

BOOK II.

FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE CITY LA VALETTA, TO THE
ELECTION OF THE GRAND-MASTER ROHAN, 1775.

CHAPTER I.

The City La Valetta completed by the Grand-Master, Peter de Monte, and made the Residence of the Order. Most of the Galleys destroyed. Battle of Lepanto. The celebrated Monastery of the Hospitaller Nuns of Sixena, in the Kingdom of Arragon, return to their Obedience under the Order of St. John. Origin of that Monastery. De La Cassiere Grand-Master—His Character. Disturbances fomented by the Inquisitors. Patents granted. Pretensions of the Bishops of Malta. The Officers of the Holy Brotherhood accused of having attempted to murder the Grand-Master. Misunderstanding between Malta and the Republic of Venice. The Knights begin to make Complaints against the Grand-Master. Spanish Knights punished.

PETER DE MONTE was extremely anxious to complete the city La Valetta, and for that purpose not only attended himself to the works, but contributed to the expenses out of his own private property. The whole was finished three years after the death of La Valette (1571). The convent was removed to the new city; and it became from that time the seat of government.

It was during this mastership that the squadron of galleys was surprised by Ucciali (1570), a celebrated corsair, whose forces

being much superior to those of the order, attacked and took three galleys; he also ran the admiral's galley aground at the foot of the tower of Manchiaro in Sicily. This fatal event greatly diminished the squadron of the order, which, at the battle of Lepanto (1571), only consisted of three galleys. They fought, however, most gloriously on that memorable day. The *St. Stephen* was closely attacked by three Turkish galleys, and was in the greatest danger of being taken; but the admiral's galley fortunately came to her assistance, and soon forced two of the enemy's vessels to strike. The third was on the point of doing the same, when *Ucchiali* brought up four other galleys, and a most bloody action took place, in which the *Bailli de Spar*, commander of the land forces, was slain, and the admiral's galley fell at last into the hands of the infidels, who immediately brought forward their seven shattered galleys, and towed her off in triumph. Their success was, however, of short duration; for the cruel fate of the admiral's galley inspired the knights and their crews with fresh courage, and they attacked *Ucchiali* with redoubled fury. The vessel was defended with obstinacy, and attacked with unparalleled perseverance; nor was the banner of *St. John* once more hoisted on the admiral's galley, till *Ucchiali* had seen the bravest of his men drop by his side, and been informed of the death of his lieutenant *Caragiali*. The Turks lost thirty thousand men in that celebrated battle; their general was killed; two of his sons taken prisoners; together with five thousand officers and soldiers. Twenty thousand Christians were liberated from slavery. The infidels also lost a hundred and forty galleys, independent of

those which were either burnt or sunk. The loss of the Christians was computed at seven thousand six hundred men, and fourteen captains of galleys.

Peter de Monte had the satisfaction, before he died, to see his authority acknowledged by the royal convent of Hospitaller Dames at Sixena, who had for a considerable time disowned any dependence on the order. I will, in this place, give some account of the illustrious origin of this institution, which was undoubtedly one of the most celebrated of the kind in Europe.

Sancha, the daughter of Alphonso king of Castille, was the wife of Alphonso II., surnamed the Chaste, king of Arragon. This noble dame, cruelly afflicted by the loss of the Holy Land, and hearing of the dispersion and misfortunes of its inhabitants, founded a monastery, in her dominions, of noble ladies of the order of St. John, to preserve the memory of so many illustrious knights who had so lately perished by the troops of Saladin. Her daughter, another queen Sancha, founded likewise a monastery of Hospitallers at Sixena, a small town between Saragossa and Lerida. This institution was dependent on the grand-prior of Arragon; and the house she built for the purpose had much more the appearance of a palace than of a nunnery. She indeed imagined it might in future serve for a retreat, not only for herself, but for other princesses of the royal family: she therefore attended extremely to the convenience and magnificence of the building, to the extent of the inclosure, and particularly to ensuring a large and certain revenue to the order.

- Sixty noble young ladies were, according to the rules of the founda-

tion, to be received without portions into this royal convent; and those from the kingdoms of Arragon and Catalonia were to be of such acknowledged illustrious descent as not to be required to adduce proofs of their nobility.

The monastery at Sixena soon became the most celebrated in the kingdom. The king endowed it with great riches; and pope Celestin III. subjected it, equally with the Hospitallers, to the rules of the Augustine order. The habit was either a scarlet or dark-red robe, with a black mantle *abec*, on which was a white cross with eight points, worn on the side next the heart: in church they appeared with fine lawn sleeves; and, in remembrance of their foundress the queen, they held a silver sceptre in their hand during divine service. The prioress had the right of presenting to vacant benefices, and had even the power of giving the habit of obedience to the priests who officiated in the chapel. She appeared at the provincial chapters of the order in Arragon, where she had a vote, and where she took her seat immediately after the grand-prior or castellan of emposta.

Queen Sancha, with one of her daughters, retired into this monastery after the death of her husband; and some historians say they both took the veil. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, this community, which had always prospered and shone forth in the greatest splendor, according to its original regulations, chose to withdraw itself from under the government and particular discipline of the grand-masters, and place itself under that of the pope; but, in 1569, Dame Hieronyma d'Olibo, grand-prioress of this royal founda-

tion, with the consent of all the Hospitaller nuns, returned to their obedience, and acknowledged the authority of the order of St. John. Having thus resolved to hold no longer of the holy see, they wrote their intentions to Malta, where this intelligence was received with the greater joy from its being unexpected.

La Cassiere, though seventy years old, succeeded Peter De Monte* as grand-master. He owed his elevation to this high dignity, to his valour—the services he had rendered the order—his piety, and his prudence; notwithstanding which, his reign was far from tranquil and happy; for, with these great virtues, he had considerable faults in his character, to which indeed he principally owed all his misfortunes. He was obstinate, harsh, and violent; and, in the transports of passion, he did not scruple making use of improper expressions, and speaking in a very injurious manner against the most distinguished knights of the order; he had therefore many powerful intestine enemies to cope with, who, indeed, very frequently conspired against him. One of the most dangerous, both to him and his successors, was the inquisitor.

In former times the sovereign council of the order alone took cognisance of every thing relating to articles of faith and religion in general. This authority, so legitimate in the hand of a sovereign, had been frequently attacked by the bishops of Malta. The order, justly offended, applied to the pope for redress. Gregory XIII., who at that time (1574) occupied St. Peter's chair, agreed to send

* Died the 26th of June, 1572.

an inquisitor to Malta, who should decide to what lengths the bishop's jurisdiction should extend. The council of the order, to preserve its authority, exacted a promise from the sovereign pontiff, that the officer sent from the court of Rome should never act but in conjunction with the grand-master, the bishop, the prior of the church, and the vice-chancellor of the order; by which means this new tribunal was divided between the inquisitor and the principal officers of the state. But this prudent arrangement lasted a very short time. The inquisitors, as will be seen in the course of this history, from a spirit of emulation so common among themselves, and on pretence of maintaining the authority of the holy see, contrived to get fresh assessors; and, in order to become absolute in their tribunal, endeavoured to establish a degree of dominion in the island; and frequently struggled hard to make it supercede the legitimate one. To effect this purpose, they pursued the following method: Any Maltese who was desirous of throwing off the authority of the order, might address himself to the office of the inquisition, which immediately presented him with a brevet of independence, to which was given the name of patent. Those who took out this patent were called the patentees of the inquisition; which implied, that, in consequence of the said patent, they, and all their family, were under the immediate protection of the holy see: so that, in all causes, either civil or criminal, the patentee was first tried in Malta, by the tribunal of the inquisition; and, if the condemned party thought proper to make a last appeal to the court of Rome, he was there tried a second time, by a tribunal called *la Rotta*: their persons, too,

were secure; and the government of the order could neither commit them to prison, nor punish them in any manner whatsoever.

The bishop also took upon himself to have a separate jurisdiction; and a simple tonsure given to a Maltese made him independent of the grand-master: by which means all priests, and even the above-mentioned shavelings, were only amenable to justice at the bishop's private tribunal; which, equally with the inquisition, pronounced in all civil and criminal causes relative to these privileged persons; who likewise might appeal from the sentence passed by the tribunal, either to the archiepiscopal see of Palermo, or to Rome. All these people wore the habit of ecclesiastics; and it became, at last, difficult in Malta, to distinguish betwixt a priest and the father of a family.

Brother Gargalla, bishop of Malta, and Cressin, the prior of the church, men of restless and turbulent dispositions, were the first to raise the storm, which afterwards burst over the head of the grand-master, their common benefactor.

The first laid claim to the privilege of making the juridical visit to the hospital in the City Notable; but the managers, who acknowledged no other authority than that of the grand-master, refused him entrance; upon which they were excommunicated by the bishops. They were supported in this act by the clergy, who made a collection among themselves to defray the expenses of the necessary steps to be taken, in order to bring the affair before the archbishop of Palermo. This was, however, attended by much difficulty,

and at last referred to the holy see (1579). The people thus privileged by the bishop, took up arms, and so cruelly treated the citizens who persisted in their obedience to their legitimate sovereigns, that the order, to suppress such disorders, found it necessary to appoint a guard consisting of fifty men.

The inquisition carried its evil designs against the grand-master to much greater lengths; and three of the holy brotherhood being apprehended, confessed that they had formed a plan to poison La Cassiere, and immediately accused many of the Spanish and Italian knights as their accomplices. The latter entered the council-hall in the most tumultuous manner, and openly insulted the grand-master. Without the smallest respect for his dignified situation, they enjoined him to state the proofs of their having conspired against his life, and insisted that the order should send an ambassador to the pope to demand justice. The knights, unwilling to engage in so troublesome and difficult a business, made use of a variety of pretences to avoid the journey; and the wrath and animosity of the most violent being at last softened by time, all thoughts of the embassy were entirely relinquished.

Whilst so many intestine disputes disturbed the peace of the convent, the republic of Venice was very near declaring war against Malta. This was occasioned by some goods, of very little value, the property of Jews settled in the Venetian territories, having been seized on board some vessels taken by the order. But this affair was soon accommodated, and Malta forgot the vexatious conduct of the republic, and never failed to afford it all possible as-

sistance, by sending continual succours to Candia, one of the finest of the Venetian possessions.

Selim II. was so busily employed in making considerable preparations for war (1574), that Malta had reason to tremble for its safety. Though proper means were employed to put it in a state of defence, yet the malcontents reproached the grand-master and council with an inactivity very prejudicial to the interests of the order. They however learnt, a short time afterwards, that the Turkish emperor had turned his arms against the fort of Goletta and Tunis, of which he had taken possession.

The archduke Wincelas, a prince of the house of Austria, of the German branch, had obtained (1577), through the interest of the king of Spain, the grand priory of Castille and Leon, together with the bailiwick of Lora, on the condition of his taking the vows. The grand-master and council thought it impossible to refuse ratifying the appointment of the king of Spain, who had granted such powerful protection to the order. This favour, however, might very well be attended by disagreeable consequences, and it was certainly a prelude to the discontent which broke out afterwards (1578). The Castilian knights complained in the strongest terms against the grand-master and the council, for having consented to the nomination of the archduke to such considerable benefices, which they regarded as an act of great injustice to every individual of their language. These malcontents were secretly encouraged by several of the grand-crosses, who likewise fomented the sedition. The grand-master was forced, in this dilemma, to have

recourse to the pope, who cited the rebellious knights to appear before him. They acknowledged their fault; but, on pretence of their having neither commanderies, private fortune, nor indeed any thing to enable them to undertake such a journey, the grand-master obtained a dispensation from the pope. They, however, were obliged to present themselves before him and the whole council, with wax tapers in their hands, thus to repair their fault in full assembly, and to ask pardon for their conduct. This was granted them, after having received a severe reprimand from La Cassiere.

These were not the only disorders which called for punishment; others of a much more atrocious nature took place. Six Portuguese knights, masked, and wearing false beards, entered the house of one of their countrymen, the chevalier Carreras, and barbarously murdered him. So dreadful a crime did not, however, long remain unpunished. They were presently discovered, apprehended, delivered over to secular justice, and sentenced to be put into a sack and thrown alive into the sea; which sentence was immediately carried into execution.

CHAP. II.

Insurrection of the Knights against the Grand-Master. The Spanish Knights discovered to be the Promoters of the Rebellion. Romegas at the Head of the Insurgents—His Character. Atrocious Conduct of the Prior of the Church. The Viceroy of Sicily interferes in the intestine Divisions of the Convent. The Knights assemble, depose the Grand-Master, and appoint Romegas Lieutenant of the Mastership. Imprisonment of the Grand-Master—Charges brought against him—He refuses the friendly Offers made him by the General of the Galleys. The Rebels send Ambassadors to Rome; whither the Grand-Master contrives to transmit a Letter. The King of France insists that the Affair shall be brought before the Pope. La Cassiere refuses to accept his Liberty till he shall be made acquainted with the Pope's Decision.

THESE repeated disturbances (1581)*, far from appeasing the minds of the public, served only to add to the general discontent, and were indeed only a prelude to more serious troubles. The Spa-

* There is a very interesting note by Mr. Sauserre of this affair, which may be seen in the thirteenth volume of "Literary Memoirs of the Academy of Belles-Lettres." The principal facts are taken from dispatches sent by Mons. de Foix, archbishop of Toulouse, at that time ambassador from Henry III. to the court of Rome. This was printed in quarto, at Paris, in 1628. All the histories of Malta, before that published by Vertot, are silent on the subject; for none of them treat of facts posterior to that memorable epoch when the siege was raised in 1565. The abbé Vertot concluded his at the death of La Valette, in 1569, and only added a summary account of the annals of the order from that time to 1725. He has, however, related the revolt against La Cassiere in a more particular manner,

niards were principally concerned in fomenting the sedition. They had gained over to their party the Italian knights, who seduced the Germans; and had even contrived to sow division among the French, and engage a part of them in their cause.

