

EPIGRAMS.

TO MISS A. O., SYDNEY.

BRIGHT are the sunny days of childhood,
And the spring-time of youth's innocence;
In the throng'd city, or lone wild-wood,
These smiling seasons need no eloquence
To show their joys are pure and holy,
And all pervading and unfeigned—
Nor tainted with one shade of melancholy,
Nor aught disguised, nor overstrained.
Such, now, are these, thy happy days:
May they be thine in womanhood!
With virtue arm-in-arm always—
Where nought that's evil dare intrude.
A grateful heart this homage pays,
And for thy lasting welfare prays.

Bush, 1846.

J. W.

ON THE DEATH OF SIR ROBERT SALE.

Far o'er the Orient billows' flow,
The battle-cry is borne;
One laurel more for England's brow
From Indian fields is torn.
But high above the trumpet's breath
Our response rings of wail—
For 'tis no common note of death
That tells the fall of Sale.

Few, few of us his voice had heard,
But few his aspect known;
Yet was his name a household word—
We loved him as our own.
For he it was in hours of ill,
Mid rout and ruin's tale,
Upheld Old England's honor still,
Our own unconquered Sale.

It is a light and easy thing
To head the warrior throng,
When Victory waves a favoring wing,
And friends are staunch and strong;
But he who steers the adverse tide,
While all around him fail,
He shows the true heroic pride,
And such a chief was Sale.

Long, long, shall wild Afghanistan
Tell of her leaguer vain,*
When, flushed with blood, her victor Khan,
Stormed round our scanty train,
Nor comrades' fall nor crumbling wall,
Could make our chieftain quit—
The earthquake's shock† might move the rock,
But not the soul of Sale.

Thou, too, right valiant English heart,
That 'mid the conquering foe,
Though woman, play'dst the hero's part,
Still darker hours must know.
If prayers and tears could purchase life,
A nation's might avail,
And give thee, glorious from the strife,
Once more to welcome Sale.‡

Yes, it is ours and thine to weep—
Yet are they tears of pride;
He sleeps the Conqueror's chosen sleep,
The Soldier's death he died.
A fame is his no stain can dim,
No time can ever pale—
Who would not live and die like him,
The brave Sir Robert Sale?§

ART. II.—1. *Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, on the Theophania, or Divine Manifestation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. A Syriac Version edited from an ancient Manuscript recently discovered.* By Samuel Lee, D.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge. 8vo. (Printed for the Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts) 1842.

2. *The same. Translated into English with Notes; to which is prefixed a Vindication of the Orthodoxy and Prophecetical Views of Eusebius.* By Samuel Lee, D.D. 8vo. 1843.

3. *The Antient Syriac Version of the Epistles of St. Ignatius to St. Polycarp, the Ephesians, and the Romans; together with Extracts from his Epistles collected from the Writings of Severus of Antioch, Timotheus of Alexandria, and others.* Edited, with an English Translation and Notes, by William Cureton, M.A. 8vo. London 1845.

4. *Journal of a Tour through Egypt, the Peninsula of Sinai, and the Holy Land in 1838, 1839.* Intended solely for private circulation. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1842.

[FROM THE QUARTERLY REVIEW.]

AMONG the societies lately formed for publishing manuscript works contained in our public libraries, there is none which embraces a sphere so extensive, which aims at promoting so high a class of literature, and which, if adequately supported, promises to afford so valuable an addition to our stock of learning and science, as that under whose auspices Dr. Lee has put forth the volume named at the head of this paper. It is to the East only that we can look for direction in our endeavours to obtain fuller information upon many of the most interesting of subjects. It is hence only that we can hope to draw any additional knowledge concerning the earliest races of mankind, or any help in tracing their descendants among the present nations of the world. In the absence of any written record of events, the only course is to collect the traditions prevalent in those countries, to endeavour to decipher ancient inscriptions, to read the legends of coins, and to trace the connexion and intercourse of people by the affinities and inter-

* The siege of Jellalabad.

