reached this stage. [16] Then he said to her: "See then, no longer be proud of yourself as more pious than all others and dead to the world, for I am more dead than you and show by my act that I am dead to the world;

for impassively and without shame I do this thing. Then having left her in humility and broken her pride, he departed.

There are many other marvellous acts which he did in the direction of impassivity. He died in the sixtieth year of his age, and was buried at Rome itself.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. -- EVAGRIUS PONTICUS

[1] IT is not right to be silent about the story of the illustrious deacon Evagrius, a man who lived in apostolic wise; rather one ought to put it into writing for the edification of readers and the glory of the goodness of our Saviour. I have thought it worth while to relate (the story) from the beginning, how he came to his ideal, and how having pursued asceticism worthily he died in the desert at the age of fifty-four, according to the words of Scripture: ”In a little time he fulfilled many years.”

[2] He came of a Pontic family and belonged to the city of Ibora, the son of a country-bishop. He was ordained reader by the holy Basil, the bishop of the church of Caesarea. After the death of the holy Basil, Gregory Nazianzea the bishop, that very wise and most impassive and highly cultured man, ordained him deacon. Then at the great synod of Constantinople he left him to the blessed Nectarius the bishop, since he was skilled in argument against all heresies. And he flourished in the great city, speaking with youthful zeal against every heresy. [3] Now it happened that this man, who was held in high honour by the whole city, was congealed by an image of the desire of a woman, as he himself told us at a later time, when his soul was freed from such thoughts. The woman loved him in return; now she belonged to the highest rank. So Evagrius, fearing God and respecting his own conscience, and putting before his eyes the greatness of the shame and the malicious joy of the heresies, prayed to God in supplication that he would put some obstacle in the way. Now the woman was pressing and madly excited, while he, though desiring to withdraw, had no power to, being constrained by the chains of this servitude.

[4] After no long time, when his prayer had succeeded but he had not experienced the benefit of it, there appeared to him an angel vision in the shape of soldiers of the governor, and they seized him and took him apparently to the tribunal and threw him into the so-called custody, the men who had come to him, as it seemed, without giving a reason having first fastened his neck and hands with iron collars and chains. But he knew in his conscience that for the sake of the above fault he

was suffering these things, and imagined that her husband had intervened. [5] So now he was extremely anxious. Another trial was going on and others were being put to torture for some accusation, so he continued to be much perturbed. And the angel who brought the vision transformed himself to represent the coming of a genuine friend and said to him, tied up as he was among forty prisoners chained together: ”Why are you retained here, my lord deacon? He said to him: ”In truth I do not know, but I have a suspicion that so-and-so the ex-governor has laid a charge against me, impelled by an absurd jealousy. And I fear that the judge corrupted by bribes may inflict punishment on me. [6] He said to him: ”If you will listen to your friend, it is not expedient for you to stay in this city. Evagrius said to him:

”If God will release me from this misfortune and you see me in Constantinople (any more), know that I shall suffer this punishment justly. He said to him: ”Let me bring the gospel, and swear to me by it that you will leave this city and care for your soul, and I will free you from this durance. [7] So he brought the gospel and he swore to him by the gospel: ”Except for one day, to give me time to put my clothes on board, I certainly will not remain. So when the oath had been produced, he came back out of the trance which had come on him in the night; and he arose and argued with himself: ”Even if the oath was in a trance, nevertheless I did take it. So having put all his belongings into the ship he went to Jerusalem. [8] And there he was received by the blessed Melania, the Roman lady. But once again the devil hardened his heart, as he did Pharaoh’s, and since he was young and vigorous doubts beset him, and he hesitated, saying nothing to any one, and changing his clothes and his habit of speech back to his old ways,vain-glory stupefying him. But God Who wards off destruction from us all involved him in a bout of fever, and after that in a long illness lasting six months, drying up his flesh, the source of his trouble.

[9] But when the physicians were at a loss and could find no way of cure, the blessed Melania said to him: ”Son, your long illness does not please me. Tell me therefore what are your thoughts. For this illness of yours is not without God. Then he confessed to her the whole matter. But she said to him: ”Give me your word before the Lord that you will keep to the mark of the monastic life; and, sinner though I am, I will pray that you may be granted a furlough of life. And he consented. So within a few days he got well, and he arose and received a change of clothes at the hands of the lady herself and went away and exiled himself in the mount of Nitria which is in Egypt.

[10] Having lived there two years, in the third year he entered the desert. So he lived fourteen years in the place they call Cellia, and he used to eat a pound of bread, and in three months a pint of oil, though he was a man who had come from a luxurious and refined and voluptuous life. And he made 100 prayers; and he wrote during the year only the value of what he ate----for he wrote the Oxyrhyncus

characters excellently. So in the course of fifteen years having purified his mind to the utmost he was counted worthy of the gift of knowledge and wisdom and the discerning of spirits. So he composed three holy books for monks, called Antirrhetica, in which he taught the arts to be used against demons. [14] The demon of fornication troubled him grievously, as indeed he told us himself. And all night long he stood naked in the well, though it was winter, so that his flesh was frozen. On another occasion again the spirit of blasphemy troubled him. And for forty days he did not enter under a roof, as he told us himself, so that his body threw out ticks, like the bodies of irrational animals. Three demons attacked him by day disguised as clerics, questioning him on the faith. And one said he was an Arian, the other an Eunomian, the third an Apollinarian; and he vanquished these in his wisdom by means of a few words.

[12] Again one day, the key of the church having been lost, having made the sign over the front of the lock and pushed with his hand, he opened it, after first calling upon Christ. So many castigations did he receive from demons and so great trial of them did he have that there is no counting the occasions. And to one of his disciples he told the things that would happen to him after eighteen years, having prophesied all to him in a vision (of the future). And he said: ”From the time that I took to the desert, I have not touched lettuce nor any other green vegetable, nor any fruit, nor grapes, nor meat, nor a bath. [13] And later, in the sixteenth year of his life without cooked food, his flesh felt a need, owing to the weakness of the stomach, to partake of (something that had been) on the fire; he did not however take bread even now, but having fed on herbs or gruel or pulse for two years, in this regime he died, after communicating in church at Epiphany. Shortly before his death he told us: ”For three years I have not been troubled by fleshly desire---after so long a life and toil and labour and ceaseless prayer. He was told of the death of his father, and said to his informant: ”Cease blaspheming, for my father is immortal.”

CHAPTER XXXIX. -- PIOR

[1] PIOR, a young Egyptian, having renounced the world, left his father's house and in an excess of zeal gave his word to God that he would never see any of his relations again. Fifty years after his sister, now an old woman, having heard that he was alive seemed likely to go out of her mind if she could not see him. But being unable to go to the great desert she besought the bishop of the district to write to the fathers in the desert that they should send him and she might see him. So, considerable pressure having been brought to bear on him, he decided to take one other with him and go. [2] And he announced at his sister's house: "Your brother Pior has come." So standing outside and perceiving from the creaking of the door that the old woman came out to meet him, he closed his eyes and called to her: "Ho! What's-your-name, I am Pior your brother, I am he. Look at me as much as you want." So she was convinced and glorified God, and having failed to persuade him to enter her house she returned to her dwelling. But he having offered a prayer on the doorstep exiled himself again in the desert.

