

SYRIAC LITERATURE

THE literature of Syria, as known to us at the present day, is, with the exception of translations from the Greek and some other languages, a Christian literature. The writings of the Syrian heathens, such as the so-called Sabians (see SABLANS) of Harran, which were extant, at least in part, even in the 13th century, seem to have now wholly disappeared. The beginnings of this literature are lost in the darkness of the earliest ages of Christianity. It was at its best from the 4th to the 8th century, and then gradually died away, though it kept up a flickering existence till the 14th century or even later. We must own—and it is well to make the confession at the outset—that the literature of Syria is, on the whole, not an attractive one. As Renan said long ago, the characteristic of the Syrians is a certain mediocrity. They shone neither in war, nor in the arts, nor in science. They altogether lacked the poetic fire of the older—we purposely emphasize the word—the older Hebrews and of the Arabs. But they were apt enough as pupils of the Greeks; they assimilated and reproduced, adding little or nothing of their own. There was no Al-Farabi, no Ibn Sina, no Ibn Rushd, in the cloisters of Edessa, Ken-neshra, or Nisibis. Yet to the Syrians belongs the merit of having passed on the lore of ancient Greece to the Arabs, and therefore, as a matter of history, their literature must always possess a certain amount of interest in the eyes of the modern student. The Syrian Church never produced men who rose to the level of a Eusebius, a Gregory Nazianzen, a Basil, and a Chrysostom; but we may still be thankful to the plodding diligence which has preserved for us in fairly good translations many valuable works of Greek fathers which would otherwise have been lost. And even Syria's humble chroniclers, such as John of Ephesus, Dionysius of Tell-Mahré, and Bar-Hebraeus, deserve their meed of praise, seeing that, without their guidance, we should have known far less than we now know about the history of two important branches of the Eastern Church, besides losing much interesting information as to the political events of the periods with which their annals are occupied.

As Syrian literature commences with the Bible, we first briefly enumerate the different versions of Holy Scripture. The most important of these is the so-called Peshitta (mappakhta peshitta), "the simple" or "plain version," the Syriac vulgate. This name is in use as early as the 9th or 10th century. As to the Old Testament, neither the exact time nor place of its translation is known; indeed, from certain differences of style and manner in its several parts, we may rather suppose it to be the work of different hands, extending over a considerable period of time. It would seem, however, as a whole, to have been a product of the 2d century, and not improbably a monument of the learning and zeal of the Christians of Edessa. Possibly Jewish converts, or even Jews, took a part in it, for some books (such as the Pentateuch and Job) are very literally rendered, whereas the coincidences with the LXX. (which are particularly numerous in the prophetic books) show the hand of Christian translators or revisers. That Jews should have had at any rate a consultative share in this work need not surprise us, when we remember that Syrian fathers, such as Aphraates, in the middle of the 4th century, and Jacob of Edessa, in the latter half of the 7th, had frequent recourse, like Jerome, to the scholars of the synagogue. To what extent subsequent revision may have been carried it is not easy to say; but it seems tolerably certain that alterations were made from time to time with a view to harmonizing the Syriac text with that of the LXX. Such an opportunity may, for instance, have been afforded on a considerable scale by the adoption of Lucian's text of the LXX. at Antioch in the beginning of the 4th century (see SEPTUAGINT, vol. xxi. p. 669). On all these points, however, we know nothing for

Bar-Hebraeus, Chron. Syr., ed. Bruns and Kirsch, p. 176; Chwolson, Isabier und Sabismus, i. 177. De Philosophia Peripatetica apud Syros, 1852, p. 3. See the passage of Moses bar Kephai, who died in 903, cited by the Abbé Martin in his Introduction à la Critique Textuelle du Nouveau Testament, p. 101. note.

certain, and may well repeat the words of Theodore of Mopsuestia in his commentary on Zephaniah i. 6: "ἡμῶν γενναίω δὲ ταῦτα εἰς μὲν τὴν Σύρον παρ' αὐτοῦ δὴ ποτε οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐγγύστα μέχρι τῆς τήμερον ὄντος ποτὲ ὄντος ἔστιν." The canonical books of the Old Testament according to the Peshitta are substantially those of the Hebrew Bible. In the Massoretic MSS. (see below), whether Nestorian or Jacobite, the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah are passed over, and in the Nestorian the book of Esther also. But, on the other hand, it must be noticed that all these books are cited by Aphraates, and that they all appear in the Codex Ambrasianus. Of the Chronicles there is a MS. of the 6th century in the British Museum, Add. 17104. Esther appears in a volume of equal age (Add. 14652) as one of the constituent parts of the "Book of Women," the others being Ruth, Susanna, Judith, and the history of Thecla, the disciple of St Paul, which last is excluded from Biblical MSS. The oldest dated MS. of any portion of the Old Testament at present known to us is Add. 14425 in the British Museum (Gen., Exod., Num., Deut.), transcribed at Amid by a deacon named John in 464. The deuterocanonical books or apocrypha, translated by different hands from the Greek, are nearly the same as in the LXX. The Codex Ambrasianus, for example, contains Wisdom, the Epistle of Jeremiah, and two Epistles of Baruch; the Song of the Three Children, Bel and the Dragon, and Susanna; Judith, Siracides or Ecclesiasticus; the Apocalypse of Baruch; the fourth book of Esdras; and five books of the Maccabees, the fourth being the history of Samona and her sons, and the fifth Josephi de Bello Judaico lib. vi. To these must be added from other MSS. the first or third book of Esdras, the book of Tobit, and the prayer of Manasses. Of the first book of the Maccabees two recensions are extant, as far as chap. xiv. 24. The book of Tobit presents the text of the LXX. as far as chap. vii. 11.

