

lest their harshness should drive the rayah to leave the island, or at least to revolt, for which his degraded condition would be an excuse. So that after fifteen or twenty years the Christians redeemed nearly all the monasteries from those who had seized them, and much of the church lands as well. Churchmen of position left money for masses for the repose of their souls, or bestowed it by way of gifts.

Yet there were still a few who contrived somehow to escape from the island, not enduring a new and barbarous yoke: these were scattered abroad over Crete and the Morea and Corfu and Venice; for the two islands were then under Venetian rule. But hardly fifty years had passed when the taxes imposed on the rayah were increased, and the Pashas one after another in their insatiable avarice trampled down the people, and the aghas who had already come from Constantinople to make money, and others who followed them, were a burden on the inhabitants. The island was suffering from repeated droughts, and the ravages of locusts, the peasants began to emigrate, and the country was gradually becoming a desert. Often enough the rayahs laid their griefs before the Porte, declaring that it was impossible for the island to bear the cost of a Pasha and his train: and especially through a great dearth in 1640, and in the following year a terrible plague, the island was wasted and ruined. The Porte gave heed at last to the manifest sufferings of the people, and sent a *muvela* or examiner, who sought out and wrote down name by name every rayah in Cyprus, and found (they say) hardly 25,000, including old men and children of twelve and fourteen. From that date the Porte removed the two Pashas of Paphos and Ammochostos, and left only the Pasha of three tails at Levkosia, though his train was somewhat curtailed of followers and servants. The taxes too were somewhat lightened, but the *kharaj* remained as before: and the Porte published a firman, that Cypriots wherever they might be were to return to their country, where they would only have to pay the second year eight or ten piastres each as taxes.

After the Porte had shown thus much interest in the island, Cypriots scattered here and there heard of it, and those who were free from family burdens returned to their country, hoping they would find the exactions lightened, according to the imperial commands. Furthermore, about the same time fortune-hunters from Constantinople were debarred from taking the *aghaliqs* on coming to Cyprus, and the Turkish *zaims* and *sipahi* who were left in the island began to hold the four local *aghaliqs*, the Porte being really desirous to relieve the country of some of its many burdens. For many of the Turks settled in Cyprus were sufficiently rich and influential. They farmed their offices however from Constantinople, not from the Pasha for the time being. Nevertheless hardly twenty years passed, and the rayahs were rather fewer than more in number; because the commands of the Porte were again neglected, and the insatiate Pashas exacted taxes as before, or even threefold more greedily. Drought, the incessant ravages of locusts, and the failure of commerce by reason of the wars waged by the Sultan with the Venetians in Crete and the Morea, and other troubles innumerable, reduced the Cypriots to such straits that many fled to the Syrian coast with their families.

We are led, although with no great certainty, to conclude that on account of the desolate state of the island in the year after the conquest of Crete, or even before this, the Porte reduced Cyprus from a *pashaliq* and placed it under the supervision of the *Qapudan Pasha*, by whom there was appointed from time to time as its chief a petty governor or *musellim*, with a fixed salary of 12,000 pieces of Seville, or about 15,000 piastres, which impost was called *muzul*. For the collection of the *kharaj* there was sent from Constantinople a special collector, and it is said that he distributed among the rayahs 15,000 notices of assessment. Another tax, called *ma'ishet*, was claimed and paid every year to the *Qapudan Pasha*. This