

island, as it everywhere affords plenty of snipes, partridges, hares, wild goats, but it has no deer.

Early in the morning the shepherds find on the goats' beards a viscid substance, which looks and smells pretty much like pitch; and this smell, which is far from being disagreeable, is said to be good against the pestilence. Some Franks call it *laudanum*, others give it the name of *stirax*.

Near Baffe are mines of rock crystal, and a French merchant there showed me a most beautiful stone, which might pass for a diamond, and such stones being found in the mines here are commonly called Baffe diamonds. Ancient historians and geographers speak of various mines in Cyprus both of gold and silver, and gems, but the present proprietors do not concern themselves about mines, and the Greeks must not work them, indeed the ore, after all their pains and charges, would be of little advantage to them, for they know nothing of separation, or any other branch of metallurgy: under the Venetian government, however, Cyprus exported a great deal of very good vitriol.

In some of the mountains is found a kind of blueish stone, by the ancients called *amianthus*, and out of it is spun a kind of cotton, of which formerly sheets were made, and cleaned by being put into the fire. They were also used in the burning of substances into ashes, according to the custom of those times. The ancients also made bags of it, in which they put bodies that were to be burnt, in order thus to preserve the ashes, which were deposited in an urn. The Indians are said to have burnt their dead bodies in sacks of this kind. Some will have this stone to be a kind of asbestos, or alumen schiston, or fissile alum. But the difference is very great; that consumes in the fire, but the *amianthus* withstands the most intense fire.

This stone is also found in China, in the island of Corsica, and is said likewise to be met with in the Riviera di Genna, near Sestri di Ponente, in the Pyrenean mountains, and in those of Volaterra in Tuscany.

The chief trade of the island at present is in flowered silks and cottons little inferior to those of the Indies. A kind of flax for making cordage is likewise no inconsiderable article.

Amidst all these advantages of nature and industry, the inhabitants, by reason of their enormous taxes, are far from being wealthy. A poor Cypriot pays every year, in the whole, thirteen piastres for head money: and those who have houses or lands pay also eight piastres of *nozul*, besides the tenths of the produce of their land.

This island was formerly governed by a Pasha, residing in Nicosia; but at present the governor is only a Musellim or Stadholder, and far from being a person of great dignity, which has the convenience that he is not obliged to live in the splendour of a Pasha; yet he must remit three hundred and sixty purses to the Grand Vizir's lady, to whom the Grand Signor, as being his sister, granted the revenues of this island. Besides such a considerable sum, he is obliged at least to reserve forty purses for other demands and himself.

The towns inhabited at present are only nine, Nicosia, Famagusta, Baffe, Lernica, Cherines, Lunnesol, Sirori, Mazulo and Lescara; but the other smaller towns or villages, I was told, amount to eight hundred. The Turks have made a military division of this island into eleven departments, each furnishing a regiment.

Nicosia, the capital and residence of the governor, is a pretty handsome and fortified town, about three miles in circuit, and in the middle of the island; but as for the walls and fortifications, the Turks suffer them to go to ruin without any repair. In this city are three or four Greek churches, but the cathedral called Saint Sophia is turned into a mosque. There