The canonical books of the New Testament are the four Gospels, Canon the Acts of the Apostles (to which are annexed the three catholic epistles, viz., James, 1 Peter, and 1 John), and the fourteen epistles books of St Paul. The shorter apostolic epistles, viz., 2 and 3 John, 2 New Testament Peter, and Jude, and the Apocalypse of St John, were rejected by Tament, the early Syrian Church. As to the Peshitta version of the Gospels (P), a variety of critical questions arise when we consider it in connexion with two other Diaworks, the Dia-lessarôn of Tatian (T) and the Curetonian Gospels lessarôn (Se). Tatian, the friend of Justin Martyr, afterwards counted a heretic, composed out of the four Gospels a work which received the title of τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων εὐαγγελίων, in Syriac more briefly Dia-lessarôn, or Evangelion da-Mêhallê, "the Gospel of the Mixed." It is a subject of controversy whether Tatian wrote this work in Greek or in Syriac, and whether he compiled it from the Greek Gospels or from a previous Syriac version. According to Zahn and Baethgen, the author's language was Syriac, his sources Greek. They hold that this was the only Gospel in use in the Syrian Church for nearly a century, but that about the year 250, under the influence of Western MSS. of the Greek

Mai, Patrum Nova Bibliotheca, vol. vii. 252. Some scholars, such as P. de Lagarde and Bickell, think that Ecclesiasticus was translated from the lost Hebrew text. See Ceriani, Monumenta Sacra et Profana, vol. i. fasc. 1, 2; vol. v. fasc. 1, 2; P. de Lagarde, Libri Vet. Test. Apocryphi Syriaci. Splendidly reproduced at Milan by the process of photo-lithography under the direction of the Rev. Dr A. M. Ceriani, 5 parts, 1876 foll. See Das 6te Buch d. Bellum Judaicum übersetzt u. kritisch bearbeitet, by Dr H. Kottke, Berlin, 1886; only capp. 1 and 2. See the Syriac note on p. xii. of De Lagarde's edition. The principal editions of the Peshitta are contained in the Paris polyglott of Le Jay and the London polyglott of Walton, to which latter is attached the immortal Lexicon Heptaglotton of Edmund Castell. The Old Testament (without the apocrypha) was edited by S. Lee in 1823 for the Bible Society, and is frequently bound up with the New Testament of 1826. The first edition of the New Testament was that of J. A. Widmanstad, with the help of Moses of Mardin (Vienna, 1555). Those of Tremellius (1569), Trost (1621), Gutbir (1664), and Leusden and Schaaf (1708, 1717) are well known. To the last named belongs Schaaf's admirable Lexicon Syriacum Concordantiale. The American missionaries at Urûmiyah have published both the Old and New Testaments in ancient and modern Syriac, the former in 1852, the latter in 1846. Remains of a very Antient Recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac, hitherto unknown in Europe, discovered, edited, and translated by W. Cureton, D.D., F.R.S., 1858. Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons, &c., 1 Theil: Tatian's Diatessaron, pp. 98, 99. Evangelienfragmente. Der griechische Text des Cureton'schen Syrens wiederhergestellt, 1885.

text (see Westcott and Hort, A New Testament in the Original Greek, Introd., §§ 118, 214), a version of "the Separate Gospels," Evangelion da-Mêpharrêshê, was introduced. The translator, according to Baethgen, made use of T as far as he could; and of this text Se is, in the opinion of these scholars, the solitary survival in our days. The evidence for this view does not, however, appear to be conclusive. It seems that a Syriac version of the four Gospels, as well as of the other parts of the New Testament, must have existed in the 2d century, perhaps even before the version of the Old Testament. From this Tatian may have compiled his Dia-lessarôn, or he may have written that work in Greek and others may have done it into Syriac. Be that as it may, T certainly gained great popularity in the early Syrian Church, and almost superseded the Separate Gospels. Aphraates quoted it; Ephraim wrote a commentary upon it; the Doctrine of Addai or Addæus (in its present shape a work of the latter half of the 4th century) transfers it to the apostolic times; Rabbûlâ, bishop of Edessa (411-435), promulgated an order that "the priests and deacons should take care that in every church there should be a copy of the Separate Gospels (Evangelion da-Mêpharrêshê), and that it should be read"; and Theodoret, bishop of Cyrhus (423-457), swept up more than two hundred copies of it in the churches of his diocese, and introduced the four Gospels in their place: τὰ τῶν τεσσάρων εὐαγγελιστῶν ἀνεπιθήγαγον εὐαγγέλια. The result of these and similar well meant efforts is that not a single copy of T has come down to our times. Both Aphraates and Ephraim, however, made use of the Separate Gospels. The former seems to have employed a text which Baethgen calls a slightly revised form of Se (op. cit., p. 95); we would rather speak of it as a revised form of the old Syriac Gospels of the 2d century. The latter made use of a more thorough Edessene revision, closely approaching in form to, if not identical with, P (Baethgen, p. 95; Zahn, p. 63). Our oldest MSS. of P are, however, more than a hundred years later than Ephraim's time. We cannot, therefore, expect very important textual results from the collation of even such MSS. as Add. 14470, 14453, 14459, ff. 1-66, and 17117, in the British Museum, all of which may be safely ascribed to the latter part of the 5th or the beginning of the 6th century. Early in the 5th century Rabbûlâ, bishop of Edessa, the friend and correspondent of Cyril of Alexandria, occupied himself with "translating the New Testament out of the Greek into the Syriac, because of its variations, exactly as it was." This probably means, as has been suggested by Nestle, that Rabbûlâ undertook a revision of the Syriac text according to a Greek MS. or MSS. in his possession, that is to say, still further assimilated P of that day to a Greek (possibly, from his connexion with Cyril, Alexandrian) text. We do not as yet know, however, whether this revision was merely a private effort, or what influence, if any, it exercised on the history of P; more likely it was a first step in the direction of the Philoxenian version (see below). The result of these successive revisions as regards Se has been that it survives in but one mutilated codex, and that written at comparatively so late a date as 450-470, a phenomenon which has its parallel in the case of the Itala codex of the Gospels, copied in the 11th century. The greater part of this volume is in the British Museum (Add. 14451); but there are three leaves of it in the royal library at Berlin, forming the fly-leaves of the MS. marked Orient. Quart. 528. Crowfoot's attempt

