

Baqi tries all his tricks, cozens and cheats the empty-headed Hussein, the aghas and bishops, and goes down to Scala as representative of the whole population to greet the Qapudan Pasha, to whom he offers gifts and obeisances. After the usual compliments, with the utmost address he implores and intreats Hassan Pasha to accept him as his *chiragh* or protégé, to assist him, and secure his appointment as the next Governor in Cyprus. He finds favour with the Pasha, obtains his promise and in 1775, all unworthy as he was, was appointed Muhassil, taking the style of Haji Abd'ul Baqi Agha. His wiles and rich gifts prevailed so far that he was maintained in office until 1783.

For the first year or two with consummate craft he feigned a kind of good nature, and made no attempt to resist the just demands of the bishops, and bore himself mildly as became a poor and friendless man. He inspired evil doers with fear, and it cannot be denied that he won the good opinion of the public, and that he did not try to load the rayah with new burdens. But still he was incurably greedy, not so much to make a fortune for himself, for he was liberal enough, but to satisfy the inhabitants of Levkosia and to make a name. He meddled in all kinds of business; took from the rayah cotton, silk, wheat, barley on account of taxes at his own rates, sold at high prices, and insisted on making a kind of monopoly of produce of little value, so as to embarrass both the traders and the peasants and rouse their resentment. Thus enriched, and, mere villager that he was, puffed up by his riches, he began to build palaces and summer houses, to store water outside the city, to acquire teams of oxen and farms and mills and gardens in every direction, extorting them from the peasants, and paying little or nothing in proportion to their value. At last he put a tax of eight piastres on the rayah, regardless of his poverty. The bishops, knowing and regretting the misery of their poor flocks, resisted and refused. In spite of them he sent his officers out to collect the money by force and threats. The Turks as well as the rayahs were greatly disturbed, and they compelled the bishops to leave the island secretly in August, 1783, and to go to Constantinople, to lay before the Porte their complaints, and report how greatly disturbed the island was on account of his tyrannical exactions.

The unexpected news of the bishops' flight excited Baqi's wrath, and he wrote overland at once abusing them to the Porte. The Porte made no further enquiry, but issued an order of banishment, that wherever caught they were to be exiled to Mount Athos. With threats and pressure he harried and worried the clergy and laity of Levkosia, who chose four monks in the room of the absent bishops. Baqi wrote and obtained their *berats*, and squeezed from them as many purses as he would. With these powerful agents he persuaded the Vazir to order the Patriarch to write to his brother of Antioch to consecrate them. But he failed to gain his point, and the bishops elect were not consecrated, much as they might wish to infringe the canons, and take possession of their sees. At Chios the unhappy bishops heard of their banishment, and of the search made for them by the Porte. They hid themselves in Smyrna: the Archbishop found a refuge in the house of the Dutch Consul and his wife Madame Baroni, a lady noted for her freedom of speech towards the Turkish officials both in Constantinople and Smyrna, as well as for her great generosity and good heart. And the other prelates were housed with various pious persons, until the anger of the Porte passed. Shortly after Meletios, Bishop of Citium, was sent secretly to the capital, and using the measures which were generally convincing there obtained the *illaq* or release of his colleagues. By imperial command the Archbishop Chrysanthos, Sophronios, Bishop of Kyrenia, and Panaretos, of Paphos, went to Constantinople, and in an audience of the Vazir exposed the tyranny and extortion of the one-eyed Baqi, and his persecution of rayahs and Turks. The Porte was satisfied, and ordered him with threats to come in hot haste to the capital, to justify