

brought into cultivation, as much as each should bring under good culture so much should be his own, and thus all that vast quantity of trees which hindered cultivation was rooted out of the soil, which made excellent fields.

This island had always tyrants in its cities until the Ptolemies, kings of Egypt, became its lords, under favour, however, of the Romans who allowed them to rule there; and they remained its masters to the time of Ptolemy, uncle of Cleopatra, who succeeded to the throne, but for some fault the Romans took it from him, and made Cyprus a prætorian province. The chief cause whereof was Publius Claudius Bellus, who was captured by pirates, who imposed upon him for his ransom the payment of a certain sum of money. Claudius begged King Ptolemy, as a friend of the Republic, to pay this amount to the pirates for his ransom. The King sent him a small sum, which the pirates saw and despised, and sent back. Claudius too they set at liberty without any payment. To the best of his power he gave them such thanks as he thought were fitting; and not long after, being made tribune of the people, he strove eagerly to have M. Cato sent to take from King Ptolemy the sovereignty of Cyprus; and as soon as the King heard this he slew himself before Cato arrived, and would not wait to be deprived of his kingdom. Cato now assumed the government, and sold all the treasures of the dead King and sent the money to the public treasury: and thereafter the island was made a prætorian province. So Strabo tells the story, but Sextus Rufus gives it in another fashion. He says that the fame of the immense wealth of Cyprus, and the poverty into which the Roman people had fallen, moved the latter to make a decree that the island should be confiscated, although it was an ally, and when the King heard the will of the Romans he chose rather to lose his life than his wealth, and took poison, and Cato took the treasures of Cyprus, and carried them to Rome, and placed them in the public treasury, which at the moment was reduced to the greatest straits. But no long time followed before Antony gave it as a gift to Cleopatra and her sister Arsinoë.

To return to the island. I say that in it is a mountain a thousand paces in height, with a circuit of two miles, composed entirely of the bones of various beasts, and even of men. It is called Cirenes, and the dwellers there affirm as of perfect truth that whosoever is stricken by fever, and drinks a little of the powder scraped from these bones, has no sooner drunk than he is freed of his fever.

But among so much good, that there may be found nothing in this world without its bitterness, the luck of the island has this one drawback, mingling with its blessings so heavy a curse that men can hardly bear up against it, that a vast multitude of *cavalette* or locusts appear with the young wheat: these as they pass from place to place are so many in number that like a thick cloud they hide the sun: and where they light they devour and consume not only the grain and grass, but even the roots below ground, so that one might say that fire had blasted everything. Yet they use all diligence to destroy these insects, and make a very great outlay to seek out the eggs while they are in the earth; and they do indeed in some years find of them thirty thousand bushels. Besides this they use yet another remedy of a strange kind; they send to Syria to fetch a certain water, with which they soak the ground, and where it is thus soaked the eggs burst, and produce none of these insects.

In old times the island had several names, as Achamantide, Cerastin, Spelia, Amatusa, and Machara, and now Cyprus. In its midst is the Mount Olympus, and on its western cape the city of Paphos, now called Bafö. Here formerly was built a temple to Venus on which rain never fell. Venus was called hence Cypria, and the first woman who made a habit of selling her body for money was in this island. It lies at the beginning of the fourth clime, in the ninth parallel, and the longest day is of fourteen and a quarter hours.