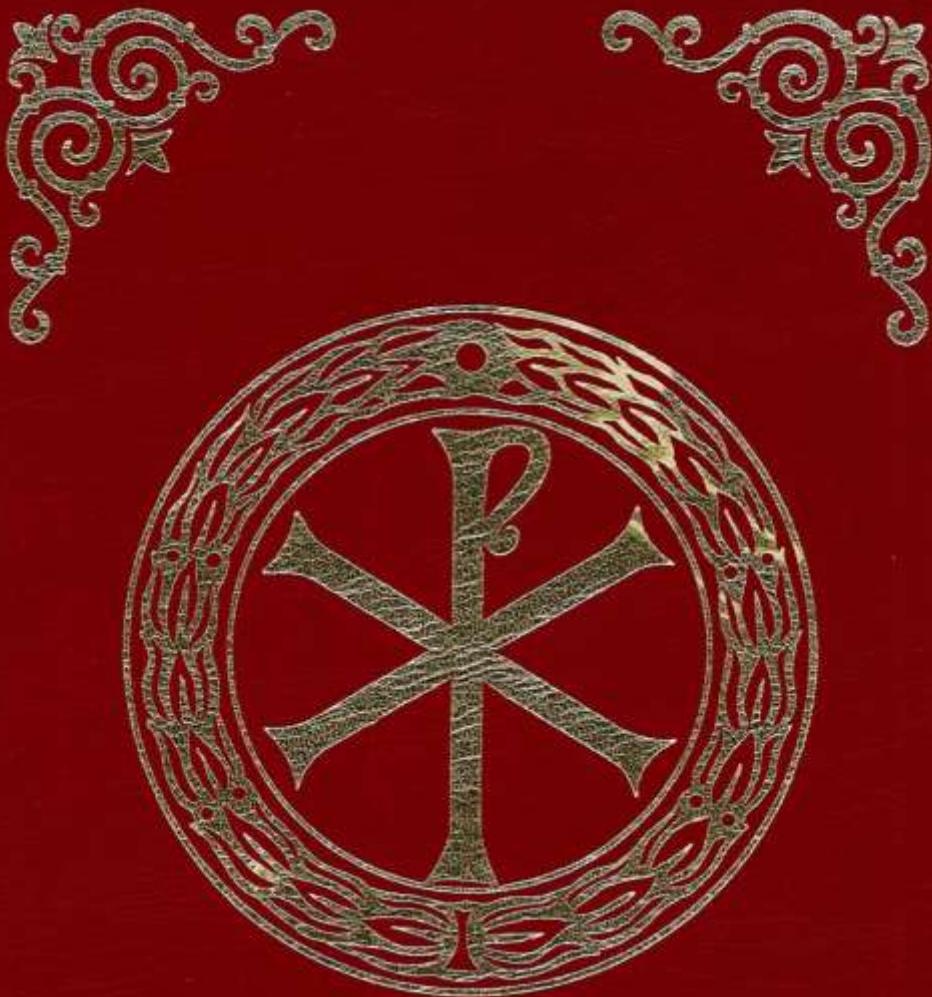


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LONDRA, 1948



ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΗ ΔΙΑΚΟΝΙΑ
ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΣΟΣ

The Life of St. John the Almsgiver

From *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver*, trans. Elizabeth Dawes, and introductions and notes by Norman H. Baynes, (London: 1948)

INTRODUCTION

by Norman H. Baynes

THE first half of the seventh century was marked in the Eastern provinces of the Empire by great literary activity in hagiography and four outstanding figures in the writing of lives of the saints were intimately associated. Leontius bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus wrote a biography of St. John the Almsgiver, Patriarch of Alexandria. Both Leontius and the Patriarch were, it would seem, natives of Cyprus and the former probably lived in contact with St. John during his patriarchate. John Moschus, a Palestinian monk, was the author of the *Pratum Spirituale* - the 'Spiritual Meadow' or 'New Paradise' in which he gave an account of the lives of the solitaries whom he had visited in his wanderings. John Moschus twice went to Egypt accompanying the 'sophist' Sophronius who is perhaps to be identified with the Bishop of Jerusalem (633-7) of the same name.

Both John Moschus and Sophronius were in Egypt during St. John the Almsgiver's patriarchate and gave him their loyal support. Later, working, it would seem, on material which John Moschus had collected but had not lived to publish, Sophronius wrote a Life of the Patriarch; this Life has not been preserved. Leontius not only wrote his biography of John the Almsgiver but also composed a Life of Spyridon, a Cyprian saint, which is lost and an immensely popular account of St. Simeon of Emesa, the Fool for Christ's sake. Finally the Patriarch, whose favourite reading was Lives of the Saints, wrote a panegyric in honour of St. Tychon, the patron saint of Amathus, the Cyprian town in which he himself was born and to which he returned to die. St. Tychon was the protector of the vinegrowers of the island and the Patriarch gives a vivid account of the Festival of the New Grape Harvest celebrated on the saint's anniversary.

There were thus two contemporary biographies of St. John the Almsgiver, one by Sophronius and John Moschus and another intended to serve as a supplement to this written by Leontius. The former, as we have seen, is no longer extant, but both it and the supplementary Life by Leontius were used by an editor and by him fused into a single story. The text of this conflation of the two biographies was published from a manuscript in

Venice by Pere Delehaye in 1927 and it was this version, and not the original texts of the two Lives, which was used by the Metaphrast in the second half of the tenth century for his biography of the Patriarch. Since we thus possess the source employed by the Metaphrast his text ceases to have any independent value. We have therefore translated the opening chapters of the text published by Pere Delehaye which represent for us the Life written by Sophronius and John Moschus and have then turned to the original text of the biography of the Saint composed by Leontius on which the latter part of the document published by Pere Delehaye was founded.

The eastern provinces of the Roman Empire had long been distracted by the religious discords which formed the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon. Egypt, which ever since the days of Athanasius had played the part of the Conscientious Objector, consistently opposing the envoys of the monarch ruling from Constantinople, had defeated all efforts at conciliation. Eulogius, the Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria (A.D. 580-607), had in his many writings fought for the creed of Chalcedon but with so little success that in 611 St. John the Almsgiver found that the Monophysites held not only the valley of the Nile: even in the Greek city of Alexandria no more than

seven churches were left in the possession of those who supported the dogma of the Two Natures in the Incarnate Christ. That is the background which the reader of St. John's Life must keep in mind: as Patriarch he chose a better way - he would recommend Orthodoxy to Egypt by a sympathy and a charity which knew no limits. There is no reason to doubt that in large measure he was successful.

In A.D. 602 the Emperor Maurice had been dethroned and together with his family put to death by the rude soldier Phocas whose reign was a bloody tyranny. The cities of the Empire were thrown into confusion by the fights of the circus parties, the Blues and the Greens, while Jews seized the opportunity of these conflicts to kill off some of the hated Christians. There was no effective opposition to the armed forces of Sassanid Persia which had invaded East Roman territory.

From Carthage which Justinian had recovered from the Vandals Heraclius sailed to Constantinople to overthrow the tyrant (A.D. 610) while his relative Nicetas attacked Egypt and established himself in Alexandria. When Egypt had been won for the new emperor it was natural that Heraclius and Nicetas, now Augustal Praefect of Egypt, should desire to have on the patriarchal

throne one who had played no part in the recent warfare. Their choice of a native of Cyprus can thus be easily explained, but it would appear from the biography of Sophronius and John Moschus (as represented by the text published by Pere Delehaye) that there was a further reason: St. John was the adopted brother of Nicetas. He was, however a simple layman; he had been married and of that marriage several children had been born. Now wife and children were all dead. Despite John's protests, the imperial will prevailed and the layman stepped directly into the proud position of Patriarch .

And the Almsgiver was fortunate in having for his biographer his countryman Leontius. That biography (written at some time after A.D. 641) Leontius composed in a simple homely style that it might be read by simple folk; his aim was, as he tells us, that the humble Christian should learn that even in his own day the Christian faith could inspire men to sainthood. The portentous rhetoric, which often makes the reading of Byzantine hagiography a weariness of the flesh, is abandoned, and in the vocabulary of Leontius many words are borrowed from popular speech, words carefully removed when later purists used his biography as their source. In fullest sympathy with the aims of his sainted fellow-countrymen he

recalls past scenes of many of which he had been an eye-witness; he writes with no hagiographic stencil: freshly and vividly he paints his picture and gives us a glimpse of life as it was lived in seventh-century Egypt. [*See final note]

One of the outstanding features of early Byzantine asceticism is its passion for social justice and its championship of the poor and oppressed. The Life of John the Almsgiver serves to show the difficulties which beset one who, inspired by ascetic ideals, was yet seated on the throne of St. Mark. Surrounded by a hierarchy of ecclesiastical officials it was no easy matter for the Patriarch to establish direct contact with the common folk of the city. That contact, however, John established, and the vast resources of his see he spent, not on the erection of sumptuous churches but on buildings which should serve the needs of the poor and homeless - the *humiliores* on whom the East Roman world pressed so heavily. St. John exemplified that tradition of universal and unquestioning charity which under the early Empire had embraced pagan as well as Christian in its generous self-devotion. The law which governed the Archbishop's whole administration was the command of his Master: 'Give to him that asketh thee and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.' And after a Cyril, after a

Dioscoros how refreshing to discover a Patriarch possessed of the saving grace of humour

It has sometimes been said that the ascetic ideal of the East Roman was a barren withdrawal from the world of his day; the biography of John the Almsgiver may suggest why it was that the Byzantine in his hour of need turned instinctively for aid and comfort to the ascete in the full assurance of his sympathy and succour.

[Additional Note: Halsall]

St. John the Almsgiver's basic biographical details dates are:

Born: Amathus in Cyprus, c. 560.

Died: there, 11 November 619.

Feast Day [In Roman Calendae]: 23 January/

He is exceptional in a number of ways. He was a married man with children, was elected bishop as a layman, and became a saint without being a martyr. He is one of the very few Byzantine era saints to gain a following in the West. He was one of the saints in the *Golden Legend* , but it was his role as original patron of the order of St. John of the Hospital, the Hospitallers, - one of the great Western crusading military orders - that made his name famous. This order still survives as the Knights of Malta, and, in the British

Commonwealth, the "St. John's Ambulance Corps" is named after him.

THE LIFE OF OUR HOLY FATHER, JOHN THE ALMSGIVER

[* indicates a note, arranged by chapter following the text]

1

JOHN, the great servant of God and His faithful high-priest, who was named after 'almsgiving' and received that exceptional and glorious title from his exceeding goodness which took Christ for its model-this John, I say, invites us to the present banquet of praise, and as dainty and free fare he sets before us for our common feast most pleasing tales of his achievements and his triumphs.

And every soul that delights in instruction will revel and find joy in them, and in its love for God it will be aroused by a sacred passion to pious imitation.

And the Lord of glory will be signally glorified, for He is always glorified in His own servants, and those that glorify Him He glorifies splendidly in return.

Come then ! let us, as best we may, begin our story, it cannot be complete but we shall be

graciously guided towards the end which we have set before us by John's merciful co-operation and intercession.

2

This renowned light of the Church and great father among saints was the noble offspring and precious nursling of the island of the Cyprians, and was descended not from ignoble or ordinary ancestors, but from those of an illustrious family and of brilliant renown. For John's father, Epiphanius* (=Conspicuous) by name, did so many 'conspicuous' and remarkable things in his life in accordance, we may say, with his name that he was chosen by the rulers of that time to be entrusted with the reins of government in the island of the Cyprians. And we may, I think, reasonably suppose that his wife, I mean the mother of our wonderful John, had like her husband her share of good fortune and distincticun.

This noble lad was given a generous education by his noble parents and was brought up in the fear of the Lord. As he grew in age he developed in body and progressed in spirit until he was joined to a wife in the partnership of lawful wedlock; not however by his own wish but in obedience to his father's authority did he take upon himself the

yoke of marriage. Nor was it so much that he yielded readily but rather that he was forced thereto by constraint. And in his love of purity even after assuming the bonds of marriage he gave a proof of his great passion for the unmarried state. For accepting the marriage-contract only in name and treating it as but a form, in his love for continence he abstained for a considerable time from intercourse with his wife. Finally his father-in-law noticed what was happening, became very angry and threatened to brand with guilt the purpose of his guiltless son-in-law.

At this the great-hearted man yielded, for in all things he was ready to make concessions and earnestly strove to give offence to none. He therefore went so far as to submit himself to the lawful intercourse of married life. From this intercourse he allowed himself even to beget children of whom he had a bountiful crop, becoming the father of sons according to the law of nature.

These all departed this life while they were still in the flower of their age, and his wife, too, met her end soon afterwards. He had now gained complete freedom from all worldly burdens and anxieties and gave himself up wholly and entirely without any other thought than how to please the Lord

and, like the great apostle, to 'become all things to all men' [1 Cor 9:22] and 'not to seek his own profit only but the profit of many' [1 Cor 10:33] that they might have a prosperous course.

And indeed he was always on all occasions amiable to all, advising, encouraging, assisting, acting as peacemaker, doing a kindness, reconciling, and ever anxiously striving to display his love for the highest virtue in all its forms.

4

And by this conduct John became everywhere very famous and at the same time dearly beloved, not only by the subjects of the Empire and by private individuals, but even by the Emperors themselves and by the nobles and governors.

Thus under strong pressure by the Emperor Heraclius and largely through the counsel of Nicetas, who at that time had been raised to the rank of 'patrician' and shared in the government of the Empire (he was also the adopted brother of the blessed man) and further with the approval of the whole body of Alexandrians* he was raised to the high-priestly throne as Patriarch.

5

With his mind filled by the inspiration of the Divine spirit John first of all suppressed the blasphemous addition, namely the innovation in the 'Trisagion', which Peter, nicknamed 'the Fuller',* in his profane babbling had recited, daring impiously to say: 'Holy, immortal, Thou Who was crucified for us'. For when John by divine decree received into his hands the reins of the high-priesthood, he found only seven churches maintaining the services of the Orthodox liturgy; and by much diligence he succeeded in increasing the number to seventy and in all these he authorized the celebration of the Immaculate Oblation.

He absolutely refused to receive presents or money or any kind of gift whatsoever, not only as a fee for ordination, but also on any other pretext or excuse, whether the matter were great or small, for he ever kept in mind the words of the writer of Proverbs, who says 'He that is greedy of gain destroys himself but he that hateth taking gifts shall live'. [Prov 15:27 LXX] Moreover from all those who were seeking ordination at his hands, whether as bishops or priests, he demanded a written declaration in order to safeguard the orthodox faith and to secure the observance of all the ordinances set forth in the Canons.

With regard to the decisions concerning ordinations and the testing of candidates he was so very scrupulous that once when the Emperor sent to him about a certain monk, who feigned great piety, asking John to ordain him bishop he examined the facts with care and recognizing that the monk was unworthy of the priesthood he confined him to one of the monasteries, bidding him remain there quietly.* The monk escaped soon afterwards and reported the whole matter to the Emperor, but John was not afraid nor did he take any account of the Emperor's order; he sent the monk empty away telling him to return to him who had sent him.

The priests who abjured their heresy and gave written declarations of their repentance, confessing the doctrines of the orthodox faith, accepting the four holy Oecumenical Councils and anathematizing all the heresies and the heresiarchs, were willingly received by John who made them members of the Catholic church.

6

At that time the Persian armies invaded and laid waste the whole country of the Syrians,* and the inhabitants of all the towns there came in great numbers with bishops and other clergy and governors and sought refuge in Alexandria. In the

greatness of his mind and the generosity of his purpose he supported them all liberally, supplying most abundantly each one's necessities.

When he learnt that some of the bishops staying in Alexandria were in need, he summoned the richer members amongst the leading clergy and when he had brought them together he exhorted them with many counsels and then laid down that they all, and he himself first of all, should pay one pound of gold a year to their poverty-stricken colleagues.

He made a similar arrangement for the needy priests and deacons and the rest of the clergy of the Church, freely granting to each* in every rank a certain sum of gold yearly corresponding to the particular labour of his own station so that his wants might be satisfied.

In addition to this he built a great many poorhouses and hostels for strangers, and he decreed that all the corn and all the necessary expenditure for the feeding of their inmates should be paid for from the revenues of the Church.

7

Once when a severe famine was oppressing the city and the holy man's stewards were, as usual, ceaselessly distributing money or some small gift to the needy, some destitute women overcome with

hunger and but lately risen from child-bed were obliged to hasten to receive help from the distributors while they were still in the grip of abdominal pains, deadly pale, and suffering grievously; when the wondrous man was told of this, he built seven lying-in hospitals in different parts of the city, ordered forty beds to be kept ready in each and arranged that every woman should rest quietly in these for seven full days after her confinement and then receive the third of a nomisma and go home.

