

vailing quiet was broken by a singular wild moaning. 'Listen!' said my companion, pausing. 'Those people have lost some one. That is the dirge which they always sing for the dead.' We passed the cottage; and, squatting against its farther wall, we saw two women with dark dishevelled hair and painfully strained faces, the one silent, but beating her breast rhythmically, and the other pouring forth a prolonged piteous wail, of which the words and cadences seemed constantly to repeat themselves. 'Soon,' said Mr. Matthews, 'that one will be silent; she will beat her breast, and the other will take up the singing. The custom,' he went on, 'is of extreme antiquity, and there is no doubt that it comes from Phœnicia. It was expressly condemned by a pope in the Middle Ages as "that heathenish Syrian custom of immoderately wailing for the dead."'

Mr. Matthews was full of information like this; and for the rest of the way back he poured it forth into my ear. He was the only person I met during the whole of my stay in Cyprus who had studied systematically its mediæval history, who showed any interest in its castles and feudal life, or turned to its past with a sense of romance or sentiment. I had been debating for some days as to what places in the island would best repay a visit, my time being unhappily limited; and on this point Mr. Matthews was the very adviser I needed. I found, in fact, after a single hour's consultation with him, that my programme for the future was taking a definite shape