

And this was true, for thenceforth for four months we heard no bell but this, which we believe was put up by S. Helena, who set here this cross. But what moved that holy woman to set this cross here? We might say that she had many excellent reasons. First for the destruction of gentile rites and errors. For on this mountain stood a temple dedicated to Venus, who claimed indeed the patronage of the whole island because she left throughout marks of her wantonness. Helena therefore destroyed the shrine, and set up the cross for a rule of chastity, and bid religious men, vowed to chastity, live here to give the lie to Venus. She changed the name of the mountain: it was formerly called Ydolius, now Santa Croce. 'Twas said too of old that Perseus, sire of all the nobility of Greece, took his flight from this mountain to free Andromeda, who was bound to a rock at Joppa and left to be devoured by a sea monster. Hence too he flew to fight the Gorgon. These fantastic stories drew many people hither. So the holy woman placed here the cross from which the good thief flew to Paradise.

Secondly, she did this for the comfort of the Cypriots. For in a certain part of the mountain is a cleft, whence were heard rumblings and a roar of wind. It was said to be a way down to hell, and hence the Cypriots feared hell the more when they saw they had among them an entrance thereto. To meet this vain fear this holy woman set up the cross. Thirdly, she did this to stir the devotion of pilgrims. For those who journey towards the Holy Land long with all their hearts to see that land, and the nearer they approach the warmer is their desire. From this mountain the Holy Land is seen in fine weather. So that of old time pilgrims climbed it to see that much desired country. Wherefore S. Helen set here the cross and built the convent to stir the devotion and give comfort to pilgrims. Fourthly, she did it for our instruction, signifying that he who would reach to the Cross of Christ must first take on himself the thief's cross of penitence.

When we had finished our visit to the church we went out and entered the cell of the chaplain, hoping to find there something for our refreshment. But the room was empty and bare, there was neither cold water nor biscuit, nor could he talk to us, because he was a pure Greek, to whom Latin was Barbaric, Italian Arabic, and German Tartar. So we went out without refreshment, and strolled about on the top of the mountain, and saw there remnants of thick walls belonging to the temple of Venus. Looking to the shore on every side we saw the island in all its length and breadth. But on account of the extreme heat the air was somehow dark and cloudy, and we could not see the Holy Land, nor the mountains of Armenia, Cappadocia, Coelesyria, or Galilee, all of which would have been visible if we had had a clear day. Finally we entered the church, saluted and kissed the holy cross, and hurried down the mountain to our mules, and rode to the town of Santa Croce. We found dinner ready, and gave thanks and ate. We could not leave the place at once, for it had grown very hot and the sun burned like fire. So we went over to a Greek church hard by, to pray and to rest a little in the shade. While we were sitting there a certain clerk came, who said to us in Latin, "What are you doing in a Greek church? close at hand is a Latin church in which you should pray and rest." We rose and went with him to the Latin church. He produced from the treasure of the church the arm of S. Ann, mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary, decently set in silver. He brought out also a nail likewise sheathed in silver, which he said was one of the nails with which Christ was nailed on the cross. We kissed these relics, and pressed our rosaries against them, as I said before. I learned that this clerk was a monk, which I could not have known from his dress, for he wore a habit of cunlet, and was curate of both churches, the Greek and the Latin, and performed indifferently the offices of either rite. On Sundays he first said mass in the Latin church, and consecrated the Host, as do the