† During the siege of Jellalabad the fortifications which Sir Robert Sale and his little garrison had repaired with immense toil and peril, were thrown down by the shocks of an earthquake. The defence was still made good, and the assaults of Akhbar Khan repulsed.

‡ See the narratives of the retreat from Cabul, all or any of them, for an account of Lady Sale's heroic conduct.

§ See the narratives of General Pollock's campaign, for the meeting of Lady Sale, after her return from captivity, with Sir Robert Sale, after the gallant action by which the siege of Jellalabad was raised.

mixtures of language. But no one can qualify himself for such a task otherwise than by studying the present languages and literature of those countries. In vain will he pore over the hieroglyphic or demotic inscriptions and papyri of Egypt who has not grappled with the Coptic: vain will be every endeavour to explain the Pehlevi, and arrow-headed inscriptions at Persepolis, or the legends on the Babylonian bricks and cylinders, unless the inquirer has previously made himself acquainted with the Chaldee or Aramaic and the modern Persian, and the Zend as preserved in the books of the Parsees. What has been already done for ethnography by the comparison of language since the introduction of the Sanscrit into Europe, shows how much more we may reasonably expect when the different stocks and dialects of oriental tongues shall have been more extensively cultivated.

But not only may we look to the East for fuller means of tracing the history of the earliest races of mankind;—from the same quarter we may also hope to recover much of the science and literature of Greece and Rome, which appears to have perished in the original languages. And still more, even in those authors which have been preserved, many obscurities may be cleared up and difficulties explained by comparing them with oriental versions made previously to the time when multiplied transcriptions had introduced many errors into the original text. Elian, writing in the first half of the third century, mentions that it was reported that the Indians and Persians had translations of the poems of Homer, which they used to sing in their own language. (*Var. Hist.*, lib. xii. c. 48.) And the historian Agathias, in the middle of the sixth century, informs us that the Persian monarch Chosroes was said to be more thoroughly imbued with the writings of Aristotle than even Demosthenes with those of Thucydides, and to be perfectly versed in the works of Plato, which had been translated expressly for his use. (*Hist. Justin.*, lib. ii.) We have also evidence before us that as early as about the end of the seventh century of our era, several works were translated from the Greek into the Arabic. In the eighth and the earlier part of the ninth century, under the Abbassides, this labour of translation is known to have been carried on to a great extent. No expense was spared to procure the works of the learned in every language. Greeks, Syrians, Persians, and Indians met on the banks of the Tigris to give their aid in spreading knowledge and civilization among the Arabs.

Of these translations many still remain. Those of which the originals are extant may often be used with great advantage. We would instance the case of Ptolemy; where the astronomical skill of the Arabs at that period would enable them to correct mistakes in numbers and figures which might altogether escape the notice of Greeks, and where the evidence of their tradition will be most important, because in such cases no critical knowledge of the original language can be of any avail to rectify an error. Of works lost in the original, which have already been restored to us through this channel, we may instance the fifth, sixth, and seventh books of the Conic Sections of Apollonius of Perga, translated into Latin from the Arabic by the Maronite Abraham Ecchellensis; and his work on the Section of the Ratio, made known by the publication of Halley, who, without understanding a word of Arabic, was enabled by his great geometrical skill to state and demonstrate the several propositions from the schemes in the manuscript of the Bodleian.

Versions were also made from the Greek into the Armenian at a very early period, especially of ecclesiastical works. The publication of the Armenian translation of the Chronicon of Eusebius, has been of essential service to history, and has confirmed the criticism of Scaliger respecting the original. The Book of Enoch, first made known to Europe by the translation of the late Archbishop Laurence, shows that something has been already recovered from the Æthiopic: and the Coptic too may yet make us better acquainted with writings hitherto only known to us by the tradition that they once existed.

