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dual of the congregation, previous to his depar-  
ture from the church, kisses a little cushion, co-  
vered with a greasy cloth; then a cross, and af-  
terwards rolls his head on the shrine of the saints.  
This shrine is said, by the Arabs, to contain no  
other reliques than bones of camels or asses, that  
have perished in the desert, and have been col-  
lected by the monks; but the latter affirm, that  
it is the repository of the bodies of seven saints,  
among whom, Maximous and Domadious are men-  
tioned as the objects of peculiar veneration.

There were but three priests and a few friars in  
the convent, at the period of our traveller's re-  
searches; but they were frequently visited by the  
Coptic cultivators, who came to do penance for  
their sins and to supply the fathers with the means  
of subsistence. The common provisions of the  
community are chiefly the alms of the rich  
Copts, at Cairo, and are conveyed to the monas-  
tery twice or thrice a year, by caravans of ca-  
mels. Their meals, which simply consist of  
buiscuit, made of flour of lentils and rice boiled  
in salt and water; detestable cheese; and, by  
chance a little honey, are usually eaten in a re-  
fectory, while one of the monks reads for the  
edification of his brethren: their only beverage is  
a brackish and unpalatable water.

The cells of the monks are vaulted and exceed-  
ingly low, and their dress perfectly accords with  
their wretched habitations. A kind of robe and  
a long shirt, of black linen, constitute the whole  
of their apparel; the dismal colour of which,  
together with their dark complexion, mean look,  
and short stature, combines to render the Coptic  
monastics the most ugly of mankind, as they are  
likewise the most filthy and disgusting!

By