

This island is above two hundred and fifty hours in circuit; the length being about one hundred, and the breadth sixty-five leagues. But the parts towards the south-west are much broader than those towards the north; and its distance from the continent is computed at about twenty hours. Some ancient writers say it was a peninsula; but that it has been separated from the continent by earthquakes, tempests, and inundations.

Eratosthenes says that this island was, at first, so overgrown with trees, that there was no room for culture; but the inhabitants, at last, cleared the ground and cultivated it; and their labour was richly rewarded, for the island from a wilderness became one of the most fertile and delightful countries upon earth.

This island has on all sides a multitude of sharp promontories, whence the ancients compared it to a sheep-skin stretched out; and as they called those promontories horns, the island was called Cerustia, and the inhabitants Cerastæ. And this probably gave rise to the fable that the Cyprians had formerly horns on their foreheads, according to Ovid, *Met. X, 222.*

*gemino quondam quibus aspera cornu
Frons erat, unde etiam nomen traxere Cerastæ.*

This island has been governed by several states. Its first inhabitants were the sons of Japhet; and its first government, mentioned by historians, by kings, of which one is called Evagoras, who out of regard to the politeness and learning of the Athenians zealously espoused their cause on all occasions; but was assassinated by one of their own courtiers. Afterwards the Ptolemies made themselves masters of the island, and kept possession of it 'till Marcus Cato reduced it under the Roman government, making a splendid entrance into Rome, with the immense treasures he found in the island. The last king is said to have laid violent hands on himself, being unable to bear the thought of having his kingdom taken from him by the private person of a Commonwealth.

In the time of Pliny this island was divided into nine kingdoms. And in more modern times the inhabitants are said to have consisted of four classes, the nobility, the people, the *francomeses* or freedmen, and the *pareii*, or slaves.

The nobility, and people, lived in the city, and kept the freedmen and slaves in subjection. The slaves cultivated the fields, and performed all the other laborious works of husbandry. The freedmen formed the army, and were above all others detested by the slaves, as oppressing and abusing them more than either the nobility or the people. In process of time the island fell under the Greek Emperors, till Isaac Comnenus, a terrible tyrant, revolted against his master, and took possession of it for himself.

His usurpation, however, was of no long continuance, being driven from the island in 1191 by Richard I., King of England, in revenge for the barbarous treatment some of his subjects had met with from Comnenus, after their being shipwrecked on this island.

Some time after Richard sold Cyprus to the Knights Templars, an order at that time very powerful. But either the Cyprians appeared to be a fickle people, or the knights' government was not agreeable to them, every place being filled with tumults and opposition; so that the knights transferred their purchase to a French nobleman, called Lusignan, whose family, by their mild conduct, enjoyed a long and quiet possession of it, 'till it came by marriage to the house of Savoy, who did not possess it long, though it still reserves the title of King of Cyprns.

The Dukes of Savoy were deposed by a natural son of the last king of Cyprus, who was betrothed to a daughter of the Cornaro family at Venice; on which the Venetians, after the decease of him and his son, who died very young, took possession of the island, and held it