But it is above all to the Syriac or Aramaic that we may look for the recovery of works lost in the original Greek. This language which with slight variations prevailed from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and from the confines of Arabia and Egypt to Armenia, not only possesses a peculiar interest for us as being that used by our Saviour and his disciples, but also as being the vernacular tongue of many writers who hold a high rank in Grecian literature; whose works therefore can hardly be entirely free from some of the idiomatic expressions of their native land. The New Testament is, as we may naturally expect, full of Aramaisms; and one of the Evangelists is believed, not without good grounds, to have written his Gospel in that tongue. The earliest version of the New Testament is undoubtedly the Syriac; and after the Septuagint, that of the Old Testament also. This is not the place to discuss the question as to the period when those versions were made; but better arguments than occidental scholars have hitherto been willing to admit, support the belief of those branches of the Christian Church which first made use of them, that they touch upon Apostolic times. The work of translating from the Greek into the Syriac was certainly commenced very early. We are told by Eusebius in his account of the Martyrdom of Procopius, A.D. 303, that he had been employed in translating from the Greek into Aramaic. This passage does not indeed occur in the Greek text of the Martyrs of Palestine, as it has come down to us, but it is found both in the Syriac and in the ancient Latin version. Indeed the age of the manuscript itself in which the Syriac translation of the Acts of the Martyrs of Palestine and the Theophania of Eusebius, together with the Recognitions of St. Clement and the treatise of Titus of Bostra against the Manicheans, are found, shows that considerable progress in the work of translation from the Greek into Syriac must have been made as early as about A.D. 400.

Dr. Lee has given us in one volume the Syriac text of the Theophania, and in another his own version of it into English—with a preface and notes displaying great and varied erudition. But what we propose at present to consider is not the contents of the book, but its external history; the discovery of a very considerable theological treatise by Eusebius, of which only two or three fragments had been known, must excite a desire to learn what circumstances have at length brought it to light, and what reasons we may consequently have to hope for further acquisitions of a similar nature.

About six years ago the Rev. Henry Tattam, of Bedford, made a journey to Egypt, with a view of collecting MSS. serviceable towards an edition of the Scriptures in Coptic. Be-

sides Coptic treasures, he brought back about fifty volumes of Syriac MSS.—some extremely ancient. Dr. Lee says:—

It was in looking over these manuscripts that I had the extreme pleasure of discovering that of which the following work is a translation. The manuscript containing our work is very neatly written in the Estrangelo or old Church-hand-writing of the Syrians, on very fine and well-prepared skin. It is of the size of large quarto, each folio measuring about 14½ inches by 11½, and containing three columns, each of the width of 2½ inches.

The Professor then translates a note from one of the margins, which states that the transcript was made at Edessa in Mesopotamia, in the year of our Lord 411. The age of the manuscript therefore, according to this note, the veracity of which there is no ground to question, is 1434 years. At first sight, notwithstanding all our readers have heard of the dryness of the Egyptian climate, the date assigned may startle them; but we can assure them that in the collection of upwards of three hundred manuscripts amongst which this was discovered, there are many from the fifth to the thirteenth century as to which there can be no doubt. They are all noted with the year of the era of the Greeks (Seleucidæ); some also with that of the Martyrs; others, which are more recent, with that of the Hijrah likewise; and these notices are accompanied by so many particulars as to the scribe himself, as to the convent where each manuscript was transcribed, who was its superior, who its principal officers, who was then bishop of the diocese, and who the supreme patriarch, as to leave no possibility of mistake as to the date. By comparing the style of the handwriting, the nature of the vellum, and other particulars of those manuscripts which are not dated, or in which the note of the year is either erased or lost, with such as still retain the record of the year, we are enabled to decide, with a tolerable degree of certainty, the age even of the manuscripts without a date. There are in the collection one dated manuscript of the fifth and many early in the sixth century, and from comparing Dr. Lee's volume with these, we could not attribute it to a later date than that in which he acquiesces.

The manuscript was purchased by Mr. Tattam from the convent of St. Mary Deipara, in the desert valley of Nitria, situated between 30 and 31 degrees both of latitude and longitude, about 35 miles to the left of the most western branch of the Nile. The name of Nitria belongs properly to the northern part of the valley, where the famous natron lakes are situated; the southern part is more correctly the Valley of Scithis, or Scete, and is also called the Desert or Valley of Macarius, from the convent dedicated to one of the three saints who bore that name. Each of these three appellations may however be applied generally; and Mohammedans commonly call the whole valley Wadi Habib, after one of their own saints, who retired hither about the end of the seventh century.

