

F. SURIANO.

Fra Francesco Suriano, of a patrician family of Venice, left a work of which there exist two manuscripts in the Communal Library of Perugia (one of them in the autograph of the author, corrected and enlarged by him in 1514) and a single printed copy, preserved in the Civic Library of Lucca, published by F. Biondi at Venice in 1526 under the title *Traitato di Terra Santu*.

Suriano, born 1450, had made no less than sixteen journeys to the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean before, in 1475, he assumed the Franciscan habit. He visited Cyprus in August, 1484, on his way from Jaffa to Venice, and was still alive in 1529. He mentions in a note on p. 219 an earthquake which in 1480 nearly destroyed the royal city of Levkossia or Nicosia, "a town twice as large as Perugia," throwing to the ground a large number of palaces, houses and churches, particularly the archiepiscopal church of S. Sophia.

I translate from the Italian text edited by P. Girolamo Golubovich. O.M., 8vo, Milan, 1900 (pp. 241—248).

We left Jerusalem, or rather Zapho, on the tenth of August, 1484, with the galley of Messer Augustin Contarino, and sailing for six days together over the open sea we arrived at the Salines of Cyprus. To this place came S. Paul with Barnabas from Seleucia. These Salines, as one reads in the chronicles of the island, were thus miraculously made. The whole plain was planted with vines, and as S. Lazarus passed by he asked from those who kept the vineyards a few grapes for the love of God. The alms was refused him, and he asked what there was in a basket which hung near. They told him it was salt, but it was full of grapes. Then he laid a curse on them and said, "May all these vineyards turn to salt." And so it befell, for from that hour the vines dried up, and every year the water (is turned to salt). These Salines are almost miraculous because the rain that falls collects without any art of man in a space a mile in circuit (and from under the earth some veins of sea water burst up, and mix with the fresh water which congeals, and becomes most perfect salt, white as snow, hard as stone, four fingers thick, and sweet as violets. And such a quantity is formed that were it all collected it would furnish salt in abundance for the whole of Italy. To keep ever alive the memory of the event a church was built in honour of S. Lazarus, in which I celebrated in token of my devotion. Here we stayed two days, and left it sailing always close to the shore, and the following day reached Limisso, a city entirely destroyed and overthrown by wars and earthquakes. Leaving this we came to C. Gavata, eighteen miles away: we call it the Cape of Cats. And here I saw a great and strange wonder.

Of the miracle of the cats in Cyprus.

I heard a marvellous thing. From the said city of Lymisso up to this cape the soil produces so many snakes that men cannot till it, or walk without hurt thereon. And were it not for the remedy which God has set there, in a short time these would multiply so fast that the island would be depopulated. At this place there is a Greek monastery which rears an infinite number of cats, which wage unceasing war with these snakes. It is wonderful to see them, for nearly all are maimed by the snakes: one has lost a nose, another an ear; the skin of one is torn, another is lame: one is blind of one eye, another of both. And it is a strange thing that at the hour for their food at the sound of a bell all those that are scattered in the fields collect in the said monastery. And when they have eaten enough, at the sound of the bell they all leave together and go to fight the snakes. On this account the monastery has large revenues. From this Cape Gavata we sailed up to Paphos, in which city S. Paul by his