

and including the very things in it which I should probably value most.

In addition to his instructions about buildings and architecture he helped me to understand the existing scenery of the island. The whole of the mountains, he said, with perhaps a few exceptions, were at one time covered with forests. These have, however, been constantly felled for timber, from the days of Alexander the Great to the days of the Turkish sultans; and thus by a slow but ceaseless process, in the course of two thousand years, two-thirds of them have disappeared. It is the slopes of the Pentedactylon range, looking towards Nicosia, that have suffered most in this way. The consequence has been that the soil, in which once the trees were rooted, has been, to a great extent, washed into the plains below, and has in some places, within historical times, raised their level by at least thirty feet. In proof of this he told me that at a village, whose name escaped me, there is a singular church, which stands in a walled enclosure. The walls of this, as seen from the outside, rise hardly more than a few feet from the ground; but one finds, on looking over them, that they sink to a depth so great that the church within stands in a sunk basin, leaving nothing visible from the neighbouring fields but its roof.

The depth of soil, indeed, over a large part of the island is astonishing. It is still abundant even amongst the lofty crags of the mountains, and the