8

It was not only for those in bodily need that he showed care but he took special forethought for the salvation of those suffering from spiritual hunger. For instance, there was a lake in Alexandria, called Maria,* in which a great quantity of papyrus grew, and the inhabitants of that district had been in the habit of cutting it down and using it as fuel instead of wood. And the boys, whose work it was to cut down the papyrus together with the men dwelling there, practised the vice of sodomy unrestrainedly; and they had no house of prayer, no priest at all, they never heard the Scriptures nor partook of the Divine Mysteries. When the inspired Patriarch heard of these illegal doings and of this pollution, he ordered the boys to be brought away from that

place and he built houses of prayer for its inhabitants and set apart certain priests whom he appointed to minister to them and to teach them.

9

After Rasmiozan* the governor, or rather the general-in-chief, of Chosroes, King of the Persians, had demolished all the holy places of Jerusalem, the news of this wickedness* came to the ears of the thrice blessed Patriarch. When he heard of this horrible insolence and learned that all the holy things had been committed to the flames, then just as though he had been an inhabitant of the places which had suffered thus he sat down and made lament. He mourned for their desolation, not merely for one or two days, or ten or twenty or even twice as many but for a whole year; wailing and groaning bitterly he strove by his lamentations to outdo Jeremiah who of old lamented over the capture of this same city, Jerusalem. And this lamentation he did not compose, as it were, without careful thought, leaving it to be forgotten, but he is said to have committed it to writing.

And on receiving the news of this disaster he sent a man, dearly loved of God, Ctesippus by name, and at that time in charge of the monasteries of the Ennaton,* to view the destruction of the holy places in Jerusalem. And by his hands he sent a

large sum of money and an abundance of corn, wine, oil and pulse; also garments for laymen and for monks; and for the sick various kinds of eatables, and finally, a great many beasts of burden for the distribution of these necessaries. He not only took much thought for those who had been captured in the towns but he took measures with great care for those from the monasteries who had suffered a similar fate, and especially for the women from the convents. A number of the latter had been done to death by the Persians and about a thousand of the nuns were captured, so John sent a large sum of money to ransom them and then he restored them all, settling them in convents.

The Persian governors heard of John's surpassing liberality and boundless sympathy - for certainly he was most appropriately named 'the Almsgiver' - and therefore they were very eager to see him - for even an enemy respects a man's virtue* - and they offered money to Dion, who was governor at that time, if he would make it possible for them to see him.

Besides all this, John sent Theodore, bishop of Amathus,* to rescue those who had been taken prisoners by the Madienians,* and with him Anastasius, abbot of the mount of the great

Antony,* and Gregory, bishop of Rhinocoroura;* by their help he effected the rescue of very many captives, both men and women, whom he redeemed by paying a large sum of gold.

10

But it was not only in the distribution of money and the ransoming of captives that he showed the generosity of his disposition, but also in the matter of his simple fare; for he had no hesitation in showing that his own humble style of living was to buy cheaply and be content with little. One day in the large church of the great martyr Menas* he took a cup of wine in his hand and, when he noticed its bouquet and pleasant taste, he asked the steward where it had been bought and for how much. The steward replied that the wine had been brought from Palestine and purchased at a very high price, so John refused to drink it, saying, 'Humble John does not drink such fragrant and excellent wine, bought, too, at so high a price; pour me out rather some Mareotic wine,* for its taste is nothing to boast of and its price is low'.

11

A certain John, at that time bishop of the town of Tiberias,* escaped the barbaric invasion of the Persians, fled for refuge to the great city of the

Alexandrians and there reached the end of his life. He used to wear on his breast a gold cross inside which was a portion of the precious Cross, and this he bequeathed to his heir. Now John longed to possess this and asked the man to take double its price and give him what he desired. The man took the sum agreed upon, then changed the pectoral cross and gave the Patriarch another in place of it. Afterwards the rascal at dead of night saw a vision of angels calling him to account and questioning him and using terrible threats to him and saying that unless he gave the just Patriarch (Papas) the precious bit of wood which he had inheritedz he should suffer most grievous ills and end his life in utter misery. So he did this at once and asked forgiveness for the crafty theft.

12

Some of the clergy had deserted their own towns owing to the invasions of the barbarians and had come to Alexandria and had no expectation of ever returning to their native towns; these John accepted and enrolled in the Church. As these men had no shepherds, he did not insist on their supplying 'letters of introduction', but he took written declarations from them to prove their confession of the orthodox faith and their observance of the ecclesiastical canons

13

On hearing of the wholesale devastation of the Roman realm by the Persians John decided to go to the Emperor and open negotiations for peace. But, although he had drawn up his farewell speech and read it to all, the people of the city would not allow him to leave. After the Persian armies had utterly laid waste the whole of Syria, Phoenicia and Arabia and various cities besides, these sinners threatened to take even Alexandria itself. And then the holy man, having found out by God's help, that a murderous plot was being hatched against him, sailed away to his native country, Cyprus.

Now a general, one Aspagurius* by name, had been sent to Constantia in Cyprus but had not been admitted by the town; so he prepared himself for war against its citizens and they on their side were arming themselves against him. And they were just on the point of engaging in this slaughter of each other when the all-admirable John, the disciple of the God of Peace, intervened and induced both parties to seek reconciliation and succeeded in bringing them to terms.

14

John once received relics from Jerusalem of Stephen, the first martyr, and of James the brother

of our Lord; so he built a chapel in the name of this first great martyr and having made a list of all his belongings he generously dedicated them to this chapel.

15

Isaac who was general at that time betrayed the city of the Alexandrians (to the Persians) and then fled for refuge to Cyprus. There he found the most holy Patriarch (Papas) and formed a murderous intrigue against him, intending to kill him on the Monday before Palm Sunday. The divine man was informed of this and therefore stayed at home and received nobody, and thus by God's providence he was miraculously saved from this deadly attack. But the author of this plot, the miserable Isaac, by the just judgment of the unsleeping providence of God was savagely set upon by some men and murdered on the very day on which he had planned death against the righteous Patriarch.

John, the all-holy Patriarch (Papas), when he had arrived at Constantia paid reverent worship to the relics of the saints there, namely, Barnabas, the all-praiseworthy apostle, and Epiphanius, the great miracle-worker, and afterwards went on to Amathus and it was from there that he departed to be with his beloved Lord.

**A SUPPLEMENT
to the *Life of John the Almsgiver,*
our saintly father and Archbishop of Alexandria,
written by Leontius,
Bishop of Neapolis in the island of Cyprus**

Our purpose in writing this biography of the glorious Patriarch is the same as that of the earnest and holy men who wrote before me, and that is, that from the study of his life all may gain spiritual profit and a desire to imitate his piety; and that men may ascribe glory and magnificence to the Holy and worshipful Trinity Which in this, as in all things, from generation to generation exhibits Its own luminaries 'to give light to those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death' [Luke 1:79] which is caused by sin.

Then again, my Christ-loving readers, we completely fail to admire the men of our own generation, even if they have lived lives well-pleasing unto God; but rather by the Devil's instigation we often say to each other that in former times the lawlessness of men was not so multiplied, but now, the Devil whispers, it is as the Holy Scripture foretold: 'because lawlessness has been multiplied, the love of many shall wax cold' [Matt 24:12] - hence we grow feeble in virtue.

This is the second reason for my undertaking this incomplete story of the Saint's life-to prove that even nowadays those who desire it and carry out their purpose by force have shewn themselves more excellent than we and have trodden 'the strait and narrow path' and closed the mouth of those who utter unrighteous and soul-destroying thoughts.

The others, who before us wrote about this wonderful man and high priest, John, have composed their works in a beautiful and lofty style, for they were powerful in word and deed-I mean John and Sophronius*-men who feared God and loved virtue, true champions of piety.

And yet, although they won so high a reputation, even they failed to tell all about this man's virtue and were in the same case as industrious husbandmen. They, when gathering in the crop of a goodly and fruitful vineyard, even without wishing it, will be sure to leave something from the blessing of the harvest to the poor who follow in their footsteps and glean the grapes remaining on the vines; and of such gleaners we are indeed the least.

And, although all these holy men strove in their zeal for God with all their powers to gather in the produce of this fruitful olive-tree, for indeed the

olives on it were very rich, since 'it was planted in the house of God' (as says the psalmist David)[Ps. 52:8] yet the greater part of the fruit of the tree escaped their eye. This was by the Lord's dispensation Who was willing to accept also our modest and cold-hearted desire, just as He accepted the widow's two mites.

For it was not with the idea of belittling them, or as though we could imitate their God-given wisdom, that we were anxious to commence writing this just man's glorious achievements, but in the first place because we thought it not right to bury in silence things that would bring profit to those who heard them, lest we, too, should incur the condemnation which was pronounced on the servant who buried his talent in the earth. And furthermore because the achievements and pleasant tales collected in this account of ours were not included in the eulogies of that true Saint, the blessed John, written by the worthy men whose names we have mentioned. Lastly, since those historians were clever and skilful writers, they have drawn a picture of their subject in a clever and exalted manner, and this very fact spurred us on still more to undertake our present work, which relates John's life in a prosaic, unadorned and popular style so that even 'the

unlearned and ignorant men' [Acts 4:13] can profit from our words.

1

I, all unworthy as I am, came up to Alexandria to revere the holy and victorious martyrs, Cyrus and John,* and to enjoy their succour, and while I was in Alexandria, I met with certain pious Christian men, and as we were conversing about biblical and other edifying narratives, a stranger came up to us asking alms, 'for,' said he, 'I have only just been rescued from my captivity under the Persians'.*

Now it chanced that not one of us sitting there had either a large coin or even any small change with us. A servant of one of our company happened to be with his master, he was a hot-water carrier at the baths, who received only three nomismata a year, and had a wife and two children. When the beggar was going away this man followed him quietly, took off a small silver cross he was wearing, and gave it to him, saying that besides that he had only a sixpence [= a *kertaion*] in the world.

Thus by chance, or rather through the good purpose of the all-wise God, I was privileged to see what he did, and deeply moved, I forthwith recounted it to the man sitting next to me, one

Menas by name, a virtuous, God-fearing man who was also treasurer* of the most Holy Church in the time of the glorious and ever-blessed Patriarch John.

He, seeing me astonished and full of praise for the man who had done this deed of charity, said to me: 'Do not be surprised, for he practises that virtue by tradition and from instruction.' On my replying, 'How so? for pity's sake enlighten me!' he answered: 'He was servant to our most saintly, thrice-blessed Patriarch John, and like a true son he has inherited his father's virtue.-For the holy man once said to him, "Humble Zacharias, be charitable, for then you have a promise from God through me, a miserable sinner, that neither during my lifetime, nor after my death, will God desert you". And this promise He keeps to the present day. For God sends him many blessings and of these he spends nothing save that which he distributes forthwith to the poor, almost reducing his own household to want. Men have often heard him say to God in exultation, "Verily, verily, let us see who surpasses the other -Thou in sending blessings or I in scattering them! For Thou, Lord, art clearly the source of our riches and the giver of our livelihood". And it sometimes happens that he has nothing to give at the moment to a beggar, and then in his distress he says to some merchant or

tradesman, "Give me a crown [= one tremiss] and I will work for you for a month or two, as you wish, because my folk at home are very hungry", and when he gets it he gives it to the poor man and begs him not to tell anyone.'

Menas, that pious man, observing that I listened to him as if to the gospel, said to me with emotion: 'Are you amazed at this, sir? What would you think then if you had met the sainted Patriarch?'

'What!' said I. 'Is there anything I would rather have seen?'

Then he replied, 'By the grace of God he made me a priest and treasurer to the most Holy Church, and, believe me, I have seen him do things which are almost supernatural, and if you will deign to honour us to-day with your presence, I will relate to you the glorious deeds which I have beheld him do with my Own eyes'. At these words I took him by the hand and helped him to rise, and he led me to his God-guarded house. But when he wanted us to sit down to table at once, I said to him, 'It is not right, master, to neglect the soul's nourishment and to satisfy the body before the soul, let us rather first partake of the food which perisheth not, and afterwards attend to the wants of the body'.

Then he began to give a truthful account of the holy man's life; he said, 'His first and most remarkable achievement is that he never at any time used an oath'. I at once asked for ink and paper and wrote down all he said, word for word.

2

After John had been elected and was to be enthroned in the Christ-loving capital of Alexandria most certainly by the will of God and not 'from men neither through man' [Cf. Gal 1:1] this was the first glorious deed and victory which he shewed forth to all men-he immediately summoned the treasurers and the official who is styled 'the guardian of the peace',* and said to them in the hearing of all in the Patriarch's council-chamber, 'It is not right, brethren, that we should consider anyone in preference to Christ'. The whole assembly which had gathered together was deeply moved at his words, and agreed thereto, and then the holy man continued, 'Go therefore through the whole city, please, and make a list of all my masters down to the last'. But his hearers could not imagine who these could be, and besought him to tell them, as they were astonished that any could possibly be masters of the Patriarch; and he opened his angelic mouth again and said: 'Those whom you call poor and beggars, these I proclaim my masters and

helpers. For they, and they only, are really able to help us and bestow upon us the kingdom of heaven.'

The imitator of Christ saw that this command was carried out with all speed, and he then bade them apportion a daily sum to be paid by his private treasurer sufficient for the needs of these poor; and they were more than seven thousand and a half.

Then like a true shepherd and no hireling he went with his sacred flock and the concourse of saintly bishops to the holy church and was enthroned by the will of God.

3

And there is another good deed which it would not be right to overlook amongst his achievements.-For on the morrow he again sent through the whole city his God-loving treasurers, and the ushers, and with them those who were entrusted with the civil administration of the city and insisted that it should not be lawful to use at will different measures or scales, whether great or small, throughout the city, but that everything should be bought and sold according to a single standard and weight, whether the 'modius' or 'artaba'. [both dry measures] He sent out an edict signed by his own hand throughout the whole neighbourhood

worded as follows: 'John, the humble servant and the least of all the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, to all whose lot it is to be shepherded under our Poverty by the same Lord, our God. The inspired and blessed apostle, Paul, gave this command and law to all through Christ Who spoke in him: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them; for they watch in behalf of our souls, as they that shall give account." [Heb 13:17] I, who am nothing, am convinced that in obedience to these godly words you will receive our requests as from God and not from man. Therefore, knowing this I exhort you, beloved, since God hates "a large and a small balance", as the holy Scripture says, [Deut. 25:13] never to allow such a transgression of law to be seen anywhere amongst you. But if, after the promulgation of this our edict, subscribed by us, anyone shall be proved to have rendered himself open to such a charge, he shall hand over all his possessions to the needy, whether he will or no, and receive no compensation.'

We were anxious to insert this story about his public edict as we considered it most worthy of record.

4

Some persons once informed this Saint of godly wisdom that the stewards of his church, being

corrupted by bribes, were become respecters of persons in their administration of justice.

Thereupon he convoked them without delay and without bringing any charge against them, he increased the salaries they had received hitherto, and at the same time made it an inflexible rule that they should never take a gift from anyone whatsoever, 'for', said he, 'Fire shall consume the houses of the receivers of bribes'. [Job 15:34] Consequently by God's grace their households from that time on prospered so exceedingly that some of them did not take their additional pay

5

On another occasion the thrice-blessed found out that some who had been wronged by those who had gone to law with them and wished to appeal to the Patriarch were prevented from so doing through fear of the ushers and the disciplinary officials and the rest of his retinue. So he devised the following plan which was pleasing unto God.

Every Wednesday and Friday he had a seat and two stools placed in the open in front of the church and there he sat in company with a few virtuous men, or with the gospel in his hands and allowed no member of his great retinue to approach him except one disciplinary official. He was anxious to

give confidence and ready access to those who wished to consult him, and on their behalf he caused justice to be done immediately by the disciplinary officials, and he used to order the latter not to touch food until they had settled the matter.

