



## CHAPTER VII

### A CITY OF THE CRUSADERS

AT night I took to bed with me a number of books about Cyprus, and tried, till my candles burnt down into their sockets, to put together some coherent history of Nicosia. To begin, I gathered that it was a town of immense antiquity; that it was certainly wealthy and populous before the days of Constantine; that it was then adorned with palaces and beautiful Greek temples; and that gradually side by side with the white Corinthian porticoes rose a splendid crowd of Christian churches and monasteries. When the English crusaders came in their grey armour and seized it, it looked like a vision to their rude European eyes. This happened about 1190. A few years later, under circumstances which I afterwards studied more attentively, and which read exactly like a chapter out of the Waverley novels, it, and Cyprus with it, were handed over to Guy de Lusignan, ex-king of Jerusalem.

This Guy, who when he began life was nothing