

1881-11-19

þÿ § Á ì ½ ¿ Â ° ± ¹ š í À Á ¿ Â

Library of Neapolis University Pafos

<http://hdl.handle.net/11728/11268>

Downloaded from HEPHAESTUS Repository, Neapolis University institutional repository

P. P. 9104. Ca.

THE "ALITHIA" SUPPLEMENT.

LIMASSOL NOVEMBER 7 19 1881

and CYPRUS

We have read in "The Times" an article and a letter from Limassol, both of which are full of errors.

We shall try, as shortly as possible, to point out the principal errors; both of the article and the letter.

We shall not dwell upon the increase in the exportation of wine, and upon the high prices people obtain now for it, because the Government have nothing to do with it. It is the demand of Cypriot wine in France, which made prices run high, and not the Government of Cyprus. It is rather ridiculous to count this as one of the benefits, the Cypriots have reaped from the English occupation.

It is said that the High-Commissioner Sir R. Biddulph has been accused of being a mishellenist. The accusation is quite just. That he does not favor the Greeks, it has been proved, not because, as

he has given mistaken information to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. That his information was false, it has been proved by the general protest the whole Island made against him, on seeing his statements in the Blue Book. His Excellency cannot have forgotten the telegrams addressed from all parts of the Island, to the noble Earl of Kimberley by which the Cypriot people protested against "High-Commissioner's false information, thanking Colonial Secretary for his good intentions". Sir R. Biddulph, telegraphing to the colonial Secretary, the Right Honorable the Earl of Kimberley, that the Cypriots were much concerned at the news of the annexation of Cyprus to Greece, and that they said that this would be their ruin, said what in common parlance is called— If Sir R. Biddulph meant to say, that the triumvirate of Musti, Fuat Effendi and of another Turk, who telegraphed protesting against annexation, represented the whole population of Cyprus he meant an absurdity. The general satisfaction, of the Cypriot people, at the news of the annexation, has been proved by the telegrams addressed from all parts of the Island, to Mr. Gladstone and to the President of the "Reform Club".

Indeed, the thing in itself would

be an absurdity. How could 145,000 Greeks protest against their union with their mother country Greece?

It is said that Cyprus made wonderful progress since the occupation, and that it is in such a flourishing condition, that the peasants instead of borrowing from the merchants, lend their money to them. All Cypriots know that we are far from being in such a prosperous condition, and every foreigner, who has a certain amount of insight, and who does not express quite the contrary of what he thinks, will say the same. But nobody can know better the condition of the peasants, than we who are in daily contact with them. Not only they have no money to lend, but they cannot return what they owe, on account of the harvest having been bad, since the English occupation, and the heavy taxes which they pay, cannot help them in saving money.

The few houses which have been built in Cyprus, since the occupation cannot be considered as a proof of continual progress; in fact, there are in Nicosia, the Capital of Cyprus, only half a dozen houses built and the proprietors have very much repented their having built them; They did so at the first days of the occupation, hoping that good administration would attract people from other countries; but they have been very much disappointed, just like His Excellency the High Commissioner Sir R. Biddulph, when on the 3rd inst at the reception he held at the Konak, instead of seeing the Greek notables of Nicosia or some other Greek Gentlemen (numerous invitations were distributed) he saw only a shoe-maker, a diligence proprietor and an hotel Keeper.

It is stated, that the people are generally contented in Cyprus, and that the only ones who are not satisfied with the Government, are Greeks who are clamoring for annexation with Greece; and Greece, it is added, could ill afford to keep Cyprus. The first statement contradicts the second. If the Greeks of Cyprus are not satisfied with the Government, almost the whole population of Cyprus are not satisfied, because, out of 187,740 persons who form the population of the Island, 145,000 are Greeks. As to our clamoring for annexation that is sheer nonsense. We have

never caused any trouble to the Government, but we have expressed our wishes in the most legal and constitutional way. We have never had recourse to arms, and never such an idea occurred to us. On hearing that our Island was of no use to England; on hearing the complaints of English people against us, that we were merely a burden to England, without being of any use to her, we respectfully begged the Ministers of her Gracious Majesty to give us over to Greece.

The statement that Greece cannot afford to keep Cyprus is not correct. If the employes of the Government of Cyprus were paid like the employes of the Government of Greece, if we do away with many offices which are of no practical use; if a better administration were introduced in the Island, and if some encouragement were given to Agriculture, Cyprus instead of leaving a deficit, would have a yearly surplus.

We cannot admit the idea of Cyprus being merely a burden to England, without being of any use to her. The Harbour of Famagusta, a trifling expense, (trifling to England) might become, according to people who have great experience in nautical matters, larger than the Great Harbour of Valetta. Cyprus might become a place of arms, and in case the famous railway from Iskenderoon to the Persian Gulf would be executed, Cyprus would be of immense value to England for her Indian possessions. Cyprus is a good footing in the Mediterranean for England, and from Cyprus she may keep an eye on Egypt, where she has so many interests.

If Cyprus is indeed of no use to England, and it is merely a burden to her, she may easily get rid of the burden, by giving her to Greece. We shall be grateful to England for such an act of generosity. But if England finds Cyprus necessary to her, and means to keep her, she must introduce in the Island the necessary reforms, because it would be shameful to her to administer an Island of which she took possession for making a model of good administration in the East, worse than Turkey.

If we compare the rights of the people of Cyprus, to those of the people of Candia, we find them much inferior, and a comparison in

the administration of the two islands would not be favorable for Greece.

In Candia the Legislative Council consists of natives, under the presidency of the Governor General, and it is elected by the people. In Cyprus, there are only three unofficial native members, not elected by the people, but appointed by the High Commissioner; and the native members can have no chance of being useful to their country, because the official members of the Legislative Council being more numerous, are always in majority.

In Candia the Greek language, as being that of the majority of the population, has been recognized as the official language of the Island. In Cyprus a confusion of languages exists, and chiefly in the Courts of Justice. If there are people who take a great interest in Sacred History, and want to have an idea of the confusion of languages in the Tower of Babel, let them visit our Courts of Justice.

Can any one say that the Cypriots who are under a liberal and civilized Government have more rights than the Candiotas, who are under Turkey? And can any one say that our Administration may serve as model of good Administration in the East? Certainly not. But of the Legislative Council and the necessary reforms which must be introduced in the Island, we shall speak later. Suffice it to say to day, that without the necessary reforms, no progress can be made in the Island.

Before finishing our observations, we think necessary to remark that the opinion of an individual can have no great weight, and if a man says that all the officials of the Government of Cyprus are fools, it will be as great nonsense, as the one expressed by the unknown Greek Gentleman, who said that it is in the nature of the Greeks to be always discontent. We think the anonymous correspondent of "The Times" from Limassol, would have been much wiser, if he had not published such stupid opinions.

NICOSIA 11 November 1881.

VOX. POPULI.