[3] Now this miracle is told of him, that he dug in the place where he lived and found some very bitter water. And until he died he remained there, accepting the bitterness of the water in order to show his endurance. Many of the monks therefore after his death tried to rival him by dwelling in his cell, but they could not complete a year; for the place is terrible and inconsolably dreary. [4] Moses the Libyan, a man of exceedingly gentle disposition and very affectionate, was counted worthy of the gift of healings. He told me this: "When I was a young man in the monastery we dug a very big pit, twenty feet broad. In this eighty of us excavated for three days and we got a cubit further than the vein where we generally found water and expected it (in this case), but found none. So very much disheartened we were contemplating the abandonment of the work. Then Pior appeared from the great desert at the sixth hour, (the time) of burning heat, an old man clad in a sheep-skin coat, and greeted us and said after the greeting: "Why have you lost heart, men of little faith? For I have seen you since yesterday losing heart." [5] And having descended by a ladder to the cavity of the well he said a prayer with them, and having taken the pick he said after striking the third blow: "O God of the holy patriarchs, make not the toil of thy servants useless, but send them the

water they need." And immediately water sprang out so that they were wetted all over. So he prayed once more and went off. They tried to make him eat, but he would not suffer them, saying: "That for which I was sent is accomplished; for this I was not sent."

CHAPTER XL. -- EPHRAIM

[1] You must have heard particulars about Ephraim, the deacon of the Church of Edessa; for he is one of those who deserve to be remembered by religious people. Having completed in worthy fashion the journey of the Spirit, without being diverted from the straight road, he was counted worthy of the grace of natural knowledge, and afterwards of the knowledge of God1 and final blessedness. So having always practised the quiet life and for many years continuing to edify his visitors, at last he left his cell, for the following reason. [2] A great famine having come upon the city of Edessa, he felt compassion for the whole country-side, which was being destroyed, and approached those who were rich in material things and said to them: ”Why do you not take pity on human nature being destroyed, instead of letting your wealth be corrupted for the condemnation of your souls? They considered the matter and said to him: ”We have no one whom we can trust to minister to the famine-stricken. For all are dishonest in business affairs. He said to them: ”What do you think of me? Now he had a great reputation among all, not falsely but truly. [3] They said to him: ”We know you to be a man of God. ”Then trust me,” he said. ”See, on your behalf I appoint myself hospitaller.

And he raised money, and partitioned the porticoes and made up some 300 beds, and so nursed the sufferers from the famine, burying those who succumbed and treating those who had hope of life, and in a word out of the funds entrusted to him provided day by day hospitality and assistance for all the inhabitants. [4] So when the year was completed and prosperity returned and all went home, no longer having anything to do he entered his own cell and died after a month, God having provided him this opportunity of gaining a crown just before his end. Also he left some writings, most of which deserve to be studied.

CHAPTER XLI. -- HOLY WOMEN

[1] IT is necessary also to mention in my book certain women with manly qualities, to whom God apportioned labours equal to those of men, lest any should pretend that women are too feeble to practise virtue perfectly. Now I have seen many such and met many distinguished virgins and widows. [[2] Among them was the Roman lady Paula, mother of Toxotius, a woman of great distinction in the spiritual life. She was hindered by a certain Jerome from Dalmatia. For though she was able to surpass all, having great abilities, he hindered her by his jealousy, having induced her to serve his own plan. She has a daughter now living an ascetic life at Bethlehem, Eustochium by name. I have never met her, but she is said to be very chaste, and she has a convent of fifty virgins;

[3] I knew also Veneria, wife of Vallovicus the count, who gallantly distributed her camel's burden and was delivered from the wounds which property inflicts. And Theodora the wife of the tribune, who reached such a depth of poverty that she became a recipient of alms and finally died in the monastery of Hesychas near the sea. I knew a lady named Hosia, in every respect most venerable; and her sister Adolia, who lived in a way not indeed comparable to her, but proportionately to her own capacity. [4] I knew also Basianilla, the wife of Candidianus the general, who practised virtue ardently and scrupulously, and is still even now strenuously engaged in contests. Also the virgin Photina, venerable in the extreme, daughter of Theoctistus the priest near Laodicea. Again, I met in Antioch a most venerable lady who conversed familiarly with God, the deaconess Sabaniana, aunt of John the bishop of Constantinople. And I saw also in Rome the beautiful Asella, the virgin who had grown old in the monastery, a very gentle lady and a supporter of convents. [5] There also I saw men and women recently instructed. I saw also Avita, who was worthy of God, with her husband Apronianus and their daughter Eunomia, all so desirous to please God that they were publicly converted to the life of virtue and continence, and were held worthy on this account to fall asleep in Christ freed from all sin, having become possessed of knowledge and leaving their life in good remembrance.]

CHAPTER XLII. -- JULIAN

[I HAVE heard of a certain Julian in the region of Edessa, a very ascetic man, who wore away his flesh till it was so thin that he carried about only skin and bone. At the very end of his life he was counted worthy of the honour of the gift of healing.]

CHAPTER XLIII. -- ADOLIUS

[1] AGAIN, I knew a man at Jerusalem named Adolius, a Tarsian by origin, who having come to Jerusalem followed eagerly the untrodden road, not that on which most of us walked, but carving out for himself a strange mode of life. For his asceticism was superhuman, so that the very demons, trembling at his austerity, dared not approach him. For by reason of his excessive abstinence and his vigils he was even suspected of being a phantom. [2] For in Lent he would eat at intervals of five days, and the whole rest of the time every other day. But his greatest act of asceticism was this. From evening until the time when the brotherhood began to assemble again in their houses of prayer he would continue on his feet singing psalms and praying, on the Mount of Olives, the hill of the Ascension whence Jesus was taken up; and whether it snowed or rained or there was a white frost he remained undaunted. [3] So having completed his accustomed time he knocked at the cells of all the monks with his little waking-up knocker, collecting them into the houses of prayer and in each house singing one or two psalms with them antiphonally and praying with them. Then he went away to his own cell before daybreak, so that of a truth the brethren often had to undress him and wring out his clothes as if after the wash, and put other clothes on him. So then, after resting until the hour of psalmody, he applied himself (to worship) until evening. And so this was the virtue of Adolius the Tarsian, who reached perfection in Jerusalem and died there.

CHAPTER XLIV. -- INNOCENT

[1] You have heard from many the story of the blessed Innocent, the priest of the Mount of Olives, but none the less you will hear it also from us who lived with him for three years. He was simple to an excess. Having been one of the dignitaries of the palace in the early days of the Emperor Constantius, he renounced the world, leaving his marriage, by which he had also a son, Paul by name, of the imperial bodyguard. [2] When the latter had sinned with the daughter of a priest, Innocent cursed his own son, beseeching God and saying: ”Lord, give him such a spirit that his flesh may no longer find opportunity to sin”----thinking it better that he should struggle with a demon than with incontinence, which actually happened. At this present moment he is still on the Mount of Olives, wearing irons and chastised by the spirit. [3] How compassionate indeed this Innocent was, so that often he himself stole from the brethren and gave to the needy----I shall seem to be talking nonsense if I tell the truth. And he was exceedingly innocent and simple, and was counted worthy of the gift (of power) over demons. As an example of this: Once a young man was brought to him before our eyes taken by a spirit and by paralysis, so that I, having seen him, wished publicly to repel the mother of the man who had been brought, since I despaired of his cure.

