

by license of the Senate to all citizens of the Republic who could prove that for five years at least they had lived in Leucosia. Now under the tyranny of the barbarians all Christians are of the same condition; there is no difference between noble and plebeian, all are slaves, and esteemed as the vilest of such: master and man, rich and poor, old and young, mistress and maid, all and everyone feel the same yoke. They have even fallen long since into the ways of their conquerors, and acquired their vices; they are however gentler and more civilized than others of Greek race who are subject to the Turks. They are kind and courteous to strangers, quick-witted and deft of tongue and hand: strong and spirited, and apt soldiers, but the extreme fertility of the soil inclines them to be self-indulgent and voluptuous. Their women are generally lascivious, true to the character of their ancestors, who (as Justin tells us), before they contracted a lawful marriage, prostituted themselves to foreign sailors. The ancients had reason then for telling us that the island was dedicated to Venus, especially as it produces abundantly all that ministers to lust.

Let us now touch on its fertility. It abounds in silk, cotton, flax, wool, grain, oil, honey, cheese, butter, and wine of excellent quality and most wholesome. It will keep, we were told, eighty or more years intact. It is naturally red, but (strange to say) it grows paler and whiter with age. It has the virtue of a balsam, and taken in moderation is of great service in sickness. But whether old or new it is hardly palatable to persons not accustomed to the pitchy taste which it acquires by being kept in pitched jars: this gives it a rough flavour, but preserves it to a wonderful age. Grapes, purposely dried and shrivelled, which they call *Zibibo*, are produced in great quantity, the best are black and large: also grain, and different vegetables. One could hardly exaggerate the richness of the soil, but it must not want water through the long summer heat, but be diligently irrigated. On this matter they spare neither money nor labour, for when the rivers or torrents fail they have deep and wide wells from which, by means of large wheels driven by horses, they draw up in earthen vessels abundance of water for the use of their fields.

Their seasons seem extraordinary compared with those of our latitude. In summer everything is so dried and scorched by the sun's heat that, except where irrigation is used, you will scarcely find a blade of grass. Then in winter, after the copious autumn rains, the fields are soaked, and the whole is a pleasant expanse of green: you would rather call it summer. To travellers, ploughmen and workers generally, even to sick people, the winter is far more comfortable than the summer; they are not molested by the cold, except during a north wind, and the season is so soft and temperate that the cattle seek the green of pastures and groves as though spring were beginning. Summer is a very different thing, the heat is great and trying, and a general torpor prevails: it is not safe for strangers or natives to travel under the mid-day sun, so they stay at home, and avail themselves as best they can of the shelter of walls and roofs against the deadly heat. They are up before the sun, and make the most of the twilight, fortifying themselves against the weakness which grows on them with a healthy breakfast. Labourers sleep in the open without covering, the well-to-do lie on quilts, but exposed to the air, or just covered with a linen sheet.

Enough about the seasons: let us return to the fertility of the island. One remarkable product is the *canna ebasia* or *canna mellis*, a reed as tall as the cotton plant, from which they make sugar. Others are alum (*alumen scissile*), white and black, pitch, resin, gypsum, which they quarry out of the earth, and in many places abundance of nitre, jasper, agate, emerald, crystal, red and white coral, other precious stones, and diamonds, though inferior in hardness and value to those of the East. It is rich in mines of gold, iron and copper, in the best possible vitriol, in verdigris useful in medicine, and marchasite both white and red.