And he said so that all could hear, 'If we men have confidence that we can at any time enter into God's house with our petitions and make our requests known to the Unapproachable, the Lord of all creation, and we are impatient for our prayer to be granted, and we importune Him not to delay; nay, rather we at once cry in the words of the prophet: "Let Thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, O Lord!" [Ps 79:8] is it not then our duty to fulfil the requests of our fellow-servants with all speed, remembering the words of our Lord, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again", [Matt 7:2] and those of the prophet: "As thou hast done, so be it done unto thee!" [Obad. 1.15]

6

One day the admirable man went out as usual and sat in his accustomed place until the fifth hour, and as nobody came to him he returned all tearful and cast down. No one ventured to ask the reason of his despondency until the Saint Sophronius,

who chanced to be present, said to him in private, 'What is the cause, God-guarded master, of this melancholy which is weighing down your holy soul and has cast us all into sudden dismay?' John answered in his meek voice, 'To-day for the first time humble John did not get any wages from anyone, and this was the first time that he could not offer anything to Christ on behalf of his countless sins'.

Then, inspired by God, Sophronius replied to the hierarch (for he at once guessed the reason of the Patriarch's sorrow), 'To-day you ought rather to rejoice and be delighted, most blessed master, for you are truly blessed if you have brought such peace to the flock entrusted to you, that nobody has a quarrel or dispute with his neighbour, but they are like the angels, free from enmity and from lawsuits'. When the truly meek shepherd felt satisfied that Sophronius had spoken the truth he lifted his eyes to heaven and said: 'I thank thee, O God, Who hast allowed me, unworthy as I am, to be called Thy priest and, though the least of men and a sinner, to be the shepherd of a reasonable flock.' Then he immediately laid aside all his despondency and much joy was added to him in his humility.

Some men say that Constantine* who reigned after Heraclius (whose son he was) imitated John in this respect.

7

During the lifetime of this saintly Patriarch the Persians came up and laid waste Syria and took its inhabitants captive.* All who escaped from the hands of the godless Persians ran to the person of the thrice-blessed as if to a waveless harbour, praying that they, too, might enjoy help and assistance from him; and the blessed man welcomed and consoled them, not as if they were prisoners of war, but as though they were in truth his natural brothers.

He accordingly gave immediate orders that the wounded and sick should be put to bed in hostels and hospitals which he himself had founded, and that they should receive care and medical treatment without payment and that then they should be free to leave as each of them should choose. To those who were well but destitute and came to the daily distribution he gave sixpence apiece [i.e. one *keration*] to the men and one shilling [i.e. two *keratia*] apiece to the women and children as being weaker members. Now some of the women, who came begging for alms, wore ornaments and bracelets, and those who were

entrusted with the distribution reported this to the Patriarch. Then he, who was really gentle and of a cheerful countenance, put on a grim look and a harsh voice and said: 'If you wish to be distributors for humble John, or rather for Christ, obey unquestioningly the divine command which says: "Give to every man that asks of thee." [Luje 6:30] But, if you vex by your inquiries those who come to receive alms, God has no need of mischievous servants nor has humble John. If indeed the money given were mine and had come into existence with me I might do well to be niggardly with my own possessions. But if the money given happens to be God's, where His property is in question He wishes His commands to be followed absolutely.

'But if, perhaps, because you have no faith or are of little faith, you fear that the amount given away may exceed the moneys which we receive, I myself refuse to share in your little faith. For if it is by God's good will that I, an unworthy servant, am the dispenser of His gifts, then were the whole world to be brought together in Alexandria and ask for alms they would not straiten the holy Church nor the inexhaustible treasures of God.'

When he had dismissed them after banishing the indolence and little faith which beset them he told

the following story to his companions who were astonished at his God-bestowed sympathy.

8

When I was in Cyprus and was but a stripling of about fifteen years old, I saw one day in my sleep a certain maiden whose countenance outshone the sun and who was adorned beyond all human imagining, and she came and stood by my bed and touched me on the side. I woke up and saw her really standing there and I perceived that she was no woman. I crossed myself and said to her: 'Who are you, and how did you dare to come into my room while I was sleeping?' She had too, a wreath of olive branches on her head. And then with a joyous countenance and a smile on her lips she said to me: 'I am the first of the daughters of the King.' On hearing this I at once did obeisance to her. And then she said to me: 'If you will have me as a friend, I will lead you into the presence of the King. For no one has as free access to Him as I have. For I caused Him to put on man's nature on earth and bring salvation to men.' With these words she disappeared.

When I came to myself I understood the vision and said, Verily she is either Sympathy or Charity, and for this reason she had a wreath of olive leaves on her head. For it was certainly sympathy with, and

pity for mankind that made our Lord become incarnate in our flesh'.* I dressed quickly and without waking anyone in the house I made my way to the church. For it was already dawn. And on my way I met a brother shivering with cold, so I took off my goatskin and gave it to him, saying to myself, 'Now by this I shall know whether my vision was really a true one or sent by a demon'. And truth bore witness, for before I reached the church a man clad in white suddenly met me and handed me a bag with 100 nomismata in it saying, 'Take this, brother, and use it as you like'. In my joy I turned round directly I had taken it, wishing to give him back the bag as I was not in want, but I could not see anybody. Then I said: 'Certainly it was not my imagination.

From that time on I would often give an alms to a fellow brother and would say to myself, 'Let me see whether God will repay me a hundredfold as He said'. In this way I tempted God, acting wrongly, and after I was fully satisfied by the facts themselves in various ways, I said: 'Leave off wretched soul, tempting Him who cannot be tempted.' To think that when my humble soul has received such ample proofs from God these faithless folk should come to-day hoping to persuade me as well as themselves to shew a want of pity !

9

Whilst this same crowd of people was still in the city, one of the strangers, noticing John's remarkable sympathy, determined to try the blessed man; so he put on old clothes and approached him as he was on his way to visit the sick in the hospitals (for he did this two or three times a week) and said to him: 'Have mercy upon me for I am a prisoner of war.'

John said to his purse-bearer: 'Give him six nomismata.' After the man had received these he went off, changed his clothes, met John again in another street, and falling at his feet said: 'Have pity upon me for I am in want.' The Patriarch again said to his purse-bearer: 'Give him six nomismata.' As he went away the purse-bearer whispered in the Patriarch's ear: 'By your prayers, master, this same man has had alms from you twice over!' But the Patriarch pretended not to understand. Soon the man came again for the third time to ask for money and the attendant, carrying the gold, nudged the Patriarch to let him know that it was the same man; whereupon the truly merciful and beloved of God said: 'Give him twelve nomismata, for perchance it is my Christ and He is making trial of me.'

10

There was a foreign captain who had fallen upon evil days, he came to the blessed man and with many tears besought him to show mercy to him as he did to all others. So John directed that he should be given five pounds of gold. With these the captain went and bought a cargo, and no sooner had he gone on board than straightway, as it chanced, he suffered shipwreck outside the Pharos,* but he did not lose his ship. Then trusting to John's good will he again applied to him saying, 'Have mercy upon me as God had mercy upon the world. The Patriarch said to him, 'Believe me, brother, if you had not mixed your own remaining monies with the money of the Church, you would not have been shipwrecked. For you had them from an evil source and thus the money coming from a good source was lost with it'. However he gave fresh instructions this time that ten pounds of gold were to be given him and he was not to mix other money with it. Again the captain bought a cargo and when he had sailed for one day a violent wind arose and he was hurled upon the land and lost everything, including the ship, and he and the crew barely escaped with their lives. After this from despair and destitution the captain decided to hang himself. But God, Who ever takes forethought for the salvation of men, revealed this to the most blessed Patriarch, who, hearing what had

happened to the captain, sent him word to come to him without delay. The latter came before him with his head sprinkled with dust and his tunic torn and in disorder. When the Patriarch saw him in this guise he found fault with him and said, 'May the Lord be propitious unto you! Blessed be God! I believe His word that from to-day on you will not be wrecked again as long as you live. This disaster happened to you because you had acquired the ship itself, too, by unjust means'.

He immediately ordered that one of the ships belonging to the Holy Church of which he was head should be handed over to the captain, a swift sailer* laden with twenty thousand bushels of corn. The captain, when he had received the ship, sailed away from Alexandria, and on his return he made a solemn statement to the following effect: 'We sailed for twenty days and nights, and owing to a violent wind we were unable to tell in what direction we were going either by the stars or by the coast. But the only thing we knew was that the steersman saw the Patriarch by his side holding the tiller and saying to him: "Fear not! You are sailing quite right." Then after the twentieth day we caught sight of the islands of Britain, and when we had landed we found a great famine raging there. Accordingly when we told the chief man of the town that we were laden with corn, he said, "God

has brought you at the right moment. Choose as you wish, either one 'nomisma' for each bushel or a return freight of tin". And we chose half of each.' Then the story goes on to tell of a matter which to those who are ignorant of God's free gifts is either hard to believe or quite incredible, but to those who have experienced His marvellous works it is both credible and acceptable. 'Then we set sail again,' said the captain, 'and joyfully made once more for Alexandria, putting in on our way at Pentapolis.* The captain then took out some of the tin to sell-for he had an old business-friend there who asked for some-and he gave him a bag of about fifty pounds. The latter, wishing to sample it to see if it was of good quality, poured some into a brazier and found that it was silver of the finest quality. He thought that the captain was tempting him, so carried the bag to him and said, 'May God forgive you! Have you ever found me deceiving you that you tempt me by giving me silver instead of tin?' The captain was dumbfounded by his words and replied: 'Believe me, I thought it was tin! But if He who turned the water into wine has turned my tin into silver in answer to the Patriarch's prayers, that is nothing strange. However, that you may be satisfied, come down to the ship with me and look at the rest of the mass from which I gave you

some.' So they went and discovered that the tin had been turned into the finest silver.

Mark ye, lovers of Christ, this miracle is not strange. For He Who multiplied the five loaves and at another time converted the waters of the Nile into blood, transformed a rod into a serpent, and changed fire into dew, easily accomplished this miracle, too, in order to enrich His servant and show mercy to the captain.

11

One Sunday when this saintly man was going down to his church there came to him one whose whole house had been despoiled by burglars; they had taken everything even down to his mattress. The sufferer was in great distress* but, as those who had robbed his house could not be found in spite of a strict search, he was finally obliged by his extreme want, very shamefacedly, to apply to the Saint and told him about his misfortune. The Saint was very sorry for him-for he was one of the prominent foreign residents-and whispered to the man in charge of the gold to give him fifteen pounds of gold. When the latter went out to give the money to the man he took counsel with the cashier and with the treasurer and at the Devil's prompting they grudged him so large a sum and gave him only five pounds.

On the venerable Archbishop's return from the service, a widow woman, who had an only son, brought him news that she intended to give him five hundred pounds of gold. After he had received this message and dismissed his venerable council, he summoned the stewards and said to them, 'How many pounds did you give to my suppliant?' and they answered, Fifteen pounds, sir, as your Holiness commanded' But by the grace residing in him he perceived that they were lying, so he sent for the recipient and asked him how much he had received. On his replying 'Five pounds', the Saint produced from his venerable hand the bond the woman had given him and said to them, 'God will demand the other ten hundred pounds from you, for, if you had given fifteen pounds as my humbleness ordered, she who has offered me five hundred pounds would have given fifteen, and to convince you of this I will send and ask the giver to come'. He dispatched two pious men to fetch the very pious woman who had given him the bond and to bring her to the baptistry; he sent her a message, 'Come to my humbleness and bring with you the offering which God put it into your heart to bring to Him'. She arose hurriedly and came into the presence of the Saint bringing the sum of money with her. After receiving her oblation and bestowing many blessings upon her and her son,

the Patriarch said to her: 'I charge you by your prayers mother, tell me, did you intend to give only this to Christ or a little more in addition?' As she perceived that the inspired man had guessed what she had done she fell to trembling and said: 'By your Reverence's holy prayers and by my patron saint, Menas,* I had written fifteen hundred on the bond and an hour before I gave it to your Reverence as I was standing during the service, I opened it unthinkingly and read it; I, your unworthy servant, had written it with my own hand and yet I found that the "ten." had got wiped out of itself. Then in my amazement I said to myself, "Evidently it is God's will that I should not give more than five".' When the Patriarch had dismissed the pious woman, the stewards who had disobeyed him fell at his feet craving his forgiveness and assuring him that they would never transgress again.

12

Nicetas, the patrician,* had observed this virtuous man's great-mindedness and seen that his hand was open unsparingly and gave to all as if from an ever-flowing spring; at the suggestion of certain slanderers he visited the Saint and said to him: 'The Empire is in great straits and needs money. Therefore instead of spending so prodigally the

money that comes in to you, give it into the public purse for the benefit of the Empire.'

The Saint remained unperturbed by these words and replied, 'To my mind, my lord, it is not right to give to an earthly king what is offered to the heavenly King. But even if your heart is set on some such plan, let me tell you that humble John will not give you a penny. But see, the money-chest of Christ is there under my lowly bed. Do as you will.'

The patrician got up at once and shouted to his own followers to carry off the treasure; he loaded them with all the money, only leaving the Patriarch one hundred pounds. As the men were going down carrying their burden others were coming up carrying small jars containing money sent to the Patriarch from Africa, labelled either 'Finest honey' or 'Unsmoked honey'.

The patrician read the labels as he went down and asked the Patriarch to send him some of this honey for his cellar, for he knew well that the Saint never bore malice.

When the man in charge of the jars came up and gave the Patriarch the documents he carried he announced to him that there was money instead of honey in the jars. Thereupon that truly gentle shepherd forthwith sent Nicetas a pot labelled

'Finest honey', and with it a tablet on which were written these words: 'Our Master who said "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee" [Heb 13:5] cannot lie and is a true God. Therefore corruptible man cannot straiten God Who gives life and good to all. Farewell.' He ordered the men who were going to carry the jar to Nicetas to open it in his presence and say to him, 'All the jars you saw being brought up are full of money instead of honey .

Now it happened that the men bearing the jar as well as the Patriarch's note were brought to Nicetas as he sat at table; and when they came in and he saw only one jar he said, 'Tell him, "Surely you are angry with me, great lord, you have not in the past sent me only one jar".'

After handing him the tablet when they had unsealed the jar, the men straightway poured out all the contents, and informed him that the rest of the jars which he had seen were likewise all filled with money.

Then when he read the words, 'Corruptible man is unable to straiten God' he was pricked to the heart by the message and said, 'As the Lord liveth neither will Nicetas straiten Him, for he is but a sinful and corruptible man himself. And straightway he left his lunch and taking with him all the money which he had carried off from the

venerable father and the jar which he had sent, as well as three hundred pounds of his own, he made for the Patriarch's dwelling; he took none of his suite with him but came to him in deep self-abasement and besought him to implore God's forgiveness as he had been incited to his act by others slanderously. He also assured the Patriarch that, if he assigned him a penance, he would willingly accept and fulfil it. As the Patriarch marvelled at the man's swift transformation he did not upbraid him for what he had sought to do, but rather consoled him with comforting words. And from that day so strong a bond of affection was knit between the two men that the Patriarch became the godfather of the patrician's children.

13

He that tempted Abraham for our advantage that the whole world might know and imitate his faith which was known only to God also tempted this glorious John. Now the manner of his temptation has become an example for the benefit of God's holy churches, and this was the temptation. An indescribable number of fugitives from the Persians invaded Alexandria, as I have said before, and great scarcity of food prevailed because the river had not risen to its usual height; therefore after he had spent all the money he had, the holy

Patriarch sent and borrowed about ten hundred pounds from divers good Christians. After these too had been spent in their turn the famine still prevailed and no one was willing to lend him any more as all feared the persistence of the famine; since the need of those who had come to look for his support was still urgent, the blessed man continued in much anxiety and prayer.