[4] Well, it happened in the meantime that the old man having come up saw her standing and weeping and lamenting over the unspeakable misfortune of her son. So the good old man wept and, moved with compassion, took the young man and entered into his oratory, which he had built with his own hands, and in which relics of John the Baptist were laid. And having prayed over him from the third hour to the ninth, he restored the young man to his mother cured that same day, having driven out both his paralysis and the demon. His paralysis was such that the boy, when he spat, spat on his own back, so twisted was he.

[5] An old woman having lost a sheep came to him in tears. And having followed her he said: ”Show me the place where you lost it.” She led him to the neighbourhood of the tomb of Lazarus. He stood and prayed. But the young men who had stolen it anticipated him by killing it. So while he prayed, no one confessing and the meat lying hidden in the vineyard, a crow came from somewhere and hovered over the

place, took a morsel and flew off again. And the blessed one having marked the place found the slain animal, and so the young men who had killed it fell at his feet and confessed and paid, when asked, the proper price of the sheep.

CHAPTER XLV. -- PHILOROMUS

[[1] We met in Galatia the priest Philoromus, a most ascetic and enduring man, and stayed with him a long time. His mother was a maidservant, his father a free man. But he showed such nobility in the Christlike mode of life that even those whose family record was unsurpassable revered his life and virtue. He renounced the world in the days of Julian the infamous Emperor, and spoke to him with boldness. Julian ordered him to be shaved and buffeted by boys. He endured the ordeal patiently and expressed his thanks to Julian, as he told us himself. [2] In his early days war against fornication and gluttony was his lot. He drove out these passions by shutting himself up and wearing irons, and by abstinence from corn-bread and all things cooked by fire. After persevering in this course for eighteen years he sang the hymn of triumph to Christ. Attacked in divers ways by the spirits of wickedness, he abode in one monastery for forty years. He told us this: ”For thirty-two years I touched no fruit. Once when timidity attacked him, in order to get rid of it, he shut himself up in a tomb for six years. [3] The blessed Basil, the bishop, took great care of him, rejoicing in his austerity and firmness. Even now he has not renounced the pen and the writing sheet, though perhaps in his eightieth year. He said:

”From the time that I was initiated and born again until to-day, I have never eaten another’s bread for nothing, but always as the result of my own labours. (Speaking) as in the presence of God, he convinced us that he had given to the cripples 250 pieces of money earned by the work of his hands, and had never wronged anyone. [4] He went on foot even as far as Rome itself to pray at the martyr-chapel of the blessed Peter. He went also as far as Alexandria, to pray at the martyr-chapel of Mark. Then he came also a second time to Jerusalem, having gone on his own feet and defrayed his own expenses. And he said this: ”I do not remember that I was ever absent in mind from my God.”]

CHAPTER XLVI. -- MELANIA THE ELDER

[1] THE thrice-blessed Melania was a Spaniard by origin, but afterwards belonged to Rome. She was the daughter of Marcellinus the ex-consul, and wife of a certain man of high official rank, whom I do not quite remember. Having become a widow at twenty-two, she was favoured with the divine love, and having said nothing to any one----for she would have been prevented----in the time when Valens had the rule in the empire, she had a guardian nominated for her son and took all her movable property and put it on a ship; then she sailed with all speed to Alexandria, accompanied by various highborn women and children. [2] After that, having sold her goods and turned them into money, she went to the mountain of Nitria, where she met the following fathers and their companions----Pambo, Arsisius, Sarapion the Great, Paphnutius of Scete, Isidore the Confessor, bishop of Hermopolis, and Dioscorus. And she sojourned with them for half a year, travelling about in the desert and visiting all the saints. [3] But after this, when the prefect of Alexandria banished Isidore, Pisimius, Adelphius, Paphnutius and Pambo, with them also Ammonius Parotes, and twelve bishops and priests, to Palestine in the neighbourhood of Diocaesarea, she followed them and ministered to them from her own money. But, servants being forbidden them, so they told me----for I met the holy Pisimius and Isidore and Paphnutius and Ammonius----wearing the dress of a young slave she brought them in the evenings what they required.

But the consular of Palestine got to know of it, and wishing to fill his pocket thought he would terrify her. [4] And having arrested her he threw her into prison, ignorant that she was a lady. But she told him: ”For my part, I am So-and-So’s daughter and So-and-So’s wife, but I am Christ’s slave. And do not despise the cheapness of my clothing. For I am able to exalt myself if I like, and you cannot terrify me in this way or take any of my goods. So then I have told you this, lest through ignorance you should incur judicial accusations. For one must in dealing with insensate folk be as audacious as a hawk. Then the judge, recognizing the situation, both made an apology and honoured her, and gave orders that she should succour the saints without hindrance.

[5] After they were recalled she founded a monastery in Jerusalem, and spent twenty-seven years there in charge of a convent of fifty virgins. With her lived also the most noble Rufinus, from Italy, of the city of Aquileia, a man similar to her in character and very stedfast, who was afterwards judged worthy of the priesthood. A more learned man or a kinder than he was not to be found among men. [6] So these two during twenty-seven years receiving at their own charges those who visited Jerusalem in pursuance of a vow, bishops and monks and virgins, edified all who visited them, and they reconciled the schism of Paulinus, some 400 monks in all, and winning over every heretic that denied the Holy Spirit they brought him to the Church; and they honoured the clergy of the district with gifts and food, and so continued to the end, without offending anyone.

CHAPTER XLVII. -- CHRONIUS AND PAPHNUTIUS

[1] A CERTAIN man named Chronius of the village called Phoenice, having measured off from his own village, which was near the desert, 15000 steps counted with his right foot, dug a well there after prayer; and having found very good water forty-two feet away, built himself there a little dwelling. And from the day that he installed himself in this abode he prayed to God that he might never return to an inhabited place. [2] But when a few years had passed he was counted worthy of the priesthood, a brotherhood of some 200 men having collected round him. Now this meritorious feature of his asceticism is told, that having officiated at the altar for sixty years, exercising his priesthood, he did not leave the desert and never ate bread that came from any source but the work of his own hands.

With him dwelt one Jacob, who belonged to the neighbourhood, surnamed the Lame, an exceedingly learned man. Now both were known to the blessed Antony. [3] Now one day they were joined by Paphnutius, surnamed Kephalas, who had the gift of knowledge of the divine Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, interpreting it all without having read the Scriptures, but he was so modest that his prophetic virtue was concealed. It is told of him that during eighty years he never wore two tunics together. The blessed Evagrius and Albanius and I when we met these men sought to know the causes of brothers falling away or backsliding or stumbling in the proper life. [4] For it happened in those days that Chaeremon the ascetic died in a sitting posture and was found dead on his chair holding his work in his hands. And it happened also that another brother while digging a well was swallowed up by the well; and another on his way down from Scete died from lack of water. Then again there was the story of Stephen, who fell into disgraceful profligacy, and of Eucarpius, and the story of Heron of Alexandria, and the story of Valens of Palestine, and the story of Ptolemy the Egyptian who lived in Scete. [5] We asked therefore what was the reason why the men who lived there in the desert were some of them deceived in their mind and others shattered by lust. So this was the answer that the most enlightened Paphnutius gave us, namely:

”All things that happen are divided into two, what God approves and what He allows. As many things then as happen in accordance with virtue for the glory of God, these happen with His approval. But as many, on the contrary, as are fraught with loss and danger and are due to external crises or fallings away, these happen with God’s permission. [6] But the permission is given in a rational manner. For it is impossible that a man who thinks rightly and lives rightly should succumb to snares of shame or the deceit of demons. Consequently, all who seem to pursue virtue with a corrupt purpose, the vice of men-pleasing or perverse imagination, these also make false steps, for God deserts them for their benefit, in order that through their desertion they may perceive the difference that results from their change and correct either their intention or their conduct. [7] For at one time the will sins, when it acts with evil intent, at another time also the conduct, when it acts corruptly or in the wrong fashion. And this indeed often happens, that the vicious man with a corrupt purpose gives alms to girls in pursuance of an evil end, though he does an apparently good action by giving help to her who is an orphan, a solitary, or an ascetic.