Zahn, op. cit., pp. 104-106. Op. cit., pp. 59, 60, 72 sq. Wright's edition, p. 1.10, "as it is written at the head of the Gospel of our Lifegiver, in the beginning was the Word." Now extant only in the old Armenian version, translated by the Mechitarist Aueher, and revised by G. Mösinger under the title of Evangelii Concordantis Expositio facta a S. Ephraemo, Venice, 1876. Phillips's edition, p. 65, l. 17. S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulæ epi Edesseni Babel aliorumque opera selecta, ed. J. J. Overbeck, Oxford, 1865, p. 220, 3. Αἰπερακτῆς κακομῆθας ἐπιτομῆς, l. 20. Martin's article "Le diâ τεσσάρων de Tatien" (from Revue des Questions Historiques, April 1883) contains much curious literary information, particularly regarding similar compilations of later date. See also Casca's article "De Tatiani Diatessaron Arabica Versione," in Cardinal Pitra's Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmuni parata, iv. 465. This Arabic Diatessaron begins with Mark i. 1, John i. 1-2, Luke i. 5-50, Matthew i. 1-25, Luke ii. 1-20. Casca's copy is now (1887) in the hands of De Lagarde, who has published a few pages of it in Nachrichten von der Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 1886, No. 4, pp. 150-158. According to De Lagarde, the text is that of the ordinary Peshitta. Overbeck, op. cit., p. 172, 18-20. The whole of the Abbé Martin's elaborate argumentation (Introd. à la Critique Textuelle de N. T., pp. 163-236) is of no avail against this palaeographic fact. No one who is conversant with Syriac MSS. can for a moment doubt that our codex of Se was written within a few years of the time indicated above. The handwritings of Jacob of Edessa's time (the latter half of the 7th century) are altogether different. Possessors of the abbé's work should cancel pp. 234-236. The "Psephiscriptum," as the author himself has explained, is only an elaborate joke. There is no MS. Add. 70125 in the British Museum, no catalogue of the Greek MSS. in twenty-five volumes, and of course no such photograph exists as he has described. As for the "special telegram" from "Réverend Crowfoot" through the "agence Fri-Fron-Fro and Co.," dated 25th December 1882, it is enough to say that Mr Crowfoot died on 18th March 1875. See Wright, Catalogue, p. 73, No. cxix. See Rölliger in the Monatsberichte der Berlin Academy for July 1872, p. 557; Wright, Fragments of the Curetonian Gospels (privately printed).

to retranslate Se into Greek is a failure (Fragmenta Evangelica, 1870-72); Baethgen's work (Evangelienfragmente, &c.) will perhaps be found more satisfactory. The scholars of the Monophysite branch of the Syrian Church were, however, by no means satisfied even with the revised text of P, and demanded a yet more accurate reproduction of the Greek text in use among them. Accordingly Aksênâyâ or Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbôgh (485-519), undertook to satisfy this want, and with the assistance of his chorepiscopus, Polycarp, produced a literal translation of the whole Bible in the year 508. This seems at first to have met with considerable approval; Moses of Aggêl, for example, who flourished from 550 to 570, refers to the version of the New Testament and of the Psalms evidently as the standard work of the day. But it was in its turn superseded by two later revisions, and MSS. of it are now very rare. Portions of Isaiah survive in the British Museum, Add. 17106, ff. 74-87, and the text of the Gospels in the codex A. 2, 18 of the Biblioteca Angelica at Rome, of the 11th or 12th century, and perhaps also in the Beirut (Beyrout) MS. described by the Rev. Isaac H. Hall. At the beginning of the 7th century the work of retranslation and revision was again taken in hand by the Monophysites, the scene of their labours being the different convents in the neighbourhood of Alexandria. There, in the years 616-617, Paul, bishop of Tellâ dhê-Mauzêlath or Constantina, undertook a version of the hexaplar text of the LXX. at the request of the patriarch Athanasius I. Of parts of his many MSS. are extant in the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, and the Biblioteca Ambrosiana at Milan possesses the second volume of a codex of the entire work, which has been reproduced by photo-lithography under the direction of Ceriani. This version not only exhibits the asterisks and obeli of Origen's text of the LXX., but the marginal notes contain many readings of the other Greek translators, which have been largely utilized by Field in his noble work Origenis Hexaplorum quæ supersunt (2 vols., Oxford, 1875). At the same time and place the New Testament of Philoxenus was thoroughly revised by Thomas of Harkel or Heraclea, bishop of Harkel-Mabbôgh, who, being driven from his diocese, betook himself to Alexandria and worked there in the convent of St Antony at the Enaton (or Nine-mile-village). This version comprises not only all the books contained in the Peshitta but also the four shorter epistles. The lapse of another century brings us to the last attempt at a revision of the Old Testament in the Monophysite Church. Jacob, bishop of Edessa, undertook, when living in retirement in the convent of Tell-Adda or Teleda, in 704-705, to revise Edessa the text of the Peshitta with the help of the Greek versions at his disposal, thus producing a curious eclectic or patchwork text. Of this work there are but five volumes extant in Europe, four of which came from the Nitrian Desert and form parts of a set which was written in the years 719-720. It would seem, therefore, never to have attained popularity. One other version remains to be noticed, namely, that used by

