the blue Vallauris vases, and the cascade of fairy-like notes that chimed from a Bond Street clock. Cyprus, in fact, gave a sense of remoteness to the house; the house gave a sense of elusive civilisation to the mountains; and the warm air which floated in through the windows seemed at once as much at home and as strange in this exotic dwelling, as if its walls had been the petals of some unknown anemone which from some foreign seed had blossomed up there out of the soil, half a native and half an alien.

Such were the impressions which formed themselves in my mind as I sat at luncheon, and to which the luncheon contributed by its own delicate simplicity, by its cold meats, its goats'-milk cheese, its conserve of golden apricots, and its jug of Cyprian wine. My host and his family, of whom he presently spoke to me, had already had their meal. The children, he said, under the charge of the governess were somewhere in the neighbourhood amusing themselves. Mrs. St. John had gone out to look for them, and would soon be back with the eldest two of the four. 'I tell you that,' he proceeded, 'because we have been thinking this. You want, I know, to see the Castle of St. Hilarion. It is on the mountain directly behind the house. You can go there easily this afternoon, and spend an hour there, and, if you like it, Mrs. St. John and one of the boys will come with you. I have things to do myself, or else I would come also.'

No proposal could have been more charming