Mathurin Lescat de Romegas, a French knight, was in high estimation with the order, not only on account of his great personal valour, but because he occupied many very important posts: he was prior of Toulouse and Ireland, and made general of the galleys in 1575. He was a very able seaman, and his name inspired terror as far as the Levant; but his ambition was unbounded; and, though brave and fortunate in his expeditions, he was fierce and cruel towards his enemies. The Spaniards found it an easy task to corrupt a man of this character, by flattering him with the hopes of becoming grand-master, though it was far from their intention to raise him to that dignity; for what advantage could they reap by deposing one Frenchman to place another at the head of the order? The Spaniards were strongly united among themselves; and their sole desire was to sow discord among the French, that they might profit from the general confusion. Romegas, therefore, blinded by ambition, contributed to forward the secret designs of the wary Spaniards, without having the smallest suspicion of their real intentions: he, however, though certainly at the head of the conspiracy, did not

and in a more elegant style, than is requisite in "Summary Annals," which title he gave to this part of his history; yet of the consequences of this affair he says nothing. M. De Thou may also be blamed for the same neglect—(see his History, book xiv.); his relation of these facts being concise and inaccurate.

openly declare himself against the grand-master ; but four other knights, who acted in concert with him, publicly avowed their designs. Cressin, prior of the church, had been named to that dignity by La Cassiere ; but on this occasion he proved himself his benefactor's bitterest enemy. Many different reasons contributed to incense the factious part of the community against the grand-master ; who had with great justice forbidden the knights of the different languages to show any partiality towards their respective sovereigns. This prohibition was meant to repress the pride and ambition of the Spaniards, who, elated with the high degree of power to which Charles V. had raised the house of Austria, wished and intended to make the order at large subservient to its sovereign authority : added to this, La Cassiere, with still more propriety, had banished all courtesans from the suburbs, and city La Valetta, and commanded them either to retire to those villages which were situated at the greatest distance from the convent, or entirely to quit the island. Strange as it may appear, some among the elder knights made use of this well-judged prohibition to irritate the younger against the grand-master : so true it is, that, in all conspiracies, every method which leads to success becomes justifiable, and is quickly adopted by the head of a party.

Some of the grand-crosses, who aspired to the grand-mastership, perceiving that, notwithstanding the great age of La Cassiere, he continued to enjoy perfect health, and might probably outlive them, determined to depose him, and thus render vacant a dignity they were impatient to possess.

A few days before the revolt took place, the grand-master had,

with the strictest attention to justice, supported the rights and privileges of the language of Auvergne, and of the marshal of the order, who was of that language, in a dispute which had taken place between them and the Italian and Spanish knights relative to the watch-word. His conduct in this affair was represented in a criminal light, as having shown a marked partiality for his own nation. The Spaniards appeared to favour the secret views of their court, which, in order to support its countrymen, had sent, a short time before, three galleys from Sicily, and these were to be followed by five others. The ostensible reason for this assistance was, to protect the island from the insults of the Turks, who had an army at that time in Barbary; but the real one was, to second the Spanish knights in their designs against the grand-master.

The rebels having, as they thought, taken every necessary measure to ensure the success of their plans, held a tumultuous assembly, in which they complained of the government of the grand-master, whom they accused of having dissipated the sacred patrimony of the order—of having neglected its affairs—of leaving the magazines of Malta void of proper stores—and of not maintaining the island in a state of defence against the different enterprises of the Turks and Barbary corsairs. They even impudently pushed their calumny to such great lengths, as to accuse him of secret intelligence with the enemies of the Christian name. They likewise attacked his moral conduct; adding, that it was easy to judge, from all his actions, that his great age made him incapable of governing, and that he always fell asleep in council.

The result of this seditious assembly was, that a deputy was sent

to the grand-master, to propose his naming a lieutenant, on whom might devolve the affairs of government, the weight of which his advanced time of life rendered it impossible for him properly to support. La Cassiere having rejected this insulting proposition, a second assembly was held, at Cressin's apartment. A Siennese knight, at this meeting, gave way to the greatest violence; and even went so far as to declare, that, unless a new grand-master was elected, all the grand-crosses ought to be suppressed. No attention was paid either to his complaints or his threats; and they contented themselves with naming Romegas lieutenant to the grand-mastership. The Spanish faction thought it more prudent to choose this knight than one of their own nation; since, by so doing, they would undoubtedly attach the French more than ever to their cause.

The vice-chancellor signed this resolution of the council, and inserted in it, that it had been made by common consent of all the languages, whose proxies had voted on the occasion; but this was not the case, since some of them had no procuration to this effect; and, among those who had, some were found who opposed the resolution. By this act it was declared, *that the great age and extreme decrepitude of the grand-master* had rendered it necessary for the order to create a lieutenant. But nothing could be more unjust than this representation; for La Cassiere, old as he was, enjoyed such excellent health, that he constantly walked round the town every day. The original act only contained the simple creation of a lieutenant; but this was no longer thought sufficient, and another assembly was held, in which it was ordained, that, in order to ensure the personal

safety of the grand-master, he should be imprisoned in the tower of St. Angelo; in consequence of which, the conspirators went to the palace, and seized upon La Cassiere, who received them with an intrepid countenance; and notwithstanding they endeavoured, by threats, to inspire him with terror, did nothing unworthy of his great rank and high dignity, but openly reproached them with their perfidy and rebellion.

They immediately placed him in an open chair, and, surrounded by soldiers, he was carried, like a criminal, to the castle of St. Angelo. To add to this degrading situation, he was exposed, during the whole of the way, to the shouts and insults of the younger knights, and likewise to the bitterest reproaches from the infamous creatures he had banished the city: but such reproaches were the highest encomiums on his conduct; and, in the eyes of those who formed a just estimation of his character, redounded to his honour.

Two days after his imprisonment, Chabrian, general of the galleys, entered the port. The rebels dared not refuse him permission to visit the grand-master; and he immediately offered to reinstate him in his dignity and conduct him to his palace; but the noble-minded old man prudently answered, that he expected to be re-established in his rights by the sovereign pontiff.

The rebels had sent three different ambassadors to Rome, to give an account of their proceedings to the pope, and to ask his approbation of their conduct. The grand-master likewise found means to convey letters to the holy father, and to monsieur De Foix, the French ambassador; and on the 24th of July all Rome was

acquainted with the late occurrences at Malta. The knights there, though divided in their opinions, were so irritated at this intelligence, that, on the 30th of the same month, the chevalier Bosio, a Piedmontese, slew chevalier Guimarva in St. Peter's-square, and that in the presence of the pope's guards: the cause of their quarrel was the latter's having reproached the former with taking part with the grand-master. Bosio contrived to escape, and was never apprehended.

The pope expressed the greatest indignation against the authors of the imprisonment of La Cassiere, and called (31st of July) a congress of cardinals to take cognisance of the affair. It was resolved that his holiness should dispatch Visconti, auditor of the Rotta, to Malta, to inform himself of all that had passed, and to send the result of his inquiries to Rome. He was also authorised to reinstate the grand-master, if it could possibly be done without exciting sedition.

Visconti having departed for Malta, the knights who had been sent by the rebels to Rome, not being able to follow him, presented an accusation against the grand-master, not only to the pope and cardinals, but to the ambassadors. This contained fifty-three articles, among which was a relation of different affairs wherein they pretended to say that La Cassiere had disobeyed the holy see, and exercised acts of violence against the ministers of his holiness. The grand-master, on his part, sent to the pope, the cardinals, and ambassadors, a memorial in justification of his conduct. In the meantime, Henry III., king of France, who had been informed of the

underhand proceedings of the Spanish court, and who was greatly interested in the affair, wrote to his ambassador, monsieur De Foix, to carry it on with the greatest vigour. He also dispatched the commander De Chasse to Malta, who, immediately on his arrival, communicated to the council the threatening message with which he was charged by the king his master. This greatly alarmed the French knights. The Spanish faction also began to repent the crime they had committed, and quickly re-united themselves to those who had continued faithful to their duty. They proceeded in a body to the grand-master, and supplicated him to re-take the reins of government and to forget what was passed; but La Cassiere continued firm in his first resolution, and was determined to pursue his design of having his justification made public: he therefore declared he would never quit his prison till the arrival of the pope's nuncio.

CHAP. III.

The Pope's Nuncio arrives in Malta. Departure of the Grand-Master and Romegas for Rome. The Nuncio obliges the Spanish Galleys and Troops to withdraw from Malta. Honours paid the Grand-Master during his Journey to Rome—His triumphant Entry into that City; and his Reception by Cardinal D'Est. The Grand-Master has an Audience of the Pope. The Manner in which the French Ambassador conducts himself on the Occasion. Behaviour of Romegas and his Adherents; one of whom the Cardinal de Montalto addresses in the severest Terms. Romegas, a Prey to Remorse, dies of a Fever. La Cassiere prepares to return to Malta—Is taken ill, and dies—His Obsequies. De Verdale elected to the Grand-Mastership—His Character. The French Ambassador insists that the Memory of La Cassiere shall be publicly vindicated. An Assembly called on the Occasion, in which he is pronounced innocent. The Pope grants Permission to the Grand-Master to name to the Office of Turcopolier. A Misunderstanding takes Place between Venice and Malta. The Knights excluded from filling the Posts of Bishop of Malta and Grand-Prior of St. John's Church. Disturbances in the Convent. A general Chapter held. De Verdale's first Journey to Rome. He is made Cardinal. He returns to Malta, and goes a second Time to Rome. His Death.

THE pope's envoy, Visconti, having travelled through Sicily, did not reach Malta till the 8th of September, 1581, a day on which a solemn festival was held in honour of the Blessed Virgin. It was appointed to be kept by La Valette, to return thanks to Almighty

God for the relief, received on the same day of the month, which had forced the Turks to raise the siege. The nuncio, immediately on his arrival, was applied to for his opinion, whether it would be proper for Romegas, as lieutenant of the mastership, to carry La Valette's sword, as usual, in the procession; but Visconti, who was unwilling to show any partiality to either party, gave orders to have the ceremony postponed to another day.

He spent the first forty-eight hours after his arrival in informing himself very exactly of every thing that had passed; and he found the minds of the public at large so irritated against the grand-master, that it appeared to him impossible to reinstate him in his dignity, according to the orders of the pope, without exposing his own life to the most imminent danger. He therefore thought it more prudent to begin by calling a council, in which he read the pope's brief appointing him nuncio and vicar for the affairs of the order; at the same time commanding the knights to yield him obedience, as the representative of the holy see. The brief was no sooner read, than Romegas resigned to Visconti the lieutenantancy of the mastership, which he assured him he never would have accepted without the express orders of those who had elected him to the office. On the breaking up of the council, the nuncio immediately repaired to the castle St. Angelo, from whence he released the grand-master, re-conducted him to his palace, and presented him with a brief, signifying, that the pope yielded to his wishes of visiting Rome, where he promised him a gracious reception.

La Cassiere embarked for Italy on the 14th of September; but

he was detained by contrary winds at Port St. Paul till the 19th. He was attended in this expedition by three galleys, the marshal of the order, the general of the galleys, and three hundred knights. The nuncio likewise presented a brief to Römegas and his party, which contained a positive order from the pope to repair immediately to Rome. He too, therefore, accompanied by his partisans, among whom were the vice-chancellor and the Siennese knight already mentioned, embarked on board the fourth galley, which the grand-master had left behind, and arrived in the night of the 15th of September. On the 16th he visited the French ambassador, monsieur De Foix, to whom he endeavoured to vindicate his conduct.

No sooner had the grand-master quitted Malta, than Visconti gave orders for all the Spanish troops and galleys to leave the island; but to this, general Pompeo Colonna, the commander, at first objected; alleging that he did not pretend to dispute the nuncio's authority in the government of the order, but, the island of Malta being the property of the king of Spain, he had an undoubted right to guard the fortresses in times of universal confusion. To this the nuncio replied, that the order certainly held the island originally from the generosity of Charles V.; but, in consequence of that gift, it was now become the domain of a body, composed of members taken from the different Christian states; so that his master could have no greater interest in the island than the rest of the European princes, to whom it equally served as the bulwark of Christianity: his subjects, therefore, could not possibly dispense with the obedience they owed the pope, who was the head of all Christian princes.

in general, and of the order of St. John in particular. These arguments had the desired effect; and the Spaniards left Malta with the greatest reluctance.

The nuncio continued to inquire into all the particulars of the late affair; after which he wrote to the pope, to acquaint him that the Spaniards were the original authors of the revolt, and had constantly impeded every arrangement towards quelling the troubles; and even prevented his acting in the manner most conformable to the wishes of his holiness.

The grand-master, who had landed on the Neapolitan coast, was unfortunately taken ill, and obliged to stop at Pousoles, where the viceroy and nuncio waited on him, and induced him to repose himself at Naples. He was lodged in the palace of the former, and treated with every possible mark of respect, both there and in every place through which he passed in his journey to Rome; where he arrived on the 26th of October, and where he was received, not as a degraded criminal, but as a sovereign prince in the full meridian of his power. The pope had issued orders that he should make his entry with all possible pomp and magnificence; he had therefore sent directions to the cardinals, and all the ambassadors, that the officers of their respective households should be present: he also commanded twelve bishops, and all the referendaries, to appear on the occasion. Eight hundred knights went forth to meet the grand-master, who rode between the patriarch of Jerusalem and the bishop of Imola, steward of the household to his holiness. He was escorted by the Swiss and horse-guards of the pope; and, on passing the castle of

St. Angelo, was saluted by a discharge of artillery from the fort. He then alighted at Monte Jordano, the residence of the cardinal D'Est, who, with monsieur De Foix, received him at the top of the stairs. This cardinal was the most magnificent prince of his time. During the whole of the grand-master's stay at Rome, he, with the three hundred knights of his suite, were all lodged with this prince, who defrayed the whole of the expense, and who had more than a thousand persons in his palace.

On the 28th of October, the grand-master, attended by his three hundred knights, went to the pope's audience at the Vatican. His procession thither had all the appearance of a triumphal entry; and he was presented to his holiness by cardinal D'Est, who was accompanied by twelve other cardinals. The grand-master fell on his knees before the pope; and, having kissed his feet, pronounced a most eloquent speech. His holiness, in reply, expressed his pleasure at seeing him, and assured him he never believed him guilty of the crimes imputed to him by his enemies. He endeavoured to console him on the occasion; and, having ordered the gentlemen of the chamber to raise him from the ground, seated him immediately after the four first cardinals, who assisted at the audience.

After having conversed familiarly together for some time on the subject of the grand-master's journey, La Cassiere took leave; and the following day De Foix had a private audience of the pope, in which his holiness informed him, that the conduct of the grand-master had not been entirely irreproachable, and that it would be proper to advise him to act with more moderation for the future.

