

celebrated mass therein they would think that all the water of the ocean were not enough to purify the church, to such an extent do they wash the altar, and even the whole building, in their belief that the Latin mass contaminates and profanes it. Their usage of consecrating with leavened bread, and their other rites are sufficiently known. They hate the Latins worse than they do the Turks. The honest tradesman with whom I lodged told me they had refused absolution to one of his servants, a Greek by race, because he served a Frank (so they call those who follow the Latin rite). It will not be out of place to relate here another of their superstitions. The same man was concerned. He had confessed a quite ordinary fault, but was repelled by the confessor who refused to absolve him, telling him he could not do so without calling in seven other priests. A little money brought these together, they made the penitent lie like a corpse on the ground, and at last reciting certain prayers gave him absolution. It is their custom to demand money for absolution, and to refuse it when none is given them. For they pretend to have a right to four or five crowns and even more to absolve quite ordinary faults. The penance they impose for the other great sins is to repel the penitent from communion for four or five years. They do so perhaps to show contempt and aversion for the Latin Church which enjoins yearly communion. One would be all the readier to believe it because the Greeks have certain games in which they introduce a Latin, on whom they pour a hundred insults, box his ears, hit him with the fist on the nose, and a thousand other outrages. The Latins have at Nicosia only a small church, or rather a chapel which is well kept up. It is served by a priest, an aged and honest man, but ignorant and illiterate. The Italian merchants who live there give him his food and clothes, and provide the ornaments of the church. Lastly, the Maronites have also their church, which is in a poor condition, so ill supplied with linen cloths, candlesticks, altar chalices, chasubles, and in fact everything, that I was really sorry for them. To learn what was their rite, as well as that of other places of the island where they were settled, I enquired without distinction from Italians, Greeks and Maronites. I learned that they had but one rite common to their whole sect, of which I shall speak hereafter, and that they lived under the same Patriarch. I learned also that their homes were scattered over nineteen villages or farms called Metosci, Fludi, Santamarina, Asonatos, Gambili, Carpasia, Cormachiti, Trinitia, Casapifani, Vono, Gibo, Jeri near Citria, Cruscida, Cefalauriso, Sotto Cruscida, Attalu, Cleipirio, Piscopia, Gustria: that in each of these places they have at least one parish, and in some two or three with one or more priests. I was assured they had eight churches at Metosci, and that mass was said on all festivals on the mountains and every day in the plains, unless the priests have some special duties of their own. This sect has usually a bishop there, but he had died and another had not yet been chosen in his room.

There is in the kingdom a Greek bishop who enjoys the receipts of the tribute which the others are obliged to pay: he exacts each year from every one seventy aspres. The Janisary does not hesitate to give a good beating to those who do not pay and shows no more quarter to bishops than to others, according to the instructions of the Receiver. He exacts besides fifteen or twenty ducats from each priest on whom he confers orders. Such is the pitiable condition to which are reduced the Christian subjects of the Turk, although there are fewer Turks than Christians. For of 30,000 or more inhabitants at Nicosia there are scarcely 4000 or 5000 Turks, and there are not 12,000 or 13,000 of these in all the island, most of whom are renegades who have adopted Islam to enjoy greater quiet; so that it should not be hard to protect the island from the tyranny of the Turk, and to re-establish the Christian faith. For as soon as these renegades saw a Christian army they would discard the turban and resumé the bat, and turn their arms against the Turk. But let us drop this, to return to our subject.