

from Athens, afterwards Patriarch of Jerusalem, with testimony from the Governor, the local aghas, and the Molla, of the great destruction wrought by the plague—but even before this Ephraim had been by common consent despatched to the monastery of Mount Athos, whence he brought over to Cyprus the holy skull of S. Michael *Synadas*, which had the special virtue of dispersing the locusts which destroy crops and every green herb, and which have been from time immemorial a yearly scourge to the island. But certain Cypriots, enemies of Paisios, intrigued against him for their own ends, and frustrated the good he hoped to achieve for his country, so that not only was their suit rejected, but the Porte listened to the slanders against Paisios, and banished him. He heard of the intrigue, and fled to Beirut. A certain Cypriot deacon, one Cyprianos (afterwards Patriarch of Alexandria) was then living in Constantinople as tutor in families of consequence; he was induced by the enemies of Paisios, and by the Patriarch, acting under compulsion from the Porte, to accept in an underhand way the episcopal habit (ὁ καβάδων) and to pose as Archbishop of Cyprus by request of the Porte. He came to Cyprus loaded with debts and engagements, and by putting pressure on the monasteries and churches, and even on many of the surviving inhabitants, to meet these debts contracted in Turkey, obtained considerable assistance. This was bad, but yet another worse evil befell the country, for there was sent as an exile the famous Ajem Ali Agha, who was strongly supported by one of the Sultanas, and by her influence was invested with the Governorship, as a salve for his banishment, and proved an incomparable Sardanapalus and worshipper of Dionysus.

Meanwhile the debts with which the see was loaded were heavy and intolerable, and Cyprianos, the nominee of the Porte, felt that he was unfit for the office, and was coldly received by the clergy and people. He grew vexed, and of his own motion handed over his debts and his throne to its rightful owner Paisios, and went back, as a deacon, to Constantinople. At the prayer of the people Paisios returned from Beirut, but failed to appease the rapacity of Ajem and his train, so that the debt of the see mounted up to over 200 purses—the purse among the Turks represents 500 piastres—but all these troubles will be thought but a trifle compared to the horrors which befell the island a little later.

It was, I say, further permitted by Heaven that this unhappy island should suffer another unexpected blow, and encounter the most terrible danger; while the rumour of such great and complicated troubles terrified the inhabitants indiscriminately from the least to the greatest, as in the days of the conquest. Death had been rife, emigration frequent, men were driven from their homes by the exactions, and the harvest was small. All these causes had reduced the number of the rayahs liable to the payment of the twenty-one and a half piastres to hardly 7500, without counting 1500 cripples, blind people, old people, paupers and children of eleven years and under. The 10,000 warrants were exacted inexorably, while the extra payments extorted by the *mukassils* on behalf of the Vazir increased year by year. The inevitable expenses of the Palace and the administration were covered by the extortion from the richer families of forty or fifty piastres: the middle classes were squeezed to give thirty, and children, old and sick persons, ten, fifteen and even twenty. The harvests were scanty, commerce insignificant, distress evident everywhere. Twice and thrice the bishops renewed their complaints to the Porte. But, alas, they were not heard! The Porte was troubled with wars and rumour of wars, and could lend no ear to the wails of the Cypriots, or of many others of its subject states which were equally loud in lamentation.

At last in 1764 came that rock of offence, that cause of all our ills, the Muhassil Chil Osman Agha, over head and ears in debt, by reason of the huge sums either exacted from him, or offered by him to the Porte, to obtain the Governorship of Cyprus. The wretch hoped