

and the Pasha ordered all the country people to bring a certain measure full of the insects to his palace at Nicosia, and afterwards he had holes dug outside the city where they were thrown, and covered with earth lest their corruption should infect the air. For ten days together the Greeks made processions and prayers to be delivered from a curse so ruinous to the land. They carried too in procession a certain picture of the Virgin Mary with the child Jesus in her arms said to be the work of S. Luka. This picture is generally kept in a convent called Chicho, to which belong some four hundred Caloyers, part of whom are sent to Mnscovy and elsewhere on various duties. This convent is built on Mount Olympus, the highest mountain in the island. In times of drought the picture is brought with great ceremony out of the convent, and placed on a stage about twenty steps high, with the face turned to the quarter from which they may expect rain. Now it happened that the same ceremony had been observed on account of the locusts, and as soon as the picture had been set on the stage there appeared forthwith certain birds not unlike plovers, which swooped upon the locusts and devoured a great quantity. Moreover the next day, when the heat of the sun forced the insects to rise from the ground, there arose a mighty land wind which swept them before it, and towards evening, when the sun had lost its power, they all fell into the sea, and were drowned. Which was made plain some time afterwards when a sea breeze drove them in heaps to the shore, and thus was the island delivered from this terrible plague. The birds which ate the locusts, the story adds, had never been seen before, nor were ever seen again. But the Pasha had forbidden them to be killed, under pain of death.

I saw myself in the neighbourhood of Nicosia a great quantity of these insects, and remarked that the fields they had cropped were burnt as though by fire; my horse too at every step crushed ten or twelve. Several persons assured me that from time to time certain birds, natives of Egypt and called in Arabic *Gor*, visit the island. They are not unlike ducks, but have a pointed beak. They eat the locusts and thus lessen their ravages. The same thing is said of storks.

The mention of storks reminds me that so far no one has been able to say with certainty where they go when they leave us (Dutch). I do not set it down here as an indisputable truth, but I am assured that the place of their retreat is a long way the other side of Jordan. It is called by the Greeks *Erimo*, or the desert, is unvisited by man, full of brushwood, and exceedingly hot. The storks go there in October, and return here in March. Some are said to go to Egypt.

It is in this island of Cyprus that is found the stone *amianthus*. Men of old knew the way to make from it thread and cloth, as well as the bags in which they wrapped the dead before burning them, so as to preserve the ashes. For as the fire could not consume this cloth, but only cleaned and whitened it, the ashes could be very well preserved, to be placed afterwards in vessels of stone called urns. Paper too was made of it, with this property that to efface the writing on it, it was thrown into the fire and withdrawn quite clean. But the art of making this cloth and paper is lost. The colour of the stone is dark green, slightly shining. When drawn out into threads it is like cotton, and thrown into the fire it is not consumed, but suffers no hurt nor loses anything of its substance.

Among the products of Cyprus are first its wines. They are excellent, and when drunk on the spot are very different from the same wines after export to other countries. For though they may come straight from the island, and they bear transport well, yet on the journey they acquire a certain taste of pitch which partly helps to preserve them. I have drunk wine here over thirty years old: it had a very pleasant taste, and a beautiful colour,