

"I suppose," said Harte, sinking his voice to a whisper, "there is nobody who can hear us?"

"No," said Brymer, looking to both the doors.

"*They were forged notes!*"

"Ah!" said Brymer, after a pause, and drawing a long breath, "I suspected as much. But then——"

"I know what you are going to ask," said Harte—"What became of them? I'll tell you. That Eli Wire set me on! I went to him, believing, like a fool, that he had got plenty of money, and I wanted to borrow two hundred and fifty pounds of him. He laughed in my face, and told me he had not got two hundred and fifty pence. But still he talked as if he could help me, and at length suggested the payment by *flash-notes*. Of course I treated this with contempt, because they would be sure to be detected at once, and then I should be a criminal, as well as a bankrupt. But the old fiend quietly went on. He said he could get some notes prepared in such a way as to defy any easy or ordinary means of detection, and, moreover, he could so treat them with some chemical agent, that in less than twenty-four hours they should crumble into dust, and leave no trace by which they could be recognised as bank-notes at all."

There was a dead silence.

"Ah!" at length said Brymer. "I see it all!" But, my good fellow, how could you lend yourself to such a villainy, so to wrong a man that had confided in you?"

Harte trembled like a leaf, and big tears rolled down his cheeks. "It was that devil tempted me," said he, "and it seemed to show me the only way out of an awful fix. But I had no sooner given the notes to you than I would have cut off my hand to get them back. And I swear that if you had trusted me

when I wanted to take them into the bank, I should have taken the responsibility of destroying them myself."

He was still fidgeting with his pocket-book, while Brymer recalled the circumstances, remembering how little Jem had shaken up the cash-box, and how his wife had noticed the quantity of dust and paper fibres that was in it when she emptied it into the fire.

"And now," said Harte, "I have come to confess all this, and to ask you to forgive me before I go, and to spare my name as much as you can when I am gone. There is the money, with interest for the last few months!" and he laid notes on the table to that amount. "I could not bear to carry with me the thought of having defrauded the man who had been my friend and trusted me." And here he utterly broke down.

"Harte," said Brymer, "I confess I wanted this money very badly, but I can honestly say that I am almost as glad that you have put yourself right in this matter as that I have got the money."

"God bless you!" said Harte, and they parted.

Little more need be said. Flemmings was purchased. Brymer continued to prosper, and it was not many years before he was able to retire altogether from business, and to purchase a still larger estate. One of the first things that Harte was induced to do on getting to Australia was to take the temperance pledge; and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that he has become a wealthy man. He corresponds regularly with Brymer, and many a valuable remembrance is sent from the Australian sheep-farm to the English home. No other allusion is ever made either by Brymer or by Harte to the strange history of "The Mortgage-Money."

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF CYPRUS.



FULL as the world and modern life are of new discoveries, new combinations, and new schemes, some point of paramount interest crops up from time to time, attracting all eyes, centralising all

thoughts, offering a basis for novel operations, an outlet for idle capital, and a field for enterprise which promises to yield the rich harvests usually brought forth by virgin soils. One of these points of light is the annexation of the Island of Cyprus, which in the early days of July took all by surprise except the sagacious few who were in the secret, and within a fortnight figured continually in the daily papers, not only in its political, strategical, and military aspects, but in the every-day ones intimated by the announcements that a line of steamers would run immediately from London, that a great banker had opened a branch house in Cyprus; by the advertisement of a wine merchant anxious to supply the settlers therein with fermented liquors, and the scheme of some enterprising agriculturists for obtaining funds and coadjutors for the purchase of lands and the commencement of farming operations.

With regard to the profit likely to accrue from our occupation of this island in the Syrian Sea, opinions differ, as they do on most other subjects. One poli-

tician considers that we have merely bought from Turkey the obligation of defending her Asiatic possessions, in consideration of our feeding the Cypriotes; another reminds us that though we have advanced our military outpost in the Mediterranean 750 miles farther, we have added to our difficulties by the increased distance from England, while detractors cry out that Rhodes would have served our purpose far better, and cost us far less coin.

Shrewd John Bull, however, with his excellent common sense, and a keen eye on his money-bags, perceives at a glance, like Alexander the Great, that he has laid his strong right hand on the key of Egypt, and of other lands as well.

The naval mind is already exercised on the respective merits and demerits of Ayas Bay, Tripoli, Seleucia, Sidon, Beyrout, and Scanderoon, as Asian harbours for a British fleet, and railway engineers descant on the advantages of these various localities as probable or possible termini for that line through the Euphrates valley, or that other through the desert of Palmyra, which may bring the heart of our Indian Empire within less than a week's journey of our new depôt in the Levant before many years have sped.