This valley, most probably from its lonely situation, and possibly also, as Jerome seems to hint, from some fancied virtues of purification in the lakes themselves, in allusion to the passage of Jeremiah (xi. 22), "For though thou wash thee with nitre," &c., has been celebrated as the resort of ascetics from the earliest times. About the middle of the second century we read of one Fronto who retired thither with seventy brethren. At the beginning of the fourth century, Ammon, who, although there were ascetics before his day, has generally been reputed the originator of monasticism, withdrew from the world to this spot. The fame of his compulsory marriage, of the resolution of virgin purity which he persuaded his bride to adopt, and his retirement to the desert so soon as the death of his parents left him at liberty, gained for him many followers. But a very few years afterwards, Macarius is said to have instituted the first establishment in that part of the valley which to this day bears his name. To this place Arsenius, the preceptor of Arcadius and Honorius, retired upon the death of Theodosius. The number of ascetics increased, in a short time, to an almost incredible amount. Rufinus, who visited them about the year 372, mentions some fifty convents or tabernacula; and Palladius, who fifteen years later passed twelve months here, reckons the devotees at five thousand. Jerome visited this desert about the same period. From the narratives which these have given, with the accounts of Evagrius and Cassian, we may gather a very accurate knowledge of the manners of these monks at the end of the fourth century. Subsequently we have few materials for their history down to the middle of the seventh, when Egypt was taken by the Arabs.

From this period the only information is to be gathered from Arabic writers. The convents and their inmates seem to have been regarded with peculiar interest even by those who had embraced the religion of the Koran. Not only were several immunities granted them upon different occasions, but they even formed a favourite subject of poetry for the Moslem writers of the third and fourth century of the Hijrah. Abu'l-Faraj Al-Ispahani, a celebrated Arabian who died A.D. 967, published the Kitáb al-Diárát, or Book of Convents, which contained all the best poems inspired by the aspect of the Christian convents and the habits of their inmates. If any reliance is to be placed upon Al-Makrizi, in his famous work on the History, Antiquities, and Topography of Egypt, Monasticism must have increased most rapidly in about two hundred and fifty years: for he says that after the conquest of Egypt by Amr Ibn Al-A's, seventy thousand monks met him at Teraneh, each with a crook in his hand, to implore that he would grant them a deed of security. To this request the Arab assented. The number seventy thousand seems enormous; but both the manuscripts which we have consulted agree on this point.

About the end of the seventh century the Khalif imposed a tribute of a dinor each upon all the monks, but they appear to have remained without further molestation during the whole of the eighth century. Shortly after the death of Harún Al-Rashid, at the commencement of the ninth, the Kharigites having seized upon Alexandria, made an excursion also into the Wadi Habib, plundered and burnt the monasteries, and carried away many of the monks for slaves. Such as could escape were scattered abroad into different countries, and many found an asylum in the convents of the Thebaid. With this event the decline of monasticism in Egypt seems to have commenced. We find, however, that under Jacob, the next Patriarch, many of the monks returned to Scete, and some of its convents were rebuilt. In the days of the 52nd Patriarch we are told that they were again in a thriving condition.

Under Sanutius, the 55th in succession upon the throne of St. Mark, an order was obtained from the Mohammedan sovereign to liberate their monks from the payment of tribute. The Patriarch, who had been himself formerly steward of the Monastery of Macarius, seized upon this as a favourable opportunity to restore that edifice. He not only completely rebuilt it, but surrounded it with a high wall to protect it against sudden incursions of the Arabs, labouring with his own hands in the work. Elmacin informs us that the Patriarch Gabriel restored some of the convents at the beginning of the tenth century, but does not specify which they were. It seems probable, however, that at this period the Syrian convent of St. Mary Deipara, concerning which we are most interested, was in a flourishing state, as we find that in the year 932 Moses of Tecri, who was then Abbot, having had occasion to make a journey to Bagdad, brought with him upon his return an accession to the library of not less than two hundred and fifty volumes—among which in all probability was the manuscript containing the Theophania.