Now a certain land-owner who lived in the city noticed the straits, or rather the absolute poverty, to which the Saint had been reduced; now his wish was to become a deacon of the Holy Church, but he had married a second time.* So he hoped to persuade the holy man to ordain him by reason of the stress which encompassed him on every side and he sent a petition to him in the following terms-for he did not dare to utter such a request to his face-'To the most holy and thrice blessed father of fathers, John the deputy of Christ, the request and petition of Cosmas, an unworthy servant of the servants of thy Holiness. Having learnt, most holy Sir, of the shortage in food which oppresses thy honourable person by the permission of God, or rather in consequence of our sins, I, thy servant, do not consider it just to live at my ease whiist my master abides in continual need. Your unworthy servant has two hundred thousand bushels of corn, and one hundred and eighty pounds of gold;

these I beg that I may offer to Christ through you, my lord. Only let me, unworthy though I am, enjoy the post of deacon under you, so that by standing beside my lord at the holy altar I may be cleansed from the profligacy of my sins. For, true herald of God, it has been said by the holy apostle Paul that "There is made of necessity a change also of the law".' [Heb 7:12]

After receiving this letter the wise man of God sent for the writer and said to him: 'Was it you who sent me the petition by your notary and son?' and on his answering 'Yes, master', the blessed man sent everybody out of the room as in his great sympathy he did not wish to humiliate Cosmas before them all. Then he turned to him and said: 'Your offering is a generous one and much needed at the present time but it has a blemish, and you know that in the law a sheep, be it large or small, was not accepted for an offering unless it were without blemish, and for this reason God would not take heed of Cain even when he offered his sacrifice. As to what you said, brother, that there is made of necessity a change also of the law, the apostle said that about the law of the old covenant. For what is it that James, the Lord's brother, says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all"? [James 2:10] But as regards my brethren, the poor,

and the holy Church, the God Who fed them before you and I were born will Himself feed them also in our day, but only if we keep His commands inviolate. For He Who long ago multiplied the five loaves is able also to bless the ten bushels in my granary. Therefore I say to thee, my son, what is written in the Acts, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter".' [Acts 7:21]

After he had dismissed this man who was sullen at not having achieved his purpose, news was brought that two of the Church's fast-sailing ships, which he had sent to Sicily for corn, had cast anchor in the harbour. At these tidings the blessed man knelt on the ground and gave thanks to Almighty God saying: ' I thank Thee, Master, that Thou didst not permit Thy servant to sell Thy grace for money; verily they that seek Thee, Lord, and keep the canons of Thy holy Church shall never want any good thing.'

14

On one occasion two of the clerics committed a sin, for they attacked each other, and in consequence the Patriarch suspended them from their duties for some days according to the Canons. One of them willingly suffered his punishment and acknowledged his sin; but the other, a man of bad character, hailed the punishment with joy, for the

wretched fellow was seeking a pretext for not attending church and desired a long freedom for his lawless doings. And he was very wroth with the Patriarch and threatened to do him as much harm as he himself could purpose. Some even say that it was he who talked slanderously about the Church's money to Nicetas, the patrician, who carried it off high-handedly, as we have already recounted. This fellow's maliciousness and perverse purpose were reported to the blessed Patriarch, who, being a true shepherd, called to mind him who said, 'Who is weak and I am not weak?', [2 Cor 11:29] and again, 'You that are strong bear ye the infirmities of the weak!' [Rom 15:1] Accordingly he determined to send for him, exhort him fittingly, and release him from the suspension, for he saw that the wolf was trying to seize the sheep. But by God's dispensation in order that the Patriarch's forgiving spirit might be made known to all men, he forgot to send for the cleric and release him from his punishment.

When Easter Sunday came round and he was near the holy altar to offer the bloodless sacrifice, and the deacon had all but reached the close of the catholic prayer,* and the holy veil* was about to be lifted, he suddenly thought of the malicious cleric. And straightway he remembered the divine command which says: 'If therefore thou art offering

thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift', [Matt. 5:23-24] so he instructed the deacon to begin the deacon's prayer over again, and when he had finished, to repeat it once again, until his Holiness returned. For he pretended that his stomach was troubling him. Then he went into the sacristy of the church and at once dispatched about twenty vergers to search for the evil-minded cleric, since the shepherd's intention was to snatch the sheep from the lion's mouth. And God, Who does the will of those who fear Him, caused the cleric to fall into their hands at once, and when he was brought in, the Patriarch first of all, so a witness testifies, threw himself down and said: 'Forgive me, brother!' Then through awe of the honourable Patriarch's high-priesthood and the presence of the onlookers, but still more through fear of condemnation and dread lest fire should come down from heaven at that very moment and destroy him as he looked at that venerable grey head lying on the ground, the cleric too threw himself on his knees begging for forgiveness and mercy. After the Patriarch had said: 'May God forgive us all!' they both arose and went into the church. And thus with great joy and delight the

Patriarch stood before the holy altar with a clear conscience and was able to say to God: 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' From that day the cleric who held the post of reader in the church was so chastened and filled with compunction that later he was accounted worthy to be ordained priest.

15

Some of the inspired fathers of the Church say, 'It is characteristic of the angels never to fight at all, but to abide in complete and perpetual peace; of men to quarrel indeed, but to be reconciled immediately and without delay; of demons to fight and to remain unreconciled all day long'.

I write this, lovers of Christ, as an introduction to the following narrative.

It happened one day that this glorious Patriarch had a dispute with the aforementioned patrician, Nicetas, about a public matter. The cause of the quarrel must also be stated as it is edifying-this was the quarrel. The patrician on his side wanted to regulate the market so as to ensure a profit for the State, whereas the Patriarch could not tolerate this because he took thought for the welfare of the poor. They argued about this for a long time in the council-room, and, as they could not come to an

agreement, they separated in anger and unreconciled to each other. It was then the fifth hour; the Patriarch's resistance and bitterness were in support of God's command, while the patrician's were for the sake of a financial profit. Yet a righteous man says: 'Man ought not to grow angry either for a reasonable, or unreasonable cause.' So at the eleventh hour the Patriarch sent this memorable message to the patrician by the hands of the chief elder accompanied by the clergy, 'Master, the sun is nigh setting'.

When Nicetas heard the message, he could not bear the fever in his heart but, as if pricked to the soul by the divine fire of the Saint's message, he suddenly dissolved into tears and rising, went to seek the blessed man. Directly the righteous man saw him he said: 'The son of the Church, ever obedient to her voice, has done well to come.' Next they both knelt down and embraced each other, then seating themselves, the Patriarch opened his wise mouth and said: 'Truly, master, had I not known that you were very disturbed about this matter, I should not have hesitated to come to your lordship. For our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, used to go round the towns and villages and houses Himself and visited individuals, too.' All present were edified and amazed by the Patriarch's humility, and the patrician answered, 'Really,

father, my ears are no longer big enough to hold all the slanderous tales people come and tell me'. Thereupon the wise teacher said to him, 'Listen, son and brother. If we were prepared to believe all we hear, we should be responsible for many sins, especially at the present time when the majority of men hate one another. For I, too, was often led astray by persons who brought me information about public affairs, and often after I had inflicted punishment wrongfully I found I had been misdirected, for others would come later and tell me that I had been misinformed in giving my judgment. Therefore after this had happened to me two or three times I made it a rule for myself never to give effect to any decision except after hearing both parties and to assign to those who brought me information, if their information was false, the same punishment as that which was fitting for the man informed against. So from that day nobody ventures to come to me with information about anybody without danger to himself.

'Wherefore, my son, I adjure and advise your Excellency to do likewise. For those entrusted with authority have often been known to put innocent men to death, if they have been credulous and have decided cases that came before them without full inquiry.' And the patrician, as if warned by God, agreed to observe this rule inviolate.

16

The glorious man had a nephew named George. One day this nephew had a quarrel with one of the shopkeepers in the town and was grievously insulted by him. George was bitterly vexed, not only because he had been publicly dishonoured, but more because it had been at the hands of a mean fellow, and most of all because he was the nephew of the Patriarch; so he went to see the latter in his private room weeping bitterly. When the gentle Patriarch beheld him so distressed and tearful he inquired the reason for his state of misery, wishing to learn what had caused it.

George, however, could not himself give a clear statement because of the bitterness of soul which had overmastered him; accordingly his companions who had been present when this insult was put upon him by the shopkeeper began to explain the reason to the Patriarch. 'It is not right', they said, 'for your Holiness to be so despised that your relations and kinsfolk should be insulted by abandoned creatures.'

Then he who was indeed a true physician wished first to treat his nephew's inflammation, as it were with a soothing salve, and afterwards, by his wise words, to cut out and remove the source of pain as if by the knife. Accordingly he began to allay his

suffering by these words: 'What, did someone actually dare to open his mouth and shout recriminations at you? Trust me, child, and I, your father, will do a thing to him today at which all Alexandria will be astonished.' When he saw that his nephew was calmed and had shaken off all his grief, for he imagined that the Patriarch would proceed against the man who had insulted him and have him scourged and paraded in public by the overseer of the market, he kissed his breast and said to him, 'Boy, if you are in reality the nephew of my humbleness, prepare yourself to be beaten and insulted by everybody; for true relationship is not declared through flesh and blood, but through the virtue of the soul'.

He immediately summoned the overseer of the shopkeepers and ordered him never in future to accept from that shopkeeper either his customary 'tip' or the public taxes or the rent for the shop,* for this shop, too, belonged to the Holy Church.

All were amazed at the man's unshaken magnanimity and understood that this was what he meant when he said, 'I will do a thing to him which will astonish all Alexandria', i.e. to show him favour instead of taking revenge on him.

The blessed Patriarch was once informed that a certain cleric harboured a grudge against another and was quite irreconcilable; he accordingly asked for the man's name and rank. And on the morrow, which was a Sunday, he learnt that he was a deacon, called Damianus. He therefore ordered the archdeacon to point Damianus out to him when he came into the church, but not to say anything to him. At the Sunday service the next morning this deacon was present with the others, and as soon as he saw him the archdeacon pointed him out to the Patriarch. The latter was present that day at the holy altar for this one purpose, but he had not confided to anyone what he intended doing. When, therefore, the deacon Damianus came up in his turn to receive the Holy Communion from him, the Saint took his hand and said: 'Go first and be reconciled to thy brother and then come and partake worthily of the immaculate Mysteries of the forgiving Christ!' Damianus was too ashamed to contradict the Saint before such a number of clerics and especially in such a place and such an awful hour, so he agreed to do this, and afterwards the Saint administered the Holy Mysteries to him. From thenceforth all both clerics and laymen, took care not to bear malice to each other for fear the Saint should make them contemptible and ashamed as he had made the deacon.

18

This saintly man had also a good knowledge of the holy Scriptures, not so much an accurate knowledge of the words through learning them by heart (which is but for vainglory), but by actually practising their precepts and keeping their commandments. If you looked in at his council-room any day, there was no idle word spoken-unless he was engaged in the settlement of some civic matter-but only stories of the holy fathers, or scriptural questions or dogmatic problems due to the multitude of unmentionable heretics* who swarmed in the country. If perchance someone began slanderous gossip, the Patriarch, like a wise man, would courteously turn him off it by starting another subject, but, if the gossiper persisted, he said nothing more at the time but would point him out to the doorkeeper and tell him never again to admit him with those that came to consult the Patriarch; in this way the others were taught through him to practise self-control.

19

We must not omit to mention another rule which the just man put into practice. He had heard that, when an emperor is crowned, first of all the members of the guild of tomb builders* have

access to the royal presence while the whole Senate and the army are in attendance; directly after the crowning the builders of the imperial tomb come in and bring with them four or five small pieces of marbles of different colours and say to him: 'Of which mineral does Your Majesty desire his tomb to be made?' thus suggesting to him that, as a corruptible mortal who soon passes away, he should take thought for his own soul, and govern his kingdom righteously. - The blessed man imitated this truly praiseworthy custom and gave orders for a tomb to be built for him in the place where the previous patriarchs were buried, but to leave it unfinished until his death so that on some great feast-day when the clergy were present, the zealous Christians,* as they are called, should come in and say to him, 'Your tomb, master, is still unfinished. Allow us, we pray, to finish it because you do not know at what hour the thief will come'. The Patriarch arranged this to be done in that wise in order to leave a good example to his successors.

20

The Lord allowed His churches in Jerusalem to be burnt down by the heathen Persians because of the multitude of our sins.* So when the saintly Patriarch learnt that the holy Modestus, Patriarch* of Jerusalem, was in great distress, he sent him

towards the rebuilding and repairing of the churches 1000 nomismata, 1000 sacks of corn, and 1000 of pulse, 1000 lb. of iron, 1000 casks of dried fish called 'Maenomene',* 1000 jars* of wine and 1000 Egyptian workmen, with the following letter: 'Forgive me, true workman of Christ, for sending nothing worthy of Christ's churches. Rest assured, that if it were possible, I would come and work myself in the house of the Holy Resurrection of Christ our God. Further I beseech your venerable self not to inscribe the name of my unworthy self anywhere at all, but rather ask Christ to inscribe my name there where the inscription is truly blessed.'

21

Another good habit this Saint also adopted, namely sleeping on the cheapest of beds and using only very poor coverings in his own cell. One of the city's landowners once went into the Patriarch's room and saw that he was only covered with a torn and worn quilt, so he sent him a quilt costing 36 nomismata and besought him earnestly to cover himself with that in memory) he said, of the giver.

John took and used it for one night because of the giver's insistence but throughout the night he kept saying to himself (for so his chamber-attendants related), 'Who shall say that humble

John'-for he ever called himself that-'was lying under a coverlet costing 36 nomismata whilst Christ's brethren are pinched with cold? How many are there at this minute grinding their teeth because of the cold? and how many have only a rough blanket half below and half above them so that they cannot stretch out their legs but lie shivering, rolled up like a ball of thread? How many are sleeping on the mountain without food or light, suffering twofold pangs from cold and hunger? How many would like to be filled with the outer leaves of the vegetables which are thrown away from my kitchen? How many would like to dip their bit of bread into the soup-water which my cooks throw away? How many would like even to have a sniff at the wine which is poured out in my wine-cellar? How many strangers are there at this hour in the city who have no lodging-place but lie about in the market-place, perhaps with the rain falling on them? How many are there who have not tasted oil for one month or even two? How many have no second garment either in summer or winter and so live in misery? And yet you, who hope to obtain everlasting bliss, both drink wine and eat large fishes and spend your time in bed, and now in addition to all those evils you are being kept warm by a coverlet worth 36 nomismata. Verily, if you live like that and pass your life in

such ease, do not expect to enjoy the good things prepared for us on high; but you will certainly be told, as was that other rich man: "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, but the poor evil things; and now they are comforted, but thou art in anguish?" [Luke 16:25] Blessed be God ! You shall not cover humble John a second night. For it is right and acceptable to God that 144 of your brothers and masters should be covered rather than you, one miserable creature.' For four rough blankets could be bought for one nomisma. Early on the following morning, therefore, he sent it to be sold, but the man who had given it saw it and bought it for 36 nomismata and again brought it to the Patriarch. But when he saw it put up for sale again the next day he bought it once more and carried it to the Patriarch and implored him to use it. When he had done this for the third time the Saint said to him jokingly, 'Let us see whether you or I will give up first!' For the man was exceedingly well-to-do, and the Saint took pleasure in getting money out of him, and he used to say that if with the object of giving to the poor anybody were able, without ill-will, to strip the rich right down to their shirts, he would not do wrong, more especially if they were heartless skinflints. For thereby he gets a two-fold profit, firstly he saves their souls, and secondly he himself will gain no small reward

therefrom. And to confirm this saying he would adduce as trustworthy evidence the tale about St. Epiphanius and John the Patriarch of Jerusalem-to wit that the former would skilfully steal away the Patriarch John's silver and give it to the poor.*

22

[The story which is related in this chapter is omitted, as a similar legend is found In other sources and the story has no direct bearing on the life of John.-We give the last paragraph of the chapter.]

For John was able to give profitable instruction to a man, even against the latter's will, not only by stories from his own life but also by other true and God-pleasing tales. And he used always to say to those that heard them, 'If some men have not spared their own blood, but have given even that for the service of their brethren, or rather of Christ, how much more then ought not we with zeal and humility to give of our possessions to the poor and needy so that we may receive our recompense from the just rewarder, God, on that fearful and terrible day of vengeance, when he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sowed in blessings, that is generously and large-heartedly, will also reap very abundantly, that is, he will

inherit those good things which pass all understanding' .

23

Our Saint who was adorned with so many good deeds was not wanting either in this respect, for he dearly loved reading the lives of the holy fathers, especially of those who practised almsgiving.

One day when reading the life of St. Serapion,* who was nicknamed Sindonius, he came across the following passage: 'Serapion once gave his cloak to a poor man and as he walked on and met another who was shivering, he gave that one his tunic, and then sat down naked, holding the holy Gospel, and on being asked, "Who has taken your clothes, father?" he pointed to the Gospel and said, "This is the robber". Another time he sold the Gospel to give an alms and when a disciple said to him, "Father, where is your Gospel?" he replied, "Son, believe me, it was the Gospel which said to me 'Sell all you have and give to the poor', so I sold it and gave to the poor that on the day of judgment we may have freer access to God".'

He also read: 'Another time a widow woman asked the same St. Serapion for alms because her children were hungry and as he had nothing whatever to give her, he obliged her to sell him to

some pagan* actors, and these he converted to Christianity in a few days.'

After reading all this about St. Serapion he was so overcome and filled with admiration for his goodness that he burst into tears and then summoned all his own officials and read all these portions about St. Serapion to them and said: 'On my soul, you lovers of Christ, see how greatly a man is edified by reading the lives of the holy fathers. For, believe me, until today I really thought that I was doing a little something by giving away the monies which came to me, for I did not know that some, when overcome by pity, even sold themselves!'