One of the most feasible ideas that have yet been mooted, appears to be that of clearing out and improving the old port of Famagousta, on the east of Cyprus, the fortifications of which still stand as intact and impregnable as when originally raised by the Lusignans. Nearly opposite to it, a few miles further south on the Syrian shore, is the ancient crusaders' post of Tripoli, which, though very suitable for the terminus of a railway running through to the head of the Persian Gulf, is not everything that can be desired as a harbour. Still it is possible that, when its other advantages are duly weighed, British pluck, perseverance, and skill, backed up by British gold, may surmount the difficulties, and remove many of the obstacles that beset it.

Famagousta itself, the "devoted city," as it has been called, was built by the Christians 800 years ago from the ruins of the ancient city of Salamis, only a few miles away. Its massive walls are between sixteen and seventeen feet thick, and an inspection of them convinces the beholder that they were perfectly impregnable. Only by means of treason from within, or utter starvation, was it possible for besiegers to enter, or force the inhabitants to capitulate. On the land side they enclose an area of more than two Italian miles, skirted by a ditch hewn out of the solid rock, and flanked by numerous towers. From the autumn of 1570 till the beginning of August in the following year, did Mustapha Pacha, the Turkish commander who descended on Cyprus in the days of the Doge Luigi Mocenigo, invest the city, assault it with his batteries, shatter it with his mines, and surprise it by his sallies. It was not till all the provisions and ammunition were consumed that Bragadino, the commander, was induced to surrender; and it was in the great square of the place he had so heroically defended that, after untold indignities, he was barbarously flayed alive. Just outside the harbour bar the faithless Mustapha

caused to be sunk the vessels containing Venetian families to whom he had previously given permission to depart.

Most pathetic are the ruins of the 300 churches, with unobliterated frescoes here and there upon their walls; and very touching are the relics of luxurious homes to which the hand of Time has been far more merciful than that of man. On the bastions facing the sea and the plain of Salamis may still be seen the old bronze Venetian guns, spiked and useless as they have been for the last 300 years; and side by side with them are half a dozen rusty iron pieces of Turkish make, in pretty much the same condition. There is a small fort looking seaward, in which the Turkish governor and a company of artillery lived till within the last few weeks; and attached to this building is a large round tower associated by tradition with Othello, the Moor of Venice, who was Lord-Lieutenant of Cyprus from 1506 to 1508. As this worthy was four times married, and did not live too exemplary a life, the bard of Avon had ample foundation on which to build his tragic tale. The fortress of Famagousta, under the Turks, contained some of the worst criminals of the empire, if the depth of their guilt could be calculated by the length of their sentences. This measurement, however, would hardly hold good even in Western Europe, and the poor souls condemned to be incarcerated for life, or for periods of fifteen, twenty, or five-and-twenty years, and heavily manacled, are perhaps not sinners above all their compatriots.

The greater part of the ruins of Salamis are covered by about ten feet of sand, drifted from the sea-shore. A considerable portion fell into the sea from the effects of an earthquake in the reign of Constantine Chlorus, but the harbour and nearly 700 feet of the wall may be easily traced—that is, if the explorer does not mind walking through a thick growth of weeds and thistles, infested by asps and snakes.

Nikosia, or Lefkosia, is the actual capital of Cyprus, and stands on an elevation in a rich champaign country, in its very centre. The scenery around it is lovely, there is plenty of water, and the salubrity of the air has always made it a favourite abode of the natives. Much care was taken by the Venetians in the construction of its fortresses; but even after reducing the size of the city in order that it might be more easily defended, it required a much larger garrison than could be maintained. The Turkish troops in 1570 besieged and took Nikosia, and then massacred its inhabitants before attacking Famagousta. The present population is about 16,000. The whilome church of St. Sophia is now converted into a mosque, and the ancient monuments of the Lusignan dynasty have been terribly mutilated and defaced. The streets are narrow and dirty, as is usual in the East, but there are a spacious bazaar, a khan for the accommodation of travellers, and also some Greek convents and churches. On the portal of the governor's palace the Venetian lion carved in stone may still be seen, but it is almost the only vestige of departed glory.

Larnaca is one of the principal sea-port towns, and

has for many years been in regular communication with the outer world, by means of the Austrian Lloyd steamers, which touch there once in fifteen days. It is a most unpromising-looking place as viewed from the anchorage in the open bay, a mile or more away from the shore. At that distance no sign of life can be discerned, nor any trace of vegetation, except a few melancholy palm-trees drooping their long leaves over the desolate sand-hills. It is built on and near the ruins of the Phœnician Citium, and, like the other towns of Cyprus, divided into two districts—the Marina, near the sea, which is the residence of the foreign consuls and the commercial centre of the whole island, and Larnaca proper, about three-quarters of a mile inland, which becomes depopulated every year in proportion as the new buildings on the beach increase and prosper. The houses are low and unpretentious, but there is a tolerable amount of room in them, and they are not wholly devoid of comfort. Hotels are conspicuous by their absence; furniture is scarcely to be bought for love or money, unless some resident is departing and disposing of his household gods, and visitors have no resource but to accept the proffered hospitality of those who have in their time faced the difficulties of the situation, and been entertained as strangers before them.