He added, that Romegas was a man of merit, who had never intended to prevent the reinstatement of the grand-master in his post; but that he thought both Romegas and his party had acted very ill in never having paid their respects to the grand-master since his arrival in Rome. Monsieur De Foix endeavoured to induce Romegas to visit La Cassiere, and he did not appear much disinclined to follow his advice; but his fears, lest some of the knights who accompanied the grand-master might not treat him with all the respect he thought he deserved, prevented his visit; though the ambassador endeavoured to encourage him, with the idea, that a man like him might be assured of commanding respect wherever he presented himself.

Romegas, thus abandoned by every one, lived constantly in solitude. Such a situation awakened remorse, and he became sensible of the enormity of his crime, which caused him the most heartfelt sorrow, and brought on a fever, of which he died in seven days*.

All the revolted knights were under the necessity of presenting themselves before the grand-master, to implore forgiveness: when the commander Sacquenville, the friend and confidant of Romegas, approaching La Cassiere, merely requested his hand to kiss; upon which the cardinal de Montalto exclaimed, "Kneel down, rebellious knight! for had not the goodness of your worthy grand-master

* On the 4th of November.

Vertot is mistaken in saying the pope insisted that Romegas should resign the lieutenancy—he having done it before.

interfered in your favour, you would many days since have lost your head in the piazza Navona."

The Pope, as a particular mark of favour, dispatched a brief to Malta, to forbid the nuncio and council naming to any employment, priory, commandery, or vacant benefice; wishing, as a fresh proof of his regard, to reserve this privilege for the grand-master, when he should be reinstated in his former dignified situation. Order being thus restored among all the inhabitants of Malta, La Cassiere prepared to return and enjoy his long-lost authority; but the Wise Disposer of all Things ordained that he should die at Rome. During his illness, which was very short, the pope allowed him to dispose, by will, of ten thousand ducats over and above the sum specified by the statutes of the order. La Cassiere also, in his last moments, entreated his holiness to order the ceremony of his funeral. This the pope chose should be very magnificent, and in every respect becoming the dignity of the deceased. It was accordingly attended by the whole of his household, as also by the households of the cardinals and ambassadors. The body was carried to the church of St. Louis, there to be deposited till it should be transported to Malta; the heart still remaining in the above-mentioned church. A Latin inscription was, by order of the pope, engraved on his tomb: this was the composition of Mark Anthony Muret, who likewise pronounced the funeral oration.

Immediately after the death of La Cassiere, a brief was sent from the pope to Malta, to forbid the knights naming a new grand-master, or indeed acting in any way, till they had received his commands.

The pope, as superior of the order, thought he had a just right to appoint to the grand-mastership—or, at least, to have the election take place by the votes of the knights then resident at Rome. He, however, would not determine on this measure till he was informed in what manner his orders had been received at Malta—fearing a double election might occasion a schism: he therefore only ordered the galleys which had brought La Cassiere to Rome, to be prepared; and sent word to the knights to hold themselves in readiness to depart. They accordingly quitted Rome on the 14th of January, and on the 21st embarked for Malta.

The knight who was intrusted with the briefs of his holiness, at first only presented one, which declared, “that, on account of the grand-master having died at Rome, and considering the present situation of affairs at Malta, the pope, being head of the order, had an undoubted right to name the successor, his predecessors having always done so in similar circumstances; notwithstanding which, he was so desirous of proving the tender affection he bore the order, and of preserving its privileges, that he consented the election of a new grand-master should take place in the usual manner.” The knights, therefore, assembled as formerly; and when the electors had met, and were chosen, the pope’s nuncio presented a second brief, which he had hitherto concealed, and which announced that his holiness expressed a wish they would elect one of the three knights specified in the brief*.

These knights were Panisse, Chabrilan, and Loubeux de Ver-

* Vertot and De Thou say there were four knights mentioned by the pope.

dale—three natives of France, and of the language of Provence. The electors having yielded obedience to the orders of the pope, unanimously made choice of Loubeux de Verdale; and the whole council approved this nomination (1582). The enemies of La Cassiere did not concur in the election, they not arriving in time to give their votes.

The accession of Verdale to the mastership occasioned the greatest rejoicings throughout the island; the Spanish knights, indeed, did not join in the universal approbation, but left Malta immediately afterwards. Had the election been entirely free, there is no doubt but the choice would have fallen on the prior of Naples, who was an Italian.

The new grand-master was at that time fifty years of age. He had filled the principal posts in the order in the most distinguished manner, and had been for a considerable time ambassador at Rome. His disposition was gentle; he was a lover of peace, and a decided enemy to disputes of every kind. Immediately after his election, he gave orders that the great seal should be made on the same plan as formerly—Romegas having broken that used by La Cassiere, on being appointed to the lieutenancy. He established his household, and received indiscriminately both parties.

Verdale paid the greatest honours to the remains of him whose post he occupied; of which, indeed, he would not take possession till the crown and the other insignia of his office were restored to the illustrious deceased. These ornaments had been taken from him by the rebels, but the cardinal had ordered them to be placed upon

the corse, when it was sent, attended by a numerous retinue, to Malta.

In the mean time, the French ambassador warmly solicited, in the name of his sovereign, that the memory of La Cassiere should be publicly vindicated, and that he should be solemnly pronounced innocent of all the crimes laid to his charge.

The nuncio, Visconti, returned at last to Rome, and presented the pope with the informations taken at Malta, which contained the depositions of more than five hundred witnesses. His holiness commanded him to make extracts from them for his use. In the mean time he employed the patriarch of Jerusalem to report on the said informations. All this was not completed before the 23d of July; when the patriarch made his report in the congress of the jurisdiction, to which the pope had referred the affair, in order to take its advice.

This congress was composed of five cardinals, and other persons of respectability, who were of opinion that the proceedings against the grand-master should be declared null, as being unjust; that his memory should be cleared from all the accusations; that the most criminal persons in the revolt should be (though it did not express severely) punished; that a decree should pass, purporting that the alienation of a grand-master's authority did not belong to the knights, but exclusively to the pope; and that, for the future, all those who entered into the order, and were raised to dignified posts in it, should be obliged to make their profession of faith. The five cardinals unanimously approved all the articles, except that relative to the trial and alienation of the authority of a grand-master, against

which, two of the number gave their votes. The pope decided in favour of the majority; and, on the 3d of September, 1582, this sentence was published in the consistory. It met with universal approbation in the assembly, where, however, it was determined that a particular decree should be made for the article concerning the profession of faith, because it was not in the smallest degree connected with the trial of La Cassiere. The king of France was undoubtedly the cause of the pope's vindication of the grand-master's memory; a circumstance, though sufficiently important, which the different historians, who have written on Malta, have passed over in silence.

The great demonstrations of joy which took place on the election of Verdale, were more the effect of the circumstances of the times, than of any particular affection for that prince, who vainly attempted by every possible method to gain the confidence of the people.

A general chapter, assembled by Verdale (1582), produced only a fresh assessment of the taxes on all the property belonging to the order. The just punishment he inflicted on Avogarda, general of the galleys, and on Sacconai, marshal of the order, only increased the number of his enemies.

The pope excluded the knights from becoming bishops of Malta, or priors of the church of St. John; and his brief for that purpose was received (1587), not only with submission, but approbation, by the greatest part of the members of the order, who thought it the most probable means of attaching the Maltese. Most of the conventual chaplains were already of that nation, and this new re-

gulation gave them an opportunity of aspiring to the first dignities in the order. The commander Jean Antoine Fossan had been for some time employed in collecting materials for a history of Malta, but, having left it unfinished, the grand-master employed Jacques Bosio (1589) to complete so useful a work. He could not possibly have made a better choice; for though this history may not, perhaps, be written in the most pleasing style, it is certainly the most exact hitherto published on the subject of the order.

The spirit of sedition still continued to reign in the convent; and if it appeared quelled for a moment, it was only to break forth with the greater violence. Verdale having used every possible effort to restore peace and quiet, determined to go to Rome (1587); where he was received by the pope in the most distinguished manner. His holiness bestowed on him the cardinal's hat, thinking by such a mark of favour to inspire the malcontents with more respect for his person; but the grand-master, on his return, found his new dignity of no avail;—the discontent and seditious spirit of the knights still continued in full force. He, therefore, tired out by the eternal complaints which assailed him on all sides, once more went to Rome, where he soon after died of a broken heart*.

The tumultuous state of the convent was not the only evil Malta had to support; the plague raged with the most dreadful violence throughout the island, and swept off incredible numbers of the inhabitants (1592). The same year, the bishop Gargallo, wishing

* May 4, 1595.

to strengthen his authority, called in the Jesuits to support him (if necessary) against the power of the order. This learned and artful body of men soon gained the same ascendancy in Malta as in every other place where they had ever been established: it is, however, but justice to observe, that they frequently refused to close with the ambitious views of the bishops and inquisitors.

CHAP. IV.

Garzez Grand-Master—His short Reign. Vignacourt succeeds him. The Gallies of the Order are sent at different Times on Expeditions to the Levant. The Turks make a Descent on Malta. The Inquisitors and Bishops raise great Disturbances in the Island. A general Chapter held. The Knights of the German Language refuse to admit a natural Son of the Royal Family of Lorraine into the Order. A magnificent Aqueduct and Fortifications made by Vignacourt—His Death. Vasconcellos named to the Grand-Mastership, which he enjoys only six Months. Anthony de Paule elected. Two Knights severely punished; the one for Murder, and the other for embezzling Public Money. Accusation and Justification of the Grand-Master. Favours very unjustly conferred by the Pope. Discontent among the Italian Knights. The Pope makes fresh Claims. Another general Chapter convened. Chief Articles debated in the Assembly. Misfortunes and Successes of the Maltese Gallies. Complaints made by the Venetians: energetical Answer sent by the Grand-Master. Enumeration of the Inhabitants of Malta and Goza.

THE turbulent reigns of La Cassiere and De Verdale, were succeeded (1596) by the comparatively quiet one of Garzez; which was not disturbed by any thing of greater importance than the busy interference of the inquisitors, which, however, at that time, was only directed to trifling objects. Garzez was a prince who had no particular favourite, and was perfectly impartial; his government, therefore, was equally agreeable to the knights and the people. The

fortifications of Goza and its castle were entirely completed within the sixteenth century.

The reign of Vignacourt, his successor (1601), was both long and brilliant; and the knights of that day planned and executed the most daring enterprises. They attacked Patras and Lepanto; and the Maltese galleys seized (1602) on Mahometa, on the coast of Africa. This expedition was projected with great prudence, and executed with consummate courage. The same galleys also ravaged the island of Lango, held in high estimation by the knights while they resided at Rhodes. They took one hundred and sixty-five prisoners, whom they employed as slaves. The Fort De Laiazzo, in the gulf of that name, was taken by Fresnet, Mauros, and Guacourt, three knights; who, by means of a petard, blew up the gate, and thus entered the fortress, which they plundered to a great amount; and, after rasing the fortifications to the ground, brought off (1610) more than three hundred slaves. The following year (1611) the city of Corinth was pillaged and sacked by the galleys of the order, which were continually spreading terror throughout the whole of the Levant, notwithstanding they were surrounded by a considerable fleet, composed of Turks and Barbs, constantly sailing in those seas. Such repeated successes induced the Turks (1615) to make a fresh attempt on Malta. Sixty galleys approached the coast, and landed five thousand men, who, however, were forced to re-embark with precipitation, and that without taking a single prisoner—the inhabitants having retired into the fortresses. The Maltese galleys continued masters of the sea; and it was re-

solved to make a desperate assault (1620), which required as much skill as resolution. This was no less than landing troops in the fortress of Castel Torneza, which might be regarded as the store-house of the Morea, and which they succeeded in taking. The general of the galleys having received intelligence, by a Greek, of a meditated attack on the marines, he, overawed by a body of four thousand Turks, who were already within a short march of him, ordered a retreat to be sounded; which the commander St. Pierre, who headed the land forces, so ably conducted that he regained the vessels, not only with the booty, but all the prisoners.

In the mean time (1619), the land troops belonging to the order, serving on the coast of Africa in his catholic majesty's army, received a very serious check before Suza, which they in vain attempted to take, and in which expedition twenty knights lost their lives.

Whilst these different military enterprises were carrying on abroad, the grand-master was continually harassed by the inquisitors and the popes. Virelli, the grand-inquisitor, who was openly supported by Clement VIII., chose to take cognisance of the affairs of government. The bishop of Malta likewise made many attempts against the authority of the grand-master and the council, and went to Rome in order to induce the pope to support his pretensions. He appointed one of his grand-vicars to act for him during his absence. This man was as turbulent and meddling as himself; so much so indeed, that the younger knights, irritated beyond description at his insolence, flew in a body to his house, intending to throw him into

the sea. Vignacourt contrived to prevent their putting this design into execution ; and, having got him into his possession, sent him, together with the accusations brought against his conduct, to Rome : but the pope was so incensed on the occasion, that he ordered his inquisitor to take the proper information, and threatened the grand-master with all the anathemas of the church. He, therefore, equally with the council, was obliged to yield ; and, by this concession, concluded the affair.

During the mastership of Vignacourt, a general chapter was held (1603), in which the principal subjects determined were the manner of bringing the proofs necessary for admission into the order, and the administration of some particular departments in the treasury.

About this time, the knights of the German language gave a strong proof how jealous they were of the dignity of the order, and how strictly they observed the regulations, in the reception of a knight of their country. Charles de Brie, a natural son of Henry duke of Lorraine, presented himself to be received into the German language ; and, as the empire made a point of his being admitted, the Germans rose in a body, and tore away the armorial ensigns of the grand-master, together with those of the order, from the gates of their inn, leaving those of the emp̄ror as the only ornament.

It is impossible for any sovereign to leave behind him a more useful and magnificent monument of attention to the public weal, than the work erected by the order of Vignacourt (1616), to supply the city La Valetta with water, which, from a canal, he caused

to be brought, by means of an aqueduct of seven thousand four hundred and seventy-eight cannes* in length, into the square facing the grand-master's palace. Since that time a handsome fountain has been made, and canals have been dug to convey the water into different parts of the city. This is not the only useful work executed by Vignacourt, he having caused St. Paul's Cove, the ports of Marsa Sirocco and Marsa Scala, together with the island of Cumin, to be fortified in the most regular manner.

