

The Pasha of Aleppo had received orders to raise troops destined for the military occupation of Cyprus: these man-hunters were to be posted in the midst of a prosperous and industrious community. The news had scarcely reached the island before these bands arrived, more voracious than the swarms of locusts which too often destroy the hopes of the year in the plains of Famagusta and Nicosia. Some had embarked in the Gulf of Adalia, others, drawn from Syria, at the ports of Acre and Tripoli. These last were reinforced by troops of Syrians and Arabs from the country about Palmyra, who had long been arrayed against the Wahabis. More than ten thousand men arrived together at the port of Larnaca. Christian blood began at once to flow. The bazars were pillaged, the farms near the town laid waste, their Greek inmates cut in pieces, and the few whom chance saved from the fury of the barbarians sought safety in the interior of the island. Larnaca would have been ruined but for the firmness of M. Méchain, French Consul, whose remonstrances, backed by the cannon of a transport of the Royal Navy, decided the cowardly Governor to quarter the Syrian levies in the fortresses of the island: a measure incomparably more disastrous than the damage they had already done, because they carried desolation to spots which had so far remained free from outrage and discord.

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In September Greek ships from Psara sailed towards Cyprus with the intention of helping their brethren, who were falling every day under the swords of the Asiatics. A frightful anarchy was ravaging this peaceful island. The conciliatory firmans extorted from Constantinople by the French Legation remained unnoticed: the guilty Vizir, who was to have been dismissed, was maintained in office when the time came for the renewal of *berats*, which occurs after Bairam. The villages were deserted, the harvest lay abandoned on the fields: the Greeks reduced to despair were on the point of revolt: the Turks of the island were getting angry: the foreign soldiers waited with impatience a signal, or the pretext of some rising, when the French transport *Lionne*, commanded by Captain Ferrand, arrived, again to save Larnaca from a ruin which seemed inevitable.

The French Consul, M. Méchain (for the least prominent agents of His Most Christian Majesty covered themselves with glory in these times of trouble), alone had faced the storm. He would doubtless have fallen, for the commandant of the town, the *agha* of the janissaries, and the treasurer were on the list of persons proscribed by the Pasha. Their crime was to have shown favour to the Christians, in saving some few from death. All Europeans or Franks were doomed, and Larnaca would have been given up to be sacked by the foreign soldiery. So it was again to His Majesty's navy that so many wretched beings owed their escape. History will add that from his capital Louis XVIII. watched over them, his flag gave them shelter, his charity provided for their wants: for some thousands of rations of biscuit were sent from Toulon, and placed at the disposal of Admiral Halgan, to feed a crowd of unhappy creatures, of whom famine would have swept off those who escaped from the sword of the oppressor. Charity such as this is better than the most brilliant triumph.

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In October Cyprus was again given up to the horrors of anarchy. The native Turks, beguiled by the treacherous insinuations of the Syrian soldiers, reeked with the blood of their countrymen. The murders began again early in September, and if all the European Consuls distinguished themselves by their humanity, there as elsewhere it was reserved to the French Consul to surpass in courage all his colleagues.

His hour of glory arrived on October 6. The Turkish population had risen *en masse* on