But it happens also that men give alms with a right purpose to the sick or aged or those who have lost money, but sparingly and with a grumble, and the intention is right but the action is unworthy of the intention; for it is necessary that the merciful man show mercy gladly and generously. [8] They said also this: ”There are good qualities in many souls, in some a natural goodness of thought, in others aptitude for asceticism. But whenever some action is not done or natural goodness not manifested for the sake of the actual good, and those who possess good qualities do not ascribe them to God the Giver of all good things, but to their own free will, natural goodness and capacity, then such men are deserted and are involved either in disgraceful conduct or experience and in shame, and by means of the consequent humiliation and shame gradually lose the pride felt in their pretended virtue. [9] For when the man who is puffed up with pride, pluming himself on the natural charm of his discourse, does not ascribe to God the natural charm or even the supply of knowledge, but to his own application or natural gifts, God withdraws from him the angel of foreknowledge. When this angel is removed, then overpowered by the adversary the man who plumes himself on his natural charm falls into licentiousness through his presumption, in order that, the witness of his self-control being withdrawn, the words spoken by such men may be no longer worthy of credit;

while religious men shun the teaching which proceeds from such a mouth as if it were a fountain containing leeches, so that the Scripture is fulfilled: ’But to the sinner said God, Why dost thou recount my judgments and takest my covenant in thy mouth?’ [10] For truly the souls of the vicious are like diverse fountains. The gluttonous and wine-lovers are like muddy fountains; the covetous and greedy like fountains with frogs; others, envious and haughty but with an aptitude for knowl-

edge, are like fountains which cherish serpents, in which reason is always floating but no one likes to draw from them because of the bitterness of their character. This is why David demanded three things in his prayer, 'goodness and discipline and knowledge.' For without goodness knowledge is not good. [11] And if such a man corrects himself, putting away the cause of his abandonment, that is, pride, and recovers humility and recognizes his own measure, not exalting himself against anyone, and thanking God, then knowledge attested by proof returns to him. For spiritual words which do not have as an escort a sober and disciplined life are like ears of com blasted by the wind; they have the outward appearance (of corn) but have been robbed of their nutritive value. [12] Therefore every fall, whether by the tongue, or by perception, or by action, or by the whole body, tends to produce abandonment in proportion to the presumption, though God spares those who are abandoned.

For if, in the midst of their vice, the Lord will bear witness to their natural grace by providing them with eloquence, arrogance turns them into demons, puffed up with uncleanness."

[13] And those men told us this too: "When you see a man irregular in his life but plausible in speech, remember the demon who conversed with Christ using the words of Scripture, and the witness which says: 'Now the serpent was the most subtle of all the beasts on the earth.' In his case intelligence has the rather resulted in harm, since no other virtue accompanied it. For the faithful and good man must think the thoughts which God gives and say what he thinks and do what he says. [14] For if the relationships of a man's life do not accord with the truth of his words, he is, as Job says, like bread without salt which will in no case be eaten, or, if eaten, will make those who eat it ill. 'Shall bread be eaten without salt?' he says. 'And is there any taste in vain words,' which are not fulfilled by the witness of the works? Now these are the causes of the abandonings: in one case because of hidden virtue, that it may be revealed, as was Job's, God speaking to him and saying: 'Reject not My judgment, nor think that I have spoken to thee for any other reason than that thou mightest be shown to be righteous. [15] For thou wast known to Me who see secret things;

but when thou wast unknown to men, people supposing that thou wast serving Me because of wealth, I brought on the disaster, I cut off the wealth, that I might show them thy philosophy of gratitude.' In other cases it is to avert pride as with Paul. For Paul was abandoned, being tossed about in misfortunes and buffetings and divers afflictions, and he said: ' There was given me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted.' [16] Lest perhaps in the midst of his marvellous works both the repose and the prosperity and the honour which accrued to him might cast him gaping with vanity into diabolical pride. The paralytic was abandoned because of sins, as Jesus says: 'See, thou are made whole,

sin no more.' Judas was abandoned, because he loved money more than the word, wherefore also he hanged himself. Esau also was abandoned and fell into dissolute conduct, preferring the grossness of entrails to his father's blessing.

[17] So that considering all these things Paul said concerning some: 'As they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do things which are not fitting.' And concerning certain others who seem to have the knowledge of God with a corrupt mind: 'Since knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, neither gave Him thanks, for this cause God gave them up unto vile passions.' So that from these instances we know that it is impossible that any should fall into dissolute conduct unless he has first been abandoned by God's Providence."

CHAPTER XLVIII. -- ELPIDIUS

[1] IN the caves of the Amorites round about Jericho, which they excavated long ago when they fled from Joshua the son of Nun, who was ravaging then the aliens on the mountain of Doukas, there lived a certain Elpidius, a Cappadocian, afterwards counted worthy of the priesthood. Having been a member of the monastery of Timothy, the Cappadocian country-bishop, a very able man, he came and settled in one of the caves. He showed such self-discipline in his asceticism as to put all others in the shade. [2] For during his twenty-five years' life there he used to take food only on Sunday and Saturday and would spend the nights standing up and singing psalms. With him, (reigning) like a little king in the midst of his bees, lived the multitude of the brethren, and I too lived with him, and thus he made the mountain a veritable city. And one could see there different modes of life. Once a scorpion stung this Elpidius as he sang psalms by night and we too were singing with him. Fie trod it underfoot, nor did he even move from his standing position, despising the pain caused by the scorpion. [3] One day, as a brother was holding a vine-cutting, he took it as he sat at the declivity of the mountain and dug a hole for it as if planting it, though it was not the season. It grew big and became a vine large enough to give shade to the church.

In his company also a certain Aenesius reached perfection, a worthy man, and so did Eustathius his brother. To such a height of impassivity did he attain in drying up his body that the sun shone through his bones. [4] The story is told by his zealous disciples that he never turned (to gaze) towards the west because the mountain with its height dominated the door of the cave. Nor did he ever see the sun after the sixth hour, having passed overhead and now descending towards the west, or even the stars that rise in the west, for twenty-five years. From the time he entered the cave he did not descend from the mountain until he was buried.

CHAPTER XLIX. -- SISINNIUS

[[1] THIS Elpidius had a disciple, by name Sisinnius, of servile origin, but a free man as regards the faith, a Cappadocian by race. For one must point out these things for the glory of Christ, Who ennobles us and leads us to the true nobility. After dwelling with Elpidius six or seven years finally he shut himself up in a tomb and continued for three years in a tomb, praying constantly, sitting down neither by night nor day, neither lying down nor walking out. He was counted worthy of a gift (of power) over demons. [2] But having returned to his native country he was counted worthy of the priesthood, and collected a community of men and women. By his grave manner of life he drove out whatever masculine lusts there were in himself, and by self-discipline he curbed the feminine element in the women, so that the words of Scripture were fulfilled: ” In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female.” Then also he is hospitable, although without possessions, so as to shame the rich men who are not generous.]

