

sight, and well worth a visit: one might think it a frozen sea, of snowy whiteness. In August the salt is fully formed and as hard as marble. Slaves dig it out with iron picks, and put it into sacks, which are tied up and carried on the backs of asses to the higher ledges of the valley. Here they are opened, and the salt piled in huge heaps. By the end of September you would see the whole valley cleared of salt, except these heaps, and these remain sometimes for a year or more, according as the export of salt is more or less. The salt collected, which affords a very large revenue, is an Imperial right, and belongs to the Sultan: the *Emm*, of whom we have spoken above, is charged with the collection. For greater convenience in disposing of the salt, collecting taxes, and carrying out his other public duties, he comes down daily with his clerks to Comercio, and attends to business until late evening in a small house built on the seashore. The Greeks say that less salt is won now than when the Christians bore rule in Cyprus, giving as a reason the sloth and negligence of the Turks. For the former brought art and industry to the aid of nature: every year they cleaned the bottom of the lake from the sand which collected there; if the rains were scanty they let in sea-water, if too copious they dammed them out, and generally did what was necessary. But the Turks do nothing at all, and this I know to be true; for I saw the dams, formerly used by the Christians for letting in or shutting off the water, broken down and utterly neglected, and the channels too, which served to carry off the superfluous rain-water, blocked and barred with earth; hence a third part of the valley lies to-day buried in sand, barren and altogether waste and abandoned, a state of things which grows worse every day, so that in a little while it will certainly be of little, probably of no use at all. One may infer how great is the negligence, the sloth, of the Turks. Sunk in idle ease, hating toil and industry, they prefer to indulge their appetites and lusts rather than to protect their possessions or to extend them. If ever there was a race wholly abandoned to laziness and ease, that is the Turkish! Hence it follows that Cyprus, of old a most fertile and productive country, is now in great measure deserted and uncultivated. For the Turks have no care themselves for agriculture, and if they see any of the Greek natives occupying themselves in cultivating the soil, or amassing wealth, they either harass them with *avarice* (so the Italians call the fraudulent tricks of the Turks), or drain their resources by exactions, and flay them (so to speak) to the bone. So much only remains to the wretched creatures from the fruits of the earth as allows them to sustain life, to provide bare necessaries, and sow their fields anew.

The result of the researches which I made during our stay at Arnica and in journeys to places near it concerning the position, appearance, condition and fertility of this most famous island, with other things worthy of note, I purpose here to set forth briefly for the information of my readers.

CHAPTER XVI.

A description of the island of Cyprus.

Cyprus, one of the noblest islands of the globe and the most fertile in all kinds of produce, is of oblong shape, and remarkable in some parts for its pleasant and fruitful hills, in other for its broad plain. It lies between Cilicia, Syria and Egypt. Its length from east to west between the two promontories Acamantha and Dinarota (or the Clides islands beyond) is 220 miles; some say 162. Its greatest breadth, from Cormachitis which looks over the Cilician straits to the north to the promontory of Phrurium on the southern side of the island, is 60 miles. It has a circuit of 650 miles, which Strabo gives as 3420 stadia,