Locomotion is principally accomplished by means of donkeys and mules, and there is a village called Athieno, whose inhabitants are mostly muleteers by occupation, and an excellent set of people. They are the owners of tolerable saddle-mules, trained to go at an easy amble, which does not fatigue the rider, while the animal gets over more ground at this pace than at a trot. Their usual trip is from Nikosia to Larnaca, conveying passengers and goods from one town to the other, Athieno being midway between the two; but as they are well acquainted with all the roads and by-paths of the island, they may be hired to go to any part of it.

There is a khan at Larnaca known as the resting-place of the muleteers, and the usual mode of procedure is for the traveller to go there, select a mule to his liking, and bargain with its owner for a lump sum for the entire trip, or at the rate of so much *per diem*. The former method is cheap, but the latter preferable, for should the mule prove unsatisfactory, the rider is at liberty to change it on the road if he meets with a better one. If you wish to start, say at six A.M., it is wise to fix four o'clock with your muleteer, as the Cypriote is a notoriously unpunctual personage, and has a great dislike to being hurried. A native saddle, called *stratouri*, is placed on the animal's back, across which are hung, in such a fashion as not to incommode the traveller, a couple of canvas bags, which accommodate his private kit and the first day's provisions; and on the saddle itself are piled some coloured rugs or blankets, which serve as seat by day and bed by night. The muleteer himself, who also acts as guide, mounts a small strong donkey, caparisoned in the same manner, and carries all the extra baggage, provender for both beasts, his own food, and sundry parcels entrusted to his care for delivery on the road, into the

bargain. All being ready, the traveller is helped up to his perch on the top of the rugs, and has two rusty stirrups attached to the ends of a rope handed to him, into which he thrusts his feet, and then sits on the rope in order to maintain his equilibrium. Nothing now remains to be done but to hoist a cotton umbrella and depart. When halting-time arrives, shelter and a little sour milk may easily be obtained at the door of a village hut, and the guide will probably assert the principles of fraternity and equality by seating himself on the other side, eating from the same dish and drinking from the same jug as his master.

There is a fine breed of donkeys peculiar to Cyprus, almost as high as horses, very intelligent, with large eyes, sleek, glossy coats, and capable of the same speed as a good mule; in fact, they are stronger, and better able to endure fatigue than the latter steeds, though they may not appear so at first sight.

Cyprus is well watered everywhere, except just along the northern coast; but though the streams are numerous, there are only two or three rivers of any consequence. The Pedaios, or Pedios, which enters the sea between Salamis and Famagousta, is the most important. It receives tributaries from the mountains both in the north and south, and pursues an eastward course through Nikosia and the fertile plain of Maesoria. It is on record that in 1330, being swollen with heavy rains, the city was inundated by it, and the plain for many weeks presented the appearance of a lake. The river Clarius, near Soli, and the Bocarus at Paphos, are now dry most of the year, and the Tetiis is only a winter torrent. The Lapethus and Lycus run all the year, and are of considerable width and volume.

The mountain ranges extend all along the north of Cyprus and also in the south-west; from the summit of Mount Olympus a view of the whole island can be obtained; and next in height is Mount Adelphi, or Maschera. There is somewhere among these peaks an extinct volcano, from which a terrible and destructive eruption issued in the time of Titus, but no one seems to know exactly which it is.

The chief natural sources of wealth in ancient times were the copper mines, which yielded a larger supply of ore, and of finer quality, than any others then known. The island was originally covered with wood, principally cypresses and pines, which were largely cut down for smelting purposes, and afterwards for ship-building. Cedar-trees have also been abundant, and are said at one time to have surpassed in size and grandeur even those in the forests of Lebanon. Oak-trees, olives, carobs, myrtles, and arbutus flourish along the river-banks; the useful *Ferula Græca*, from which the Cypriote peasant forms his household furniture, abounds; and oranges, lemons, pomegranates, and a delicious kind of nectarine, remarkable both for the scent of its blossom and the flavour of its fruit, are largely cultivated. The soil is a very garden of Eden for fertility, and capable of producing vast quantities of grain, cotton, hemp, flax, tobacco, opium, and madder. Terra d'umbra is abundant in some districts, and the salt lakes and works if properly

