

juice, while many of the other varieties were completely withered. The explanation given by the people was simple enough—"The official valuer had not appeared, and without his certificate *no grapes could be gathered.*" There are only three valuers to an extensive district, and it is physically impossible that they can perform their duties, even were they inclined to attend when summoned to each village, in the absence of some special inducement. The actual labour of walking up the abrupt inclines upon the mountain sides which constitute the vineyards is most formidable, and at least four times the staff is necessary, of young and capable men, if the valuation of the crop is to be taken with due consideration to the interests of the grower. The distressing result that I have myself witnessed in the partial destruction of the crops can admit of no excuse, but it exhibits a painful example of mal-administration in the ruin attendant upon a Turkish system of taxation.

Some persons may suggest that the dried and withered grapes would be saleable as raisins: this is not the case. Raisins are not merely dried grapes, as is generally supposed, but the bunch of well-ripened berries is dipped in a strong solution of potash, and is then either suspended or is more generally laid upon a mat to dry. In Cyprus the growers seldom purchase potash, but they dip their grapes in a ley produced from the ashes of certain woods.

The vineyards at this season are swarming with a species of beccaficos, and the population are busy in catching these delicious birds with sticks smeared with bird-lime. It is a species of finch, a little larger than the chaffinch, the plumage a brownish grey; when plucked the body is much larger than the common beccaficos, but resembles it in extraordinary fatness and delicacy of flavour. The natives preserve them by boiling in commanderia wine, and they are highly appreciated. These must be added to the migratory birds of Cyprus.

The acorns are nearly ripe, and I am assured by the monks that even these insignificant productions pay a tax of 6*d.* per kilo (about 32 lbs.), and the crop is valued accordingly by the special authority. There are three varieties of large timber oaks in addition to the ilex and the prickly holly-leaved oak. The acorns of the ilex and holly-leaved species are small, but those of the three superior species vary in size, all being much larger than those of England, while one variety measures nearly three inches in length. This is used as food, with no other preparation than simple roasting, and is considered to be superior to chestnuts. The Ancient Britons used the acorn as an article of food, and probably it was ground into flour after the bitter principle had been extracted by soaking in running water, in the