

→ The position of the new Government House was well chosen. The character of the dreary plain of Messaria is the same throughout; flat table-topped hills of sedimentary calcareous limestone, abounding with fossil shells, represent the ancient sea-bottom, which has been upheaved. The surface of these table-heights is hard for a depth of about six feet, forming an upper stratum of rock which can be used for building; beneath this are marls and friable cretaceous stone, which during rains are washed away. The continual process of undermining by the decay of the lower strata has caused periodical disruption of the hard upper stratum, which has fallen off in huge blocks and rolled down the rough inclines that form the sides. As the water during heavy rains percolates through the crevices of the upper stratum, it dissolves the softer material beneath, and oozing through the steep inclination, carries large quantities in solution to the lower level and deposits this fertilising marl upon the plain below. In this manner the low ground of the rich but dreary Messaria has been formed through the decay and denudation of the higher levels, and the process will continue until the present table-topped hills shall be entirely washed away. The stone of the upper surface, which forms a hard crust to the friable strata beneath, is in many places merely the roof of caverns which have been hollowed out by the action of water as described.

The Government House was erected upon one of these flat-topped hills in a direct line about 1900 yards from the nearest portion of Lefkosia. It was a wooden construction forming three sides of a quadrangle. The quarters for the military staff were wooden huts, and the line of heights thus occupied could not fail to attract