CHAPTER L. -- GADDANAS

I KNEW an old Palestinian named Gaddanas, who lived in the open air in the region round the Jordan. Some Jews once set about him in a fanatic outburst, in the region round the Dead Sea, and came against him with sword drawn. And this incident occurred. When a man lifted up his sword and wished to use it against Gaddanas, the hand of him who had drawn it was withered up, and the sword fell from the hand of its wielder.

CHAPTER LI. -- ELIAS

THEN again Elias, a monk, dwelt in the same parts in a cave, living a life most grave and disciplined. One day when a number of brethren had come to him, for the place was on the main road, he ran short of bread. And he assured us: ”Dismayed at what had happened, I went into the cell and found three loaves. And the visitors having eaten of them to satiety----they were twenty in all----one was left over, which lasted me twenty-five days.”

CHAPTER LII. -- SABAS

[A MAN named Sabas, a layman, a native of Jericho, became so enamoured of the monks that he went the round of the cells and the desert at nights and at each habitation put outside a bushel of dates, and a sufficiency of vegetables, because the ascetics of the Jordan do not eat bread. One day a lion met him and, talcing him by surprise, chased him for a mile and then turned back, took his ass and went off.]

CHAPTER LIII. -- ABRAMIUS

THERE was a certain Abramius, an Egyptian by race, who lived a very rough and savage life in the wilderness. Afflicted in his mind by an untimely fancy, he went to the church and contended with the priests, saying: ”I have been ordained a priest by Christ this night, accept me as a celebrant.” The fathers removed him from the desert and led him to a less ascetic and calmer life, and cured him of his presumption, bringing this man who had been deluded by the demon to a knowledge of his own weakness.

CHAPTER LIV. -- THE ELDER MELANIA

[1] THOUGH I have told above in a superficial way of the wonderful and saintly Melania, nevertheless I will now weave into my narrative at this point what remains to be said. What stores of goods she used up in her divine zeal, as it were burning them in a fire, is not for me to dwell on, but for those who dwell in Persia. For no one escaped her benevolence, neither East nor West nor North nor South. [2] For thirty-seven years she had been giving hospitality, and at her own costs had succoured both churches and monasteries and strangers and prisoners, her family and her son himself and her stewards providing the money. She persevered so long in the practice of hospitality that she possessed not even a span of land. She was not drawn (from her purpose) by desire for her son, nor did yearning after her only son separate her from love towards Christ. [3] But thanks to her prayers the young man attained a high standard of edu-ation and a good character and an illustrious marriage, and participated in the honours of the world; he had also two children. A long while after, hearing how her granddaughter was situated, that she was married and was proposing to renounce the world, afraid lest they should be injured by bad teaching or heresy or evil living, though an old woman of sixty years, she flung herself into a ship and sailing from Caesarea reached Rome in twenty days.

[4] And having met there that most blessed and worthy man Apronianus, a pagan, she instructed him and made him a Christian, persuading him to be continent as regards his wife, Melania’s niece named Avita. And having also strengthened the will of her own granddaughter Melania, with her husband Pinianus, and instructed her daughter-in-law Albina, wife of her son, and having induced all these to sell their goods, she led them out from Rome and brought them into the holy and calm harbour of the (religious) life. And in so doing she fought with beasts in the shape of all the senators and their wives who tried to prevent her, in view of (similar) renunciation of the world on the part of the other (senatorial) houses. But she said to them: ”Little children, it was written 400 years ago, It is the last hour. Why do you love to linger in life’s vanities? Perchance the days of antichrist will

surprise you, and you will cease to enjoy your wealth and your ancestral property. [6] And having liberated all these she led them to the monastic life. And after instructing the younger son of Publicola she brought him to Sicily, and having sold all her remaining goods and received their value, she came to Jerusalem. Then, having got rid of her possessions, within forty days she fell asleep in a good old age and profound meekness, leaving behind both a monastery in Jerusalem and an endowment for it.

[7] But when all these persons had left Rome there fell on Rome a hurricane of barbarians, which was ordained long ago in prophecies, and it did not spare even the bronze statues in the Forum, but sacking them all with barbaric frenzy delivered them to destruction, so that Rome, which had been beautified by loving hands for 1200 years, became a ruin. Then those who had been instructed (by Melania) and those who had opposed her instruction glorified God, Who had persuaded the unbelievers by a reversal of fortune, in that, when all the other families had been made prisoners, these ones only were preserved, having been made by Melania’s zeal burnt-offerings to the Lord.

CHAPTER LV. -- SILVANIA (MELANIA continued)

[1] IT so happened that we travelled together from Aelia to Egypt, escorting the blessed Silvania the virgin, sister-in-law of Rufinus the ex-prefect. Among the party there was Jovinus also with us, then a deacon, but now bishop of the church of Ascalon, a devout and learned man. We came into an intense heat and, when we reached Pelusium, it chanced that Jovinus took a basin and gave his hands and feet a thorough wash in ice-cold water, and after washing flung a rug on the ground and lay down to rest. [2] She came to him like a wise mother of a true son and began to scoff at his softness, saying: ”How dare you at your age, when your blood is still vigorous, thus coddle your flesh, not perceiving the mischief that is engendered by it? Be sure of this, be sure of it, that I am in the sixtieth year of my life and except for the tips of my fingers neither my feet nor my face nor any one of my limbs have touched water, although I am a victim to various ailments and the doctors try to force me. I have not consented to make the customary concessions to the flesh, never in my travels have I rested on a bed or used a litter.”

[3] Being very learned and loving literature she turned night into day by perusing every writing of the ancient commentators, including 3,000,000 (lines) of Origen and 2,500,000 (lines) of Gregory, Stephen, Pierius, Basil, and other standard writers. Nor did she read them once only and casually, but she laboriously went through each book seven or eight times. Wherefore also she was enabled to be freed from knowledge falsely so called and to fly on wings, thanks to the grace of these books; elevated by kindly hopes she made herself a spiritual bird and journeyed to Christ.

CHAPTER LVI. -- OLYMPIAS

[1] THAT most venerable and devoted lady Olympias followed the counsel of Melania, attending to her precepts and walking in her footsteps. She was the daughter of Seleucus the ex-count, grand-daughter of Ablavius the ex-prefect, and bride for a few days of Nebridius, the ex-prefect of the city, but the wife of no man. For she is said to have died a virgin, but the spouse of the Word of Truth. [2] She dispersed all her goods and gave to the poor. She engaged in no mean combats for truth's sake, instructed many women, addressed priests reverently, and honoured bishops; she was accounted worthy to be a confessor for truth's sake. The inhabitants of Constantinople reckon her life among the confessors, for she died thus and went away to the Lord in the midst of her struggles for God's honour.

