

begin their ravages: the young shoots would be devoured, and they would be obliged to sow over again. Hence the delay. They prepare the soil for sowing cotton just as we prepare our cornfields in Tuscany, and sow the seeds, three or four together, in holes at equal intervals, burying them in the furrow like beans. As soon as the plants are above ground they keep the strongest and pull up the rest. In June and July they hoe lightly round the plants, and root out all the weeds between them. The crop is gathered in October and November, but it requires time to free the cotton from the husk, and extract the seed, so that the first shipments are not ready until the February or March following.

A good crop is reckoned at 5000 bales; sometimes it hardly reaches 3000. Not more than 50 years ago, according to the accounts of persons still alive, it was 8000: and when the island was under Venetian rule it reached 30,000. The difference is to be ascribed to the disproportion of the inhabitants to the cultivable lands: to which may be added two natural causes, want of rain, and the strong hot winds of July, which beat out the cotton just as it is passing from flower to fruit.

The merchants who accept commissions from Europe for this produce base upon them the sums which they advance to their clients, or to the peasants who raise the crop. This is a newly adopted custom, and due to the increase in the number of trading houses: formerly cotton was paid for upon delivery. Bales of cotton usually weigh one cantar of 100 rotoli, the rotolo being equal to  $6\frac{3}{4}$  pounds of Florence.

In Cyprus every sort of merchandise, imported or exported, is subject to charges of two kinds. First those of tariff, which are invariable, based upon ancient use and the assent of merchants in Europe; these are reckoned at so much a bale, package, cask, &c. The second charge follows the value of the goods: the Customs take three per centum, the consulate