

farm or villa, belonging, if I recollect rightly, to a Levantine banker in Nicosia. The house, which I could hardly see, was secluded in a luxuriant garden of orange trees and huge cypresses, shooting up from the plain like a dark volcano of vegetation. A wall of reeds was round it, twenty feet in height, and the life of the oasis flowed to it in a long aqueduct. In view of this garden we halted, that the horses might rest again; and by the time we again started there were already symptoms of evening. Evening was full of suggestions of the nearing end of my journey, and set me thinking over what I expected to find at it. Of the past history of Famagusta I had learnt quite enough for the imagination to work upon. I knew that it had been fortified by the Lusignans, and probably strengthened by the Genoese, who seized the town at the end of the fourteenth century and held it for ninety years as a kind of commercial Gibraltar: I knew also that Venice had left her mark on it. Again, I knew that during all these periods it had enjoyed a commerce and an opulence which is generally little realised. The merchants of Famagusta were then amongst the richest individuals in the world. The jewels, for instance, belonging to the wife of one of them, were so renowned and splendid that a Sultan desired to buy them, and at a fabulous price he did so; but the lady and her husband, afterwards regretting their loss, offered half as much again in order to buy them back. Then too I had heard about splendid palaces and two hundred churches—about one church in parti-