The Coptic Christians.

In a late book of travels in Italy and the East, published in London, we notice the following sketch of the present Copts of Egypt, the descendants of the ancient Egyptian Christians, and the degenerate representatives of the once celebrated Egyptian Church:

"The Copts of the present day have entirely lost their ancient learning, and are both intellectually and socially degraded, though still retaining a proud recollection of their ancestors. After having been thinned by ages of persecution and apostasy, they still amount to some one hundred and fifty thousand persons, nearly ten thousand of whom reside in Cairo, in a quarter specially assigned them. Great numbers live in the district called 'Faioom,' and the remainder are scattered up and down in the cities and towns, where for the most part they fill the offices of the secretaries and accountants. Their language is radically the same with the old Egyptian, but with many foreign admixtures and additions. It is not spoken, but is still used in their sacred books and public services; and it now furnishes a valuable key to the study of the hieroglyphics. From the numerous monasteries in the East, so many manuscripts in the Coptic and Sahidic dialects have been discovered by the venerable Archdeacon Tattam and others, that a complete copy of the Sacred Scriptures has been recently printed, I believe, in their language. The Coptic tenets are, in the main, orthodox; but the people are divided into various sects, Jacobites, Eutychians, Monophysites, and Monothelites. Some of their practices are peculiar. They use both circumcision and baptism. The former is not deemed essential; but they consider that a child dying unbaptized will be blind in the future life. Pilgrimages they highly esteem, especially to Jerusalem, where they have a convent; and, like the Jews and Mohammedans, they abstain at well from pork as from things strangled, and from blood. Their religious orders consist of a patriarch, bishops, arch-priests, priests, deacons, monks, and nuns. The patriarch is always unmarried. The bishops are usually so, or widowers. The priests are allowed to marry, but only to virgins. The deacons have the same privilege, but they are often mere boys. Monks and nuns make a vow of celibacy, and in some religious establishments they reside together; and, generally speaking, marriage is sanctioned only among members of their own body. In the ceremonies of marriage and burials, and in their general habits, they differ but little from the Mohammedans. Their costume, however, is usually confined to gray or gloomy colors. Their feelings are not, of course, friendly towards their Moslem oppressors; but are less hostile to them than to Christians of the Greek Church—an antipathy which they appear to have derived from their ancestors of the 17th century, and to which may be chiefly attributed the success of the Mohammedan invasion. The Abyssinian Church is an off-shoot from the Coptic, and is supposed to have been founded about the middle of the fourth century. It holds the doctrines and rites; and its chief *abouna*, or metropolitan, is nominated by the Coptic patriarch."

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