24

Above all, this Saint ever honoured and reverenced the monkish habit and felt special sympathy for any monk who was hard pressed for his bodily needs. And he had this peculiarity which was not shared by many, that he would never listen to an accusation, either false or true, against any wearer of the monkish habit. For owing to the suggestion of some slanderers he once had the following experience:

A monk wandered round in the city, begging alms for several days, accompanied by a rather young

girl; some persons who saw him were scandalized and imagined she was his wife, and therefore carried accusations against him to the Patriarch, 'Because, reverend father,' said they, 'he is turning the angelic robe of the monkish life into ridicule, by having a girl as wife .

Accordingly the Patriarch thinking to prevent sins against God-Who had appointed him to this end-immediately gave orders for the woman to be beaten and separated from him, and for the monk to be scourged and to be imprisoned in solitary confinement. The Saint's order was carried out with all speed, and in the night the monk appeared to him in his dreams, showing him his back which was all torn to ribbons- for the church police-officers had scourged him pitilessly- and said to him: 'So it please you, my lord Patriarch, this once you have made a mistake as any other man might', and with these words he vanished.

In the morning the holy man recalled the dream which had come to him in the night and sat on his bed full of thought. Then quickly he sent and had the monk brought to him by his syncellus* from the place where he had been confined, for the blessed man kept wondering in his mind whether he would resemble the monk whom he had seen in his dream. So when the monk came in, walking

with great difficulty-for he could hardly move because of the terrible flogging he had endured-and the Patriarch saw his face, he remained speechless and immovable and buried in thought, unable to utter a sound Only with his hand he motioned to the monk to sit down near him on his couch. After he had regained his self-possession and signed himself with the Cross he begged the monk to gird a cloth round him and then to undress without shame so that he might see whether his back was in such a state as he had seen in his dream; with much reluctance the monk consented, girt on his own loin-cloth, and began to undress. Now, as he was undressing to show his back to the holy Patriarch, by the unexpected will of God the loin-cloth he had on got loose and dropped to the ground, and all there saw that he was a eunuch, which no one had noticed before as he was a very young man.

When the Patriarch and all who were with him had seen this and especially his horribly mutilated back, the Patriarch immediately sent and subjected to penance those who had slandered the monk without inquiry, while he made many apologies to the most holy monk, saying that it was through ignorance that he had sinned against him and against God. Further, the just man gave to the monk this counsel: 'It is not right, my son,' he said,

'that those who are clad in the holy and angelic robe as you are should wander about unguardedly in cities and, above all, they should not take a woman about with them to the scandal of the beholders.' Then the monk in deep humility made his defence to the holy Patriarch, saying: 'I assure you, master, I am not lying-I was in Gaza a few days ago and as I was coming out of the city to go and worship at the shrine of the holy abbot, Cyrus, this girl who has so skilfully hung herself on to me, met me- it was already evening-and falling at my feet she begged that she might journey with me; "For", said she, "I am a Jewess and wish to become a Christian." And then she began to invoke horrible curses upon me if I left her to perish. Therefore through fear of the judgment of God I took her, thinking that Satan does not send temptation to eunuchs; I did not realize that he does not spare anyone. So when we came to the church, your Holiness, and had finished our prayers, I baptized her there in the church of the holy abbot, Cyrus. And in simplicity of heart I travelled about with her asking a few alms in order that I might place her in a convent.'

When he heard this tale, the Patriarch said: 'Upon my soul, how many hidden servants God has, and we, simple ones, do not know them!'^{*} Then he related to all those who were present the vision

concerning the monk which he had had in the night, and afterwards taking 100 nomismata in his hand, offered them to the monk. But he, the God-loving man and true monk, would not hear of taking any sum worth mentioning,* but spoke these words to the Patriarch: 'I do not want these coins, master, for if a monk has faith, he does not need money; and if he does need money, he has not faith.' This remark more than anything else convinced his hearers that he was a servant of God. After kneeling before the Patriarch he went away in peace. From henceforth therefore the Patriarch showed special honour and hospitality to monks, both to the good and to those who were reputed to be evil, and he at once built a hostel entirely for them and called it 'The Monks' Inn'.

25

When the plague was at one time raging in the city, the just man used to go and watch the funerals for he said that this and the contemplation of graves were very edifying. Often too he would sit at the bedside of persons in their death anguish, and would close their eyes with his own hands, wishing thereby to keep the thought of his own death in continual remembrance. He also enjoined prayers for the dying to be celebrated diligently and perpetually, and in support of this he told the

following story: 'A short time ago,' he said, 'a man was captured by the Persians, and when taken to Persia was confined in the dungeon called Lethe.* Some other prisoners who escaped and reached Cyprus were asked by his parents whether they had seen him by any chance; to which they replied: "We buried him with our own hands." But that was not really the man about whom they were questioned, but another exactly like him. They also told the parents the month and the day of his death, and so the latter had prayers said three times a year for him whom they presumed to be dead.

'Four years later he escaped from the Persians and returned to Cyprus. Then his relatives said, "We heard for certain, brother, that you were dead and therefore we have held memorial services for you three times a year".

'On hearing that they did this for him three times a year he asked on what month and day the services were held, and they replied: "At Epiphany, at Easter, and on Whit-Sunday."

'Thereupon he said: "On those three feasts in the year a man in white raiment, like the sun, used to come and free me invisibly from my chains and from my cell and all that day I walked about and

nobody recognized me. Yet on the morrow there I was in chains again!" '

The holy Patriarch used to say: 'We learn from this story that those who have fallen asleep obtain comfort from the prayers we make on their behalf.'

26

The effect produced by this sympathetic man's deeds was often the same as that which we hear followed the actions of the holy Apostles. For many who observed his constant and unquestioning pity for the needy were often moved to sell many of their possessions and to bring the money and offer it to this kindhearted servant of God. For instance, a man came one day bringing seven and a half pounds of gold and told the holy man that was all the gold he possessed; then he begged him with many a genuflection to pray to God to preserve his son (for he had an only boy about fifteen years old), and also to bring back his ship safely from Africa, to which country it had sailed.

The Patriarch took the money from his hand and marvelled at the man's magnanimity in bringing him all the money he possessed, then on the man's behalf he offered up a lengthy prayer in his presence and so dismissed him. Yet because of the man's great faith he placed the bag containing the

money under the holy table in the oratory of his own bed-chamber and at once celebrated the whole liturgy over it, earnestly importuning God on behalf of the giver to save the latter's son and to bring back the ship safely, as the man had begged him to do.

Before thirty days had passed the son of him who had brought the seven and a half pounds to the Patriarch died, and three days after the boy's death the ship arrived from Africa, on which the man's own brother sailed as 'Master', but near the Pharos* it suffered shipwreck, all the cargo was lost and only the lives of the crew and the empty ship were saved.

When the ship-owner, the father of the boy, heard of this further catastrophe which had befallen him, then in the words of the Psalmist: 'His soul had almost dwelt in Hades.' [Ps. 94:17 = LXX Ps 113:17] For before his grief for his son had been assuaged he was further thrown into despair by the loss of the ship.

All these occurrences were reported to the Patriarch who grieved almost more than the sufferer himself, especially over the loss of the man's only son. And as he did not know what to do, he besought God in His mercy to comfort the man through His boundless pity; for he was

ashamed to send for the man and comfort him face to face; yet he did send him a message not to let his spirits fail, reminding him that 'God does nothing without judgment, but all is to our profit though we know it not'. To show him that he would not lose the reward for the seven and a half pounds and for the trust which he had placed in the holy Patriarch-and further to teach us, too, to remain untroubled and thankful to God in any trials that may befall us after doing a good deed-this true lover of Christ saw in a vision the following night a man in the likeness of the most holy Patriarch saying to him: 'Why are you so distressed and despondent, brother? Did you not ask me to implore God to save your son? Well, he is saved! For had he lived he would have turned out a most pernicious and unclean fellow. Then, as regards the ship, had not God been touched by your good deed and my unworthiness, since it had been determined that the vessel, souls and all, should go to the bottom, you would have lost your brother also. Rise and glorify God Who has granted you his life and has kept your son unspotted from this vain world.'

When the man awoke he felt his soul comforted and freed from all sorrow; so he put on his clothes and went in haste to the most venerable Patriarch and, throwing himself at his feet, gave thanks co

God and to him and related the vision which he had seen. The just man heard his story and then said: 'Glory to Thee, oh merciful Lover of men, for listening to my prayer, sinner though I be.' And turning to the ship-owner he said, 'Do not by any means ascribe your blessings wholly to my prayers but rather to God and your own faith, for this it is which effected all'. For the Saint was exceedingly humble-minded both in words and thought.

27

One day this blessed Patriarch went to visit the poor in the quarter called Caesareum*-for there he had had some very long vaulted buildings erected; the floor was covered with wooden boards and mats and rough rugs were provided. Here the poor could sleep during the winter months.

Accompanying the Patriarch was a certain bishop, a lover of money and of a most unsympathetic disposition. To him the blessed Patriarch said: 'Give Christ's brethren a little present, brother Troilus,' for that was his name, for somebody had whispered to the Patriarch that the bishop's attendant was carrying thirty pounds of gold at that moment in order to buy a set of engraved silver for the bishop's table. The bishop, reverencing the Patriarch's word and more probably momentarily quickened in soul thereby,

ordered the man carrying the thirty pounds of gold to give a nomisma to each of the brethren sitting there. In this way the large quantity of gold was quickly spent.

After the Patriarch and the bishop Troilus had both returned to -their own residences, the latter, who had performed this act of charity, so to speak, against his will, was seized by unreasoning and soul-destroying anxiety over the money which had been distributed, and as an outcome of his miserliness and pitilessness and change of mind a fit of shivers came over him accompanied by an unnatural feverishness. In consequence of this unexpected illness he straightway took to his bed. When the servant came from the most holy Patriarch inviting him to lunch, he excused himself saying that from some cause or other he had an attack of ague. On receipt of this message the Patriarch at once recognized that it was owing to his having given away those thirty pounds that the involuntary giver was ill, for we have already said Troilus was extremely avaricious and unsympathetic.

John could not bear that he himself should be waited on at table while the other lay in torments in his bed, so in his utter want of arrogance he quickly went to him and with a smile on his face

said to him: 'You must forgive me, brother Troilus, for you imagine that I was serious when I asked you to give that large amount to our poor brethren, but let me tell you, I only said it in jest. For I wanted to give each of them a nomisma for the holy feast and as my purse-bearer had not a sufficient sum with him, I borrowed it from you, and now see, here are your thirty pounds !'

Hardly had the bishop seen the money in the venerable hand of this true physician and shepherd before the fever suddenly disappeared and the shivering ceased, and his ordinary strength and colour returned so that there was no concealing the fact that the money was the cause of his sudden indisposition.

When he had accepted the gold from the Patriarch's venerable hands without making the slightest objection, the Patriarch asked him to acknowledge in writing that he abandoned any claim for interest on the thirty pounds of gold which had been distributed.

This Troilus did with joy, and wrote as follows with his own hand: 'Oh God, pray give John the most blessed Patriarch of the city of Alexandria, the interest on the thirty pounds of gold which have been distributed in Thy name, as I have received my own back.' The Patriarch, having received this

acknowledgment, took the bishop back to lunch with him, for as we have already said, the latter had suddenly recovered.

However God, the Rewarder, wishing to chasten him and also to arouse him to pity and sympathy for his fellow creatures, showed him in a dream that same day, when he was taking a nap after lunching with the Patriarch, how great a reward he had lost.

'I saw,' said he, 'a house whose beauty and size no human art could imitate, with a gateway all of gold and above the gateway an inscription painted on wood which ran thus: "The eternal home and resting-place of bishop Troilus."

'When I read this, I was overjoyed,' he continued, 'for I knew that the king had granted me the enjoyment of this house. But I had scarcely finished reading this inscription when behold, an imperial chamberlain appeared with others of the divine retinue, and as he drew near to the gateway of the radiant house he said to his servants: "Take down that inscription," and when they had taken it down he said again: "Change it and put up the one the King of the World has sent." So they took away the one and fixed up another while I was looking on, and on it was written: "The eternal home and resting-place of John, the Archbishop of

Alexandria, bought for thirty pounds." When I saw that,' he said, 'I awoke and went and related to the great arch-shepherd what I had seen in my sleep.' And Troilus was benefited by the instruction, for from that time he became compassionate.

28

The Lord who once took away all Job's wealth did the same to this virtuous John. For the ships of the Church of which he was head met with such a violent storm in the Adriatic* that the crew were forced to jettison the whole cargo; and all the ships were there at the same time. And the weight of their freight was exceedingly heavy for they had waterproof garments* and silver and other valuable goods, so that the weight of what was lost was estimated at thirty-four hundredweight; for there were more than thirteen ships each carrying 10,000 artabas.

Directly they reached Alexandria and cast anchor, all the ship masters and the captains took refuge in the church; when the Saint heard of this and learned the reason of their plight he sent them a message written by his own hand and in these words: 'The Lord gave, brethren, and the Lord, as He willed, has also taken away. As it seemed good to the Lord so it has happened. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Come out freely, children, and

do not be afraid because of this, for the Lord will again take thought for the morrow.'

The next day almost half the city came up to the council chamber anxious to console the glorious Saint, but he anticipated them by saying to them all: 'My sons and brethren, do not be cast down at all by this mishap to the ships. For believe me, humble John is found to be the cause of it. For had I not been high-minded, I should not have met with this misfortune. But because I had lofty plans with regard to the things that are God's and thought I was doing great things by distributing what belonged to men, this has befallen me, and God allowed this to happen to bring me to my senses. For almsgiving often exalts the mind and makes the foolish man haughty, whereas an unexpected calamity humbles him who patiently endures it. The Holy Scripture says: "Poverty humbleth a man", and again David, recognizing this truth, said: "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me that I might learn Thy statutes." [Ps 99:71]

'Thus I was the cause of two misfortunes, firstly, I lost the wherewithal to make distribution through vain glory; secondly, such large sums of money have been lost through my fault that now I have to bear the blame for the persons in distress.

However, beloved, God is the same now as He was in the times of Job, the righteous, and not because of my poverty, but because of the need of those in want He will not desert us. He Himself has said, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" [Heb 13:5]; and again, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you" [Matt 6:33] In this wise the citizens who were anxious to console him, as I have said, were in fact consoled by his Beatitude.

After a very short time God doubled our new Job's possessions and he was again the same magnanimous man in the way of sympathy, and, if anything, he was even more to be revered than formerly.

29

One day the Saint gave to one of his servants who had been reduced to extreme poverty two pounds of gold with his own hands so that no one might know of it. When his servant said, 'After this gift I shall no longer have the courage to look you in the face, a face so dear, so like an angel's', he made this wise and praiseworthy answer: 'I have not yet shed my blood on your behalf, brother, as Christ, our God, my Master and the Master of us all, commanded me.'

30

A man was harried by the tax-collectors and was unable to pay-for the crops had failed through the Nile not having risen as usual-so he went to a military commander, one of the grandees, and besought him to lend him 50 pounds of gold and offered to give security for double the value if desired. The officer promised to give it him, but postponed doing so at the time. But as the collectors pressed the man hard, he, too, like the rest, steered his course to the all-receiving harbour, I mean to the gentle and admirable Patriarch. Almost before he had fully explained the circumstances, the Patriarch said: 'Why, if necessary, my son, I will give you even this robe I am wearing.' For amongst his other wonderful traits was this one: he could not bear to see anyone weeping for misery without mingling his own tears with his. And so now, without a moment's hesitation, he fulfilled the request of the man who asked for a loan.

The next night the officer saw himself standing near an altar to which many brought offerings, and for every offering which they laid down they received a hundredfold in exchange from the altar. Now the Patriarch was there too, behind him. And one offering was lying in front of them on a stool;

and somebody said to the officer: 'Come, sir, pick up that offering and bring it to the altar and take in exchange for it a hundredfold. As he hesitated, the Patriarch ran forward, although he was behind him, and picked it up before he could do so and carried it to the altar and received, like the others, a hundredfold in exchange. When he awoke he could not interpret the dream. But he sent and had the man brought to him who had requested a loan, in order that he might give him the money; and when he came, the officer said to him: 'Take the money!' The man, however, answered: 'The Patriarch has anticipated your service. For as your lordship kept putting me off, I was obliged to flee for help to him as to a harbour, because the tax-collectors were very insistent.' Directly he heard that, the officer remembered his dream and cried, 'You have said rightly that he has anticipated my service to you, for truly he has anticipated me, and woe be to him who wishes to do good and puts it off!' and then he related his dream to him and to many others.

