

little less than six thousand talents. Fearing the length of the voyage from Cyprus to the coast of Italy, he constructed a number of cases, each holding two talents and five hundred drachmas: to each case he bound a cord, and at the end of the cord a large cork, so that were the vessel to break up the cork floating on the surface of the sea would show the position of the cases.

Cyprus had shaken off her tyrants, or changed her masters, and was henceforth governed by men of consular dignity, or senators. The profound wisdom and foresight of the Romans, duly considering the populousness and prosperity of the island, never committed the administration of the whole to a single senator or governor. And they made a decree, punishing with death any Roman invested with military or political office, who should approach the island without the consent and authority of the Senate.

Rome, illuminated at last by the divine light of truth, changed her faith, and at the same time the seat of Empire, and established herself, not perhaps without regret, on the pleasant shores of the Bosphorus. The Greek Emperors who reigned in this new and rival Rome ruled Cyprus through Dukes.

Under Heraclius the Greek arms were worsted, and the Saracens, taking advantage of their carelessness, seized the island, under the leadership of Abu Bakr, called also Mu'awiyah. Later still Basil the Macedonian constituted it the fifteenth Theme, and sent over his famous general Alexander, who held it for seven years, when it was again wrested from him by the Saracens. Yet again it was swept into the net of the Empire, and remained under a Greek administration up to the days of the tyrant Andronicos. During his reign, about A.D. 1180, a certain Isaac Comnenos, a relation of Andronicos but a rebel to the Empire, conceived a passion for ruling by himself, and sailed away to Cyprus. At first he made a show of legality, and exhibited to the Cypriots Imperial rescripts, and forged orders. His wicked schemes fully answered his hopes, and he became easily master of the island. But in no long while the villain showed himself the tyrant he was, and bore himself towards his wretched subjects with an atrocity of which no former ruler had been guilty. This Isaac, like a spiteful Jinn, an angry sea, a mad fury, daily guilty of numberless crimes, stained with innocent blood, raging to torment and destroy, defiled with adulterous lusts, a ravisher and fiend, stripped the prosperous of their goods, left the wealthy nobles bare and starving, ruining without show of cause men who before were held in high esteem, if he had not in his passion already slain them with the sword.

About the year 1191 Richard, King of the English, who was leading by sea an expedition against the Saracens, who held Palestine and had sacked Jerusalem, touched on his way at Cyprus, and took possession of it. He caught this tyrant, this inhuman and insatiable destroyer of the island, and at first kept him in bonds; afterwards he drove the wretch from the island, and gave him, like a slave fit for the scourge, to some Englishman. But the filthy Centaur got free from his chains, and like a venomous snake or blood-sucking beast began to cherish his old passion for tyranny. But by the divine mercy, while in the midst of his schemes, the curse of Cyprus gave up the ghost, and was numbered among the tyrants whom the hand of God has struck down.

When the aforementioned King of England reached Cyprus the wretched islanders, trodden down by the brutal Isaac, welcomed the English as so many heaven-sent saviours. The poor things little knew that they had escaped the wolf to fall into the jaws of the bear; for this very Richard, who was thirsting to redeem the Holy Sepulchre, warred manifestly against Christ when he robbed and stripped, like some bloodthirsty beast, the whole of the island. Later he sailed away to Palestine, leaving behind him a garrison, as though the country was