About a century after this we have mention also of the library of the Monastery of Macarius. Severus, Bishop of Aschmounin, to whom Renaudot is indebted for most of the facts in his work on the Patriarchs of Alexandria, informs us that he consulted for the compilation of his history various MSS. both in Greek and Coptic, then existing in that library. There is little mention in such books as are accessible to us, of the condition of these monasteries during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. We are told that it was a practice of the Patriarchs of Alexandria to visit the Convent of Macarius immediately after their election, and also that they used to pass the season of Lent there.

According to Al-Makrizi, writing at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the number of monasteries had once amounted to a hundred, but at his time they were reduced to seven. That of St. Macarius was still a fine building, but even its inhabitants few, and the other buildings in a ruinous state.

In later times several Europeans have visited these convents. Gassendi relates in his *Life of Peiresc*, that a Capuchin monk named Egidius Lochiensis (Giles de Loche), who had resided seven years in Egypt for the purpose of studying oriental languages, informed Peiresc that there existed in several of the monasteries great quantities of manuscripts, and that he himself had seen in one of them a collection of about eight thousand volumes, many of great antiquity, some as old as the time of St. Anthony. This monk had given a somewhat exaggerated statement. The monastery to which he alludes is, in all probability that of St. Mary of the Syrians, near the Natron Lakes, as from all the accounts which have reached us, this possessed by far the greatest number of books. Vansleb, during his visit to Egypt in the year 1672, had formed the resolution of making an excursion to the Natron Lakes; and, although frustrated in this design, he did visit the convent of St. Anthony in the desert near the Red Sea. We mention this because he was admitted into the library, which was situated, as is generally the case, in the strong tower where all their valuables are kept. This collection, he says, consisted of three or four chests of ancient Coptic and Arabic manuscripts, chiefly church books and books of devotion, some of which seemed to him well worthy of a place even in a royal library. Of the whole number he selected two, one a Coptic and Arabic dictionary and grammar, valued by the monks at thirty crowns, and the other a ritual of the ceremonies of the Coptic church, very carefully transcribed. These he was anxious to obtain; but failed because the monks could not alienate them without incurring the risk of excommunication by the patriarch; and further, which perhaps was the strongest reason, because he was himself but ill furnished with funds.

Six or seven years later the monks of Nitria were visited by our own countryman, Robert Huntington, then chaplain at Aleppo, and afterwards successively provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and bishop of Raphoe, whose fine collection of Oriental manuscripts now forms part of the priceless treasures in the Bodleian. During his residence of eleven years in the East he had availed himself of every opportunity to enrich his stock; but the book which of all others he was most anxious to procure, as appears from his letters, published by Dr. Thomas Smith in the year 1704, was the Syriac version of the epistles of St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch. The Ignatian controversy was then at its height. The immortal work of Bishop Pearson was published about two years after Huntington had left England, and much interest was felt for the discovery of the Syriac version; to the existence of which Archbishop Usher had drawn attention in the preface to his edition of the Epistles of Polycarp and Ignatius. It was principally from his anxiety for this Syriac version that he undertook his journey into Egypt in the year 1678 or 1679, and proceeded across the desert to the Natron Lakes. He seems to have entertained considerable expectations of finding the epistles of Ignatius here; but in this hope he was disappointed: although the Syriac version of three of these epistles, and two copies of that of Polycarp, existed at that time in the Syrian monastery of St. Mary Deipara, as will be seen in the sequel. The Syrian monks doubtless did not admit Huntington into their library, as the only book which he mentions was an Old Testament in the Estrangelo character. In the convent of St. Macarius he states that he saw a large volume of St. Chrysostom in Coptic, on vellum, an immense volume containing his commentary on St. Matthew in Arabic, and a Coptic Lectionary for the whole year in four large volumes. In the monastery called El-Baramous, which at that time was inhabited by twenty-five monks and a superior, he makes mention of no other books than a copy of the New Testament in Coptic and Arabic. He does not speak of any manuscripts in the convent of Amba Bishoi, which he says was at that time in a less ruinous condition than either of the other three; he speaks, however, of the still famous tamarind-tree. The tradition is that St. Ephraem, out of pious anxiety to see St. Piseos, or Pissus, now corrupted into Bishoi, the fame of whose sanctity had travelled as far as Edessa, undertook the long and weary journey from the confines of Armenia to the desert of Nitria. This zeal was rewarded by a miracle. Upon his arrival he hastened to the cell of St. Piseos and stuck his staff in the sand before the door as he entered. The staff immediately struck root and sprouted, and eventually grew up into that fine and beautiful tamarind-tree which the monks then showed, and we believe still show, as a living record of the visit of St.

