

his destination—the house of an old miser in the rich city of Hypata—magic and not business is the thing that fills his brains. ‘The morning after my arrival,’ he says, ‘when the night had been shaken from nature, and a new sun recreated the day, I started from sleep and from bed at the same instant, and, full of the thought that I was now in the very heart of Thessaly, which the whole world celebrates as the native land of enchantment, burning with eagerness and curiosity, I went out and examined everything. And there was nothing in all that city which I could believe to be really what it seemed to be, but I fancied that everything was enchanted and changed into another shape by sorcery, that the stones I tripped against were human beings petrified, that the trees, in the same way, were human beings with leaves on them, and that the pouring waters of the fountains were human lives wasting. Every moment I expected that the statues and the frescoes would begin walking, that the walls would speak, that the oxen and cows would prophesy, and that from the very heaven itself and the dazzling circle of the sun there would issue some sudden oracle.’

I cannot say of Nicosia that I expected to hear oracles in it, but it filled me with precisely the same sense of unreality as that with which Hypata filled the hero of Apuleius. Everything seemed to be something more than it appeared to be on the surface. The air seemed charged with some latent romantic life. Any