Assemani, Bibliotheca Orientalis, II. 23. B.O., II. 82. Id., II. 83. Guidi, Rendiconti della R. Accademia dei Lincei, May and June 1886, p. 404. Edited by Ceriani in Monumenta Sacra et Profana, vol. v. fasc. 1, pp. 1-40. See Bernstein, Das heilige Evangelium des Johannes, Leipzig, 1853, krit. Anmerkungen, pp. 2, 29; Martin, Introd. à la Crit. Text. de N. T., pp. 160-161. Syriac Manuscripts, Gospels of a pre-Harklensian Version, Acts and Epistles of the Peshitto Version, written (probably) between 700 and 800 A.D., January 1884. See Ceriani, Monumenta, vol. i. fasc. 1: Prolegomena in Edit. Vers. Syr. ex Textu LXX., p. iii.; Martin, Introd., p. 333-334. B.O., II. 333-334. Monumenta, vol. vii.: Codex Syro-heropolitanus Ambrosianus, 1874. The first volume of this codex was in the possession of Andreas Masius, but has disappeared since his death in 1573. It contained part of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, (four books of) Kings, Chronicles, Ezra (and Nehemiah), Judith, and Tobit (complete?). See Middeldorff, Codex Syriaco-hexaplaris, Berlin, 1835, who enumerates in his preface the labours of previous editors. Since his time the books of Judges and Ruth have been published by T. Skat Rôrdam (Libri Judicum et Ruth secundum Vers. Syriaco-hexaplarum, Copenhagen, 1850-61), and Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, 1 and 2 Kings, by P. de Lagarde (Vet. Test. ab Origene recensiti Fragmenta opud Syros servata quinque, Göttingen, 1880, printed with Hebrew letters). Ceriani has commenced a critical edition in the Monumenta, vol. i. fasc. 1; vol. ii. fasc. 1-4; vol. v. fasc. 1, 2. B.O., II. 90, 334; Bernstein, De Harklensii N. T. Translatione Syriaca Commentatio, p. 4. Or Manûjî; according to others, of Germanicia or Mar'ash. He must not be confused with an older Thomas of Germanicia, a Monophysite of the earlier part of the 6th century; see B.O., II. 92, 326; Kleyen, Jacobus Baradaeus, p. 43, note 1. See Wright, Catal., p. 34, note. It has been edited by White at Oxford—the Gospels in 1778, the Acts and Apostolic epistles in 1799, the Pauline epistles in 1803 (the epistle to the Hebrews is defective, ending in the middle of chap. xi. 27). The text of the shorter epistles, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude, has been recently reproduced by phototype from a manuscript dated 1471—Williams Manuscript. The Syrian Antilegomena Epistles . . . edited by Isaac H. Hall, 1886. Consult also Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. xxvii. No. viii. "On a Syriac MS. belonging to the Collection of Archbishop Usher," by the Rev. J. Gwynn, D.D. There is a fine MS. of this version, dated 1170, in the university-library, Cambridge, Add. MS. 1700. Its peculiar feature is that it has the two epistles of Clement inserted between the catholic epistles and the Acts of St Paul. Probably the modern Tell'âdi or Tell'âde; see Socin, Paläst. u. Syrien, p. 450; Sachau, Reise in Syrien u. Mesopotamien, p. 459. Wright, Catal., p. 38, col. 1. See Ceriani, Le Edizioni e i Manoscritti delle Versioni Siriache del Vecchio Test., 1869, and Monumenta, vol. ii. fasc. 1, pp. xi, xii., vol. v. fasc. 1, pp. 1-40; Martin, Introd., pp. 230-232, 296 sq.

the Christian population of the Malkite (Greek) Church in Palestine, written in an Aramaic dialect more akin to the language of the Jewish Targüms than to that of the Peshittä.<sup>1</sup> A lectionary containing large portions of the Gospels in this dialect was described by Assemani in the catalogue of the Vatican Library,<sup>2</sup> studied by Adler,<sup>3</sup> and edited by Count Fr. Miniscalchi Erizzo under the title of *Evangelium Hierosolymitanum* (2 vols., Verona, 1861-64). It was written in a convent at a place called Abüd,<sup>4</sup> not very far from Jerusalem, in the year 1030, and the scribe claims to have copied sundry other service-books for the use of his church (see Assemani, *op. cit.*, p. 102). Fragments of other evangeliaria have been published by Land, from MSS. at London and St Petersburg, in his *Anecd. Syr.*, iv, pp. 114-162, 213-222; of the Acts of the Apostles, p. 168; and of the Old Testament (translated from the Greek), pp. 103-110, 165-167, 222-223. According to the same authority (p. 231), the calendar in the Vatican MS. must have been drawn up about the middle of the 9th century. Few, if any, of the extant fragments appear to be of older date. Noldeke places the origin of the version in the 4th or 5th century, certainly not later than 600 (*loc. cit.*, p. 525).<sup>5</sup>

All the above revisions of the text of the Syriac Bible according to the Greek are, as we have seen, the work of Monophysites, with the single exception of the last, which proceeded from the Malkites. The Nestorian community obstinately adhered to the old Peshittä, and the solitary attempt made to introduce a revised text among them seems to have been an utter failure. Mär-abhä I., a convert from Zoroastrianism, who was catholicus from 536 to 552, went to Edessa, studied Greek there under a teacher named Thomas,<sup>6</sup> and with his help translated the whole of the Old Testament into Syriac, and perhaps also the New. This statement rests on the authority of the author of the *Kilab al-Majdal* (Märi ibn Sulaimän,<sup>7</sup> about the middle of the 12th century, supplemented and abridged by 'Amr ibn Mattä of Trhän, who lived towards the middle of the 14th century),<sup>8</sup> of 'Abhd-ishö, bishop of Nisibis (died 1318), and of Bar-Hebraeus (died 1286); and there appears to be no reason to doubt their word.<sup>9</sup>

Before quitting the subject of the versions of Holy Scripture we must devote a few words to the Massoretic MSS. of the Nestorians and Jacobites.<sup>10</sup> In the year 1721 Assemani made mention in the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (ii. 283), on the authority of Bar-Hebraeus in the *Ausar Räsä*, of a "versio Karkaphensis, hoc est Montana, qua videlicet incolæ montium utuntur."<sup>11</sup> About the meaning of these words scholars disputed, and some searched for MSS. of the alleged version, but in vain. At last, N. Wiseman (afterwards cardinal), guided by the light of another passage in the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (ii. 499, 500, No. xxii.), recognized in Cod. Vat. ciii. a copy of what he believed to be the Karkaphensian version.<sup>12</sup> Later researches, more especially those of the Abbé Martin, have corrected these errors. The MSS. of the Karkaphensian tradition, of which there are ten in our European libraries, are now known to contain a philological and grammatical tradition of the pronunciation and punctuation of Holy Writ and sometimes of other writings.<sup>13</sup> Syria was rich in schools and colleges; most of its towns possessed institutions where instruction was given, more especially to students of theology, in the reading and exposition of the Greek and Syriac Scriptures and their commentators. Such were the great "Persian school" of Edessa, which was destroyed, on account of its Nestorian tendencies, in 489; the school of Nisibis; of Mäpööz near Seleucia; of the monastery of Dör-Köni or Dair-Kunnä; of the monastery of Ken-neshrö or the Eagles' Nest, on the left bank of the Euphrates, opposite Je'äbis; of the Dairä 'Elläitü, or monastery of St Gabriel and St Abraham, at Mosul; and many others.<sup>14</sup> Every such school or college had its teachers of reading and elocution, *malig'yänä* and *makr'yänä* (or *makeryänä*), who taught their pupils to pronounce, add the vowel-points, and inter punctuate correctly,<sup>15</sup>