Ephraem. Huntington was informed that the number of convents had once amounted to three hundred and sixty-six. How many books he found is not mentioned; but we find that he sent to England, to Dr. Marshall, who was then preparing an edition of the New Testament in Coptic, a copy of the Evangelists in that language, which he obtained from one of these monasteries.

The next of whose visit any account has reached us is Gabriel Eva, a monk of the order of St. Anthony, and abbot of St. Maura in Mount Lebanon. After a journey through Egypt, he had been sent on a mission to Rome by Stephen, the Maronite patriarch of Antioch; and the account he gave of the Nitrian convents was received with much interest by Clement XI. The Pope was anxious to transfer from the desert to the Vatican a collection of manuscripts rendered precious and venerable by their extreme antiquity, and probably containing an unexplored mine of theological learning. It happened that Elias Assemani, the cousin of the famous Joseph Simon Assemani, had been sent by Stephen of Antioch, upon business to Rome, and having already accomplished the object of his journey, was at that moment on the point of returning to Syria. No person could be better qualified to undertake the mission to the desert of Nitria, and Gabriel Eva accordingly recommended him to the Pope. Furnished with letters to the Coptic patriarch, he left Rome in the spring of 1707, and was graciously received at Cairo. He arrived at the monastery of the Syrians about the end of June; the introduction of the patriarch procuring for him a good reception. The urbanity of his manners, his perfect knowledge of their habits and language, soon gained him the good-will of the monks, and at length they admitted him into their library: this he found a sort of cave or cellar, filled with Arabic, Syriac, and Coptic manuscripts, heaped together in the greatest disorder, and falling to pieces through age and want of attention. A little examination satisfied him of their value, and he began to entertain great hopes of being able to persuade the good monks to part with books which they were utterly unable to read. But frightened, perhaps, by the anathemas denounced in almost every volume by its donor, against all those who should be in any way instrumental in alienating it—suspicious by nature, and ready to suppose that what a stranger was eager to get hold of must contain some treasure—they turned a deaf ear to his request for the sale of the whole collection, and only with very great difficulty were they induced to part with about forty manuscripts. These being transported across the desert to the Nile, Elias Assemani set out, accompanied by one of the monks, to return in a boat to Cairo. On their way a gust of wind upset the boat. The monk was drowned, but another boat, passing by, picked up Assemani; and in the midst of a tumult of feelings, his energy did not abandon him. He immediately hired several watermen to fish up the manuscripts; and, having with much care wiped away the slime, he dried and restored them as well as he was able. The manuscripts, in number thirty-four, were deposited in the Vatican about Christmas, 1707.

Their obvious importance was a powerful stimulus. The Pope therefore determined to send again into Egypt, and selected J. S. Assemani, who set out in June, 1715. The head of the Coptic church received him kindly; and he left Cairo to proceed on his journey to Scete about the middle of August, accompanied by Philotheus, a monk of the convent of St. Macarius, as his guide. Having arrived at Etris, a small village on the western branch of the Nile, they turned across into the desert and came first to the convent of St. Macarius. Here he obtained some excellent Coptic manuscripts, of which he has given a catalogue in his "*Bibliotheca Orientalis*" (vol. i. p. 617); and these, he says, were all they possessed of any consequence. His next visit was to St. Mary Deipara: here he found upwards of two hundred Syriac manuscripts, all of which he carefully examined, and selected about one hundred, hoping that he might be able to purchase them. But upon this, as upon the former occasion, if Assemani's own account be correct, the monks continued most obstinate; nor could he prevail upon them by argument, bribe, or entreaty to give up to him more than a very few volumes.

