

low that one must stoop to mount two or three steps. They make their doors thus low so that Turks on horseback or an angry crowd may not enter. We landed and found on the beach a number of Turks who had come to see us. They all had in their turbans roses, violets and other flowers. After having a good look at us they left on horseback with their Cadi, all carrying a scimitar at their side, and a long dart or javelin in their hands: some had a bow and quiver, with an iron mace hung at their saddlebow, and in this array they paraded all the afternoon, managing their horses, as is their wont, with graceful dexterity. Then we walked about the village. There was nothing worthy of mark. About five years since an earthquake threw down all the houses, which have been rebuilt by the Turks after the fashion of pigsties. The poor Christians are no better lodged than the Turks, or even worse. They have indeed built a little church fifteen feet high, where they say the mass of the Greek rite. You may see too the baths where the Turks bathe every day, and the sepulchres in which they are laid after they have descended to the Paradise prepared for them by their false prophet Mahomet. The sun was low in the west, and reminded us to return to supper and sleep on our vessel.

I had dined with a Greek monk, a native of Cyprus, with whom I used often to talk on the ship—he spoke very good Italian, and was well disposed towards me—and begged him to take me to see what was most remarkable in the island. He agreed to do so, and we hired each an ass. The next morning early we landed, mounted our beasts and started, attended by a Janissary on horseback. But first we had each a draught of good Cyprian wine, which in body, strength and goodness surpasses malvoisie and other wines of the East, but it is so burning and corrosive that it should be drunk only in the morning, and then in small quantity only. Even a little suffices to warm the stomach the day through, and yet the wine is extremely cheap. Beyond Limisso we crossed a beautiful plain full of olives, fig trees and notably carob trees. This is an evergreen tree, with a long fruit of delicious taste. There are also palms, orange and lemon trees, and some of a kind called cypress, which is used for fuel, the country producing only aromatic wood, whose smoke gives a strong scent. The peasants had already gathered in their wheat and barley. They sow, the monk told me, at the end of October, and reap generally in the following April.

And so conversing together we arrived at the abbey of S. Nicolas. It is close to the sea, and remains almost whole, having received no injury from the Turks when they took Cyprus from the Venetians in 1570. But they slew or drove away the monks of S. Basil who occupied it, nor have they from that time forth allowed anyone to dwell there, so bitterly do they hate the Christian faith. My companion told me that the said monks kept a number of cats on purpose to catch the snakes, which are found all about the plain in greater numbers than in any other part of the island.

These snakes are black and white, at least seven feet long, and thick as a man's leg, so that I could scarcely believe that a cat could overcome so big a beast, or that they would have the patience to go to hunt them, and not to return until the bell rang for mid-day, and as soon as they had dined to resume their chase until evening, if it were not that the monk swore that he had seen it. His story was confirmed later by other persons of honour who had seen the same. The abbey is left deserted, and the cats are dead for want of food, but their memory lives in the name Cape delle Gatte, the Cape of Cats. Close to the abbey and the Cape is a large fishery, round, and nearly two leagues, or six Italian miles in circuit. There is one little entrance by which the sea-water and the fish enter. To take the fish they shut this entrance, and open it again to admit others. The Grand Signor gets six thousand ducats yearly from the farmers, who are obliged by ancient usage to give to the abbey all the fish