

squeeze out of it also a very sweet juice, which makes an excellent condiment. You may see along the shore huge heaps of carobs, piled up like hills, with which at times whole ships are loaded. Their great abundance makes them very cheap, and they are even given to animals, which fatten readily on such pleasant food. With these also, as the vulgar believe, the prodigal son of the Gospels would fain have filled his belly, and no man gave unto him. Melons, pumpkins and gourds grow in great abundance, and the choicest bananas of exquisite flavour.

The banana or *musa* is a tree, or rather a shrub, whose fruit is also called *musa* or *musi*, half as tall again as a man, with a green trunk and a wide stretching crown of leaves, which spread out like fingers, and are so long that they generally surpass the height of a man standing upright, and so broad that a single leaf will give one ample cover. Some think that the ancients used to dry them and use them instead of the papyrus, for they are ribbed from top to bottom with lines, perfectly straight and exactly spaced, just as to-day parchment is ruled in Italy. The stalks are cut down every year, or if the plant dries up new shoots spring up from below. Each stalk bears fruit only once, but on each branch there are several, ten, twenty or more. Each fruit is as large as an egg, and covered with a husk or thick skin, yellowish like that of a fig. It is rather like a rose in smell, and a cucumber in shape: they are green at first, but gradually as they ripen they become of saffron or orange yellow. They are very sweet and pleasant to the taste, but harmful to the stomach: they fill the caverns of the brains with their fumes, are cloying, and decay rapidly; so it is only people of the poorest class who use them for food. To preserve them for any time they must be picked unripe, and buried in the sand, then they are hung up in bedrooms, or exposed to the sun, and they ripen. There are people who call them the apples of Paradise, and think them to be the same which our first father Adam ate, and so transgressed the commandment of God. There is this indeed about the fruit which I think worthy of note, or even marvellous, that if you cut it into little disks, you will see in each, veins which form on either side the image of the Crucified.

Cotton (*gossypium*), which the Italians call *Gozone*, *Cottone* or *Bambagio* (*bombasum*), is gathered here in great quantity. It springs from a tiny seed, which is sown and produces a shrub a cubit high, bearing at the top a berry or pod as large as a filbert, within which is the cotton and the seed: as this comes to maturity it splits and opens. It is generally sown in May, and is gathered ripe in September. The country about is rich in wheat and other grain. Sowing begins in October, and in April the whole island gathers in its harvest.

The inhabitants, both natives and immigrants, are chiefly Greeks, there are also Turks and Jews. The Greeks generally are engaged in commerce or agriculture: the Jews employ their capital in trade: the Turks are sunk in sloth. On account of the frequent earthquakes all the dwellings are small and low, constructed, like a floor, of wattles and clay, of one storey only. The doors are so low that you must stoop to enter them, a device to prevent the Turks bursting in and stabling their horses in private houses. The Turks have a small mosque here in which they pray and hold services after the Mohammedan rite. Near it is their public bath. Nor are the Greeks either without a house of worship, though it be small and shabby, in which to perform the sacred mysteries after their own rite. A square fort occupies the centre of the village, supplied with cannon, and generally with a guard of Janissaries. It is of great use in preserving the coast from the raids of pirates. At the sixth milestone from Limisso are large ruins, and monuments of the ancient Romans are visible on the shore itself. Fame says that a very ancient city once stood here, dedicated to Venus, and called *Amatha*, which Richard, King of England, levelled to the ground.