Whilst thus employed in useful and honourable improvements, the order had the misfortune of losing its respectable grand-master, who, hunting a hare, during the heats of August, was seized with an apoplexy, of which he died in a very few days †.

His successor, Mendez Vasconcellos, enjoyed his dignified situation only six months, dying March 7, 1623, which short space of time was passed in confirming all the prudent dispositions made by his predecessor.

The mastership of Anthony de Paule began by the severe, but necessary, punishment of two of the knights: John de Fonseca, a Portuguese novice, being convicted of theft and murder, was beheaded in the great square before the palace; and the prior of Capua having embezzled fifteen thousand ducats from the receiver's office at Naples, two thousand crowns from that of Rome, together with fifteen thousand ducats from the effects of the deceased grand-master,

* Each canne contained eight palmes—each palme about nine inches.

† September 14, 1622.

Vasconcellos, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment; in which he ended his days.

Anthony de Paule was himself obliged to vindicate his conduct to the pope, to whom some wicked persons, with the most shameless effrontery, had presented a memorial filled with the grossest calumnies, which they flattered themselves they could impose upon his holiness as truths. In it they represented the grand-master as a man of depraved morals, having been guilty of simony, and even paid down ready-money for the post he possessed. In this unpleasant situation, the commander De Polastron, a most exemplary character, was sent to Rome, where he presently triumphed over the grand-master's enemies, and sufficiently proved his innocence.

No sooner was De Paule relieved from one embarrassment, than he was involved in another still worse (1625); for the pope, Urban VIII., was both party and judge in the cause. This pontiff followed the example of his predecessors, Paul V. and Gregory XIV.; and took upon himself to dispose of all the commanderies which became vacant in the language of Italy. In a very short time the different popes had given away more than twenty to their friends and relations. All the representations made on this subject having proved useless, the Italian knights refused to make their caravans, or to go aboard the vessels and galleys belonging to the order; the greatest part of them indeed retired to their own country, where they joined their families. The grand-master, wishing to prevent these disturbances, convened a council, in which it was unanimously resolved, that an ambassador should be sent to the pope

with the just complaints of the order ; but, as the conduct of his holiness had been such that they had very little to hope from this step, they determined to send three other ambassadors to the principal Christian princes—*viz.* the emperor, and the kings of France and Spain.

The ambassadors were likewise charged to represent to these sovereigns the very great abuses which had taken place in certain dispensations granted by the court of Rome ; particularly that of permitting the knights to dispose of their effects to the prejudice of the common treasury, which greatly diminished the revenue of the order, and consequently was extremely detrimental to general utility.

Notwithstanding all these remonstrances, the pope not only continued to dispose of the commanderies in favour of his relations, but published an ordinance, *motu proprio*, by which he changed the form hitherto observed in the election of the grand-masters (1630). He had also, the year before the last chapter was held, endeavoured to alter the ancient customs which took place on those occasions ; and the moment it was convened, the inquisitor presented himself to act as president, with power from the pope either to suspend or to prorogue it at pleasure.

The grand-master assured his holiness, that he was very well disposed to obey his commands ; but that the body of the order would never submit with patience to the introduction of an entire stranger, to whom should be given the title and authority of president. The pope gave no attention to any thing that could be urged

on the occasion; the council therefore thought it necessary to give up the point; but, in order to avoid the impetuous disapprobation of the younger knights, they were sent upon a cruise whilst the chapter was held. This assembly having as usual committed their authority into the hands of sixteen commissaries, they, with the inquisitor, retired into the conclave, which met in the hall belonging to the tower in the palace. The inquisitor, as has been already mentioned, presided according to the pope's wishes, but without being allowed a vote, or empowered to make any overture; and Boisrigault, grand-hospitaller, proposed the matters of debate, as the oldest of the sixteen commissaries. Imbroll, prior of the church, in quality of procurator to the grand-master, and brother Peter Turamini, secretary of the common treasury, intervened in this assembly, where it was first taken into consideration what methods should be pursued to erect separate private houses for the reception of novices of the different languages. The fund for building these dwellings, was to arise from what was paid for the *passages* of minority. But this plan was never carried into execution, the treasury having always employed the money for more pressing occasions.

Several of the knights, the principal of whom was the prior of the church, were employed to comprise, in one volume, all the statutes, ordinances, and capitulars, "to translate the whole into Italian, without any additions, and to retrench every thing which appeared useless, or which had been since revoked; thus leaving only what was necessary;—to report, and place under the different titles, all the new statutes which had the greatest connexion with the

others; and to add to the perpetual institutions some particular ordinances, to which custom and the observance of them had given all the force of a law." This volume was ordered to be finished in one year, and presented to the grand-master and the council. It was likewise to be printed, and afterwards translated into good Latin, with the approbation, nevertheless, and confirmation of the holy father the pope, and the holy apostolical see.

Many articles were also regulated relative to the title necessary for the reception of the brothers; and it was enacted, among other things, that no brother should take the habit, nor be professed, without the consent of the grand-master and the council, whose votes were to be taken by ballot; and, in case two thirds were in favour of the candidate, he was declared duly elected. To these rules was added one, that neither the grand-master nor council should be obliged to assign any reason for having refused their consent to the admission of any particular person. The same forms were likewise to be observed for the admission of a chaplain or servant of arms. The proofs necessary to be brought for the reception of the knights, were agreed upon at the same time; and the German language obtained permission, that their ancient custom, from which they had never deviated, should be kept up; and that no one could possibly be received among them, who was not born in lawful wedlock, not even if he were the son of a sovereign prince. All the other languages received indiscriminately the natural sons of crowned heads, princes of the blood, and other inferior sovereign princes. By the third title of the institutes of the church, the venerable lan-

guages were confirmed in their right to the different chapels which had been assigned to their use in the conventual church of St. John the Baptist. It was also stipulated, that if ever England should return to the bosom of the holy mother church, the council should award to that venerable language a chapel, according to the pre-eminence in which it formerly stood.

Permission was granted to the grand-master and council to tax the possessions of the order in the sum of one hundred and twenty-two thousand crowns, in case a siege should be apprehended; and this by means of the duties arising from the *passages* both of minority and majority, and indeed of all the different classes in the order.

The grand-master, having declared, by his solicitor, that it was not his intention to take upon himself the management of the treasury, it was ordained that the administration of the said treasury, together with every thing depending thereon, should continue under the direction of the venerable grand-commander and the solicitors of the treasury; but it was likewise resolved, "that the grand-master and his successors, whether they had or had not the management of the treasury, might always send their seneschal, or whatever solicitor they pleased to name, to take his seat, not only in the tribunal of the treasury, but at the audits, examinations, and summing up of the accounts: in short, to be present at the definitive regulation of affairs, of what nature soever; there to give his deliberative, active, or passive vote, according to his pre-eminence and seniority; and to act in every respect according to the orders the grand-master should judge proper to give him.

A general chapter being convened for the year 1641, the council was enjoined, as soon as the citations were sent out, to name a commissary of each language, in order to make a public roll, and to revise the accounts of the treasury, with the solicitors, conventual conservator, and secretary of that office, and then to represent to the chapter the real state of the affairs of the order. The grand-master's solicitor, the venerable general-treasurer, his lieutenant, and the vice-chancellor, were to be present at all these conferences. A commission was also named to regulate the ceremony of receiving persons of high distinction, and other foreigners, who might visit Malta.

A donation of six thousand crowns, each of the value of a twelve-tarin piece, was confirmed to the grand-master. This was to be paid by the treasury, either in ready money, or in commodities properly rated, for the expenses of the brothers' table—"In order," it was stated, "that they might always have sufficient to maintain them according to their condition; and this pension shall never be either increased, diminished, or altered, by any person whatsoever." The chapter also discharged the treasury from all the expenses of maintaining, repairing, and adding to the palaces and other buildings belonging to the mastership, situated in the City La Valetta, the City Notable, Mount Verdale, and the park or wood. But the said treasury was to furnish the small sum of two hundred crowns (of twelve tarins each) towards making doors, windows, casements, and other necessary articles; together with hangings, carpets, gold and silver plate, and copper kitchen furniture.

It was enacted, that, in future, the knights and brothers, ser-

vants of arms, should make four caravans in person (not by proxy, as formerly) on board the galleys, before they should be held capable of being named to any commandery, It was likewise decreed, that, to the new collection of statutes, the following words should be added to the twelfth article, which treats of the solicitors-general at the court of Rome—" Ambassador to his holiness our lord; and solicitor-general at the court of Rome."

It was forbidden to tax the commanderies more than a fifth part of their revenue; this restriction was likewise to take place in the magisterial commanderies.

The grand-master was empowered to apprehend and imprison any knight accused of a crime which rendered him liable to be stripped of the habit of the order; but he must afterwards name commissaries to institute an action against him, in which case he was to be tried by the grand-master and council. It was also decreed that any prisoner who should make his escape before sentence was passed upon him, should be regarded as guilty of the crime laid to his charge, and consequently condemned without further trial. Any knight arraigned for an atrocious crime might be deprived of the habit by the council, or the egards, on presumptive proofs. According to the same regulations, if the crime appeared worthy of condign punishment, the accused party must be given up to secular justice; that is to say, to the chastellanry, or grand-master's court, when the action was to be tried anew, and sentence passed without any reference to that already given by the tribunal of the order. Those, however, who were in holy orders, and also officiated in the

churches with the tonsure and habit of an ecclesiastic, were not tried in this manner ; but, after being deprived of the habit of the order, were delivered over to the bishop's court, there to take their trial conformable to the decree passed by the venerable council relative to those criminals who, having been stripped of the habit, were given up to secular justice.

The suppression of duels was also attended to on this occasion ; and the ancient laws against this practice renewed. Orders were given to proceed with the utmost severity against all novices and professed knights “ who should either fight without the gates of the City La Valetta, or on the bastions—which occasioned duels being generally fought within the city, that not being specified by the letter of the law. Many travellers have mentioned one particular street where affairs of this nature frequently took place, and have falsely added, that it was a privileged spot : the truth is, it was originally chosen on account of its situation*, and since resorted to from the mere effect of habit. Lastly, the chapter made numerous regulations relating to the galleys, leaving, however, the grand-master and council at liberty to make alterations when occasion required.

I have perhaps dwelt longer than may be thought necessary on the awards of this general chapter, the statutes and regulations of

* The crosses which are marked on the walls of the houses in this street were made by the Maltese, who had an ancient custom of drawing them near the spot where they imagined any person had been killed ; and they thought they were acting agreeably to God's will, to whom they prayed for the deceased, and made this mark, as being particularly respected by all who bore the name of Christians.

which were never new modelled till the year 1775, when the greatest part of them were left unaltered, and are observed by the order to this day. The particulars here detailed will explain many of our customs, which, being unknown to readers in general, could not fail to make many passages in our history almost unintelligible.

The knights, during the whole of this reign, were constantly engaged in a maritime and bloody war against the infidels (1625), in which they were sometimes successful and sometimes unfortunate. The order attacked the island of St. Maura, possessed by the Turks; but the expedition proved a fatal one, twelve knights being killed, and several wounded. The order also lost two of their galleys (the St. John and St. Francis) in a very long and obstinate sea engagement. The knights of St. John had for some time only possessed five galleys, but the grand-master had presented them a sixth (1633); and with these they captured, near the island of Zante, four vessels containing six hundred and thirty Moors or negroes, on their passage from Barbary to Constantinople. In the same campaign they engaged several corsairs from Tripoli, made three hundred and thirty slaves, and delivered sixty Christians.

The Venetians, to gratify the Turks, who at the same time were only watching for a favourable opportunity to drive them from the Levant, complained most bitterly that the Maltese galleys were continually taking prizes in the seas, and on the coasts belonging to the republic. They also demanded that the slaves which had been taken on these occasions should be given back; to which the am-

bassador from Malta, by the commands of the grand-master, replied, that the order would willingly release the subjects of the grand-seignor who had been taken in the Adriatic; but that as for the corsairs, they should undoubtedly be hanged, as villains who were equally inimical to all religions and all countries.

The terror spread by the arms of the order was so great throughout the Levant, that the different Franciscans of Europe, to whom was intrusted the care of the holy sepulchre on Mount Calvary, Bethlem, and other holy places in Palestine, having made complaints to the pope that the schismatic Eastern Greeks had taken possession of their posts, his holiness had recourse to the grand-master and council, to employ some proper means to make these usurpers repent their conduct. They immediately resolved to give no quarter to any vessel belonging to these schismatic Greeks, as long as they continued to usurp the place of the Franciscans in the guardianship of the holy sepulchre.

Such daily losses (1632) both by sea and land must, according to all calculation, greatly diminish the inhabitants of Malta. The fact, however, was otherwise; and, thanks to the continual benedictions bestowed upon them, and to the paternal cares of a wise administration, the population of Malta increased in a manner unexampled in history. An enumeration of the inhabitants of Malta and Goza was taken in 1632, when, without reckoning the knights, &c. of the order, the ecclesiastics and officers of the holy brotherhood, the number amounted to fifty one thousand seven hundred and fifty, including men, women, and children.

In the year 1559, after the raising the famous siege of Malta, the island only contained ten thousand inhabitants: it will therefore be seen by this calculation, that, in the space of seventy-three years, the population was become five times more considerable.

CHAP. V.

Lascaris Grand-Master. Famine in Malta. War between France and Spain. Malta finds great Difficulty in preserving its Neutrality. The Maltese Batteries fire on a French Ship. Consequences which ensue. The Grand-Seignor declares War against the Order. Defensive Preparations. Count D'Arpajon's Conduct, together with that of some other Noblemen. The Order rewards their Services by Grants to their Families. Siege of Candia. Malta sends constant Reinforcements to the besieged. Junction of the Maltese Galleys with the Venetian Fleet. The Pope and Inquisitor make fresh Pretensions. The Order engaged in a War which took Place between Christian Powers. The Jesuits driven out of the Island by the younger Knights. New Fortifications erected. Acquisition of St. Christopher and other American Islands, which are afterwards sold by the Order. Disputes concerning Precedence at the Court of Spain between the Maltese and Tuscan Ambassadors; and likewise relative to the Order of Salute between Malta and the Republic of Genoa.