In the interval between the journeys of Elias Assemani and that of his cousin the convents of Nitria had also been visited (December, 1712) by the Jesuit Claude Sicard. The once flourishing monastery of St. Macarius at that period had only four inhabitants—the superior, two deacons, and a porter. Having passed one day in this convent he proceeded to that of the Syrians, which he describes as being in the best condition of them all, having a very agreeable garden, watered by a well, in which were many trees of various kinds. The number of monks was not above twelve or fifteen. Having remained here two days, during which time he made a short visit to the convent of Amba Bishoi, only a few paces distant, and inhabited by but four monks, he set out at sunrise on the morning of the 11th, and arrived at the monastery of the Holy Virgin of El-Baramous, or of the Greeks, about noon. The number of monks here was about twelve or fifteen. Sicard states that in the immediate neighborhood of this convent were the ruins of ten or twelve other buildings, and that he could distinctly trace through the valley the ruins of upwards of fifty monasteries; and that the superior of St. Macarius informed him that they were formerly equal in number to the days of the year. Sicard does not upon this occasion make any particular mention of the books in either of these convents, but merely states that in the tower of each there was a library, which consisted of three or four chests filled with books and ancient manuscripts, covered with dust and in a neglected condition. This Jesuit revisited Nitria with J. S. Assemani, and afterwards accompanied him, upon his return to Egypt in the next year, 1716, in his expedition across the desert of the Thebaid to the convents of St. Anthony and St. Paul near the coast of the Red Sea. Sicard in describing their visit to the monastery of St. Anthony, says—

He [Synodius, the superior of the convent] was more tractable when Assemani begged him to show us the tower which is shut against all strangers; for making him some trifling presents of hardware (the good monk was a great student of astrology and alchemy, and the transmutation of metals), we persuaded him to conduct us thither. Our only curiosity was to see the manuscripts. We found three chests-full, being all that had escaped the ravages which at different periods had befallen the monastery. We examined them all. For the most part they consisted of prayers and homilies in Coptic and Arabic. The Abbé Assemani only found three or four manuscripts worthy of the Vatican. These he pur-

chased secretly from the Superior, without the knowledge of the monks, who, had they known, would have opposed the sale, although the manuscripts are quite valueless to themselves, and they make no use of them whatever.

Assemani, although he mentions that Sicard accompanied him in his expedition to the Thebaid, is altogether silent respecting his attending him to the desert of Macarius. Neither does his account of obtaining so few manuscripts there, and those with so much difficulty, quite coincide with that of Sicard, who says that he took those which suited him. This silence certainly gives ground for suspicion that there was something in the transaction which Assemani did not wish to transpire, and of which the mention of Sicard's accompanying him might have led to the disclosure. His secret and indeed fraudulent dealing with the Superior, who had no right to dispose of any property without the consent of the community, would make but a sorry figure in his account of the manner in which various valuable accessions had been made to the collections of the Vatican.

In the month of August, in the year 1730, the Sieur Granger made a journey to the Natron Lakes. He tells us that he was well received by the monks, whom he describes as poor and ignorant. Those belonging to the convent of Macarius and St. Mary of the Syrians were deaf to all his entreaties to be allowed to see their libraries. He says that the buildings at that time were falling into decay, and the dust destroying the books and manuscripts, of which the monks made no use whatever. Their own patriarch had represented to them that the sum which the books would produce would be sufficient to enable them to restore their churches and rebuild their cells; but they declared that they would rather be buried in the ruins.

In 1778, C. S. Sonnini, visited the valley. He remained five days in the monastery of El-Baramous. He makes no mention of books or manuscripts, but complains bitterly of the avarice and extortion of the monks, who wished to exact from him five or six hundred sequins upon his leaving them. He is the only traveller who has spoken in harsh terms of these poor monks.

