

Near a village Amiantus is found the stone of the same name, very like the *alumen scissile* or *plumosum*. It is impervious to fire, and was well known to the ancients, who made from it shrouds and wrappings for the dead. These were cleaned by passing them through the fire, washing only made them hard. Corpses destined to cremation were enveloped in these for the greater ease in preserving the ashes apart from the fuel. But cloth of this kind is no longer used. Then ladanum, frankincense, storax, manna, scammony, saffron, coriander, sesame, sumach, mastic, rhubarb, colocynth, thyme, marjoram, hyssop, with many other plants of singular virtue in medicine. Gourds, melons, cucumbers, cauliflowers, the colocas of Egyptian bean, and other useful vegetables. Near Calopsida there grows in great quantity the herb *soda*, from whose ashes they make soap, as well as others used in washing and bleaching the delicate crinkled cloth (called in Italy *Zaabelota*) which the natives weave in great quantity of goat's hair. The powder called Cyprian, so fragrant and so much valued in Italy, is made of sweet smelling herbs, or (as some say) of a certain green dew which falls on stones and plants and is dried to whiteness. All kinds of trees abound, except cherries, chestnuts and sorbs, and bounteous nature supplies their place with others of better quality. Others again which are hardly known to our western world, bananas, dates and carobs, not to speak of oranges, lemons, apricots and pomegranates. There are whole woods of cypress, and many pine trees. From these last oozes the best and most fragrant resin or turpentine, of the greatest use in affections of the stomach and spitting blood. The number of different birds is very large: wood-pigeons, quails, partridges, pheasants, ducks and geese abound, while turtle doves are as plentiful as sparrows with us, and are so tame as to seem to share with men roofs, gardens and public squares. The tiny birds which the Cypriots call *Italian*—they are not unlike the ortolans of Italy—are very common, and so plump, especially during the vintage when they feed on grape stones and mastic seed, that infinite numbers of them are preserved in jars with vinegar and savoury herbs, and sent for sale to Venice, making a dainty dish greatly in request with princes and lords throughout Italy. There are many eagles and hawks, even merlins and peregrines which do not breed here are caught as they follow their prey. Wild in the woods are found gazelles, deer, herbs, rabbits and many other such animals, but none dangerous or savage. There are sheep of enormous bulk and wonderfully fat, with tails of a cubic's length, and so broad and thick that they not only cover the hinder parts of the animal, but often weigh over twelve pounds. Here too is bred the four-footed beast called chameleon, a hideous and uncanny creature. When we were staying at Arnica with the Father-guardian of the Minorites we saw one, and again at the house of a certain Greek: they were alive, and we handled them, for they are harmless. It is a palm in height, and not more than a palm and a half in length, spotted like a pard, with a muzzle like a frog, and a very long thin tail ending in a point and sinuous as a viper, straight legs, crooked claws like a bird's; the skin rough like a crocodile's, the belly soft and narrow, the backbone and the way the sides join the belly remind one of a fish, its back humped like a camel, its motion slow like that of a tortoise. The eyes are deeply set, close together, very large, of a like colour with the body, and always open: to look round it turns the whole eye, not the pupil only: the mouth is always open. The belly is never purged for it has no vent, and alone of all creatures it lives on neither food nor drink, but on air only. Its colouring is a still more wonderful feature, for it changes with the greatest ease to match any hue, except red and yellow, to which it may be near: the skin only changes, not the black spots upon it. Hence the common proverb, "more changeable than a chameleon," which is used in reproach to an inconstant or slippery person.

The island has no navigable river, only a few streams and torrents: the chief are the