LASCARIS, a descendant of the counts of Vintimiglia, sprung from the emperors of Constantinople, succeeded the grand-master Anthony De Paule*. Such at that time was the scarcity in Malta, that he was obliged to supply the island with grain, which, in consequence of the viceroy of Sicily objecting to corn being sent out of the island, was not very easy to procure. The general of the galleys did, however, at last prevail on the viceroy to part with six

* Died June 7, 1636.

thousand salmes, free from all taxes and export duties. But the scarcity became so much greater the following year, that the Sicilian government not only refused to export corn, but laid an embargo on all Maltese vessels on their entrance into any of the ports of that island. These inimical proceedings on the part of the officers of his catholic majesty, were caused by the war which then subsisted between France and Spain; many French knights on board French vessels or galleys having taken some considerable prizes close to the Maltese ports. The grand-master was undoubtedly very far from culpable in this affair, he having forbidden all the knights indiscriminately ever to take up arms against any Christian power whatsoever; and had even written to the king of France in very express terms, representing that the knights on board his majesty's ships had taken some Sicilian vessels close to Malta, which not only interrupted the commerce between the two islands, but greatly incensed the ministers of the king of Spain, who publicly declared that these overt acts were committed with the knowledge and consent of the council of the order.

The situation of the grand-master, during the whole course of this war, was extremely embarrassing. An attempt was made to stop two Maltese galleys at Syracuse; and the governor of that place went so far as to fire upon them when they were leaving the port (1637).

This extraordinary conduct in the Spaniards, who were constant witnesses of the services rendered their sovereigns by the order in the defence of their dominions, gave great offence to all Eu-

rope ; and the Italian courts, in particular, declared, that the Maltese galleys had never before been fired upon but by corsairs and infidels.

The duke de Montalto, viceroy of Sicily, fearing, with reason, that reports of this nature, together with the just complaints of the grand-master, might reach his sovereign, reprobated the conduct of the governor of Syracuse ; and, in order to make some satisfaction for what had passed, promised to send corn to Malta, which, however, did not prevent the famine from being very distressing in that island ; so much so, indeed, that the inhabitants absolutely forced a Flemish vessel, laden with two thousand salmes of corn, which had taken refuge in Malta during a storm, to sell its cargo ; and by this means they obtained a temporary relief (1650). Nothing affected the order more sensibly during this scarcity, than being refused the liberty of making biscuits in Sicily for the use of their navy. But happily for Malta, Don Juan of Austria presently took off this prohibition. Notwithstanding this mark of favour, the Spanish ministers became every day more and more irritated at the continual prizes made by French vessels, the greatest part of which were commanded by knights of that nation : they therefore ordered all their possessions in Sicily to be sequestered, and likewise prohibited anew the transport of any provisions to Malta, or the entry of any Maltese vessel into their ports.

The grand-master and council, surprised at such severe proceedings, endeavoured to soften the king of Spain, by again forbidding the knights to engage in any armaments fitted out against Christian

princes; and the agents of the order, at the court of France, renewed their entreaties to his Christian majesty, not to permit his navy to attack the Spaniards in the canal of Malta, nor close to the coast of Sicily. The grand-master likewise issued the most positive orders to the commanders in the different ports of Malta and Goza, not to permit the approach of any privateers; nor by any means allow them to remain in any of those parts. In consequence of these orders, the chevalier De la Carte, with a French vessel under his command, having endeavoured to enter the creek of Marsa Sirocco, after a fierce engagement in the canal of Goza, was forced to put back by some batteries raised on purpose to keep of all ships of that description (1651). This affair, which might perhaps have been attended with very serious consequences, being communicated to Don Juan of Austria, who acted as generalissimo for the king of Spain, he immediately re-established free commerce between Malta and Sicily.

The court of France, being already extremely offended with the grand-master for having forbidden the ships of his Christian majesty to disembark their crews in the Maltese ports, was still more irritated at the intelligence that a French fleet being driven into the canal by a dreadful storm, had been not only refused shelter in any of the ports, but even fired upon from the batteries. Such a conduct was generally esteemed high treason by the French ministry; and it was thought worthy of no less a punishment than the seizure of all the possessions belonging to the order in France, and annexing them to the crown lands. The grand-master alleged for excuse,

the engagement entered into by his predecessors with Charles V., to which the kings of France had given their consent; and he accordingly sent the act of infeoffment of Malta to that court.

This affair was at last most amicably settled by the skilful management of the bailiff of Souere*, and the interest of monsieur De Lomenie, secretary of state; one of whose sons had just been received a minor into the order; and on whom the grand-master, in acknowledgement of the good offices of his father, conferred, by special favour, the commandery of La Rochelle.

These troublesome affairs settled, and the distresses occasioned by famine in some degree removed, the order next suffered from want of money. To procure a supply of so necessary an article, Lascaris gave orders for a fresh coinage, to which he annexed an ideal value; and this in order to pay the workmen who were constantly employed in the new fortifications at the City La Valetta, which, as we have already mentioned, were directed by an engineer named Florian, whose unremitting zeal, and great talents, the grand-master rewarded by honouring him with the habit of the order. At the same time (1638), the commander de Charott, general of the galleys, being on a cruise, fell in with three ships of war from Tripoli, convoying twenty transports or merchantmen. The Maltese general never waited to give them his broadside, but prepared to

* The king of France, it is said, addressed the Maltese ambassador in the following terms: "I am very willing to forget all that is past; but, another time, do not let the gunners who serve your batteries take quite so good aim"—alluding to the first cannon-shot having split the staff which supported the French flag.

board them, and accordingly made a disposition for that purpose. The engagement was bloody, and the infidels defended themselves with unexampled courage. The admiral of this small flotilla was a renegado from Marseilles, called La Becasse, who had formerly, and for a great length of time, acted as pilot to the vessels belonging to the order. His wife and children were still at Malta; but he, having been taken and carried into Tripoli, turned Mahometan, and, engaging in the service of the infidels, was, through his valour and skill, raised to the rank of admiral. He bore the name of Ibrahim Rais, and at the time of this action had on board his vessels four hundred and fifty soldiers, all chosen troops. Châteauneuf, who commanded the *St. Peter*, immediately engaged him. His brother, Marcel de Châteauneuf, first boarded the vessel; and the admiral was instantly taken by a number of knights, who, sabre in hand, put all the Turkish soldiers to death. Marcel de Châteauneuf, having seized on La Becasse, dragged him to his brother, whose pilot he had formerly been. The commanders of the other galleys were equally successful, and the whole of the flotilla was taken, not one single vessel escaping. The general of the galleys made three hundred and twelve slaves, and then entered triumphantly into Malta, with the twenty vessels richly laden. The order unfortunately lost several knights in this engagement, particularly the chevaliers De Viontessancourt, De Malmaison, De Saubolin, De Biacourt, D'Isnard, De Piccolomini, and De Sousa. A still greater number were wounded, which, among warriors so careless of life, where glory was concerned, can never be a matter of surprise.

The prince of Hesse-Darmstadt, general of the galleys, boldly ventured to carry off six rovers, which were riding in the port of Goletta (1640). He was preceded by Boisbaudran, who, perceiving one of the Maltese galleys in danger of being taken by the barbarians, rushed into the midst of the infidels, and, at the risk of being surrounded by their galleys, forced them to quit their hold: after which he returned to Malta, where he was received with every mark of distinction due to such noble conduct and so gallant an action.

A most formidable engagement took place between three galleys and a very large galleon, which, in order to deceive the knights, and induce them to commence an attack, had kept its artillery concealed (1644). The *St. Mary*, being a perfectly well-equipped vessel, led on the other two galleys; and her commander, the chevalier De Piancourt, disregarding the prodigious difference between a single galley and so large a vessel, instantly prepared to board her. The other galleys came to her assistance, and, after an action which lasted seven hours, the infidels, perceiving their captain and principal officers slain, surrendered to the conquering arms of the order. Nine knights lost their lives in this engagement, among whom were the gallant Boisbaudran, the chevalier Piancourt, and Robert and Nicholas de Boufflers. (These two brothers were novices, and extremely promising youths). Six hundred Turks were slain; and among the prisoners was a lady of the seraglio, who, from a principle of devotion, was going to Mecca, accompanied by a young child, supposed to be the son of the

grand-seignor Ibrahim. This boy afterwards entered the order of St. Dominic, and was always distinguished by the name of Father Ottoman.

Ibrahim, enraged at the loss of this galleon, which contained immense riches, immediately dispatched a herald (1645) to declare war against Malta. Every possible care was immediately taken to put the forces of the order in a proper state to resist the powerful army of the grand-seignor. Provisions and ammunition were procured from all quarters; and the moment it was known throughout Christendom that Malta was threatened by the infidels, several nobles levied troops, and offered their services to the order. Lewis count D'Arpajon distinguished himself particularly on this occasion. He armed all his vessels, raised two thousand men at his own expense, loaded several vessels with ammunition and provisions, and, accompanied by a great number of gentlemen, his relations and friends, set sail for Malta; where he presented this reinforcement to the grand-master, who could scarcely have hoped for such a supply even from a powerful sovereign. Lascaris thought he could not offer a less reward for such important services, than the commission of commander-in-chief of the land forces, with liberty to make choice of three lieutenant-generals, to act under his orders in those places where it was impossible for him to go in person.

The hostile menaces of the Turks proved only a false alarm, the grand-seignor turning his thoughts towards the island of Candia, which he besieged, and took Canea.

When count D'Arpajon left Malta, the grand-master, with

the consent and by the advice of the council, issued a special bull, by which he granted permission to the count and his eldest son to wear the golden-cross of the order; as also, that one of the younger branches of his family should be received a minor, free from all duties of passage, and, after his profession, should be honoured with the grand-cross; and that the heads and eldest sons of their house should be allowed the privilege of quartering the cross on their shields and in their arms. The same favour was bestowed on two brothers, Giles and John-Francis de Fay, counts de Maulevrier, Norman gentlemen; and on seignor Francis Bollo, a Neapolitan, who, at his own expense, had brought a great number of soldiers to the relief of Malta.

The war carried on by the grand-seignor against Candia, may with great propriety be termed a war with Malta; for the order never failed to send a squadron every year for the defence of that island. The Venetians, who on the slightest pretences were continually sequestering the possessions of the order, and who had but just taken off the last sequestration, saw with surprise the Maltese squadron arrive the first to the assistance of Canea. This place was defended (1649) by Mocenigo, commander-in-chief; Morosino, provveditor and commander of the land forces; and the commander Balbiano, general of the Maltese galleys, a man of great experience, and a constant attendant in the council. The latter being present when the subject in debate was the danger occasioned by the Turks having taken a half-moon at the bastion of Bethlem, immediately offered to regain those works. The offer was instantly accepted,

and he placed himself at the head of thirty knights and a hundred of the bravest soldiers from the admiral's galley. These latter were commanded by the chevalier De Sales, a nephew of the pious bishop so well known by the name of St. Francis de Sales. It was night when the attack was made, and the knights, taking advantage of the darkness, mounted the half-moon, killing every one who opposed them. The Turks, thus surprised, awoke, and defended themselves at first with great resolution; but, being too few in number to resist the knights, the greatest part betook themselves to flight, and the rest leaped off the parapet, leaving the half-moon to its fate. Their general, shocked at so shameful a desertion, reproached his troops with their cowardice, and determined to attack the Christians the following day. In order to succeed more easily in this enterprise, he sprang a mine, which blew up several knights, among whom was De Sales, who, falling back into the mine, was almost buried in the ruins. This, however, did not discourage them; and the Turks found the works so well defended, that they did not dare attempt to force them.

The Maltese galleys were equally serviceable to the republic by sea; joining their fleet every year, and particularly distinguishing themselves in two engagements (1657), which took place in the Dardanelles, where the Venetians gained a very signal victory over the Turks. Their general attributed the success of the last battle to the manœuvres and valour of the Maltese squadron, to whom he dispatched a brig purposely to congratulate them on the occasion.

The pope, the bishop of Malta, and the inquisitor, were continually endeavouring to extend their jurisdiction. The bishop

bestowed the tonsure and *patente* on any youth in the island who presented himself for that purpose. These new ecclesiastics made no scruple of absenting themselves from the companies in which they were enrolled, and refused to perform any of the military duties imposed on the inhabitants by the grand-master and council. The king of Spain and the pope were obliged to interpose in this affair, and the conduct of the bishop was severely blamed by both.

Urban VIII. was less favourable to the order than any other sovereign pontiff. He constantly violated its rules; and just at that time had granted the ancient commanders permission to dispose by will of their fortunes; which entirely ruined the common treasury, by depriving it of their effects. This pope made a request to the grand-master (1643), which ought to have been refused without the smallest hesitation, but which, on the contrary, was immediately granted by Lascaris; with restrictions indeed, though such as were very insufficient to justify a compliance so extremely blameable in every respect. The pope having discovered that a league was formed between several Italian sovereigns to prevent his invading the dominions of the duke of Parma, applied to the grand-master to send the galleys of the order to his assistance, which was instantly done. But the allied princes, from a just spirit of vengeance, seized on all the possessions belonging to the order in their different domains, and did not yield them to their ancient owners, till it was represented to them that the grand-master had been forced to obey the pope, as the first superior of the knights of Malta; but that the commanders of the galleys had been secretly

ordered to remain only on the defensive, according to the spirit of the order, which had ever indiscriminately respected the Christian flag. A short time afterwards the same pope made another request, which was refused, though it was undoubtedly of much less importance than that above-mentioned; which I must always think the greatest political error the order ever committed; I may indeed say, *the only one*. It is impossible to repeat too often, that its very essence consists in being perfectly impartial to every country which furnishes it with knights, and consequently adds to the revenue. The moment it becomes inimical to any power, that prince has an undoubted right to prevent his subjects from entering into the order, or transferring their property to Malta.

The pope, supported by the Spanish ministers, requested the grand-master to bestow the grand-cross on Don Philip, son of the king of Tunis (1646), this young prince having turned Christian; but the council strongly opposed the request, feeling the greatest repugnance at the idea of one of the most dignified posts in the order being filled by a Moor whose conversion was very doubtful.

An affair, of a very different nature (1639) from those just mentioned, had some years before engrossed, for a short time, the attention of the convent. Some young knights, who had just ceased acting as pages, disguised themselves as jesuits during the carnival. This offended these holy fathers, who made their complaints to Lascaris, and he immediately apprehended some of the youths; on which their companions forced the prison gates, and released them from confinement: after which they proceeded in a body to the college,

threw the furniture out of the windows, and compelled the grand-master to send the jesuits out of the island; eleven of whom were accordingly embarked; but four contrived to secrete themselves in the city La Valetta, where they remained. The council and elder knights were not very sorry for this banishment; the jesuits having the art of governing the grand-master, whom they prejudiced against them.