1 See Noldeke, in *Z.D.M.G.*, xxi. (1868), p. 443 sq.  
 2 *MSS. Codd. Bibl. Apost. Vatic. Catalogus*, ii. No. xix. p. 70 sq.  
 3 *N. Test. Vers. Syriacæ Simplicis, Philozeniana, et Hierosolymitana*, Copenhagen, 1789; see also Martin, *Introd.*, p. 237 sq.  
 4 See Noldeke, *loc. cit.*, pp. 621, 627. Land, *Anecd. Syr.* iv, pp. 227-229.  
 5 The remaining literature in this dialect (all of it published by Land) consists of a few hymns (pp. 111-113), lives of saints (pp. 169, 170), and theological fragments (pp. 171-210). One fragment (p. 177) contains the title of a homily of John Chrysostom.  
 6 Compare ii. 411.  
 7 *B.O.*, iii. 1, 86; compare ii. 411.  
 8 See p. 552, note 10.  
 9 See Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*, pp. 6, 7.  
 10 See *B.O.*, ii. 411-412, iii. 1, 75; Bar-Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccles.*, ed. Abbeloos and Lamy, ii. 89; Martin, *Introd.*, pp. 292-294.  
 11 See Martin, *Tradition Karkaphienne ou la Massore chez les Syriens*, Paris, 1870 (from *Journ. Asiat.*), and *Introd.*, p. 276-291.  
 12 In the Vatican Catalogue (vol. iii. 287, No. ciii.) he translates the words *alä mashlänänthä karkaphäitü* by "iuxta traditionem verticalen (i): hoc est, Montanorum in Phoenice et Mesopotamia degentium."  
 13 See his *Horæ Syriacæ*, Rome, 1828, p. 78; II. *Symbolæ Philologicae ad Hist. Veritatem Syriacæ. est. faderis. Particula prima; de versuionibus generatim, deinde de Peschito*, p. 147; III. *Particula secunda; de versuionibus Karkaphensium nunc primum describens*. We need not here indicate Wiseman's mistakes, but it is a pity to see them all reproduced even in the third edition of Scrivener's *Plain Introduction*, 1883.  
 14 See Hoffmann, *Opuscula Nestoriana*, 1880, p. v. sq.  
 15 See, for example, *B.O.*, iii. 1, 341, col. 2 at the foot, and iii. 2, cmxxiv. sq.  
 16 Hoffmann, *Opusc. Nestor.*, p. vii.; Martin, *Introd.*, p. 289.

before they were passed on to the higher classes of the *ekoläyê* *bädhökê* or *mallephänê*, that is, the professors of exegesis and doctors of theology.<sup>17</sup> The more difficult words and phrases of Scripture were gradually collected and written down so as to form "collectanea," *luk'älê dhä-shëmähê*, or "fasciculi," *kurräsê dhä-shëmähê*, and the union of these composed a *kêthäbhä dhä-kêrayäthä*, or "book of readings," in which it was shown by means of vowel-points and other signs how each word was to be pronounced and accented.<sup>18</sup> One such volume in the British Museum (Add. 12133, dated 899) represents the work of a Nestorian student in the convent of Mär Gabriel at Harrän;<sup>19</sup> but the other MSS. extant in the different libraries of Europe<sup>20</sup> are of Jacobite origin and have a common source, the scholastic tradition of the convent of Karkaphéthä, or "the Skull," at the village of Maghdal or Mijdal near Rêsh-äina or Räs-äin.<sup>21</sup> Such are, for example, Cod. Vat., No. ciii., now ciii., described by Assemani (*Catal.*, iii. 287) and Wiseman (*Horæ Syr.*, p. 151); Cod. Paris, Ancien fonds 142, described by Zotenberg (*Catal.*, p. 30, No. 64) and Martin (*Tradition Karkaphienne*, p. 58); Cod. Brit. Mus. Add. 7183, described by Rosen (*Catal.*, p. 64, No. xiii.), and 12178, described by Wright (*Catal.*, p. 108). From these and similar MSS., as well as from the words of Bar-Hebraeus,<sup>22</sup> it appears that the Karkaphäyê were the monks of the convent of Karkaphéthä; that they were Westerns or Occidentals, therefore Jacobites; and that one of their chief authorities, if not the actual originator of the compilation, was Jacob bishop of Edessa. Accordingly, the marginal notes indicate various readings from Syriac MSS., from the LXX., and from the Harklensian version, as well as from different fathers and teachers.<sup>23</sup> To the collection of words and phrases from the Peshittä version is added in several of these MSS. a similar, though shorter, collection from the Harklensian version and from the principal works of the Greek fathers which were read in translations in the schools,<sup>24</sup> followed by tracts on different points of orthography, grammar and punctuation.<sup>25</sup>

We have spoken above (p. 824) of the deuterocanonical books of Apocrypha. Other apocrypha may now be noticed more briefly; e.g., Ps. cii. (in the hexaplar version of Paul of Tella); the works, *Parva Genesis*, or *Liber Jubilæorum*, a fragment of which has been edited by Ceriani (*Monumenta*, vol. ii. fasc. 1, p. ix.); the Testament of Adam<sup>26</sup>; the History of Joseph and Äsyath (Asenath), translated by Moses of Aggäl<sup>27</sup>; the History of Sanherib, his Vizir Ahikar or Hikar, and his Disciple Nädhän.<sup>28</sup> Many similar books exist in Arabic, some of them probably translated from lost Syriac originals. The names of Daniel and Ezra "the scribe" are prefixed to late apocalyptic works,<sup>29</sup> and even to almanacs containing prognostications of the weather, &c.<sup>30</sup> The list of apocrypha of the New Testament is also tolerably extensive. We may mention the *Prot-evangelium Jacobi*; the Gospel of Thomas the Israelite, or of the Infancy of our Lord; the Letters of Abgar our Lord; the Letters of Herod and Pilate; prayers ascribed to St John the Baptist; the *Transitus, Assumptio*, or *Kolymis Beate Virginitis*, extant in four or five redactions<sup>31</sup>; Acts of the Apostles, such as St John, St Philip, St Matthew and St Andrew, St Paul and Thecla, and St Thomas<sup>32</sup>; the Doctrine of St Peter<sup>33</sup>; and the Apocalypse of St Paul.<sup>34</sup> Others

