

dying Alexander ordered his remains to be placed. While I was standing and thinking certain canons were walking up and down the nave of the church, waiting for the last stroke of the vesper bell. I approached them and begged them to tell me for what god or goddess or king or lord this incomparable tomb was designed. The canons entered the chapel with me and told me a long and very pleasant story about this tomb, and although I never read this story in any book, or heard of it elsewhere, still I believed it and set it down in my *Evagatorium*. And if the fact is not as I have written it down, at any rate this is what I heard, and as I was blameless in hearing it so was I blameless in writing it down: so it too may be read without blame, and piously believed without injury to the faith.

When Venus, queen and goddess of the Cypriots, threw aside all modesty and entertained a number of lovers, she took among them to her adulterous arms the god Mars. He grew jealous, and yoking his steeds to his chariot, with his sister Bellona to guide them he went to the hyperborean mountains. There he routed or captured the gryphons, and tore a huge stone from the hill of jasper. Bellona too carried off a crystal shield. These things they put in the chariot, and compelled the Arimaspi or Cyclopes to draw them. And when they reached the isle of Venus they set the stone for her bed, to temper and subdue her nubile appetite. But when death cut off Venus they could not grave her image nor make her statue, hence in her temple, in the place of her effigy, they set this rude unpolished block of jasper. So Virgil writes that the image of Venus bore no human likeness.

However in the days of our Lord Jesus Christ among other gentiles who desired to see Jesus (S. John xiii. 4) there were many Cypriot merchants, such as often went to Syria on account of the nearness of the two countries. Now when these Cypriots heard the Lord preaching and saw Him doing miracles they believed, and heartily abhorring the ingratitude of the Jews they begged Him that He would deign to sail with them to Cyprus, and shower His blessings on that people. To whom He replied as He had replied to Abgarus, king of Edessa, who begged Him by letter to come thither, that first of all He must suffer the cross and die, and on the third day rise again, and then He would send to them His disciples. They returned then to Cyprus and told the people what they had seen and heard, and fearing the envy of the Jews and his threatened execution, lest His crucified Body should be thrown out by the Jews as those of other condemned criminals they agreed to send certain persons to Jerusalem to bear away the Body of Jesus, and bring it in a vessel to Cyprus. They entered the temple of Venus and overthrew the jasper stone which was her symbol, and shaped thereof a tomb for the Lord Jesus. But when our Lord was dead and honourably buried the Cypriots were appeased, and preserved this tomb even to to-day. Nor would they sell it to anyone, nor suffer any man to be buried therein because it had been dedicated to Christ our Lord. And that was perhaps the reason why the image of Venus was of stone, precious indeed but unsmoothed and unshaped; for it would have been unmeet that the likeness and effigy of Venus should be the sepulchre of Christ. But Gio. Boccaccio (*De Gen. Deorum* III. 23) did not discover it. In this the gentile Cypriots are no less to be commended than the Jews, Joseph and Nicodemus, who buried Christ, and we may well apply to their praise the words of 2 Samuel ii. 5, "Blessed be ye Cypriots of the Lord, that ye have showed this kindness to your Lord, and have buried Him. And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you with kindness because ye have done this thing." So much then for this story.

A large archiepiscopal palace is attached to this cathedral church. Moreover in this city is a fair convent of our Order. It is the last house of the Preachers towards the East, and is situated in the royal castle over a torrent; for a certain king of Cyprus bore such an affection