CHAPTER LVII. -- CANDIDA

[1] ATTENDING to her precepts and imitating her like a mirror, the blessed Candida, daughter of Trajan the general, lived a worthy life and attained to the height of sanctity, paying honours both to churches and bishops. Having instructed her own daughter for the condition of virginity she brought her to Christ as a gift of her own body, afterwards following her own daughter in temperance and chastity and the distribution of her goods. [2] I knew her labour all night long with her hands at the mill to subdue her body; and she used to say: ”Fasting is insufficient; I give it an ally in the shape of toilsome watching, that I may destroy the insolence of Esau.” She abstained absolutely from anything with blood and life in it, but taking fish and vegetables with oil on feast days, at other times she continued to content herself with a mixture of sour wine and dry bread.

[3] In emulation of her example the most venerable lady Gelasia, a tribune’s daughter, walked in the path of religion, having put on the yoke of virginity. Her virtue is renowned in that the sun never went down on her irritation against man-servant or maid-servant or any one else.

CHAPTER LVIII. -- THE MONKS OF ANTINOË

[1] HAVING spent four years at Antinoë in the Thebaid, in so long a time I acquired knowledge also of the local monasteries. For some 1200 men are settled round the city, who live by their hands and are extremely ascetic. Reckoned among these there are also anchorites who have shut themselves up in the caves of the rocks. One of these is a certain Solomon, a man of very mild disposition and restrained and possessing the gift of endurance. He used to say that he had been fifty years in the cave. He provided for himself by the work of his hands and had learned by heart all the holy Scriptures. [2] In another cave lived Dorotheus, a priest. He was extraordinarily good, and having himself lived an irreproachable life was counted worthy of the priesthood, and ministered to the brethren in the caves. To him Melania the younger, grand-daughter of the great Melania, concerning whom I shall speak later, once sent 500 pieces of money, beseeching him to spend them on the brethren there. But he took three only and sent the rest to Diocles the anchorite, a most-learned man, saying: ”Brother Diocles is wiser than I, and can administer them without doing harm, knowing those who should rightly be helped. For myself, I am content with these.”

[3] This Diocles began in the first instance with the grammar course, but afterwards gave himself to philosophy. However, in course of time grace drew him on, and in the twenty-eighth year of his life he gave up the cycle of studies and gave himself up to Christ; and he had spent thirty-five years in the caves. He told us this: ”Intelligence which is separated from the thought of God becomes either a demon or a brute beast.” But since we were curious to know his manner of speaking he explained thus: ”Intelligence separated from the thought of God inevitably falls into concupiscence or anger.” And he said concupiscence was beast-like and anger demoniacal. [4] But when I objected: ”How can human intelligence be continually with God?” this same man said: ”Whenever the soul is engaged in a thought or action that is pious and godly, then it is with God.”

There lived near him a certain Capiton, who had been a robber. He had completed fifty years in the caves four miles from the city of Antinoë, and did not come down from his cave, not even as far as the river Nile, saying that he was not yet able to meet crowds because the Adversary at that instant would oppose him. [5] With these we saw also another anchorite, himself also (living) in a cave in similar fashion. Being mocked in dreams by the frenzy of vainglory, he mocked in his turn those that deceived themselves, ”feeding the winds.” And he possessed bodily continence thanks to his age and his long time (in the desert), and perhaps also thanks to his vainglory. On the other hand, his judgment was perverted owing to the unrestrained character of his vainglory.

CHAPTER LIX. -- AMMA TALIS AND TAOR

[1] IN this city of Antinoe there are twelve convents of women; in one of them I met Amma Talis, an old woman who had spent eighty years in asceticism, as she and the neighbours told me. With her dwelt sixty young women who loved her so greatly that no key even was fixed on the outer wall of the monastery, as in other monasteries, but they were kept in by love of her. Such a height of impassivity did the old woman reach that when I entered and sat down she came and sat by me and put her hands on my shoulders in a transport of freedom. [2] In this monastery there was a disciple of hers by name Taor, a virgin who had been thirty years in the monastery; she would never accept a new habit or hood or shoes, saying: ”I do not need them, lest I be forced also to go out.” For all the others go out on Sunday to church for the Communion; but she remains in the house clothed in rags, ceaselessly sitting at her work. But her looks were naturally so charming that even the most stedfast would almost have been deceived by her beauty, if she had not had her chastity as an exceedingly strong sentinel, and by her modesty had been compelling the unrestrained eye to reverence and fear.

CHAPTER LX. -- COLLYTHUS

[1] ANOTHER virgin was a neighbour of mine, but I did not see her face, for she never came out, so they say, from the day she renounced the world. But having completed sixty years of asceticism in company with her own mother (-superior), at last she was about to depart from this life. And the martyr of the place stood over her----Collythus was his name----and said to her: ”Today you are going to travel to the Master and see all the saints. Come then and breakfast with us in the chapel.”So she got up at twilight and dressed and took in her basket bread and olives and shredded herbs, after all those years going out, and she went to the chapel and prayed. [2] And having marked that moment of the whole day when no one was inside, she took her seat and called on the martyr, saying: ”Bless my food, holy Collythus, and accompany me with thy prayers on the journey.” Then having eaten and prayed again she went home about sunset. And having given her mother (-superior) a writing of Clement, author of the Stromateis, on the prophet Amos, she said: ”Give it to the exiled bishop and say to him, Pray for me, for I am going on a journey.” And she died that very night, with no fever nor pain in the head, but having decked herself for the funeral.

CHAPTER LXI. -- MELANIA THE YOUNGER

[1] SINCE I promised above to tell about the (grand-) daughter of Melania, I am constrained to pay the debt, for it is not just that men should disdain her youthfulness in respect of the flesh and leave on one side with no pillar to commemorate it such great virtue, virtue which, frankly, far surpasses that of old and zealous women. Her parents by using compulsion made her marry a man of the highest rank in Rome. Her conscience was always being pricked by the tales she heard about her grandmother, and (at last) she was so goaded that she felt unable to perform her marriage duty. [2] For, two male children having been born to her and both having died, she came to have such great hatred of marriage as to say to her husband Pinianus, son of Severus the ex-prefect: ”If you choose to practise asceticism with me according to the fashion of chastity, then I recognise you as master and lord of my life. But if this appears grievous to you, being still a young man, take all my belongings and set my body free, that I may fulfil my desire toward God and become heir of the zeal of my grandmother, whose name I also bear. [3] For if God had wished us to have children, He would not have taken away my children untimely.

After they had struggled under the yoke a long while, at last God had pity on the young man and planted in him a zeal for renunciation, so that the word of Scripture was fulfilled in their case: ”How knowest thon, O woman, that thou shalt save thy husband? So having been married at thirteen and having lived with her husband seven years, in the twentieth year she renounced the world. And first she gave her silk dresses to the altars: this the holy Olympias has also done. [4] Then she cut up her other silks and made them into different church ornaments. And having entrusted her silver and gold to a certain Paul, a priest, a monk of Dalmatia, she sent them across the sea to the East, 10,000 pieces of money to Egypt and the Thebaid, 10,000 pieces to Antioch and its neighbourhood, 15,000 to Palestine, 10,000 to the churches in the islands and the places of exile, while she herself distributed to the churches in the West in the same way. [5] All this and four times as much she snatched, if God will allow the expression, ”out of the mouth of the lion” Alaric

by her faith. And she freed 8000 slaves who wished freedom, for the rest did not wish it, but preferred to be slaves to her brother; and she allowed him to take them all for three pieces of money.

