

and are prepared by the perfumer's art. The island itself abounds in dyes and perfumes, so that the stores of Nicosia are a source from which such drugs flow over the world.

There are many churches in the city, both Greek and Latin. The Latin have bellies and bells and clergy who officiate according to the Latin rite. The Greek have towers (*pinnacula*) and wooden instruments with which they summon the people to divine service, and they sing and read in Greek. The metropolitan church is Latin, dedicated to S. Sophia. It is pretty large and well decorated, and maintains an archbishop, canons and clergy. On the right of the church is a chapel dedicated to S. Thomas Aquinas, in which the legends of the holy doctor are exquisitely painted, while a gilt plaque on the altar sets forth his acts. In this chapel I saw a remarkable monument, which I will describe. For at the side there stood, and still stands, a large and beautiful tomb, of great value, made of precious jasper. I measured it with my own hands, and found it twelve palms or spans in length, seven in depth and five broad, and one in thickness, the whole of solid stone. It has a cover of the same dimensions, "*à dos d'âne*," in the usual form, of the same stone and price. The colour is generally green, but the stone which is polished is spotted with other colours, which add to the beauty of such marble. It is said to have as many virtues as it has spots, and these spots, which are innumerable, are red or rosy as though the stone had been sprinkled with blood. Those who carry it about chastely will find in it these virtues. It drives away phantoms, checks fevers, cures dropsy, helps women in childbed, preserves a man in danger, allays inward heat, staunches blood, represses passion and its consequences, cures inveterate ulcers, purges the eyes, and strengthens and comforts their use, is proof against witchery and spells, and more efficacious set in silver than in gold. It is found only in the mountains of Scythia, where it is of excellent quality, and whole cliffs and rocks of it exist. But lest so precious a treasure should remain unguarded, and its plenty render it valueless, God has set round those mountains very strong and fierce guardians, the gryphons, most savage beasts who resist the approach of strangers, running and flying upon them, and tearing them with their beaks and claws, so that no one can come near the stone until he has overcome the gryphons. Jason had to battle with them for the golden fleece, and Hercules for the golden apples of the garden of the Hesperides. These gryphons are most fierce creatures, with the heads of eagles and the bodies of lions, they fly like the one and run like the other, and have such daring and strength that they attack an armed horseman, and carry off both man and beast whither they will: they are indeed huge and savage beasts. The head, beak and wings are fashioned as those of an eagle, their forefeet also, which have long claws: the hinder feet and the tail are those of a lion, but the legs are shorter, and the claws short and so large that drinking cups are made of them. It is said these beasts are never found except near mountains which teem with gold and precious stones: these they dig up, and take an extraordinary pleasure in gazing at and playing with them, defending them most savagely against others. In Asiatic Scythia, a rich but uninhabitable land, and accessible only to the Arimaspians, these savages, who have a single eye in their foreheads, arm themselves against the gryphons, and go and carry off the gems. Jerome, in his letter to the monk Rusticus, speaks of the way gold and gems are guarded by the gryphons....

While I was standing near this precious sarcophagus and wondering who it was who had beaten the gryphons and carried off this huge stone, and for whom it was carved into so priceless a tomb, it occurred to me that perhaps in the days of the giants, who used to lay low the pride of centaurs and gryphons, it was brought for the sepulchre of Venus, whom nearly all the gods venerated, and here abandoned. For I cannot suppose that any king would have had a tomb of so great value, for jasper is more precious than gold, in which the