In May, 1792, W. G. Browne, an Englishman, was here. He says—

During my stay near the lakes I visited two of the Coptic convents—that called the Syrian, and that of St. George—where I could observe no traces of any European travellers but Baron Thunis, whom the Empress of Russia had sent to negotiate a defection on the part of the Beys, but who having exhibited less prudence than courage in the promotion of the designs of his mistress, had been privately put to death at Cairo by order of the Beys, to avoid delivering him to the Porte, as had been requested of them. These convents contain each of them several Religious, who retain all the simplicity of the primitive ages. They drink water, and eat coarse bread and vegetables, very seldom touching meat, wine, or coffee. They are ignorant indeed, but strangers to vice; and although their time is employed to no useful purpose, so neither is their application of it prejudicial to any. They have each a small garden, which supplies common vegetables, and a breed of tame fowls, together with a well of water within the walls. The rest of the necessaries of life are provided them by the voluntary contributions of the Christians of their own persuasion; and as the business of artificers and menials is all performed by themselves, their expenses are not very extended. The entrance to each of these convents is by a small trap-door, against which two millstones are rolled within. The buildings appear to have lasted for several centuries, and the walls are still firm and substantial. No praise is to be given to the Religious for cleanliness; but as the list of their furniture and apparel is very small, they cannot be frequently renewed. Human beings, more ignorant of mankind and their transactions than some of those whom I conversed with, are scarcely anywhere to be found; but the Superiors in both were in a certain degree intelligent. One of them, when I was admitted, was mending his shoes, and seemed to think little of theological controversies. The other attempted to prove to me the tenet of Monothelism; and on my expressing myself persuaded by his arguments, he seemed highly gratified. Indeed I met with, on their part, every mark of hospitality. I inquired for manuscripts, and saw in one of the convents several books in the Coptic, Syriac, and Arabic languages. Among these were an Arabo-Coptic Lexicon, the works of St. Gregory, and the Old and New Testament in Arabic. The Superior told me they had nearly eight hundred volumes, but positively refused to part with any of them, nor could I see any more. The monks are strangers to all idiom but the vulgar Arabic.

The next account of this place is that by General Andr  ossy in his "*Memoire sur la Vall  e des Lacs de Natron* at celle du Fleuve-sans-cau." At the time of his visit in 1799, there were nine monks in the convent of El-Baramous, eighteen in that of the Syrians, twelve in the Amba-Bishoi, and twenty in the St. Macarius. He says—

Their only books, are ascetic works in manuscripts, on parchment or cotton paper, some in Arabic, and some in Coptic, having an Arabic translation on the margin. We brought away some of this latter class, which appear to have a date of six centuries.

In the year 1828, Lord Prudhoe, who thinks no labour too great when any real advantage to science or literature is probable, made an excursion to these monasteries. We have been favoured by his Lordship with the following brief account of his visit:—

In 1828 I began to make inquiries for Coptic works having Arabic translations, in order to assist Mr. Tattam in his Coptic and Arabic Dictionary. On a visit to the Coptic bishop at Cairo, I learnt that there was in existence a celebrated *Selim* or *Lexicon* in Coptic and Arabic, of which one copy was in Cairo, and another in one of the Coptic convents of the Natron Lakes, called Baramous, besides which libraries were said to be preserved both at the Baramous and the Syrian convents. In October, 1828, Mr. Linant sent his dromedaries to Terane, on the west bank of the Nile, where the natron manufactory was established by the pacha, and on the next day Mr. Linant and I embarked in a cangia on the Nile, and dropped down to Terane, where we landed. Mounting our dromedaries, we rode to the Baramous convent, and encamped outside its walls. The monks in this convent, about twelve in number, appeared poor and ignorant. They looked on us with great jealousy, and denied having any books except those in the church, which they showed. We remained with them till night, and in some degree softened their disposition towards us by presents of some comforts and luxuries, of which their situation in the desert deprived them. On the following morning we again visited the monks, and so far succeeded in making friends of them that in a moment of good humour they agreed to show us their library. From it I selected a certain number of manuscripts, which, with the *Selim*, we carried into the monks' room. A long deliberation ensued among these monks how far