17 Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, pp. xx, xxi. What the whole curriculum of such a student should be, according to the mind of Bar-Hebraeus in the 13th century, may be seen from the *B.O.*, iii. 2, 937-938 (Nonapocanon, translated by J. A. Assemani, in *Mai, Script. Vett. Nova Coll.*, x. cap. vii. § 9, pp. 54-56).  
 18 Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, pp. vi, vii.  
 19 See Wright, *Catal.*, p. 101.  
 20 Hoffmann, in *Z.D.M.G.*, xxxii. (1878), p. 745; and in *Stade's Zeitschrift für d. Alttest. Wissenschaft*, 1881, p. 159.  
 21 See Wiseman, *op. cit.*, p. 178; Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 76, 77, 183; Rosen, *Catal.*, pp. 65, 66; Wright, *Catal.*, p. 109. Among these occur *ⲁⲗ* and *ⲗⲁⲗ*. The investigations of Hoffmann (in *Stade's Zeitschrift*, 1881, p. 159) and Duval (*Journ. Asiat.*, 1884, p. 560) have made it certain that *ⲁⲗ* designates not the Peshittä, nor Jacob of Edessa, but one Tübhinä (perhaps surnamed "the Beardless"), an eminent teacher at Rêsh-äina. His colleague Säbhä was probably the famous scribe Säbhä, who wrote Brit. Mus. Add. 14423, 14430 (724), and 12185, ff. 1-43 (726).  
 22 Namely, (Pseudo-)Dionysius Areopagita, Gregory Nazianzen (2 vols.), the works of Basil, the epistles of Gregory and Basil, John Philoponus (the *Diarrhyses*), and Severus of Antioch (*Homilia Cathedrales* and certain synodical letters relating to the council of Antioch). A fuller list is given by Assemani, *B.O.*, iii. 2, cmxxvii. sq.  
 23 See Phillips, *A Letter of Mär Jacob, Bishop of Edessa, on Syriac Orthography*, &c., 1869 (Appendix iii. pp. 85-96, issued separately in 1870); Martin, *Jacobi epi Edesseni Epistola ad Georgium epum Saragenisem de Orthographia Syriacæ*, &c., 1869.  
 24 Wright, *Catal.*, p. 1242; see Renan, in the *Journ. Asiat.*, November and December 1853, p. 427, and Wright, *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament*, 1865, p. 61.  
 25 Wright, *Catal.*, p. 1047; Land, *Anecd. Syr.*, iii. 15-46.  
 26 Wright, *Catal.*, p. 1207, col. 1; Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*, 1880, p. 182; see for the Syriac text Brit. Mus. Orient. 2313, and a MS. in the collection of the S.P.C.K. (now presented by the Society to the university of Cambridge).  
 27 Wright, *Catal.*, p. 352, col. 2; Brit. Mus. Orient. 2084, f. 1, *Kêthäbhä dhä-Shädhä dhä-sabhä dhä-Dhäntê nêhlyä*.  
 28 Most of these are published in Wright's *Contributions*; see also the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, 1865, vol. vi. 417, vol. vii. 129; and B. H. Cowper, *The Apocryphal Gospels*, &c., 1867.  
 29 See Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols., 1871.  
 30 Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents*, pp. 35-41.  
 31 Translated by Zingerle in *Heldenheim's Vierteljahrsschrift*, iv. p. 139 sq.

of these apocrypha are extant in Arabic, but the Syriac originals have not yet been recovered. To these may be added such works as the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, edited (anonymously) by P. de Lagarde in 1854; extracts from the *Constitutiones Apostolorum*, ascribed to Clement, in the same editor's *Reliquia Juris Eccles. Antig.*, p. 2-32, 44-60; and the *Doctrina Apostolorum*, in Cureton's *Ancient Syriac Documents*, pp. 24-35, and in *Reliquia Juris Eccles. Antig.* (under the title of *Doctrina Addæi*), pp. 32-44.

Into a description of the service-books of the Syrian Church in its different sects—Nestorians, Jacobites, Maronites, and Malkites—we cannot here enter.<sup>1</sup> The bare enumeration of the various psalters, lectionaries, missals, &c., would far exceed our present limits. The oldest Syriac psalter in our European collections is not earlier than 600 (Brit. Mus. Add. 17110), and the series of lectionaries commences with the 9th century. Of anaphoræ or liturgies it would be easy to specify some sixty.<sup>2</sup> The oldest of all is a fragment of the anaphora of Diodorus of Tarsus (in the British Museum, Add. 14699, ff. 20, 21), of the 6th century, which has been edited and translated by Bickell.<sup>3</sup>

Besides the versions of Holy Writ and other works enumerated above, the literature of Syria comprises a vast amount of matter, interesting not merely to the Orientalist but also to the classical scholar, the theologian, and the historian. Some portions of this literature we must now endeavour to pass under review.