But having sold her possessions in the Spains, Aquitania, Tarragonia and the Gauls, she reserved for herself only those in Sicily and Campania and Africa and appropriated their income for the support of monasteries. [6] Such was her wise conduct with regard to the burden of riches. And her asceticism was as follows. She ate every other day----to begin with after a five days' interval----and assigned to herself a part in the daily work of her own slavewomen, whom also she made her fellow-ascetics.

She had with her also her mother Albina, who lived a similar ascetic life and distributed her riches for her part privately. Now these ladies are dwelling on their properties, now in Sicily and now in Campania, with fifteen eunuchs and sixty virgins, both free and slave. [7] Similarly also Pinianus her husband lives with thirty monks, reading and busying himself with the garden and solemn conferences. But in no small way did they honour us when we, a numerous party, went to Rome because of the blessed bishop John; they refreshed us both with hospitality and lavish equipment for the journey, thus winning for themselves with great joy the fruit of eternal life by their God-given works springing from a noble mode of life.

CHAPTER LXII. -- PAMMACHIUS

A KINSMAN of theirs, Pammachius by name, an ex-consul, renounced the world in like manner and lived the perfect life. As for all his wealth, part of it he distributed while still alive and the rest he left to the poor at his death. Similarly also there was a certain Macarius, an ex-vicar, and Constantius, who became assessor of the prefects in Italy, distinguished and very learned men, who reached the highest degree of the love of God. I believe that they are still in the flesh after practising the perfect life.

CHAPTER LXIII. -- THE VIRGIN AND ATHANASIUS

[1] I KNEW a virgin in Alexandria whom I met when she was about seventy years old. Now all the clergy bore her witness that when she was young, some twenty years old, and exceptionally lovely, she was to be shunned because of her beauty, lest she should make any one an object of blame through suspicion. So when it happened that the Arians conspired against the blessed Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, by means of Eusebius the prefect, when Constantius was Emperor, and they were calumniously accusing him of unlawful deeds, he avoided being judged by a corrupt tribunal and trusted no one, neither relation nor friend, nor cleric nor any one. [2] But when the prefect's men entered suddenly into the episcopal residence and sought him, he fled at midnight to this virgin, wearing only his tunic and cloak.But she was disconcerted at the affair and frightened. So he said to her: "Since I am sought by the Arians and am unjustly accused, I resolved to flee, lest I should bear a false reputation and involve in sin those who wish to punish me. [3] But God revealed to me to-night: 'With no one canst thou be saved except with this lady.'" So with great joy she cast aside all hesitation and gave herself wholly to the Lord;

and she hid that most holy man for six years, as long as Constantius lived, both washing his feet herself and ministering to his bodily requirements and arranging for all his needs, borrowing books and bringing them to him, and no man in all Alexandria during the six years knew where the blessed Athanasius was living. [4] Now when the death of Constantius was announced and came to his ears, he dressed himself fittingly and was found once more by night in the church; and all were astonished and looked on him as a dead man come to life. Now his defence to his near friends was as follows: "This is why I did not take refuge with you, that you might the better swear (ignorance of my whereabouts), and also because of the search. But I fled to one whom no one could suspect, because she was beautiful and young, bearing two things in mind, her salvation----for I did help her----and my reputation."

CHAPTER LXIV. -- JULIANA

[1] AGAIN there was a certain Juliana, a virgin of Caesarea in Cappadocia, said to be very learned and most faithful. When Origen the writer fled from the uprising of the pagans she received him, and supported him for two years at her own cost and waited on him. I found this written in a very old book of verses, in which had been written by Origen's hand: [2] "I found this book at the house of Juliana the virgin at Caesarea, when I was hidden by her. She used to say that she had received it from Symmachus himself, the Jewish interpreter." I have inserted the virtuous acts of these women as part of my plan, that we may know that it is possible to gain excellence in many ways, if we desire.

CHAPTER LXV. -- HIPPOLYTUS

[1] IN another very old book inscribed with the name of Hippolytus, a disciple of the apostles, I found this story. There lived in the city of Corinth a high-born and most beautiful virgin who was practising asceticism with a view to (a vow of) virginity. As the time for it approached, they denounced her to the pagan who was the magistrate then, at the time of the persecutors, that is, as one who blasphemed both the times and the emperors and spoke ill of the idols. At the same time also those who traffic in such things were praising her beauty. [2] So the magistrate, being erotic, received the denunciation gladly, like a horse pricking up his ears. And when after setting every device into operation he failed to persuade the woman, then, furious with her, he did not hand her over to punishment or torture, but put her in a brothel and commanded the man who kept the women: ”Take her, and pay me three pieces of money a day as her hire. But he, to earn the requisite sum, intended to hand her over to all comers. So when those who hunt women in this way like so many hawks knew of it they visited this perdition-shop, and paying the tariff talked to her the language of seduction. [3] But she besought them with entreaties, saying: ”I have a sore which is offensive, and I fear that you will hate me; give me a few days and you will get the chance of having me for nothing.

So she besought God with petitions in those days. Wherefore also God beholding her chastity inspired a certain young man in the employ of the magister officiorum, fair in character and appearance, with a burning zeal for martyrdom. And having gone off with all outward appearance of lust he came late at night to the keeper of the women and gave him five coins and said to him: ”Allow me to spend this night with her. [4] So he went in to the private chamber and said to her: ”Get up, save yourself. And he made her take off her clothes and put his own on her, both the vests and cloak and all his masculine apparel, and said to her: ”Veil yourself with the ends of the cloak and go out. And so she sealed herself (with the holy sign) and went out and was preserved uncorrupted and undefiled. Next day, therefore, the deed was known. The young official was arrested and thrown to the wild beasts, in order that by him the demon might be put to shame, in that he became a martyr in two senses, both for his own sake and for the sake of that blessed one.

CHAPTER LXVI. -- VERUS THE EX-COUNT

[1] IN Ancyra of Galatia, in the actual city, I met a certain Verus, a man of noble rank, and had considerable experience of him and his lady wife, Bosporia----he was an ex-count. They attained such a degree of good confidence that they defrauded even their children, considering the future in a practical manner. For they spent the revenues of their estates on the poor, though they have two daughters and four sons, to whom they give no portion, except to the married daughter, saying: "After we are gone all is yours." But receiving the produce of their estates they spend them on the churches of cities and villages. [2] And this, too, is a mark of virtue in them. A famine having arisen, and militating against natural affection, they brought heresies round to orthodoxy, in many places putting their granaries at the disposal of the poor for their feeding. But they have adopted in other ways an exceedingly grave and sparing manner of life; they wear very cheap clothes and live on the most frugal fare, practising a godly sobriety, living for the most part on their farms and avoiding cities, lest haply through the pleasures of the city they should become involved in some of the city life and fall from their purpose.

CHAPTER LXVII. -- MAGNA

[1] IN this city of Ancyra many other virgins, some 2000 or more, are eminent as women both of continence and distinction. Among them Magna takes a prominent place in religion, a most venerable woman; I do not know what to call her, virgin or widow. For having been forcibly linked with a husband by her mother, she wheedled him and put him off, so people say, and thus remained inviolate. [2] When he died a little later she gave herself wholly to God, attending in a serious spirit to her own houses, living a most ascetic and continent life, having her conversation such that the very bishops revered her for the excellence of her religion. While she provided for the needs, primary and secondary, of hospitals, the poor and bishops on tour, she ceased not to work in secret with her own hands and by means of her most faithful servants, and at nights she did not leave the church.

