

must have prevailed during several centuries, even during the Venetian rule. It is difficult to determine the age of an olive-tree, which is almost imperishable; it is one of those remarkable examples of vegetation that illustrates the eternal, and explains the first instincts of adoration which tree-worship exhibited in the distant past. I spent some hours with the olive-trees of Dali; they were grand old specimens of the everlasting. One healthy trunk in full vigour measured twenty-nine feet in circumference; another, twenty-eight feet two inches. Very many were upwards of twenty feet by my measuring-tape; and had I accepted the hollow or split trees, there were some that would have exceeded forty feet. There can be little doubt that these olives throve at the period when Idalium was the great city in Cyprus; they may have exceeded two thousand years in age, but any surmise would be the wildest conjecture. It may not be generally known that the olive, which is of slow growth and a wood of exceeding hardness, remains always a dwarf tree; a tall olive is unknown, and it somewhat resembles a pollard ilex. When by extreme age the tree has become hollow it possesses the peculiar power of reproduction, not by throwing up root-shoots, but by splitting the old hollowed trunk into separate divisions, which by degrees attain an individuality, and eventually thrive as new and independent trees, forming a group or "family-tree," nourished by the same root which anchored the original ancestor.

The gnarled, weird appearance of these ancient groves of such gigantic dimensions contrasted sadly with the treeless expanse beyond, and proved that Cyprus had for very many centuries been the victim of neglect. The olive is indigenous to the island, and