The long series of Syrian writers is headed by the name of Bardaisän or Bardesänê, "the last of the Gnostics."<sup>4</sup> He was born at Edessa on 11th July 154,<sup>5</sup> and seems to have been the son of heathen parents of rank. Of the manner of his conversion to Christianity, and how he came to deviate from orthodoxy, we are uninformed. Part of his life he spent at the court of Edessa; then he betook himself as a missionary to the rude mountaineers of Armenia, and finally settled down in the fortress of Anium, where he probably remained till his death in 222.<sup>6</sup> He wrote, we are told, a *History of Armenia*, which Moses of Chorenê used in a Greek translation; *Hypomnemata Indica*, compiled from the oral information which he obtained from an Indian embassy passing through Edessa on its way to the Roman court; and polemical treatises against the polytheism of the heathens and the dualism of Marcion. He and his son Harmonius were poets, and their hymns were greatly admired and imitated. Even Ephraim could not help admitting their merits, whilst he reviled them.<sup>7</sup> Of these works, however, only a few fragments have been preserved by later writers.<sup>8</sup> The famous dialogue *Περὶ εὐαγγελίου* or *De Fato*, which the voice of antiquity has unanimously ascribed to Bardesänê, was in reality composed by his disciple Philip, and doubtless presents us with an accurate account of his master's teaching. The Syriac title is *Kêthäbhä dhä-Nämösê dhä-Athrawäthä* (The Book of the Laws of the Countries).<sup>9</sup>

Of Simeon bar Sabbä'ê ("the Dyers' Son"), bishop of Seleucia and Otesiphon, and Millës, bishop of Suse, we know little beyond the fact of their martyrdom in the great persecution of the Christians by Shabbör or Sapor II., which began in 339-340.<sup>10</sup> Simeon is said by 'Abhd-ishö<sup>11</sup> to have written "epistles,"<sup>12</sup> which seem to be no longer extant. To him are also ascribed sundry hymns,<sup>13</sup> and a work entitled *Kêthäbhä dhä-'Abhäthä* (The Book of the Fathers), which, according to Sachau, treats of the heavenly and earthly hierarchy.<sup>14</sup> The writings of Millës are stated by 'Abhd-

and by Perkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, viii. p. 182 sq.; reprinted in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, January 1865, p. 372 sq.  
 1 The reader is referred to the following works: J. A. Assemani, *Codex Liturg. Ecclesie Universe*, 13 vols., Rome, 1749-66; Renaudot, *Liturgiarum Orient. Collectio*, 2 vols., Paris, 1716; Etheridge, *The Syrian Churches, their Early History, Liturgies, and Literature*, London, 1846; Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, 2 vols., London, 1852; Howard, *The Christians of St Thomas and their Liturgies*, Oxford, 1864; Deming, *Ritus Orientalium, Coptorum, Syrorum, et Armenorum in administrandis sacramentis*, 2 vols., Würzburg, 1863-64; J. Merius, *Comment. de Sacris Eccles. Ordinationibus*, &c., Paris, 1655. Antwerp, 1695; Bickell, *Conspectus Rei Syrorum Literariae*, chap. vii.-x.  
 2 See a complete list in Bickell's *Conspectus*, pp. 65-68; comp. also Neale and Littledale's *Liturgies of SS. Mark, James, &c.*, 2d ed., 1869, p. 146, and Appendix i.  
 3 See his *Conspectus*, pp. 63, 71-72. The Syriac text is given in *Z.D.M.G.*, xxvii. (1873), pp. 608-613.  
 4 See Merx, *Bardesanes von Edessa*, 1863; Hilgenfeld, *Bardesanes, der letzte Gnostiker*, 1864; Hahn, *Bardesanes Gnosticus Syrorum primus Hymnologus*, 1819.  
 5 So the *Chronicon Edessenum*, in Assemani, *B.O.*, i. 839, and Bar-Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccles.*, i. 47; but Elias of Nisibis, as cited by Abbeloos in his notes on Bar-Hebraeus, *loc. cit.*, places his birth in 134.  
 6 Bar-Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccles.*, i. 47.  
 7 E.g., *Opera Syr.*, ii. 439 D, 553 F, last line.  
 8 Compare the hymn in the Syriac Acts of St Thomas (Wright, *Apocryphal Acts*, p. 274); Lipsius, *Die Apocryphen-Apologien und Apologlegenden*, i. 292 sq.  
 9 It was first edited by Cureton, with an English translation, in his *Syriaclegium Syriacum*; see also T. & T. Clark's *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. xxii. p. 85 sq., and Merx, *op. cit.*, p. 25 sq.  
 10 See S. E. Assemani, *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum*, l. 10 sq. 66 sq.  
 11 Or 'Ebdä-yeshü, bishop of Nisibis, whose bibliographical Catalogue has been edited by Abraham Echellensis, Rome, 1693, and by J. S. Assemani in his *B.O.*, iii. 1. There is an English translation of it by Badger, *The Nestorians*, ii. 361-370.  
 12 *B.O.*, iii. 1, 51.  
 13 Assemani, *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum*, l. 5; Rosen, *Catalogue*, p. 14, col. 2.  
 14 Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi, &c., Opera Selecta*, p. 424.  
 15 Karzes *Verzeichniss der Sachauschen Sammlung syrischer Handschriften*, Berlin, 1855, p. 2, and No. 108. 3.

ishö (*loc. cit.*) to have been "epistles and discourses (*mēmre*) on various subjects"; but of these time has also robbed us.

The name of Jacob (or St James) of Nisibis<sup>15</sup> is far more widely known. As bishop of that city he was present at the council of Niceæ. He lived to witness the outbreak of war between the Romans and the Persians, and is said to have delivered the city, by his prayers from the latter power. He died in the same year (338).<sup>16</sup> To him has been ascribed, on the authority of Gennadius of Marseilles<sup>17</sup> and of the ancient Armenian version,<sup>18</sup> a collection of homilies, the Syriac text of which has only been recovered and published within the last few years. George, bishop of the Arab tribes, writing to a friend in the year 714, is aware that the author was a certain "Persian sage," *hakkimä Phärsäyâ*, and discusses his date and position in the church,<sup>19</sup> but does not think of identifying him with Jacob of Nisibis. Later writers are better informed. Bar-Hebraeus knows the name of Pharahäd as the author<sup>20</sup>; 'Abhd-ishö gives the older form of Aphrahät or 'Aphädras<sup>21</sup>; and he is also cited by name by Elias of Nisibis (11th century) in his *Chronicle*.<sup>22</sup> The real author of the twenty-two alphabetical *Homilies* and the separate homily "On the Cluster" is now, therefore, known to have been Aphraates, a Persian Christian, who took the name of Jacob, and was subsequently famous as "the Persian sage." He was probably bishop of the convent of Mär Matthew near Mosul, and composed his works, as he himself tells us, in the year 337, 344, and 345, during the great persecution under Sapor II.<sup>23</sup>

