

# CYPRUS SCENES

## The aqueduct at Larnaca



Picture: Philip Walker

The word 'aqueduct' applies to any artificial channel to transport drinking water, but we usually think of the word as applying to a channel raised above the ground on arches. It was the Romans who made such structures famous, but they continued to be built in later years. On the outskirts of the city of Larnaca in eastern Cyprus there can be seen a section of an aqueduct built by the Turks in the mid-eighteenth century. It was used until 1941, when it was replaced by an underground piped supply; and more recently seventy-five of the arches have been restored.

In the mid-nineteenth century Britain began to be interested in Cyprus, then still under Turkish rule, seeing it as a potential base in the eastern Mediterranean. In the Crimean War of 1854-5, in which Britain aided Turkey against Russian expansion southwards, the need for such a base became apparent as Britain sought to become the dominant power in the Middle East. The need became stronger in 1869 when the Suez Canal was opened, providing Britain with a sea route through the Middle East to her Indian dominions. In 1877-8 there was a further war, in which Russia annexed some of Turkey's European territory, part of the 'drying up' process (Rev. 16:12). In June 1878 Britain made a secret pact with Turkey to come to her defence if Russia tried to take any of her Asian territory, in return for which Turkey leased Cyprus to her. When this was revealed, France was furious, but it was too late; Britain was well on the way to dominating the Middle East, with all that this was to mean for the return of the Jews. The first British high commissioner, Sir Garnett Woolsey, landed at Larnaca on 22 July 1878 with a contingent of troops, which camped in the vicinity of the aqueduct. British rule was to continue until 1960, when Cyprus was given its independence.—*Tony Benson*