31

One day the Saint was in the church* of the holy and victorious martyrs, Cyrus and John, whither he had gone for prayer on their glorious anniversary, and as he went out of the gate of the

city a woman was waiting for him and fell at his feet, crying: 'Avenge me on my brother-in-law, for he is wronging me!' Some of his suite, who felt that they could speak for him, told her that he would attend to the matter on his return, whereupon the all-wise remarked: 'How will God receive my prayvrs if I put this woman off, and who will go security for me that I shall live till to-morrow? And I might go to Christ with no excuse to make about her.' He did not leave the place until he had caused justice to be done for her.

32

To help this glorious man towards attaining his purpose which was indeed wholly divine, the Lord sent him John and Sophronius,* who were wise in the things of God and worthy of perpetual remembrance. They were really honest counsellors, and the Patriarch gave unquestioning ear to them as though they were his fathers, and was grateful to them for being most brave and valiant soldiers in the cause of the true faith. For trusting in the might of the Holy Spirit they engaged in a war of dialectics, setting their own wisdom against that of the mad followers of Severus* and of the other unclean heretics who were scattered about the country; they delivered many villagesa very many churches, and monasteries, too, like good

shepherds saving the sheep from the jaws of these evil beasts, and for this reason above others the saintly Patriarch shewed special honour to these saintly men.

33

If by chance the blessed man heard of anybody being harsh and cruel to his slaves and given to striking them he would first send for him and then admonish him very gently, saying: 'Son, it has come to my sinful ears that by the prompting of our enemy you behave somewhat too harshly towards your household slaves. Now, I beseech you, do not give place to anger, for God has not given them to us to strike, but to be our servants, and perhaps not even for that, but rather for them to be supported by us from the riches God has bestowed on us. What price, tell me, must a man pay to purchase one who has been honoured by creation in the likeness and similitude of God? Or do you, the slave's master, possess anything more in your own body than he does? Say, a hand, or foot, or hearing, or a soul? Is he not in all things like unto you? Listen to what the great light, Paul, says: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus." [Gal 3:27-28]

If then we are equal before Christ, let us become equal in our relations one with another; for Christ took upon himself the form of a servant thereby teaching us not to treat our fellow-servants with disdain. For there is one Master of all Who dwells in heaven and yet regards the things of low degree; it does not say "the rich things" but "things of low degree". We give so much gold in order to make a slave for ourselves of a man honoured and together with us bought by the blood of our God and Master. For him is the heaven, for him the earth, for him the stars, for him the sun, for him the sea and all that is in it; at times the angels serve him. For him Christ washed the feet of slaves, for him He was crucified and for him endured all His other sufferings.

Yet you dishonour him who is honoured of God and you beat him mercilessly as if he were not of the same nature as yourself

'Tell me, is this all you care for humble John? Would you like it if each time you sinned, God were immediately to punish you and take vengeance on your sin? Assuredly not. Tell me how in your daily prayers you can say "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"? [Matt 6:12]

With such and similar arguments from the store within him would the blessed one admonish the

man and then dismiss him. Unless he heard that the master had reformed his ways, he would arrange that the ill-treated slave should reach in secrecy a place of refuge; then he would ask that he might buy him, and directly the just man had purchased him he would immediately set him free.

34

[This chapter is omitted as the story would seem to have been originally told of the Alexandrian Patriarch Apollinarius (A.D. 550-69) and has been taken from John Moschus and re-told of the Patriarch, John the Almsgiver.*]

35

Another command which the admirable Patriarch consistently observed was 'From him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away';[Matt 5:42] he never refused anyone who begged for that kind of help from him.

A certain rascally impostor was aware of this and asked him to lend him 20 pounds of gold - he was a so - called 'adventurer'*-and then treating the Patriarch as ungratefully as he had done many others, kept saying, 'He gave me nothing . The treasurers and administrators of the church-funds* accordingly demanded that he should be

imprisoned and his goods confiscated. But the imitator of Him Who said: 'Be ye good and merciful even as your Father in heaven, Who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust' [Luke 6:36/Matt 5:52] would not hear of their troubling the man at all. Still they were furious against him for having tricked the Patriarch and they said to the Saint: 'It is not just, master, that this prodigal should get money which the poor ought to receive" In answer to this the thrice-blessed said: 'Assuredly, brethren, if you ever take anything away from that man in Opposition to my purpose, you will transgress two commandments and only fulfil one, even if what you take you give to the poor. For, firstly, you will have shewn yourselves impatient under loss and become a bad example to others; and secondly you will have disobeyed your God and Master Who said: 'Of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.' [Luke 6:30] It is expedient, my children, that we should be an example of patience to all men, and so, too, says the apostle: 'Why not rather suffer wrong and be defrauded?' [1 Cor 6:7]

And though it is truly good to give to everyone that asks, yet it is nobler and more honourable to give to him who does not ask, and to him that taketh away our cloak against our will we should give our

tunic also, and thus really imitate the angelic, or rather the divine, nature. For from our belongings our Lord commanded us to do good to our neighbour. 'Thou shalt do good unto thy brother,' He says, 'as far as thy hand has the means, but not from the things that have been taken from the wrongdoer by litigation and strife.'

36

[This chapter is omitted as the story of Bitalius and his efforts to convert the prostitutes of Alexandria has little direct reference to the life of the Patriarch]

37

One day a man asked an alms of the Saint who directed that ten coppers [*pholleis*]s and no more should be given him. The beggar then violently abused the Patriarch to his face for not having given him as much as he wanted. But when his attendants were anxious to thrash him for his insolence, the Patriarch rebuked them severely, saying: 'I eave him alone, brothers. Here have I been insulting Christ for sixty years by my deeds, and can I not bear one insult from this fellow?' And he commanded his almoner* to open the money-bag and let the beggar take as large a sum as he wished.

38

One day the all-wise heard of a generous giver and so he sent for him privately and said jokingly, 'How is it that you became so generous? Was it natural to you, or did you put constraint upon yourself?' Some to whom he put this same question stood shamefacedly before him and would not answer, whilst others would tell him their story. One man whom the Saint questioned answered as follows: 'As a fact, master, I neither give anything nor do any good; but the little I do give and do from that which comes to me through Christ and your prayers I came to do in this way. Formerly I was very hardhearted and unsympathetic and one day I lost money and was reduced to poverty. Then my reason began to say to me: "Truly, if you had been charitable, God would not have forsaken you." And thereupon I decided to give five coppers [*pholleis*] a day to the poor. But when I started giving them Satan immediately checked me by saying: "Those coppers would really have been enough to buy a bath-ticket or vegetables for your family." Then I felt at once as if I were taking the money out of my children's mouth and so I gave nothing.

'But I noticed I was being mastered by this vice, so said to my slave: "I want you to steal five coppers

daily without my noticing it, and give them in charity." For I am a moneychanger, master.

'My slave, worthy fellow, began by stealing ten coppers, and occasionally even a shilling. [keratin] As he noticed that we were being blessed, he began to steal crowns, [trimisia] too, and give them away.

'One day I was expressing my astonishment at God's blessings to us, I said to him: "Those five coppers, boy, have greatly benefited us. So now I want you to give ten." At that the slave said to me with a smile: "Yes, be thankful for my thefts, since but for them we should not even have bread to eat today. However if there can be a just thief, I am he ! " And then he told me that he had given shillings and even crowns. So it was through his faith, master, that I grew accustomed to giving with all my heart.'

The holy Patriarch was much edified by this story and said: 'Truly I have read many stories in the lives of the fathers, but I have never heard anything like this !'

39

One of the high officials bore a grudge against another great John heard of this and admonished him several times, but could not persuade him to be reconciled with his enemy. One day therefore

the Saint sent and had him fetched on the pretext of some public business, and as soon as he had come the Patriarch held a service in his oratory, no one else being present save his syncellus.* After the Patriarch had said the prayer of consecration and had pronounced the opening words of the Lord's Prayer, the three of them began to repeat the Prayer. When they got to the sentence: 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors' the Patriarch made a sign to the syncellus to stop, and he himself stopped, too, and the magistrate commenced saying all by himself 'Forgive us as we forgive'. At once the Saint turned towards him and said in a gentle voice: 'Corlsider in whart an awful moment you are saying to God "As I forgive, do Thou also forgive me" !'

Immediately, as though tormented by fire, the magistrate fell on his face at the Saint's feet crying, 'Whatever you command, my lord, your servant will do'. And from that time he was reconciled to his enemy in all sincerity.

40

Then again, if the blessed man noticed that anyone was haughty he did not reprove him to his face, but if he noticed him sitting in his reception-room he would introduce some talk about humility in order that by such teaching he might gradually

break the pride of the haughty man and chasten him by some such words as these: 'I am astonished, my masters, that my wretched soul does not remember the virtue of humility which the Son of God manifested when He appeared on earth; but I am puffed up and exalt myself over my brother if I am perhaps a little better-looking or richer or more distinguished or hold some public office, and I forget the divine voice which said: "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." [Matt 11:29]

'Nor do I reflect upon the words of the saints, of whom one called himself "dust and ashes" [Ecclesiasticus 17:32] another "a worm and no man" [Ps. 22:6] and yet another a "stammerer and slow of speech". [Exod4:10] Isaiah, too, worthy to behold God so far as a man may, declared then that he had unclean lips. [Is. 6:5] For what am I, humble man as I am? Was I not fashioned from clay just as a brick is? And will not all the glory which I think I have wither like "the flower of the grass"? [1 Peter 1:24]

With these and many more similar discourses this wise man, while pretending to talk about himself, would cauterize the man afflicted with haughtiness and self-conceit, and do good to his soul. For the

patient understood that the Patriarch was referring indirectly to him.

41

[This chapter contains a further discourse on 'Humility' which is omitted in some MSS.-We give the second half of the chapter.]

The blessed man always used to talk much about the thought of death and the departure of the soul so that on several occasions those who went in to him with a haughty bearing and laughing face and bold eyes came out from his presence with humble demeanour and a contrite face and eyes filled with tears. He used to say: 'My humble opinion is that it suffices for our salvation to meditate continually and seriously about death and to think earnestly upon the fact that nobody will pity us in that hour nor will anyone travel with us out of this life except our good deeds. And when the angels come hastening down, in what a tumult will a soul then be if it is found unready! How it will beg that it may be allowed a further short span of life, only to hear the words: "What about the time you have lived, have you spent it well?" '

And again he used to say as though speaking of himself, 'Humble John, how will you have the strength to "pass the wild beasts of the brake", [Ps/

68:30 = LXX 67:31, which read *epitimeson tois theriois tou kalamou*] when they meet you like tax collectors? Woe is me, what fears and tremors will encompass the soul when it is called to account by so many keen and pitiless accountants?' And indeed the saintly man had especially noted that which was made known through revelation by St. Simeon, the stylite; the words were: 'When the soul goes forth from the body, as it rises from the earth to heaven there meet it troops of demons, each in his own regiment. A band of demons of arrogance meet it, they feel it all over to see whether the soul possesses their works. A band of the spirits of slander meets it; they inspect it to see whether it has ever uttered slanders and not repented. Again higher up the demons of harlotry meet it; they investigate whether they can recognize their pursuits in it. And while the wretched soul is being brought to account on its way from earth to heaven the holy angels stand on one side and do not help it, only its own virtues can do that.'

Pondering on these things the glorious Patriarch would grow fearful and troubled about such an hour, for he also bore in mind the saying of St. Hilarion* who, as he was on the point of leaving this life, lost courage and said to his soul: 'For eighty years, O humble soul, you have been serving Christ and are you afraid to go forth? Go forth, for

He is merciful.' And the Patriarch would say to himself: 'If he, after serving Christ for eighty years and raising men from the dead and doing signs and wonders, was yet afraid of that bitter hour, what can you, humble John, do or say when you come to face those cruel and pitiless exactors of taxes and tributes? To which will you have the strength to make your defence? To the demons of falsehood, to those of slander, to those of unmercifulness, to those of avarice, to those of malice, to those of hatred, to those of perjury?' and with new doubts rising in his mind he would say: 'Oh God, do Thou rebuke them, for the whole strength of man is of no avail against them; do Thou, Lord, give us as guides the holy angels who protect and pilot us. For great is the fury of the demons against us, great is the fear, great the trembling, great the peril of the voyage through this sea of air. For if, when travelling from city to city on this earth, we require a guide to lead us lest we fall into crevasses, or into the haunts of wild beasts, or into impassable rivers, or into pathless and inaccessible mountains, or into the hands of brigands, or into some boundless and waterless desert and be lost, how many strong guides and divine guardians do we not need when we start on this long journey which is everlasting, I mean the exodus from the body and the journey up to

heaven?' These were the teachings, full of God's wisdom, that the blessed man gave to himself and to all; these were his daily thoughts and meditations.

42

He also gave a great deal of thought to the holy liturgy and spent much care upon it.

One day when he determined to stop so many people from leaving the church as soon as the Gospel had been read to spend their time in idle talk instead of in prayer, what did he do? -Directly after the Gospel had been read in the church, he slipped away and came out himself and sat down outside with the crowd. And when everybody was amazed, the just man said to them: 'Children, where the sheep are, there also the shepherd must be. Come inside and I will come in; or stay here and I will stay, too. For I come down to the Holy Church for your sakes, since I could hold the service for myself in the bishop's house.'

After repeating the same action a few times he sobered the people and greatly reformed their conduct in this matter, for they were afraid that the never-to-be-forgotten Patriarch might act in the same manner towards them as before.

He also forbade anyone to make an appointment to meet in the sanctuary, but in the presence of all he would force any such to leave saying, 'If you really came here to pray, then occupy your mind and mouth with that; but if you came merely to meet someone, it is written, "The house of God shall be called the house of prayer; do not turn it into a den of thieves".' [Matt 21:13]

Now the really remarkable thing in the life of the saintly Patriarch was this: although he had not practised the discipline of the monk, though he had not spent his time in church amongst the clergy, but had lived in lawful wedlock with his wife; despite the fact that he remained a layman until the hour when he was consecrated as Patriarch,* yet he so mastered the ordering of the church and he attained to such a height of virtue that he excelled many of those who had distinguished themselves in the asceticism of the desert.

As he wished to have a share in this good thing also, I mean to be numbered amongst those who lived the monastic life, he devised the following scheme. He collected two bodies of holy monks) arranged that all their needs should be supplied from the lands belonging to him in his native city,* built cells for them and appointed them to the two

oratories, the one of our Lady, the holy Mother of God, and the other of St. John, which he had rebuilt from the foundations. Then he spoke to the monks beloved of God and said: 'I myself-after God- will take thought for your bodily needs, but you must make the salvation of my soul your care, so that your evening and night vigils may be set to my credit with God. But if you celebrate the liturgy in our cells, your own souls will gain the benefit.* This he did as he wanted to make the God-beloved monks very zealous.

So his God-pleasing organization of the two bodies of monks was established, and through their means the life of the city under him was conducted almost after the fashion of a monastery, for hymns were sung to God continuously in various places throughout the night.

Another thing the blessed man taught and insisted upon with all was never on any occasion whatsoever to associate with heretics and, above all, never to take the Holy Communion with them, 'even if', the blessed man said, 'you remain without communicating all your life, if through stress of circumstances you cannot find a community of the Catholic Church. For if, having legally married a wife in this world of the flesh, we are forbidden by God and by the laws to desert her and be united to

another woman, even though we have to spend a long time separated from her in a distant country, and shall incur punishment if we violate our vows, how then shall we, who have been Joined to God through the orthodox faith and the Catholic Church-as the apostle says: "I espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ" [2 Cor 11:2]-how shall we escape from sharing in that punishment which in the world to come awaits heretics, if we defile the orthodox and holy faith by adulterous communion with heretics?

For 'communion' he said, 'has been so called because he who has "communion" has things in common and agrees with those with whom he has "communion". Therefore I implore you earnestly, children, never to go near the oratories of the heretics in order to communicate there.'

43

Amongst his wonderful achievements the blessed man attained unto this also, I mean never to judge his neighbour without good reason, or to listen to those who condemned him. Here let me give his teaching on this point from which all may profit.

