

I believe that squatting has been carried on for many years, as during the Turkish administration a trifling annual present would have closed the eyes of the never-too-zealous official who by such an oversight could annually improve his pay. Land suitable for cultivation cannot possibly be in excess of the demand, when plots of only a few yards square are carefully formed by the erection of stone walls to retain the torrent-collected soil.

We were pestered with beggars throughout this district, and even the blind saw their opportunity; their number was distressing, and they could not account in any way for the prevalence of ophthalmia. Some endeavoured to explain the cause by referring it to the bright reflection from the sea, to which they were so frequently exposed; I assured them that sailors were seldom blind, and they proved the rule. Dirty habits, dwellings unwashed, heaps of filth lying around their houses and rotting in their streets, all of which during the hot dry summer is converted into poisonous dust, and, driven by the wind, fills the eyes, which are seldom cleansed—these are the natural causes which result in ophthalmia.

The new camels were ready, and with six of these animals we left Gallibornū and felt relieved to have parted with the carts, as for several marches they had caused great delay and inconvenience. Although Theodori had deceived me by agreeing to conduct us direct to Cape St. Andrea I did not like to discharge the thick-headed but innocent Georgi, therefore I offered to pay them a certain sum which they themselves named, per day, for the keep of their oxen, provided they should return with their empty carts to Lithrankomi (one march) and await my return there;