A junior contemporary of Aphraates was Ephraim,<sup>24</sup> commonly called Ephraem Syrus, "the prophet of the Syrians," the most celebrated father of the Syrian Church and certainly one of its most voluminous and widely read writers. He was born of heathen parents at Nisibis, but became the pupil of the bishop Jacob, and finished his education at Edessa. The incidents of his career are too well known to need recapitulation here.<sup>25</sup> His death took place in June 373.<sup>26</sup> His works have been largely translated into Greek,<sup>27</sup> Armenian, Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic.<sup>28</sup> They consist of commentaries on the Scriptures, expository sermons, and a vast mass of metrical homilies and hymns on every variety of theological subject.<sup>29</sup> Many of these last are composed in his favourite seven-syllable metre, in stanzas of different length; but he frequently used other metres and mixed strophic arrangements.<sup>30</sup> Of Ephraim's commentaries on the Old Testament but little has reached us in the original Syriac.<sup>31</sup> Most of what has been published in *Ephraemi Opera Syr.*, vols. i. and ii., is derived from a large *Catena Patrum*, compiled by one Severus, a monk of Edessa, in 861.<sup>32</sup> Of his commentary on the *Dia-fessarön*, preserved only in an early Armenian translation, we have spoken above (p. 825). In the same language there is extant a translation of his commentary on the Pauline epistles.<sup>33</sup> Vol. ii. of the Roman edition contains some exegetical discourses (pp. 316-335), the number of which has been largely increased by Overbeck (*S. Ephraemi Syri, &c., Opera Selecta*, pp. 74-104). In the same work will be found two of the discourses against early heresies addressed to Hypatius and Domnus (pp. 21-73; comp. Wright, *Catal.*, p. 766, col. 2), two tracts on the love of the Most High (pp. 103-112), and the epistle to the

15 Kai Συρίας πτόον εἰσα καὶ ἄλλα πάντα, Νισίβη, Εὐφράτην διαβίβη; Lightfoot, *S. Ignatii*, i. 480.  
 16 This date is given by the *Chronicon Edess.* (*B.O.*, i. 335), by Dionysius of Tell-Mahré (*ibid.*, p. 27), by the so-called *Liber Chaliquarum* (in Land, *Anecd. Syr.*, i. 41), by Elias of Nisibis (see Abbeloos's note in Bar-Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccles.*, ii. 3), and inferentially by Ephraim (Bickell, *S. Ephraemi Syri Carmina Nisibena*, p. 20).  
 17 In his *De Viris Illustribus*, written before 496.  
 18 Published by N. Antonelli (Rome, 1766) with a Latin translation, and reprinted in Gallandini, *Bibl. Vet. Patrum*, vol. v. The mistake has passed (no doubt through the Arabic) to the Ethiopic translation of the fifth homily; see Zotenberg, *Catal. des MSS. Ethiopiens de la Bibl. Nat.*, p. 248, col. 2, No. 17.  
 19 See De Lagarde, *Anal. Syr.*, p. 108; *The Homilies of Aphraates*, ed. Wright, p. 19; Ryssel, *Ein Brief Georgs, Bischofs der Araber*, 1833.  
 20 *Chron. Eccles.*, ii. 34. 21 *B.O.*, iii. 1, 85. 22 See Wright, *Aphraates*, p. 33.  
 23 Wright, *Aphraates*, pp. 440 and 507; comp. Sasse, *Prolegomena in Aphr. Sup. Pers. Sermones Homileticos*, 1878; J. Forget, *De Vita et Scriptis Aphr.*, *Sup. Persæ*, 1882; Bickell in Thalhofer, *Bibliothek der Kirchensüter*, 102 and 103, where eight of the homilies are translated. 24 More correctly Aphrim.  
 25 See the *Acta S. Ephraemi* in the Roman ed. of his works by Peter Mohrbrak (Petrus Benedictus) and the Assemani, pp. xxiii.-lxiii.; and comp. Bickell, *Conspectus*, p. 26, note 11.  
 26 See the various authorities cited by Assemani, *B.O.*, i. 54, note; Bickell, *Carmina Nisibena*, p. 9, note; Gabriel Cardahi, *Liber Thesauri de Aris Poetica Syrorum*, 1875, pp. 9-13.  
 27 Even Photius speaks with respect of the rhetorical talent of Ephraim, so far as he could judge of it from these imperfect translations (ed. Bekker, p. 160).  
 28 Bar-Hebraeus, *loc. cit.*, p. 149 sq.  
 29 *Ibid.*, i. 65-149; iii. 1, 61.  
 30 Compare, for instance, Bickell, *Carmina Nisib.*, *Introd.*, p. 31. The Syriac line consists of a certain fixed number of syllables, four, five, six, seven, eight, twelve, &c. In the older writers there is no intentional rime, which first appears, we believe, among the Westerns, in Antonius Rhetor (9th century). Rime metres, like those of the Greeks and Arabs, coupled in the latter case with rime, were wholly unknown to the Syrians. Hebrew poetry barely rises, as regards outward form, beyond the level of Arabic rime prose; the Syrians, whilst destitute of rime, at least imposed upon themselves the restraint of a limited but fixed number of syllables.  
 31 Genesis and Exodus in Cod. Vat. ex., and five leaves of Genesis in Cod. Vat. exx. (see Assemani, *Catal.*, iii. p. 125).  
 32 Cod. Vat. ciii., Brit. Mus. Add. 12144. Severus used for Genesis a commentary different from that in Cod. Vat. ex.; see Bickell, *Conspectus*, p. 19; comp. Zohmann, *S. Ephraemi Syri Commentariorum in s. scripturam testam. v. codd. vett. manuscriptorum et edit. Rom. impressis*, 2 parts, 1862-64.  
 33 See Bickell, *Conspectus*, p. 20.