A young man eloped with a nun and fled to Constantinople. On hearing this the just man

almost died of grief. But some time later when sitting in his sacristy with some of the clergy and enjoying a profitable conversation someone happened to speak of the young man who had carried off the nun. Those who were sitting with the Saint began cursing the youth for having destroyed two souls, his own and the nun's. But the blessed man interrupted and stopped them saying: 'No, my children, do not speak like that! For I can prove to you that you yourselves are committing two sins, one because you are transgressing the commandment of Him who said: "Judge not that ye be not judged", [Matt 7:1] and the second because you do not know for certain whether they are still living in sin, and have not repented.'

'For I read the life of a father which has the following story. In a certain city two monks were starting on an errand, and as one of the two passed through a square a harlot called out to him: "Save me, father, as Christ saved the harlot." And he, without a thought of men's censure, said to her: "Follow me!" and taking her by the hand he went out of the city openly in full view of everyone. Thus the rumour spread that the abbot had taken the woman, Porphyria,* (for that was her name) to wife. As the two travelled on so that he might put her into a convent, the woman found a baby which

had been exposed and was lying on the ground near a church and took it with her intending to bring it up. A year later some of the citizens came to the country where the abbot and Porphyria (she who had been a harlot) were staying, and seeing her with the child said to her, "You have certainly got a fine chick by the abbot", for she had not yet adopted the monastic robe. The men who had seen her spread abroad the report when they got back to Tyre (for that was the city from which the abbot had taken her) that Porphyria had had a fine son by the abbot. "We saw him with our own eyes," they said, "and he is like his father."

'Now when the abbot knew beforehand by revelation from God that he would shortly die, he said to the nun, Pelagia,* for so he named her when he gave her the holy habit of a nun, "Let us go to Tyre for I have business there and I want you to come with me." She did not like to refuse, so she followed him and they both came to Tyre with the boy who was now seven years old.

'When the abbot fell ill with a mortal sickness about a hundred people from the city came to visit him, and he said to them: "Bring hot coals!" When the censer arrived full of hot coals he took it and poured all the hot coals on to his robe and said: "Now be assured, brethren, that as God preserved

the bush unburnt from the fire, and as the live coals have not even singed my robe, so, too, I have never committed sin with a woman from the day I was born." And all were struck dumb with amazement that his robe was not burnt by the fire and they glorified God who has such servants, though they are unrecognized by men.* From the example of the nun Pelagia who had once been a harlot several other harlots followed her and renounced the world and went with her into her convent. For after the monk, the servant of the Lord, who had received her profession, had fully satisfied everybody of his innocence, he surrendered his soul to the Lord in peace. For this reason', the Patriarch continued, 'I warn you, my children, not to be so ready to mock at, or judge, the acts of other people.

For we have often seen the sin of the fornicator, but his repentance, which he made in secret, we did not see, and we may have seen somebody steal, but we know nothing of the groanings and tears which he has offered to God. We still think of him as we saw him, a thief, a fornicator or a perjuror, but in the sight of God his secret repentance and confession have been accepted, and in His eyes he is honourable.'

Thus all were astonished at the teaching of this virtuous shepherd and teacher.

44A

Two clerics were shoemakers* and worked near each other; the one had several children, a wife, and his father and mother, yet found time to attend church regularly, and it was he who, after God, supported them all by his handicraft. The other, in spite of being a more skilful workman, could not even support himself, because he found no time for church, at times working even on Sundays.

Consequently he was envious of his neighbour and one day, unable to bear his jealousy any longer, he said to him angrily: 'How is it that you have grown so rich? For I pay more attention to my work than you do and yet am losing money. The other, wishing to make him find time for going to church, said: 'Whenever I go to church, I find a coin thrown on the ground and thus bit by bit I have grown rich. Now, if you like, I will always give you a call, then you come with me and if we find anything, you shall go halves with me.'

The other consented and accompanied him to church and for that reason God blessed him continuously and enriched him. Then his good

counsellor said to him: 'You see how much good one lie for the sake of God has done both to your soul and to your finances. To tell you the truth, I never found anything in the shape of money lying-on the ground as you thought, but since our Lord said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you," [Matt 6:33] therefore I concocted my story to make you take the plunge, and see ! I did not fail, for you have found and found abundantly.'

When this reached the ears of the holy Patriarch he ordained the good counsellor to the priesthood as he deserved; for he already was a 'reader'.

44B

Here ends the narration of the very God-fearing Menas, whom I mentioned at the beginning of my work, he who had been treasurer of the most Holy Church of the metropolis of the Alexandrians. For the rest of the work I, unworthy as I am, am myself responsible, though some of the stories have been told me by trustworthy informants.

In one of the former chapters I mentioned the strong bond of spiritual love which united our blessed Patriarch with the patrician Nicetas, and the present chapter will give sufficient proof of the happy relation which bound them to each other.

When by God's permission, or rather because of our sins, Alexandria was on the point of being betrayed to the impious Persians,* the shepherd, recalling our Lord's words: 'When they drive you out of this city, flee into the next',[Matt 10:23] was going to flee to his native country, Cyprus, where was the city in which he was born. So the patrician, Nicetas, seizing upon this favourable opportunity said to the holy man: 'I beseech you, if I have found grace in your sight, deign to take the trouble of travelling to the Queen of Cities [ie Constantinople] and grant to our most pious sovereigns your acceptable prayers.' The Patriarch, yielding to his friend's great faith, agreed to his suggestion, for God wished to show His purpose and the great honour in which He held the blessed Patriarch.

Whilst the boat on which the Patriarch and the patrician were travelling was continually being battered by violent winds and seemed likely to be engulfed in the deep, the patrician of whom I have spoken so many times and the officers with him, during the night when the storm took place, saw the Patriarch running round all parts of the ship with the poor people, and at times raising his hands to heaven together with them and bringing down help from on high.

When continuing their course* they had reached Rhodes, the Saint whom God had called saw with his waking eyes a eunuch in gleaming apparel, a golden sceptre in his right hand, standing by him and saying: 'Come, I beg you, the King of Kings is asking for you!''* Without delay he forthwith sent for the patrician, Nicetas, and said to him with many tears: You, my master, called me to go to our earthly king but the heavenly King has anticipated you and has summoned to Himself my humbleness.' He then related to him the vision which he had just seen of the eunuch, or rather of the angel.

The most glorious patrician heard his words with mixed sorrow and Joy, but did not attempt to hinder the holy man, but, after receiving richly of his holy prayers, and having treasured them up for the Emperors, with great respect he encouraged him to return to Cyprus.

45

As soon as he reached his own city, Amathus by name, he bade those who ministered to him to draw up his will with all speed. Quickly and without delay they provided paper and pen and then his holy mouth bade them write thus:

'John, a slave, but free through the office of the priesthood which was bestowed upon me by the grace of God, I thank Thee, O God, for listening to me, a miserable sinner, when I begged Thy goodness not to let me possess when I died more than one "trimision". [Ie a third of a solidus]

'Hereby I inform all men that the property of humble John has never amounted to more than this one coin. When by God's permission* I was elected bishop of the most holy Church of the metropolis of the Alexandrians I found in the house of the bishop about 8000 pounds of gold, and as my revenues from Christ-loving persons almost exceed human calculation, I pondered over the matter and recognized that all this money belonged to the Lord of all things and therefore I took pains to render unto God the things that were God's, and now I have this one "trimision" left, and, as that, too, is God's, I direct that it, too, shall be given to those who are God's.'-Oh, what wonders are here ! What kindness of heart there was in this Saint ! He did not cling to things as if his own when they were not his, as many prosperous people do, who hoard the gifts of God, or even wealth scraped together by injustice, as if they were their own treasures and would still pass with them at death, and who never give generously to the needy. No, he always sought the things that abide for ever and are never spent,

and for this reason he did not fail to win those true promises which bring to us God's assurance that 'I will glorify those that glorify Me!' [1 Sam 2:30]

And in truth the Lord Who was ever being glorified by the Saint's achievements did indeed greatly glorify this Saint.

Again this glorious man could not bear the thought that righteous and commendable achievements should come to an end with his brief life, so what did he do?-He built from the foundations up hostels for strangers, asylums for the old, and monasteries, and he gathered together companies of holy monks and thus through the good works which are done therein he has won a memorial of his righteousness which shall never pass away.

Some men accomplish evil things and leave after their death successors in this life to carry on their evil doings, and of these the apostle Paul says: 'Some men's sins are evident going before unto judgment, and some men also they follow after.' [1 Tim 5:24] Just the contrary could be said of this blessed man, namely: 'Some men's just deeds are evident, going before unto the Kingdom of Heaven, some men also they follow after,' and of these latter he was one. And that what I say is not a fable or merely said in flattery can be proved to us very clearly by the marvel that happened immediately

after his venerable falling asleep. After he had yielded up and commended his soul to the hand of the Lord-as the scripture says: 'The souls of the righteous are in the hand of the Lord' [Wisdom 3:1] - and commending it to Him as a sacrifice free from blemish, his revered body was to be laid to rest reverently and with fitting ecclesiastical rites in the oratory of the miracle-worker St. Tychon.* And then the following incredible sign took place! In the sarcophagus where the Just man was to be laid there already lay the truly holy bodies of two holy bishops who had died before him, and these, which had been lying there, I suppose, up to this time in a lifeless state, now accorded the Saint as much honour as did the living. For when the body of the most blessed Patriarch was about to be laid in company with those two saints, these shepherds who honoured this arch-shepherd and respected and admired his great favour with God, moved aside their bodies- not so much of their own will but rather at the command of God, just as if they were alive-and took the Saint between them.

So these men at God's bidding shewed honour as to a man honoured of God, and at once made clear to all the glory and exceeding exaltation which in heaven had been awarded to him by God.

This very great and most extraordinary miracle was seen not only by one or ten or a hundred witnesses, but by the whole crowd which had gathered for his honoured funeral

46

Yet another more astonishing miracle I will now attempt to describe; he began it indeed while still living in the flesh but completed it after he had been translated to the Lord.-A certain woman belonging to the Saint's native town heard that he had come from Rhodes and that an angel had appeared to him there and had told him of his call to our common Master. She had on her conscience a very grievous sin which she affirmed must on no account come to the ears of men. She cherished an unwavering faith in the Saint, so she came speedily to him and seizing hold of his feet and weeping bitterly, said to the holy man in secret: 'O thrice-blessed, I have, alas, committed a sin which must not come to men's ears, and I know that if you are willing you can absolve me from it. For the Lord said about men such as you, "Whatsoever things ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven, and whatsoever things ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven. And whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosoever sins ye

retain, they are retained".' [Matt 18:18; John 20:23]]

When the Saint heard the woman quote these words, he was afraid that, if he refused her request, he might be the cause of her suffering eternal punishment, while she could be freed from her sin by the faith she had in him, so he said to her very humbly: 'If you really believe, woman, in God that by my unworthy intercession He will forgive you the crime of which you speak, confess it to me.' But she replied: 'O master, I cannot possibly say it, for no man could endure to hear it.' Thereupon the Saint said to her: 'If you are ashamed to speak of it, go home and write it down, if you know how to write, and bring it to me.' She again replied: 'I really cannot, master.' Then the Saint kept silent for a few minutes and afterwards said- 'Cannot you write it down and seal it and bring it to me?' To this she answered, 'Yes, master, I will do that, and I implore your honoured and angelic soul never to let my tablet be opened or found by anybody.' After receiving the promise of the God-honoured Patriarch that nobody should open and read her tablet, she wrote down her sin with her own hand and sealed it and brought it to the blessed man.

Five days after the holy man had received the tablet he journeyed home to God without having mentioned or given instructions about the tablet to anybody.

By chance, or rather by God's dispensation, the woman was not in town the day the Patriarch was translated in peace from this present life to the life beyond, for in this case, too, God wished to show what favour the Patriarch had won with Him through his loyal service. But the day after, when the time for the deposition of his venerable body had come, she returned and, on hearing of his death, immediately she became so distressed in mind as almost to be beside herself, thinking that the tablet she had given him had been left lying in the episcopal house and that her sin would consequently become known to all. So she jumped up, regained in her soul her former unwavering confidence in the Saint, made her way to the coffin of the God-honoured man, and there in utter desperation she talked to him as if he really were still alive: 'O man of God, I was unable to recount my sin even to you because it was so excessively grievous, and now, alas, it has perhaps been bruited and buzzed about everywhere. How I wish I had not disclosed the matter to you ! Woe is me! For I hoped to be relieved of my shame, and now I am shamed in the sight of all. Instead of healing I

incurred disgrace w What need was there for me to disclose my soul's secret to you? However I shall not grow weary nor mistrust you, nor let my tears at your coffin cease until I receive full satisfaction concerning my request. For, holy man, you are not dead, but alive; for it is written: "The righteous live for ever".'[Wisdom 5:15]

Then she would begin again and repeat the same words: I ask nothing from you, O man of God, except satisfaction for my heart. What in the world has happened to the tablet I gave you?'

Then the God Who once said to the woman of Canaan, Thy faith hath saved thee !' [Cf. Matt 15:28: Luke 7:50] Himself gave to this woman, too, full satisfaction. For after she had spent three days at the Saint's tomb without touching any food or drink, in the third night, when she was again saying with tears the same harsh yet trusting words to the blessed Saint, lo and behold! the servant of God came out of his tomb plain to see together with the two bishops who were buried with him, one standing on either side, and said to her: 'Woman, how long are you going to disturb those who are buried here and not allow them to take their rest? For, see, our robes are wet through with your tears.' With these words he gave her her tablet with the seal unbroken and said to her:

'Take it, do you acknowledge it? Open it and look.' And when she awoke from her vision she saw those saints entering their resting-place again and herself holding her tablet. Then she examined it and saw the seal whole and untouched, and breaking it open found that her own writing was blotted out and beneath the place where her confession had stood these words were written: 'For the sake of My servant John your sin is blotted out.' Oh, friends and brethren, who can recount the mighty acts of our Lord? Who is so merciful and generous as He, doing the will of those that hear Him and glorifying those that glorify Him and magnifying them by wondrous works?

Not only in the actual spot where his blessed death took place was God's well-known pleasure in him made manifest, but in other far distant places.

For on the same day that this blessed man took his departure from this life to go to his Lord one of those who have practised the angelic way of living and follow the monastic discipline,* an admirable and virtuous man, Sabinus by name, living in Alexandria, fell, as it were, into an ecstasy and saw John, honoured of God, come out of his own palace with all the clergy, bearing candles and going to the king, as, said he, a eunuch chamberlain had summoned him; and Sabinus also saw a virgin,

bright as the sun, and when John had passed beyond the gateway of his palace—which signified his departure from his body—she welcomed him and took him by the hand, and on her head she had placed a crown of olive.

From this the holy Sabinus at once realized that the Patriarch's departure to his Lord had taken place at that very hour. He and his friends noted down the month and the day—it was the feast-day of the victorious St. Menas.* And when some folk arrived from Cyprus, those living in Alexandria asked about the Saint's translation and found that the vision was true, as it had come at the very hour in which the blessed man died. The sign of the virgin holding his hand was a special confirmation for, as we said in the introduction to his life,* the Saint had received a promise from her: 'If you gain me for a friend, I will introduce you to the King', and this promise she faithfully fulfilled.

From other signs, too, all received the assurance that his charity and his sympathy with the needy had brought him into the Kingdom of Heaven; for instance, another God-fearing inhabitant of the city of Alexandria saw (the same night as Sabinus had his vision) all the poor and orphans and widows carrying olive-branches and escorting the Patriarch on his way to church. There are not only

two or ten or a hundred proofs of this, they are so abundant that we know for a certainty that the glorious Patriarch was deemed worthy to be enrolled among the saints. And there is yet another fact which proves it even more clearly.

Some considerable time after the holy man's falling asleep the yearly service of song was being held in the church of St Tychon (of whom I have previously spoken) where the revered body of the most blessed Patriarch John was laid to rest; it was the solemn all-night service of psalm-singing held yearly in remembrance of the miracle-working St. Tychon, and the Lord of marvels, wishing to show to all men the great honour in which He held His holy servant John, granted that a healing perfume of myrrh should issue from his revered corpse which all present enjoyed in gladness of heart and gave glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, our true God, Who glorifies His saints with unending glory.

