

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TOWN AND FORTRESS OF CERINES.

THE town and fortress of Cerines are about 20 miles distant from Nicosia. The town is thinly peopled. The schismatic Greeks, who make up the Christian population of the island, have a church there, the seat of a bishop, and the Turks a mosque. The government is administered by a commissioner and a judge. The inhabitants till the surrounding country, which gives a good return for their labour, for its many springs make this one of the most fertile districts in Cyprus. It produces wheat, barley, silk, cotton, oil and carobs; of these last whole shiploads are sent every year to Alexandria.

Cerines was already a city in the days of the Orthodox Greek bishops, among whom was St Theodotus, of whom Caesar Baronius in the Roman Martyrology, May 6, writes: "In Cyprus St Theodotus, bishop of Cyrenia, who suffered cruel torments under the Emperor Licinius, died when peace was restored to the Church." [H. Delehay, *SS. de Chypre*, 258.]

Cerines, says Lusignan, was built by Cyrus, King of Persia, after he had subdued the nine Kings of Cyprus. That he conquered the Cypriots we know from Xenophon, xvi. 2, who writes: "after marching down to the sea he brought under his sway the Cypriots and Egyptians." However that may be, ruins exist about the town, and part of the old walls, which are certainly not later than the Roman era. On the west are