Notwithstanding the want of specie had made it necessary to coin money of an ideal value, and famine had cruelly ravaged the island, the grand-master built Fort St. Agatha, on the coast of Melecca. This he stocked with provisions, and with every thing necessary to prevent the corsairs from making a descent on that coast, which there was constantly reason to apprehend. The order also built a seventh galley, and made acquisitions in America; but of these they were eager to dispose, from the great expenses attending the possession of them. The chevalier De Poincy, who was commandant of the island of St. Christopher (at that time the property of a company of merchants, who held it under the crown of France), persuaded the grand-master to make this purchase; and M. de Souvré, the Maltese ambassador at Paris, acted so ably in this affair, that St. Christopher was sold to the order, by a contract made at Paris and ratified in Malta. The order likewise wished to enter into treaty for the islands of Guadaloupe and Martinico.

The purchase of St. Christopher was on two conditions: the first, that the order should engage to pay the inhabitants of the island all such monies as the company of merchants, the late pro-

proprietors, might possibly owe them; and the second, that the venders should receive the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand French livres, that is to say, about five thousand pounds sterling. In this bargain was not only included the fee-simple of St. Christopher's, together with that of the neighbouring islands of St. Bartholomew, St. Martin, and Santa Cruz; but also the plantations, black slaves, merchandise, ammunition, and provisions: all which was confirmed by the letters patent of Louis XIV. On the death of the bailiff de Poincy, the order thought it more prudent to dispose of possessions which scarcely sufficed to pay off the debts contracted by the bailiff to support the dignity of his government. They were therefore sold to a company of merchants, who, under the king's protection, settled themselves in these islands in 1665. Who could possibly foresee, that, a hundred and thirty years afterwards, proprietors would be found in the very same spot, who could pay the whole purchase-money given by Malta from one year's revenue of a single plantation?

The grand-dukes of Tuscany were become so powerful, from their alliances with different crowned heads, that they raised their pretensions to the greatest height (1653); and on the entry of the imperial ambassador at Madrid, the abbé Icontré, their minister, thought proper to claim precedence before the bailiff Don Juan de Tordesillas, ambassador from Malta, who spurned at such a procedure, and presented a memorial to his Catholic majesty, representing that the mi-

nisters from the order of Malta had from time immemorial taken place of all those who were not deputed by kings, and who were not admitted whilst the king of Spain was at chapel. This dispute was decided in favour of the Maltese ambassador.

The order had about the same time another dispute with the Genoese, which had nearly been attended with very serious consequences. These republicans attacked five Maltese galleys in their port; the said galleys, on entering it, having only saluted the city and the galley of the Spanish admiral: those belonging to Genoa expected the same mark of respect, and the knights having refused it, the magistrates sent word to the commander, that they would fire upon his galleys and sink them; the general was therefore obliged, in order to save his squadron, to give them satisfaction. On leaving the port he perceived a Genoese vessel, and immediately sent to examine it; but finding it to be only a merchant ship, he contented himself with tearing down the flag, on which the arms of the republic were displayed, and waited till he met either galleys or men-of-war, on which he might revenge the insult he had so lately received.

The extraordinary conduct of the republic of Genoa was no sooner known at Malta, than the council resolved not to admit another Genoese into the order till proper satisfaction was made for this violent attack on the Maltese squadron.

CHAP. VI.

The Inquisitor endeavours in vain to prevent the Election of Redin. Towers built for the Defence of the Island. Short Duration of the Mastership of Clermont. Raphael and Nicholas Cotoner successively elected; their Characters. The Galleys of the Order sail with the French Squadron to the Coast of Africa. Gallant Actions performed by the Chevaliers Crainville, Tremicourt, and Hocquincourt. Tremicourt's noble Conduct and glorious Death. The Republic of Venice grants peculiar Privileges to the Knights. Surrender of Candia. New Fortifications erected. The Plague makes dreadful Ravages in Malta.

SCARCELY had Lascaris breathed his last (1657), when the inquisitor began to raise disturbances, by his interference in the election of a grand-master. He produced a brief from the pope, dated the 9th of December, 1656, in which his holiness commanded him, on the demise of Lascaris, to declare, that all knights who should be convicted of having canvassed, bribed, or employed promises or threats, either for the election or exclusion of any particular person, should be not only incapable of being chosen themselves, but of giving their votes in favour of another. The pope likewise interdicted, in the same brief, the election of the bailiff de Redin, viceroy of Sicily, as a man of bad character, and guilty of simony. The inquisitor certainly intended by this declaration to prevent the possibility of Redin's being elected to the grand-mastership, but it produced a very different effect; for the knights of his party thought

themselves obliged in honour to adhere to their first resolution: and notwithstanding the inquisitor again declared by his secretary, that Redin, from his ambition and the unworthy measures he had pursued to succeed in his election, was entirely excluded from the grand-mastership, the majority of votes was in his favour, and he was duly elected.

The inquisitor Odi, in despair at this event, protested against it: and Redin, in order to frustrate his designs, sent the pope the verbal process of his election; declaring at the same time, that if he was personally obnoxious to his holiness, he was very ready to resign his newly-acquired dignity. The pope, unwilling to give way to the dark passions of his inquisitor, and hurt that he should have compromised his authority, and that in opposition to a knight who was not only the minister of the king of Spain, but greatly esteemed by the majority of the knights, sent a brief to Odi, in which he declared his approbation of the election, and commanded the inquisitor to go in person and acquaint both Redin and the council, that he acknowledged him as a legitimate prince of Malta. Thus was the man who had opposed the election with the most violent fury compelled to proclaim it, and act as a herald on the occasion.

During the short reign of Redin, the coasts of the island were put in a state of defence against the attempts which the infidel Corsairs still continued to make; and towers were erected at certain distances along the shore, to which the

peasants of every separate canton repaired, and mounted guard alternately. The grand-master also established a fund from his own private property, for the subsistence of those employed for this purpose, and who watched during the night*.

The reign of Clermont was of still shorter duration than that of Redin: three months after his election he departed this life, universally regretted and esteemed by the order †.

He was succeeded by Raphael Cotoner, who, during the whole of his mastership, continued to send relief to the island of Candia; and all the reinforcements dispatched by other powers were constantly convoyed by the Maltese galleys. Louis XIV. assisted the Candians with a general and upwards of three thousand men: indeed, the relief sent to this place would have been much more considerable, and, according to all appearances, have saved the island, had it not been for a matter of etiquette, which occasioned its being most cruelly sacrificed. The Genoese had made an offer of a very powerful supply both of troops and money, and that on condition only of being treated as equals by the Venetians. The two republics had for a considerable time disputed this delicate affair; and the Venetians, jealous of their superiority, which their rivals seemed to wish to emulate, refused to purchase the offered relief, at the price of establishing equality between them.

* Redin died February 6, 1660.

† June, 1660.

The Maltese battalion distinguished itself particularly in the attack made on Santa Veneranda, near Suda, and seconded the efforts of the Christian army, which engaged the infidels sometimes successfully, and sometimes with great loss; it could however never retake Candia, which might properly be termed the arsenal of the Turks.

For the second time since the institution of the order, one brother succeeded another in the grand-mastership*. This dignity was successively possessed by Raphael and Nicholas Cotoner, two distinguished persons, whose characters I will here present to the readers.

The former was a prince truly worthy of the place he filled; prudent, pious, and magnificent in his expences. His only objects during his life were the defence of the Christian faith, the honour of the order, and the general welfare of the knights under his protection. Those of his own language erected a magnificent mausoleum, in which his remains were deposited, in the Arragonian chapel. The second, who by his superior parts had obtained the grand-mastership for his brother, owed his elevation to that dignity entirely to his own merit; and the same superiority of genius, during the whole of his government, rendered him always respected by those about him. Skilful in the art of negociating, hardy in forming enterprises, and prudent in executing them, he had a friend in every knight of the order; careful in the choice of

* Raphael Cotoner died October 20, 1663.

his confidants, and without a favourite, he ensured himself a most glorious reign.

The Barbary corsairs (1664) having extended their depredations to the coast of Provence, Louis XIV., though at the height of his glory, and possessed of a powerful navy, thought the assistance of the Maltese squadron would be necessary against them. He accordingly requested relief from the grand-master, who sent his fleet to join the French at Mahon.

In order to curb more effectually the insolence of these Africans, and to check their progress, the king of France was advised to establish a colony on the coast of Barbary, to erect a fortress and open a port, which might serve as an asylum for his vessels, and likewise give information when the squadron of the infidels set sail on an expedition. The village of Gigeri was fixed upon for this purpose. It was situated close to the sea, between Algiers and Bugia, fifteen miles from each; and near this village was an old castle, built on the top of an almost inaccessible mountain. Louis XIV. made choice of the duke of Beaufort, high-admiral of France, to carry his plan into execution; and the two squadrons having, as already mentioned, met at Mahon, the Christians arrived at the destined spot, where they landed all their troops without interruption, and presently laid the foundation of the fort they had received orders to erect. The Moors, alarmed at an enterprise which they felt was intended to keep them in subjection, immediately took up arms, and with cannon-shot destroyed the works. The

duke of Beaufort, whose forces were too inconsiderable to enable him to resist the numerous enemies which poured upon him from every side, resolved to reembark. This design could not be formed so secretly, but that the Moors discovered his intentions, and four hundred men who composed the rear guard were almost all killed or made prisoners: thus ended an expedition as ill planned as executed.

Some years afterwards (1673) the French commanders and the knights had a dispute about giving the salute; and this delicate affair, in regard to a sovereign so jealous of his privileges as Lewis XIV., was managed with equal prudence and skill by the Maltese ambassador, who succeeded in engaging that monarch to decide against himself, and fix the right of the order relative to the salute, which no power has, from that time, ever attempted to dispute. The unfortunate campaign of the duke of Beaufort was followed by the most brilliant actions performed by the knights, which every day rendered the Maltese flag more and more formidable to the infidels.

The chevaliers Crainville and Tremicourt, who commanded the one a forty-gun ship and the other a frigate of twenty, met a caravan in the Levant, consisting of ten ships and twelve saicks, sailing from Alexandria to Constantinople. The comparative strength of the adversary only tended to inspire these two knights with fresh ardour; and they instantly brought up their little squadron in the centre of that of the enemy, sunk some, took four of the richest, two of the smallest, and dis-

persed the remainder. The chevalier d'Hocquincourt likewise, nearly about the same time, performed an action of almost incredible heroism, to the everlasting honour of his memory. This knight, while at anchor off the Dolphin island, saw himself blocked up by thirty-three of the grand-signior's galleys carrying troops to the isle of Candia. The flag-officer commanding this force landed, and, under his orders, showers of arrows poured upon the Maltese vessels from the most skilful of the archers. In the mean time the broadsides of the Turkish galleys were opened upon his ship; and the infidels, having succeeded in carrying away her rigging, prepared to board her both at the head and the stern; but Hocquincourt, as if invulnerable, defended himself on all sides, and, with a crippled vessel and crew, at length fairly beat off the Turk. This obstinate resistance greatly incensed the infidel general; who, ashamed of the slender efforts made by his galleys, forced them to open their line, and leave him a passage free to bear down on the Maltese vessel: at the same time he caused his crew to push forward his galley with all their force; but fortunately the violence of this effort threw Hocquincourt's ship out of the port, and a favourable wind springing up, he soon gained the nearest Christian port, after having sunk several galleys, and killed six hundred soldiers.

An act of such rare courage merited a happier fate than that which, a short time afterwards, befel this illustrious knight and truly Christian hero; for in the same campaign, being on board the same vessel, a violent gale of wind forced her on a rock near

the isle *Scarpanto*, where she was wrecked, and he perished with her.

The fate of the brave Tremicourt was equally disastrous: this knight was the brother of him already mentioned as cruising under the Maltese flag. After having captured a forty-gun ship from the Turks, he armed her afresh, and proceeded with a convoy commanded by the chevalier de Barre to the Alexandrian sea, where he descried two *sultans* laden with merchandise: he immediately made all possible sail to prevent their reaching the port, and being the faster vessel singled out the headmost, fired a broadside into her, and prepared to board her, but received a shot through the head from a musquet ball, and dropped upon the deck: this, however, did not prevent his exhorting his officers and crew to continue the action.

The infidels, in despair and finding it impossible to escape, the Christians having grappled them, attempted to blow up the vessel, hoping at least they should all perish together; but the chevalier de la Barre perceiving the dangerous situation of his friend, immediately abandoned the second *sultan* which he was on the point of taking, and, flying to his assistance, saved the vessel, but the valiant Tremicourt expired in his arms.

His brother, the chevalier de Tremicourt, seemed to have survived him for the sole purpose of revenging his death and surpassing him in glory. Being attacked by five large Tripoline vessels, he defended himself with such undaunted courage, that, after having dismasted two of them and killed numbers of their

crews, the infidels, finding it impossible to take him, gave up the attack. But, alas! this glorious action was too soon followed by a still more glorious death. Overtaken by a dreadful storm, and driven on the coast of Barbary, his vessel was dashed in pieces, and he himself made prisoner. The Moors, delighted at having so celebrated a warrior in their power, carried him first to Tripoly, where the extraordinary defence he had made against their squadron was the universal subject of discourse, and thence to Adrianople, into the presence of the sultan.

Mahomet III. reigned at that time. On perceiving Tremicourt, he immediately exclaimed, "Art thou the man who, with a single ship, engaged five of my largest Tripoline vessels?"—"The same," replied the undaunted knight.—"What country gave thee birth?" continued Mahomet.—"France," replied Tremicourt.—"Thou art then a deserter," said the sultan, "for the most solemn peace exists between the king of France and myself."—"It is true I am a Frenchman," answered Tremicourt, "but I am likewise a knight of Malta, and by that profession am obliged to venture my life against the enemies of the Christian faith."

The grand-signior, struck with such generosity and spirit in so young a man (Tremicourt being scarcely twenty-one years old), employed every possible method to seduce him, and engage him to enter into his service. The place of his confinement bore no resemblance to a prison: he was treated not only with

gentleness, but in a most distinguished manner; and every advantageous offer which could captivate youth was made to induce him to change his religion; he was even promised the hand of a princess of the Ottoman race, and at the same time to be appointed bashaw or high admiral. All these splendid offers he refused with indignation, and resisted temptation with the same courage with which he had so frequently triumphed over the infidels.

