

me an answer exceedingly like that which natural science, if it were only honest, would give in connection with the Progressist's schemes for man. The stone, he said, was not Verd Antique, though at first sight, no doubt, it very strongly resembled it. Still, he admitted that it was of considerable beauty, and would, were it procurable in sufficiently large blocks, be also of considerable value. The size and soundness of the blocks were the things on which the value would depend ; and his own opinion was, though he did not profess to feel certain of it, that the blocks would be small, or, if not small, ruined by flaws.

Disappointments, as we know, never arrive singly ; and on top of this verdict I received a letter from Venice to warn me against my project of visiting the two castles. If I went at all, said my friend, I should go in the latter spring : such an excursion in the winter months would be miserable. Here was a second blow to the fabric of my delightful plans ; and I began to fear that possibly, after all, I should have to subside on those I had so lightly thrown over in their favour. But I found that, in spite of discouragement, it was hard to submit to this. The castles might wait till a more convenient season ; but the idea of Cyprus I could not let slip so easily. For six weeks, beyond horizons of Highland heather, and through mists scented with leaves of November woods in England, I had been seeing visions of tall clustering date palms, ruined temples, and faces turning towards Mecca. My hopes had tasted the