

other. It is distant from Venice about 2220 miles (1110 French leagues): from Alexandria in Egypt 450 miles: from the port of Caramania called Alexandretta 80 miles: from Tripoly 90: from Candia 400: Antioch 140: and Jaffa 250—all from cape to cape, for the coasting journey would be much longer. Such is the position of this noble and fruitful island, which in fertility and beauty yields to no other in the world, and contains in itself everything which man need wish for. First it has its mines of gold which the Cypriots have not yet chosen to show to the Turks, no more than mines of other kinds, except sulphate of copper which is used in medicine; next it abounds in very excellent wines, wheat, barley, cattle, salt, oil, sugar, cheese, flax, fine wool, great sheep whose tails weigh more than twenty-five pounds, capers, pomegranates, sweet and bitter oranges, palms, cucumbers, melons, and fruits of all kinds in great plenty: and particularly cotton, which was being sown during my visit to be gathered in the following September. The shrub is small, not more than three and a half feet in height, it bears little pods from which the cotton is extracted, while the seed is kept for the next year's sowing.

But with the many blessings which God has scattered over the island there is also one drawback, for about the time that the corn is ripe for the sickle, the earth produces such a quantity of *cavalettes* or locusts that they obscure sometimes the splendour of the sun. Wherever these pass they burn and spoil all. For this the Cypriots have no remedy, since the more they destroy the more the earth produces next year. God however raised up a means for their destruction, which happened thus. In Persia, near the city of Cuerch, there is a fountain of water, which has a wonderful property of destroying these locusts, provided it be carried in a pitcher in the open air, without passing under roof or vault: and being set on a high and exposed place certain birds follow it, and fly and cry after the men who carry it from the fountain. These birds are red and black, and fly in flocks together, like starlings. The Turks and Persians call them Mahometans. These birds no sooner came to Cyprus, but with their song and flight they destroyed the locusts which infested the island. But if the water be spilt or spoilt, these creatures disappear. Which accident fell out when the Turks took Cyprus, for one of them going up into the steeple of the Cathedral Church at Famagusta, and finding there a pitcher of this water, he, fancying that it contained some precious thing, broke it, and spilt the water: since when the Cypriots have been always tormented by the locusts. Nor have they found anyone willing to journey to Persia to fetch some of this water, for he must needs traverse the Arabian deserts. The Greek monk of Famagusta told me, however, that a Turk had engaged to go thither for six hundred ducats. So it is that there is nothing in this world, however sweet and pleasant, but is attended by some trouble and bitterness! Cyprus was anciently governed by kings and tyrants down to the days of King Ptolemy, from whom it was taken by the Romans at the instance of Publius Clodius Bellus, for whom a large ransom was demanded by pirates who had captured him at sea. He sent to borrow the money from King Ptolemy, who was the friend and ally of the Roman Republic, but Ptolemy seeing the sum was a very large one sent but a part of it, which was refused by the pirates, though they released Publius Clodius on his word of honour. When Clodius was afterwards tribune of the people he caused Marcus Cato to be sent by the Senate to conquer the island of Cyprus. Ptolemy hearing this chose rather to kill himself than to fall alive into the hands of the Romans. The Kingdom then became a Province, governed by a Prætor sent yearly from Rome.

To speak now of the coins current in Cyprus. The gold *sultan* is worth about as much as the Venetian *sequin*, and is of nearly the same size. It passes for 120 *aspres*, the *aspre* being a little coin of pure silver less in size than half a *denier*. Eight *aspres* make a *seya*,