Mahomet, violently incensed at his firmness, thought severe methods might probably prove more successful. He ordered him therefore to be thrown into a dreadful dungeon; and during fifteen days he was not only cruelly beaten, but put to the torture, and even his limbs mutilated. All was however of no avail; for this noble disciple of Christ Jesus employed himself solely in invoking his holy name, and imploring the favour of dying for the faith. After so many fruitless attempts to shake his fortitude, he was at last sentenced to lose his head: but his body was not suffered to remain at the place of execution; for the grand-signior, wishing to remove it far from the veneration with which it would naturally inspire the Christians, ordered it to be thrown into the river which washes the walls of Adrianople.

In the mean time (1672) the Maltese galleys were constantly employed in the war then existing between the Turks and the island of Candia. The Venetians were so well satisfied with the repeated services they received from the order,

that they gave permission to the knights to appear armed, not only at Venice, but in every other part of their dominions;—a privilege which the natural subjects of the republic have never been allowed. Powerful supplies were likewise sent by all the Christian princes:—the duke de Navailles appeared with seven thousand French; the duke de Waldeck with three thousand men; four thousand five hundred Germans arrived at the same place; the Teutonic order contributed a company of a hundred and fifty chosen and well-armed soldiers; and Malta furnished a battalion of four hundred men.

The grand-vizier Achmet, tired out with the very long duration of this war, determined to repair in person to Candia, whither he was accompanied by a considerable body of troops. He immediately laid siege to the capital of the island, which could not possibly resist the force of his arms. The Maltese battalion, after having suffered a considerable loss, thought proper to retire from before a place which in a very few days had consumed most of the exterior supplies, the remains of which were saved with the greatest difficulty.

The taking the isle of Candia (Sept. 16, 1669), joined to the peace concluded between the Venetians and Turks, alarmed the grand-master with the idea, that they might be tempted to turn their arms against Malta. In order to make a proper defence against such an attack, the grand-master and council requested the duke of Savoy to send them a celebrated engineer named Valpego, who accordingly, by the duke's command,

arrived in Malta. He caused new fortifications to be erected, the first of which was called the Cotoner. This consisted in a large inclosure filled with bastions, intended as a retreat for the inhabitants, in case the island should be invaded by the Turks. Some new works were afterwards added to La Floriana, with a false braye and two bulwarks, the one on the coast of port Musceit, and the other towards the grand port. To shut out the entry of the latter more effectually, another fort was erected, named Ricasoli, from one of the commanders, who had presented the order with thirty thousand crowns towards this work. The grand-master some time after established a fund from his own private property, for the maintenance of this fort. A lazaretto was likewise built at port Marsa-Musceit, which has ever been regarded as one of the completest and best-regulated institutions of the kind.

In the former part of this history mention has been made of the change of religion which took place in England, and of the manner in which the sovereigns of that country had deprived the order of its possessions and persecuted its members. This conduct, it may be thought, must have left the deepest impressions of resentment for such proceedings; but those whose blood was shed for Jesus Christ, and in the cause of a religion which constantly preaches the forgiveness of injuries, had forgotten every thing but the loss the family of knights had experienced in one of its favoured children. Therefore, no sooner did they hear of the war declared be-

tween Charles II. of England and the court of Tripoly, than all the ports and arsenals of Malta were opened for the reception of the English and their navy, and supplies of provision and ammunition offered to the crews. They were there received into an hospitable land, which presented every moment to their view monuments erected to the memory of their ancestors, whose places in the order had never been entirely filled up; for if at any future period another language were to be created, those who composed it were held to give it the title of English, and that in preference to their own.

Charles II. was perfectly sensible of the hospitable reception given to his admiral and fleet, and accordingly wrote in the most obliging manner to the grand-master.

May this noble conduct be ever the only vengeance taken by the order! thus proving to its most cruel persecutors the virtue and real utility of those whom they have employed every method to annihilate.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned lazaretto, a dreadful plague afflicted the island, and destroyed a considerable number of its inhabitants. The knights suffered so cruelly by this misfortune, that in the caravans, when each galley contained twenty-one of these warriors, no more remained after this ravaging malady than eleven for that of the admiral, and nine for the other galleys.

CHAP. VII.

Caraffa, an Italian, elected to the Grand-Mastership. League formed by the Christian Powers, and by Malta, against the Turks. The Maltese Squadrons go on different Expeditions. Capture of Old Navarino, and of Napoli di Romania. Generosity of the Grand-Master Vignacourt. Earthquake at Augusta. The Order sends Relief to the Inhabitants of that Place. The Disputes between Malta and Genoa settled through the Mediation of the Pope, who likewise puts an End to those occasioned by the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, in the Reign of Perellos. Statue erected in Honour of the Pope. The Sultana Bingham taken by the Galleys. A Squadron of first-rate Men-of-war re-established in Malta; its successful Expedition to Orem and the Coasts of Spain. Remarkable Conduct of the Commander de Langon; his Death. The Knights summoned to Malta. Reforms which take place. Zondodary appointed Grand-Master.

DURING the space of one hundred and twenty-eight years, there had been no grand-master elected of the Italian language; but Cotoner was now succeeded by Caraffa, a Neapolitan knight, who applied himself most assiduously to the regulation of affairs of the order, and to the completion of the different fortifications begun by his predecessor*. He almost entirely rebuilt fort St. Elmo, and put St. Angelo into a much better state of defence. He likewise interested himself extremely in

* Died 29th of April, 1680.

the war carried on by the Christian powers at that time against the infidels. The Turks having advanced close to Italy, pope Innocent XI. formed a league with the emperor, the king of Poland, and the republic of Venice, against this common enemy of the Christian faith; upon which, the Maltese squadron (1684) immediately put to sea, and cruising on the coasts of Barbary spread terror among the infidels, and drove them from the islands of Previsa and St. Maure. The knights who had joined the squadrons of Venice and the pope, distinguished themselves in the conquest of Corva (1685), and shone very conspicuously at the recapture of a fort, which the Turks had forced the Venetians to evacuate.

Several knights lost their lives at the sieges of Old and New Navarino, and likewise at that of the city of Modon; none of which places could hold out against such brave assailants. Napoli di Romania, the capital of the Morea, notwithstanding every possible effort employed by the serasquir for its relief, was obliged after a six-months' siege to open its gates to the confederate army. These last successes, however, were attended by the loss of nineteen knights, together with a great number of soldiers. But these campaigns, which it might be thought would have ruined the order, only increased its zeal for the cause, and in the next which took place, the grand-master himself equipped eight galleys. These spread universal alarm on the coast of Dalmatia, and being joined by the confederate fleets of Rome and Venice, took possession of Castel

Nuovo, a place of the greatest importance to the republic of Venice, since it absolutely insured to that government the free and unmolested trade of the whole Adriatic.

The bravery displayed by the knights in this enterprise induced pope Innocent XI. to write to the grand-master, to congratulate him on their distinguished conduct, and on the services they were continually rendering the different Christian powers. The brilliant victories obtained by the combined fleets, met, however, at last with a check, before the ramparts of the fortress Negropont (1689), where above twenty-nine of the bravest knights fell victims to the cause. Neither their undaunted valour nor that of their allies could succeed in carrying the fort, which they were at last obliged to abandon.

This loss affected the grand-master most sensibly, and, added to infirmities, contributed to shorten his days*. He was a man possessed of great military talents, joined to true religious humility, and an unfeigned love and attention for the poor.

The order had suffered so much in the different expeditions undertaken every year, that the widows, children, and relations of the brave Maltese, who had shed their blood in the same cause as the knights, were left in the most distressed circumstances. The new grand-master Adrian de Vignacourt liberally assisted them: the knights were also

* He died July 31, 1689.

eager to contribute to their necessities; and such was the universal benevolence, that it is scarcely possible to say who were the most worthy of admiration, he who gave so noble an example, or those who so generously followed it!

The munificence of Vignacourt on this occasion, did not prevent his giving attention to other objects. He built a fine arsenal for the galleys, enlarged the different storehouses, together with the ovens belonging to the order in Sicily. These were situated at Augusta, where all the biscuits were baked for the supply of the navy. This town was most unfortunately entirely destroyed by an earthquake (Jan. 11, 1693), which lasted three days, and which was even felt at Malta, where it did considerable damage. The moment the news arrived of the shocking situation to which the city of Augusta and its inhabitants were reduced, the Maltese, insensible to their own misfortunes, flew to the relief of those whose distresses called for their charitable assistance. Five galleys were immediately dispatched to Sicily, laden with every thing which could possibly contribute to alleviate the misery of these unfortunate people.

To sanctify this benevolent expedition, the grand-master put up public prayers throughout the island, and issued out an order for the observance of a three-days' fast. All public places were shut, and the usual diversions of the carnival prohibited for that year. Unfortunately for Sicily, a calamity of the same nature, in less than a century afterwards, called for the

assistance of the knights, who again appeared upon the scene, and performed the same charitable actions in an equally conspicuous manner.

Whilst some part of the knights were thus meritoriously employed at Augusta, the others were out at sea; and it was at this period (1694), whilst the members of the order were thus doubly occupied, that an attempt was made to weaken it by diminishing its possessions. The pope, the king of France, and the duke of Savoy, on pretext of the expences incurred by the different wars they were obliged to engage in, ordered a levy of subsidies to be raised on the property of the order; happily, however, these sovereigns soon acknowledged un-animously the privileges of the order, and immediately desisted from their attempt.

The pope, who had hitherto been unable to adjust the disputes which had taken place between the order and the republic of Genoa, was at last chosen arbitrator in the affair. His holiness's prudent conduct succeeded in reconciling two powers, which had been disunited by very trifling worldly motives, and which the strongest reasons both religious and political should constantly attach to each other. This reconciliation having taken place, several Genoese reassumed the habit of the order, which they truly regretted having been deprived of so great a length of time.

On the death of Vignacourt (February 4, 1694); the electors were divided into several factions; but Raymond Pe-

rellos* was at last chosen by the majority of votes. He succeeded to a prince who was particularly distinguished for piety and purity of life. The justice and benevolence of his character rendered him universally esteemed; and the only reproach which could possibly be made him was, that he was too much influenced by some favourites, who unfortunately, on more than one occasion, sacrificed the glory of the master who honoured him with his confidence to their own private interest.

The order, which had hitherto very little relation with any other Christian states but those in which it had property, was both delighted and astonished at being requested to step beyond such narrow limits, and to form fresh connections with other foreign powers. Sacchitti, the Maltese ambassador at Rome, wrote to his court that a Russian, Boyard, general of the Muscovite army and ambassador from Peter the First, had expressed a wish to visit Malta, and in an harangue made before pope Innocent XII. had spoken on the subject in terms particularly flattering to the knights; declaring, "that after having seen the most celebrated town in the universe, the holy city of God, the sacred relics of the principals of the holy apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, having likewise received the blessing of his holiness the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, he was resolved to visit the most famous heroes of the church militant, the sacred order of Malta †."

* An Arragonian.

† *Decrevi in animo famosissimos quoque Militantis Ecclesie invisere Heroes, nimirum Sacrum Melitensium Ordinem.*

The same dispatches gave an account of the honours paid this Boyard and his suite. His name was Kzeremetz*; and Peter the First not only made choice of the persons who were to accompany his envoy, but gave them particular instructions relative to the principal objects worthy their attention in their journey †. This great prince left Moscow with them, but took another route at Vienna, intending however to rejoin them on the road, but was prevented from executing his design by the affairs of his state, which immediately required his presence.

When the grand-master communicated to the council that he expected the arrival of so great a person, whom Sacchitti had even announced as a relation of the czar's, it was determined that he should be received in the most distinguished manner. The ceremonial of his reception was arranged as follows: It was resolved that the grand-master (of the family of Perellos) should go to meet him, accompanied by a num-

* Voltaire, in his History of the Empire of Russia under Peter the Great, chap. viii. says, that he was originally a Prussian, and spells his name *Sheremeto*, though by others he is called *Sheremetow*, *Sheremetoff*, and *Czeremetoff*. L'Evêque in his History of Russia, the edition printed in 1800, calls him *Cheremeteff*; but I have written his name according to the credentials sent by the czar to the grand-master, in which he is termed *Kzeremetz*. The original of his harangue to the pope is preserved in the Vatican; I have a copy of it; and in that he is called *Kremer*: but in his discourse to the grand-master, of which I have likewise a copy, he is named *Czeremeter*; and *Szerempsen* in the letter of recommendation sent by the emperor Leopold to the grand-master. Sebastian Paolo has printed it in his *Codex Diplom.* vol. II. page 373. He has also printed his credentials.

† L'Evêque pleasantly remarks, that one of the Russian nobles was so much the slave of the prejudices of his forefathers, that he never quitted his apartment in any of the towns through which they passed in this tour, and boasted on his return, that he had neither seen nor learned any thing.

ber of the knights; that, on his landing, he should be saluted at the Italian gate by the firing of twelve cannons; that the master of the horse of the grand-master's palace should attend him on the shore with the second state-coach, and divers other coaches and calashes; that the same retinue should follow him to the palace, and that the master of the horse should not quit him till he joined Perellos, who was to meet him in the antichamber nearest the great hall, and lead him by the right hand to the seat prepared for him in the most honourable place near the grand-master's, at whose table he should have precedence of the grand-crosses of the order; that in St. John's church he should be seated in the place usually occupied by the bishops, and be allowed two velvet cushions; that he should be lodged in the Cotoner palace; and that the same ceremonial should be observed at his departure, as on his arrival. It was proposed that his expences should be defrayed by the treasury of the order, but to this the grand-master would not consent, and resolved to pay them from his own privy purse. Such disinterested generous conduct merited, and obtained, the sincere thanks of the council.

Kzeremetz left Rome attended by his two brothers and his suite, and embarked at Naples (May 11, 1698) in two feluccas for Malta. They were met on their voyage by the galleys of the order cruising off cape Passaro; and the commander, chevalier de Cremeville, being ignorant of the decision of the council, received the Russian general on board the admiral's galley

by a discharge of only four cannons ; in other respects he was treated with the same distinction as if he had been acquainted with what had passed.