CHAPTER LXVIII. -- THE COMPASSIONATE MONK

[1] LIKEWISE in the city we found a monk who preferred not to be ordained to the priesthood, but had been led to the life after a short period of military service. He is spending his twentieth year in asceticism, in the following fashion. He lives with the bishop of the city, and is so humane and merciful that he goes his rounds even at nights, and has pity on those who are in need. [2] He neglects neither prison nor hospital, poor nor rich, but succours all, giving some advice about compassion, if without compassion; leading others onward; reconciling some and providing others with their bodily needs and clothing. And what generally happens in all great cities is found also in this one; for in the porch of the church a multitude of sick people laid on couches beg their daily food, some being married, others unmarried. [3] Well, it happened one day that the wife of a certain man was confined in the porch, at midnight in winter-time. So he heard her crying out in her pain, and abandoning his customary prayers went out and beheld her; finding no one he took the place of a midwife himself, not disdaining the unpleasantness of such occasions, compassion having made him not sensitive. [4] His clothes in appearance are not worth an obol, and his food runs a good race with his clothes. He cannot endure to lean over a writing-tablet since compassion drives him from his studies. If any of the brethren gives him a book, he immediately sells it, answering thus to those who scoff at him: ”How can I persuade my Master that I have learned His art unless I sell Him Himself in order to practise the art perfectly?”

CHAPTER LXIX. -- THE NUN WHO FELL

[1] A CERTAIN virgin ascetic living with two others practised asceticism for nine or ten years. Seduced by a minstrel she fell and conceived and bore a child. Having come to hate her seducer intensely she was conscience-smitten to the depths of her soul, and reached such a degree of repentance that she completely lost heart and tried to starve herself to death. [2] And in her prayers she besought God, saying: "O great God, Who hearest the evils of every creature, and desirest neither the death nor destruction of those who stumble, if Thou wishest me to be saved, show me in this Thy marvels, and take away the fruit of my sin which I have borne, lest I employ a noose or fling myself over a precipice." Praying in these terms she was heard, for her child died not long after. [3] So from that day she never again met the man who had led her captive, but giving herself to the severest fasting for thirty years she served the sick and maimed. She importuned God so, that it was revealed to one of the holy priests: "So-and-so has pleased me more in her penitence than in her virginity." I write this lest we should despise those who genuinely repent.

CHAPTER LXX. -- A READER UNJUSTLY ACCUSED

[1] A VIRGIN once fell, the daughter of a certain priest in Caesarea of Palestine, and was taught by her seducer to accuse a certain reader in that city. And when she was now with child, being cross-examined by her father she denounced the reader. The priest confidently referred the matter to the bishop, and the bishop called his clergy together and had the reader summoned. The case was investigated. The reader was questioned by the bishop but would not confess. For how could that be told which had not happened? [2] The bishop was angry and said to him sternly: ”Do you not confess, you miserable and wretched man, full of uncleanness? The reader answered: ”I said the truth, that it is no concern of mine. For I am guiltless even of a thought about her. But if you wish to hear what is not true, then I have done it. When he said this, the bishop deposed the reader. Then he approached the bishop and besought him and said to him: ”Well then, since I have fallen, bid her to be given me as wife. For neither am I a cleric any more nor is she a virgin. [3] So he gave her over to the reader, expecting that the young man would live with her, and that besides his intercourse with her could not be interrupted.

Now the young man having taken her both from the bishop and her father put her in a nunnery and exhorted the deaconness of the sisterhood there to support her until her confinement. So within a little while the days of her confinement were completed. The critical hour came----with groans, pangs, labours, visions of hell----and the babe was not delivered. [4] The first day passed, the second, third, seventh. The woman being in hell with the pain did not eat, drink, or sleep, but cried out, saying: ”Woe is me, miserable woman that I am, I am in peril because I accused this reader falsely. The nuns go off and tell the father. The father, fearing to be condemned as a false accuser, keeps silence two more days. The young woman neither died nor was delivered. So when the nuns could no longer endure her cries they ran and told the bishop: ”So-and-so has confessed in her cries days ago that she accused the reader falsely. Then he sends deacons to him and tells him: ”Pray that she who accused you falsely may be delivered. [5] But he gave them no answer nor opened his door, but from the day he entered his house he had been

praying to God. The father went away again to the bishop; prayers were said in the church, and not even then did she bring forth. Then the bishop arose and went to the reader and knocking at the door went in to him and said to him:

”Eustathius, arise, loose what you have fastened. And immediately the reader knelt down with the bishop and the woman brought forth.

Now his pleading and the persistency of his prayer were strong enough both to reveal the false accusation and to chastise the false accuser; that we may learn to persevere in prayers and to know their power.

CHAPTER LXXI. -- THE BROTHER WHO IS WITH THE WRITER

[1] And now, when I have said a few words about the brother who has been with me from youth until this day, I will end my tale. I know that for a long time he has not eaten from desire nor fasted from desire. I consider that he has conquered desire of riches, the greatest part of vainglory. He is satisfied with what he has, he does not deck himself out with clothes, when despised he gives thanks, he runs risks for his close friends, he has engaged in contests with demons a thousand times and more; so that one day a demon tried to make an agreement with him and said: ”Agree to sin just once, and whatever woman you mention to me in the world I will bring her to you. [2] And again on another occasion, after buffeting him for fourteen nights, as he told me, and dragging him by the feet in the night he conversed with him audibly: ”Cease worshipping Christ and I will not come near you. But he answered and said: ”This is why I worship Him and will glorify Him infinitely and adore Him, because you are utterly distasteful to me when I am thus engaged. He has visited 106 cities and stayed in most of them, but by God’s mercy he has had nothing to do with a woman, not even in a dream, except for this contest. [3] I know that he received from an angel on three occasions the food he needed.

One day, being in the inner desert and having not even a crumb, he found three loaves in his sheepskin still warm. Another time he found wine and loaves. Yet another time I learned that some one said this to him: ”You are fainting; go then and receive from these men food and oil. So he went to the man to whom this man had sent him and said: ”Are you so-and-so? And he said: ”Yes; some one has ordered you to receive thirty bushels of corn and twelve pints of oil. On behalf ”of such a one I will glory,” whoever he was. I have known him often weep over men distressed by dire poverty, and he gave them all that he had except his flesh. I have known him also weep over one who had fallen into sin, and by his tears he led the

fallen one to repentance. He once assured me on oath: ”I prayed God that I might incite no man, especially the rich and wicked, to give me anything for my needs.”

[5] But for me it is enough to have been counted worthy of mentioning all these things which I have committed to writing. For it was not without God that your thought was stirred up to enjoin the writing of this book and the committal to writing of the lives of these saints. But you at least, most faithful servant of God, reading them with pleasure and accepting their lives and toils and so great endurance as a fitting demonstration of the resurrection, follow them eagerly, nourished with good hope, seeing the days in front of you to be shorter than those behind. [6] Pray for me, keeping yourself such as I knew you from the consulate of Tatian until this day and such as I found you when you had been chosen to be prefect of the most religious bedchamber. For a man whom such honour accompanied by riches and such power have not made incapable of the fear of God, such a one reposes on that Christ Who was told by the devil: ”All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

[Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end]

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator’s own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.