managed would produce a large revenue. There are abundant facilities for the cultivation of the vine, and the soil and temperature are not unfavourable to the sugar-cane, which was tried by the Venetians in the days of their supremacy. Cyprus may not be a country to which it is desirable to expatriate the British agricultural labourer. In the first place, he could not bear the climate, which, though cold in winter, is intensely hot during the long summer; and, in the second place, he would not take sufficient care of himself to prove useful. Because beef and beer go hand in hand with work in England, he expects them to do the same in other countries; and when he falls sick from the consequences of unsuitable diet, excess in drinking, or careless exposure to the sun, he abuses the horrid climate, and petitions to be sent back whence he came. But if the thousands of acres of waste, because uninhabited, land in Cyprus can be brought into cultivation on enlightened principles, and with the use of modern implements, by capitalists who understand their business, the easy-going, simple, and frugal Levantines may be helped to help themselves, and do profitable work for their employers. Dairy farmers will find rich pastures for their lowing herds, sheep thrive and flourish on the thymy turf, and honey gathered from the aromatic blossoms of that sunny clime equals, if it does not excel, the contents of the far-famed jars from Mount Hymettus. Mulberry-trees also abound, and the silk produced by the worms which feed on them is of the very finest quality. In early spring the corn comes up as if by magic, intermingled with the loveliest flowers, lilies border the streams, and the meadows are spangled with pink and white anemones, dark blue irises, scarlet poppies, the gold-eyed marguerites, wild thyme, and mignonette. Unhappily this vernal glory quickly fades; the summer comes suddenly, and with such burning heat that tender and fragile plants only survive a few weeks after the last spring rains.

The Cypriotes, like other Greeks, are a handsome race, especially the women, their regular and dignified features, tall and stately forms, bearing witness to the admixture of Venetian blood in their veins. They are adepts in the use of henna, fond of displaying their charms, have a weakness for ornaments, and wear a picturesque costume which unites the glowing colours of the gorgeous East to the elegance of classic folds and draperies. They have their little superstitions, and girls are in the habit of visiting a mysterious monolith near the village of Santa Napa, for the purpose of breaking their trinkets at its foot, either when first married or when betrayed by faithless swains. Old women resort to the same stone, and there light tapers, with a vague idea of being cured of their bodily ailments. Is it to a long-forgotten shrine of Venus that they come? or to the traditional relics of some Grecian saint?

For at least nine months in the year the natives live almost entirely out of doors among the trees, the branches of which serve as larder, pantry, wardrobe,

and store-room, and are hung with every variety of clothes, weapons, and domestic utensils. There is a settlement of lepers not far from Nikosia, numbering about 200; they have no houses, and live in empty tombs, or sheds raised by themselves. The Turkish Government has been supposed to allow them a loaf a day each, but if it had not been for the charity of the Archbishop of Cyprus they would have perished from starvation long ago. At every fair or festival in the island, an encampment of these wretched outcasts may be seen near the roadside, where they entreat alms from all passers. This terrible malady seems to be confined to the lowest class, and appears to become more general in seasons of drought, when food is less plentiful than usual. The average age of the sufferers is from forty to sixty, though young people are sometimes attacked. From the moment when the first symptom is discovered, the leper loses friends and home, all intercourse with him ceases, he is driven forth hopeless and desolate, with a blanket and some food, to find his way to the place allotted for him, and counted thenceforth as one dead. Let us hope that under British rule his fate will be less stern, and his sufferings ameliorated.

Cyprus is sometimes devastated by a plague of locusts, and is infested by tarantulae and venomous spiders, as well as asps and snakes of various kinds. So numerous and destructive were the asps in the extreme south, that the *Caloyers* of the convent of Acrotiri raised and trained a peculiar breed of cats imported from Constantinople for the purpose of killing them. Twice a day a tinkling bell was rung, and at this sound the creatures returned to be fed, and then went forth again to hunt their prey. Some of their descendants are still to be found wild in the neighbourhood; and the memory of Puss survives in the name of Cape Gatte, or Delle Gatte, as the ancient promontory of Curias is now called.

Of the antiquities of this island, which has known so many masters—the birthplace of Venus, the residence of Solon, the sarcophagus of the old Hellenic worship, and the cynosure of kings—we have hardly spoken, yet they are numerous and rich as those of Nineveh and Troy. Cities, tombs, temples, and treasures have been excavated, inscriptions deciphered, and gems collected. The pottery is extremely ornate and elegant, the jewellery massive, and the coins valuable and well preserved. Many of the statues are perfect—some grotesque as any figures of fiends and goblins to be found in mediæval gargoyles; and some noble, beautiful, and dignified as we may imagine the works of Phidias and his compeers to have been. Looking at them we can figure to ourselves the beings among whom burning Sappho moved and sung; and gazing round us at the sunny skies, the towering mountains and fertile plains of the island, blessed by Heaven with the triple gifts of corn and wine and oil, we picture what it may become now the iron hand of the oppressor is lifted, and the flag of "Merrie England" floats upon the balmy breeze.

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