And let not anyone of you, my Christ-loving readers, refuse to believe this great miracle, for even to the present day in this Christ-loving island of the Cyprians this wonderful grace of God can be seen at work in the bodies of various saints. For as if from springs, the sweet perfume of myrrh issues from their revered corpses to the glory of God's

goodness, to the honour of His saints and to awaken in us, the after-born, an eager desire and a holy passion that by modelling our lives in imitation of these saints we also may be judged worthy of the same honours by the just God, the Rewarder. So let us also, beloved, strive to imitate the achievements which I have described of this our saintly father John, and since we are strangers and pilgrims' [1 Peter 2:11] in this life let us lay up treasures for the life to come by giving generously to the needy. For according to the divine apostle 'He that soweth with blessings shall reap also with blessings' [2 Cor 9:6] instead of corruptible things the incorruptible, instead of the temporal the eternal, instead of things felt and seen, 'things which eye saw not and ear heard not and which entered not into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him'.[1 Cor 2:9] And may it be granted to us all to obtain these things by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ to Whom, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory, honour and power now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

NOTES

Introd.

Texts.

Heinrich Gelzer, *Leontios' von Neapolis Leben des Heiligen yohannes des Barmherzigen Erzbishofs von Alexandrien*. (=Sammlung ausgewählter kirchen-und dogmengeschichtlicher Quellenschriften, Heft 5). Mohr, Freiburg and Leipzig, 1893

Hippolyte Delehaye, *Une Vie inédite de Saint Jean l'Aumonier*, Analecta Bollandiana 45 (1927), pp. 5-74.

For the history of the period, *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2 (1913), pp. 263-301; for Egypt: A. J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the last thirty years of the Roman Dominion*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1902, pp. 1-92. For the relations between John Moschus, Sophronius and John the Almsgiver, Hermann Usener, *Der heilige Tychon*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1907, pp. 80-107. For the saints of Cyprus, H. Delehaye, *Les Saints de Chypre*, Analecta Bollandiana 26 (1907), pp. 161-301. For an epitome of the Patriarch's panegyric on St. Tychon (the text of the panegyric was published by Usener, see above), *ibid.*, pp. 229-32: on Cypriote hagiography, *ibid.*, pp. 244-6. For Neophytus hailing St. John the Almsgiver as 'the brightest star' which Christian Cyprus had produced, *ibid.*, p. 294. For Leontius, H.

Gelzer, *Susgewahlte kleine Schriften*, Teubner, Leipzig, 1907, pp. 1-56.

ch. 2,

Epiphanius. There is an epigram (*Anthologia Palatina*, vii, 679; *The Greek Anthology*, Loeb edition, vol. 2, pp. 360-1), attributed to Sophronius where St. John is called 'the son of noble Stephanus'. But the present Vita, representing in this part the Life of St. John composed by Sophronius and John Moschus, shows that the name of St. John's father was not Stephen, but Epiphanius. It would thus appear that the epigram is wrongly attributed to Sophronius: see Delehaye, *Analecta Bollandiana* 45 (1927), p. 17.

ch. 4,

Had St. John previously settled in Alexandria and thus become widely known in the city or does this general approval simply mean that the population of Alexandria concurred in the choice of the Emperor and Nicetas?

ch. 4,

For Peter the Fuller, Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch 471-88, see the article by Edmund Venables in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (ed. W. Smith and H. Wace, Murray,

London, 1887), vol. 4, pp. 338-40, and cf. L. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Église* (4th edition, Fontemoing, Paris, 1911), vol. 3, pp. 508-9

ch. 5,

hesuchazein perhaps in the technical sense 'to devote himself to contemplation'.

ch. 6,

See the note on the Introduction, [above], and for the Persian invasion see *United Service Magazine* for May 1913, pp. 195-201

The text reads: *to d'auto touto kai epi ton penomnon presbuteron..epoiesen, philphronesamenos ekastos auton..posoteta chusiou eniausion lambanein* ktl. This nominative absolute-an infrequent construction-appears to us awkward: we would read *hekasto*, and translate 'freely granting to each'.

ch. 6,

The lake called Maria = the Mareotic Lake west of Alexandria: see map 7 in George Adam Smith, *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1915.

ch. 9,

Rasmiozan: a title; the general's name appears to have been Khorheam. See A. J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, etc., Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1902, p. 59 note.

The text reads *tes toiautes poneras angelias*: we would prefer to read *ponerias*.

The Ennaton. Probably the monastic settlement nine miles from Alexandria to the west of the city, not the monastery of that name within the city. Cf. Jean Maspero, *Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie*, etc., Champion, Paris, 123, pp. 48, 279 and Index under *Énton pres d'Alexandrie*.

'Even an enemy', etc. Delehaye cites Gregory of Nazianus, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 36, col. 561.

Amathus: St. John's birthplace. 'Many generations have passed away since Amathus was a city of living men, but the site is still pointed out, at the end of a ridge or spur of high ground, running southwards down to the sea, about six miles east of Limassol. The site, on which some ruins may yet be seen, is known to the native inhabitants as "Old Limassol". Time brings curious changes in its course, for in the days of St. John the Almsgiver Limassol was generally known as Neapolis—"Newtown"—in contradistinction to the "old town" of Amathus of which it was most probably an offshoot.' H. T. F. Duckworth, *St. John the*

Almsgiver Patriarch of Alexandria, Blackwell, Oxford, 1901, p. 5 (this is a disappointing sketch). On Amathus see Sir George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 1940, pp. 265-6.

The Madienians=Midian. Cf. R. F. Burton, *The Gold Mines of Midian* (1878) and *The Land of Midian Revisited* (1879).

The great Antony-this, of course, is St. Antony 'the first monk' whose biography is St. Athanasius' masterpiece.

Rhinocoroura = Rhinocolura on the coast-road leading from Palestine to Egypt = el-'Arish. See map 8 of George Adam Smith's *Atlas* (cf. note on ch. 8 *supra*).

ch. 10,

St. Menas: St. Menas appears in Egypt as a military saint: cf. H. Delehaye, *Les Légendes grecques des Saints militaires*, Picard, Paris, 1909, p. 6. For the collection of his astonishing miracles see Delehaye, *Analceta Bollandiana* 29 (1910), pp. 117-50; id., *Les Recueils antiques de Miracles des Saints*, Brussels, 1925, pp. 46-9; id., *Les Legendes hagiographiques*, 3rd ed., Brussels, 1927, pp. 146-8. For the confusion between the different saints of the name of Menas see De Lacy O'Leary, *The Saints*

of Egypt, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1937, pp. 194-9.

Mareotic wine: see note on ch. 8 *supra*.

ch. 11,

Tiberias: on the west bank of the Lake of Gennesaret in Galilee.

ch. 13,

Aspagurius. This is a very perplexing incident. Sir George Hill writes: 'The context of this story and the name of the governor might suggest that he was sent by the Persians; but an expedition across the sea on their part would be unprecedented and we must assume that Aspagourios was the representative of Byzantium.' And in a note he adds: 'The wording of the passage suggests that he was a military officer, not an ordinary governor, sent against Constantia [*epi Konstantian*]. But if he was sent *against* Constantia, he cannot have expected to be peacefully received by the authorities of the city. Possibly therefore we must not press the wording. Was he leading an expedition, sent by the Byzantine government, to Alexandria, and had he stopped on the way? (N.H.B.)'. A *History of Cyprus* (see note on ch.

9 *supra*), p. 282. For Constantia see *ibid.*, pp. 249-50.

NOTES on Supplement

Introduction,

John and Sophronius: see the Introduction, (above).

ch. 1,

Cyrus and John: the 'national saints' of Egypt.

For the Persian invasion and the capture of Jerusalem see *United Service Magazine*, May 1913, pp. 195-201.

'treasurer of the most holy church': the office was important and distinguished: some treasurers later became Patriarchs. For a note on the officials of the Patriarchate see H. Gelzer, *Leontios' von Neapolis Leben des Heiligen Johannes des Barmherzigen Erzbischofs von Alexandrien*, Mohr, Freiburg i. B. 1893, pp. 120-3 (cited below: Gelzer).

ch. 2,

'The treasurers and the official who is styled "the guardian of the peace",' i.e. those charged with the financial administration of the different branches of church activity, e.g. the relief of the poor, acting

under the head treasurer (see note on ch. 1) and the officer *epi tes erenes*.

ch. 6,

Heraclius novus Constantinus, eldest son of the Emperor Heraclius, reigned from February 13th to May 24th, 641.

ch. 7,

See the Introduction and note to Ch.6/first part *supra*.

ch. 8,

For the vision of the Virgin and the promise cf. ch. 46.

ch. 10,

The Pharos: the famous lighthouse at the entrance to the harbour of Alexandria.

'a swift sailer': *dorkon*, So named from the fleet-footed gazelle, *dorkas*. For the trade of the ships belonging to the Patriarchate cf. ch. 13, two ships, *dorkones*, bringing corn from Sicily, and ch. 28, the whole fleet of the Patriarchate undertake a trading-voyage to the Adriatic.

The Pentapolis, i.e. Cyrenaica; cf. Gelzer, op. cit., pp. 128-9

ch. 11,

'in great distress'. Gelzer's text reads *(h)en de en euporia polle*. We prefer to read *aporia*, and have so translated.

Menas: see note Ch 10/first part.

Ch. 12,

Nicetas, the patrician: see the Introduction, p. 197, and Gelzer, op. cit., pp. 129-31 .

ch. 13,

A second marriage as a bar to ordination into the higher ranks of the clergy, see Nikodemus Milasch, *Kirchenrecht der morgenlandischen Kirche*, 2nd ed. Mostar, 1905, p. 642.

ch. 14,

'the catholic prayer'. On the 'great collect' see Gelzer, op. cit., pp. 131-2; he concludes that in the orthodox Church of Alexandria the liturgy of St. James or of St. Gregory must have been in use; in the liturgy which goes under the name of St. Mark it is the priest who reads the 'great collect'.

'the holy veil'. The *Katapetasma* is the curtain over the door leading into the sanctuary; it hides from the congregation the altar and the clergy.

ch. 16

'his customary "tip" ': the 'sportula' was universal (in the Greek text *tas sunetheias*): paid to the tax-collector by the tax-payer, by the soldier to the officer, the monk to the abbot, the priest to the bishop the rent for the shop: the *enoikion*: the house was the property of the Church and the rent would naturally be paid to the ecclesiastical official; the public taxes: *Ta demosia*. Here there is a difficulty: how did the Patriarch release the innkeeper from the payment of a State tax? Did he make himself personally liable for this?

ch. 18,

The 'unmentionable heretics' are the Monophysites: see ch. 32.

ch. 19,

There does not appear to be any other mention of this ceremony at imperial coronations.

The *myemoralioi* are clearly the members of the guild charged with the building of the Emperor's tomb-memorial.

'the zealous Christians': Philoponoi, 'lovers of labours'. The Philoponoi, the Spoudaioi, i.e. the 'zealots', the 'Companions' formed 'une sorte de confrérie composee par chrétiens plus zélés, vivant

au milieu du monde, mais y pratiquant une vie plus austère que le commun des fidèles'. They regularly attended the vigils held in the churches and other special services; they took action against paganism, they gave themselves to social service—they volunteered for nursing of the sick (cf. Usener in *Göttinger gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1892, at p. 1017), they tended the poor year after year in the deacons' quarters. We know of them from the fourth to the seventh century, particularly in Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria. The students from Alexandria who were members of these brotherhoods went to Beirut for its law school and thus we hear of them there. It appears that many of these zealots later became monks. Cf. S. Petrides, *Spoudaei et Philopones*, *Echos d'Orient* 7 (1904), Pp. 341-8.

ch. 20,

Persian capture of Jerusalem, see note, Ch6/first part *supra*.

'Modestus, Patriarch of Jerusalem': not Patriarch, but rather the priest representing the Patriarch Zacharias who had been carried into Persia as a prisoner.

Maenomene or maene: a cheap fish. See the note of Gelzer, op. cit., p. 138.

'jars of wine': *askalonia*: the Latin translation of the Vita has 'vascula vini'. 'The word is otherwise known only for a special species of fig, Athenaeus iii, 78a.' Gelzer.

ch. 21,

Life of St. Epiphanius, ch. 44-5, ed. Dindorf, pp. 49-52.

ch. 23,

On St. Serapion cf. Palladius, *Lausiac History*, ch. 37; in Lowther Clarke's translation (S.P.C.K., 1918), pp. 127-32, and cf. Gelzer, op. cit., p. 140.

'pagan actors': *mimous Hellenas*, the context shows that the word here means 'pagan'.

ch. 24,

'syncellus': literally 'cell-mate', and thus the Patriarch's confidential adviser: cf. ch. 39 and see Gelzer, op. cit., p. 121.

Gelzer in his note (pp. 140-1) shows that this thought recurs in the Greek hagiographical literature. Cf. ch. 43 *infra*

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'any sum worth mentioning': he would seem to have accepted a token gift so as not to wound the Patriarch 's feelings-a pleasant touch.

ch. 25,

This famous dungeon is often mentioned by the Greek and Armenian historians. It was situated in Susiana and was located by Rawlinson at Gilgird.

ch. 26,

Pharos: see note on ch. 10.

ch. 27,

Caesareum: on the main harbour of Alexandria; see Gelzer, op. cit., p. 141.

ch. 28,

The fleet of the Patriarchate, see note on ch. 10.

'waterproof garments': Greek *Xerophotra himatia*. The translation is a guess proposed by Krumbacher.

ch. 31,

The church of St. Cyrus and St. John. It was begun under Theophilus as Patriarch (384-412) and finished in the patriarchate of Cyril (412-44). It was situated near Canopus (Gelzer).

ch. 32,

John and Sophronius: see Introduction, *supra*.

'followers of Severus'. Egypt, true to its tradition of hostility to the Imperial government in Constantinople, was strongly Monophysite. For Severus cf. J. Lebon, *Le Monophysisme Severien*, Van Linthout, Louvain, 1909. For Monophysitism: W. A. Wigram, *The Separation of the Monophysites*, Faith Press, London, 1923.

ch. 34,

Cf. Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, ch. 193, and see Gelzer, op. cit., pp. 143-4.

ch. 35,

'a so-called "adventurer" ': Gallodromos, i.e. a merchant who makes trading voyages to Gaul, and then? in a bad sense, of a fraudulent speculator.

For the officials of the Patriarchate cf. Gelzer, op. cit.. pp. 120-3. The Greek text here is *hoi tes ekklesias oikonomoi kai dioketai*.

ch. 37,

'almoner', *didotes*, i.e. the official charged with distributing the Patriarch's charity.

ch. 39,

'syncellus': see note on ch. 24.

ch. 41,

St. Jerome wrote the Life of St. Hilarion.
Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 23, coll. 29-54.

ch. 42,

It will be remembered that John's wife had died before his consecration.

'his native city', i.e. Amathus

'your own souls will gain the benefit': apparently the celebration of the evening and night services will accrue to the credit of the Patriarch and advantage his soul, but the celebration by the monks of the Eucharist in the cells provided by the Patriarch would be counted to the credit of the monks and would advantage their souls.

ch. 43,

Porphyria: Pelagia. For the theory of the continuance of paganism in Christian legends based by Usener on the appearance of such names as Porphyria and Pelagia see Hermann Usener, *Legenden der Pelagia. Festschrift fur die XXXIV Versammlung deutscher Philologen und Schulmänner zu Trier*, Georgi, Bonn, 1879; H. Delehaye, *Les Legendes hagiographiques*, 3rd ed., Brussels, 1927, pp. 186-96.

Unrecognized servants of God: see note on ch. 24.

ch. 44a,

'two clerics were shoemakers': for the trades and employments permitted to the clergy see Gelzer, *op. cit.*, p. 150, and the full discussion in E. Herman, *Le Professioni vietate al Clero Bizantino*, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 10 (1944), pp. 23-44.

ch. 44b,

Capture of Alexandria by the Persians: A.D. 619. John with the patrician Nicetas leaves Alexandria and dies in Amathus, November 11 th, 619.

'continuing their course': Greek: *anaballontes*. We are not sure how this word should be translated; the Latin version of the Vita renders it by 'ascendentes'.

ch. 45,

'the King of Kings is asking for you': Gelzer has pointed out that this formula is taken from the funeral ritual of the emperors. The Master of the Ceremonies at the Court says: 'Come forth, Emperor, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is calling thee.' Constantine VII, *De Ceremoniis I* 60 (p. 275, Bonn edition). 'The prince of the Church is here granted, as it were, Imperial honours' (Gelzer).

ch. 45,

We do not understand the meaning of sCaSr'SUE in this sentence.

St. Tychon: see H. Usener, *Der heilige Tychon*, Teubner, Leipzig, 1907, and see Introduction, above.

ch. 46,

'and follow the monastic discipline': Greek: *kai schema monachikon katerchomenon* We are not sure how these words should be translated. Gelzer understands by *schema monachikon* the monk's robe.

Feast Day of St. Menas-November 11th.

The vision of the virgin: see ch. 8 *supra*.

