

grey in the early invigorating air, and some Turks with the morning bright on their linen garments. At last we came to one of the city gates—a shadowy stone tunnel, about eighty feet in length, which bulged in the middle into a circular domed chamber, lit, like the Pantheon, by a circular opening in the roof; and at the end of it hung the same iron-clad doors which had been placed there by Venice four hundred years ago. Through this tunnel we plunged. For a few seconds the echoes hovered about us, and then we found ourselves launched on the open country.

Never shall I forget the sensations of that moment. We seemed to be issuing out upon the earlier ages of the world. Long luminous hazes were afloat on the plain before us; and here and there in the distance rose a tall patriarchal date-palm. At first we found ourselves in a road, but we almost instantly left it, and took a rude path between unfenced fields and vineyards. Along similar paths, from one direction or another, were groups of peasants whose clothes were patches of blue and crimson, going forth to their work and to their labour. From scattered primitive cottages came a faint barking of dogs. The clods of the earth were still yellow with sunrise, and a far-off silvery column, that came from some burning weeds, was going up like the smoke of the first sacrifice.

When we had ridden in this way for a mile or two, I turned to look back at Nicosia; and I now for the first time had a clear general view of it.