He landed in Malta on the 12th of May, when the above ceremonial was strictly observed. His harangue to the grand-master was in Latin *, and he began his discourse by declaring that he came from the Hyperborean Pole to pay homage to the celebrated warriors of the military order of Malta, and likewise to admire in the person of the grand-master, a chief as formidable to his enemies as beloved by his subjects ; he then proceeded by congratulating himself on being arrived at Malta, that angular rock which eclipsed the glory of the Turkish crescent whenever it presumed to approach its coasts, and concluded by thanking the grand-master for his flattering reception, and assuring him that he should not fail to give a faithful account of it to his master. Having finished his discourse, and received a most obliging answer, he delivered to Perellos a recommendatory letter from the emperor Leopold, enumerating the important services he had rendered him in his military capacity in different campaigns against the Turks, and the Khan of the Crimea ; and, at the same time, doing justice to his talents as negotiator in the treaties happily concluded between Poland and the emperor of Germany. On the back of the same letter was another from the czar of Muscovy address-

* He gave the master the title of *Serenissime Reverendissime Princeps*.

ed to the grand-master and council, in which he communicates to them his victories against the Turks, and the renewal of the league formed between himself, the emperor, and the republic of Venice, against the enemies of the Christian faith; he flatters himself that this intelligence will be agreeable to the knights, whom he hopes will take great care of his intimate friend the Boyard, *Boris Petrowitz Keremeter*; and finishes by assuring them, that his majesty the czar will never forget any kindness they may shew him.

The audience over, Kzeremetz was conducted to the Cottoner palace, the most spacious and magnificent dwelling in the city; and during the whole of his stay he was treated with the greatest hospitality and splendour. The 19th of May being fixed for his departure, he went to the grand-master's palace, where, with his two brothers, he was invited to dinner; but the grand-master first begged him to come into his apartment, and there acquainted him with the unanimous decree of council, by which he was requested to accept a cross the same as their own. To make this present of more value and still more sacred, it had been touched by a piece of the real cross, and by the hand of St. John the Baptist, patron of the order: two relics carefully preserved in the treasury. The grand-master added, that this mark of distinction had been unanimously decreed, still less on account of his illustrious birth than for his military exploits, his attachment to the order, and the sacrifice he had made in travelling from such a distant country pur-

posely to visit its chief place of residence ; and that for the future it was ordained, that the knights of the present time, and those who should succeed them, should ever remember him in their prayers, and make him a partaker in all their good works. Kzeremetz immediately knelt before Perellos, who placed round his neck a golden chain, from which was suspended the cross of Malta: this he received with every testimony of the profoundest respect; and at the same time he was presented with the decree of council, assigning the reasons of his being decorated with the order.

Having dined with the grand-master, on whose right hand he was placed, he embarked the same evening with his suite on board two Maltese galleys, which took him to Cape Passaro, where he was met by the galley of the pope, in which he continued his voyage.

Some authors of the present day* have imagined that this embassy of Peter the First's was to conceal some future plans of conquest which he had already formed: but I am far from suspecting that to be the case; for the conduct of this prince is very easily explained. Being convinced of the formidable power of the Ottoman arms—which, on the banks of the Pruth, were shortly to wither the laurels gathered at Pultava, and endanger his falling into the same hands as the conqueror of Narva—he thought it more prudent to be on good terms

* See *Recherches Hist. et Polit.* page 104.

with his former enemies; and having already concluded an alliance with Poland, the emperor of Germany, and the republic of Venice, it was therefore natural he should wish to encourage Malta to maintain a constant and desperate war against the infidels. His penetrating genius could not but prevent his entertaining a hope to conquer that island by force of arms; since he must be perfectly convinced that the Christian princes would oppose his success. The same genius must likewise point out to him, that Malta, no longer inhabited by the knights, would, in his hands, be a mere barren rock, incapable of yielding him the smallest advantage.

The ecclesiastical affairs, which had so frequently disturbed the peace of the order, had for some time remained in a perfectly tranquil state. They were again taken into consideration under the government of Perellos; but in a very different manner by the opposite parties,—the one side shewing the greatest moderation and obedience, whilst the other displayed the height of insolence and insubordination.

The disputes arisen between the bishop and the grand-prior of the church concerning their jurisdiction, which had only been appeased for a moment, were now judged by pope Innocent XII., and both parties submitted cheerfully to the decision of his holiness. The grand-master, from a principle of gratitude, erected a statue in honour of the sovereign pontiff, and placed it on the principal gate of the church of La Vit-

toria, with an inscription, stating the just reasons for such a tribute being paid to his merit*.

The reader is already acquainted with the original introduction of the tribunal of the inquisition into Malta, which conducted itself at first with so much moderation, that its existence was scarcely to be perceived. It never pretended to interfere with, or to oppose, an authority which was exercised (as has before been mentioned) by the most distinguished persons of the order; it was therefore never foreseen, that the inquisitors would in future *make themselves not only independent of, but insupportable to, a militia formed of the noblest blood of the Christian world, and to an order invested with sovereign power over its subjects.* This tribunal, which appeared so quiet at the beginning, only waited for an opportunity to break out with the greatest violence, and to form the most ambitious designs. The inquisitor Odi has already been seen attempting to exclude Redin from the grand-mastership; and now, one named Delci carried his pretensions to the highest degree of arrogance. He began by insolently demanding that the carriage of the grand-master should stop on meeting his; and afterwards insisted, that the infirmary belonging to the order should for the future be under his jurisdiction.

* Innocento XII. Optimo & Sanctissimo Pontifici, dissidiis compositis inter Ecclesiasticum & Magistrale forum exortis, utriusque juribus pie servatis, pluribus commendis liberaliter restitutis: Em. & Rev. Dom. Fr. D. Raimondas de Perellos Roccafull, grato & unanimi omnium voto, tot tantaque beneficia æternitati dicavit. AN. MDCIC.

This hospital, which had ever been regarded as the most privileged spot in the island, and into which even the marshal of the order could not enter without leaving his truncheon at the door, was entrusted to the care of some French knights, who were particularly zealous for their liberties, and who acknowledged no superior authority but that of the grand-hospitaler, who alone was permitted free entrance without leaving behind him the ensigns of his dignity; a ceremony to which all others of whatsoever rank were obliged to submit. Yet, even here, the officers of the inquisition had the audacity to enter by surprise, and to begin their visits of examination. But the moment the overseer of the infirmary was informed of their conduct, he obliged them to depart immediately, and declared null and void all their proceedings during his absence. The inquisitor, Delci, did not stop here; but, without the smallest attention to the rights of the sovereign, and to prove his own superiority, distributed a great number of the *patents* mentioned in a former chapter, declaring in the most absolute terms that every Maltese to whom they were granted became from that moment exempt from all obedience to the legitimate sovereign.

In order to curb, if possible, the culpable and scandalous conduct of this inquisitor, the grand-master, in 1712, dispatched an extraordinary ambassador to Rome, to complain of the improper proceedings of Delci. The overseer of the infirmary, the commander d'Avernes du Boccage, likewise went to France, and informed his christian majesty of the attempt

made by the inquisitor. The king wrote in the strongest manner to his holiness, whom he induced to disavow, and at the same time to repress, the enterprising spirit of Delci, who, however, escaped all punishment; for the pope and grand-master were too necessary to each other to fix the extent of the power to be exercised by the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in a proper manner.

The Maltese navy had been so long used to triumph over the infidels, that the order could ill brook the smallest check to the glory of its arms, of which it was particularly jealous. Two Tunisian vessels (1700) being attacked by the galleys, effected their escape, owing to the wind changing in a moment. The grand-master and council, being either ill informed of the affair, or fearful that the knights who commanded the galleys had failed in their duty, immediately issued out a commission to enquire into their conduct; but after having undergone the strictest examination, they were honourably acquitted. The galleys, however, had very soon an opportunity of proving that they had lost nothing of their former reputation. The bailiff Di Spinola, who commanded them, perceiving a vessel belonging to the enemy on the coast of Sicily, without loss of time made up to her; and the main-mast of the admiral's galley being carried away in a gale of wind, Spinola determined to board her. Shortly after, the general's brother was mortally wounded whilst fighting by his side, and the action became extremely bloody. The grand-prior, a very old man, being unable to

stand without assistance, leaned on his valet-de-chambre, who being killed, the veteran was constrained to cling to whatsoever he could find to support him on the gangway, where he remained during the whole of the action, the success of which was interrupted by a most disastrous circumstance. The enemy's vessel being on the point of striking, ran foul of the admiral's galley and damaged her materially; and a south wind springing up at the same moment, which ended in a dreadful storm, the squadron was dispersed. The commander de Javon, captain of the St. Paul, repaired immediately to the relief of those who had been shipwrecked in the admiral's galley, fifty of whom he saved; among which number were the general Spinola and the prior of Messina. Javon still continued in the same place, hoping to be equally useful to those who remained in the vessel; and when his pilot remonstrated with him in the strongest terms, and represented the very great danger to which he was exposed, he replied, "Should I not be too happy to lose my single life, to save those of the whole crew?" The violence of the wind, however, drove him, contrary to his wishes, from this dangerous spot; where, together with those who fell in action, twenty-two knights and five hundred men perished.

The following year (1701) the galleys fell in with the Sultana Bingham, a large vessel of eighty guns, which they engaged and forced to strike. Her colours the grand-master ordered to be placed in the church of St. John of Aix, as an honourable mark of attention to the chevalier Ricard, who was

born in that city, and to whose valour the victory was principally to be attributed. The galleys still continued successful, and attacked the infidels even in the port of Goletto; from whence they returned to Malta, bringing in a large vessel and a brig, taken from the enemy close under the cannon of that fort.

The Christians on the Mediterranean coast perceived with sorrow that, from the moment the order had ceased having men-of-war in the service, depending entirely on a squadron of galleys, the Barbary corsairs had built large vessels, with which they constantly captured Christian merchantmen; and likewise landed on the coasts of Italy and Spain, where they pillaged the villages, and reduced numbers of families to a state of slavery.

For more than eighty years these Christians had looked up in vain to the knights of Malta, their former protectors; but they had hitherto not been able to surmount the obstacles which prevented the re-establishment of the Maltese men-of-war: Perellos, however, assisted by the advice of his successor, the bailiff De Zondodari, determined to surmount these difficulties; and prevailed on the council to enter into his plan, with more ease than he could possibly have expected. A sufficient sum being raised for the construction of these men-of-war, the chevalier de St. Pierre*, a captain in the

* A brother of the celebrated abbé de St. Pierre, author of *La Paix Universelle* (Universal Peace). The chevalier likewise published *Le Projet pour extirper les Corsaires de Barbarie* (A Plan for extirpating the Corsairs of Barbary). This last is printed in the works of the abbé St. Pierre.

French navy, was placed at the head of the undertaking ; and the first campaign (1706) was so successful, that the most brilliant expectations were formed for the future. This new squadron fell in with three Tunisian vessels ; the admiral's ship of fifty guns was taken, and added to the Maltese navy under the name of Santa Cruce.

The reader will perceive, in the course of this history, that the two squadrons of men-of-war and of galleys emulated each other, and distinguished themselves by acts of the greatest valour.

The Algerines having besieged Oran, the commander, de Langon, who was well aware of the extremity to which the place was reduced, sailed (1707) with his single vessel through the midst of the Algerine fleet; and—notwithstanding he was exposed to the enemy's continual fire, who, encouraged by the presence of their sovereign, used every possible effort to oppose him—he contrived to send a convoy with ammunition into the town. This same brave knight having likewise been informed (1708), that the famous bashaw, Ali-Antulla-Ogli Stamboli, was gone with four sultanas and a brig towards the coast of Calabria, where he proposed attempting a descent, immediately went in pursuit of him, and in a few days discovered the admiral's vessel, commanded by the bashaw. The crew consisted of six hundred men, and she was armed with fifty-six cannons and forty peteraroes. She was in company of a tartan, mounting twelve guns. To these

two vessels the St. John immediately set fire; and the Turks, unable to extinguish the flames, plunged into the sea. The Maltese shallops, however, contrived to save four hundred of the crew, with fifty Christian captives, who were in consequence so fortunate as to recover their liberty.

The coasts of Spain being continually ravaged by the piratical rovers, his Catholic majesty requested the assistance of the Maltese squadron of men-of-war, to enable his vessels to cruise in safety. The valiant Langon was again chosen for this honourable commission; and he had scarcely arrived at the place of his destination, when he perceived the vessel of the Algerine admiral, equipped with five hundred men. He did not hesitate a moment to attack her. The enemy made an obstinate defence; but at last struck, after having lost all her officers. This victory, however, cost the order dear; since it was attended by the loss of the commander of the squadron, whose undaunted courage and various excellent qualities made him universally regretted. His body was carried to Carthagen, and interred in the cathedral under the high altar. The grand-master, wishing to eternise his memory, caused an epitaph to be engraved on a tomb-stone, in the middle aisle of the church of St. John, which should announce to posterity his great exploits, together with the deep regret felt for his loss by the whole of the order. Brother Adrian de Langon, a relation of the illustrious deceased, and who equalled him in courage, commanded the St. Catherine, with which he attacked (1713)

seven Algerine vessels, took one named the Half-Moon, of forty guns, with four hundred men, and put the rest to flight. The following year the same brave officer sunk an Algerine corsair, of fifty-six guns and five hundred men. Indeed no year passed without some of the barbarian vessels being destroyed; and the squadron of men-of-war soon succeeded in totally annihilating all the large ships, which had for so long a time ranged the sea, and disturbed the peace of the Italian and Spanish coasts.

During the grand-mastership of Perellos, the order was twice under great apprehensions of being attacked by the grand-signior, and both times the knights displayed an equal degree of disinterested zeal for the general good. The moment they were informed of the danger which threatened the seat of government, both old and young flew to its relief (1715); and those whose infirmities prevented them from repairing to the island, sent all the money they possessed, whilst others disposed of the whole revenues of their commanderies in favour of the order at large.

Whilst the knights were making such generous sacrifices, Perellos again solicited the court of Rome not to bestow the most distinguished posts in the order on those who, never having shared the common danger, ought not in justice to partake the reward. He likewise entreated the pope, in the strongest terms, not to grant any briefs, either for bestowing the grand-cross, or for dispensing from residence in the con-

vent those whose services had not entitled them to such high favours.

The grand-master endeavoured, during the whole of his reign, to reform the numerous abuses which had crept into the order. He made regulations, by which he forbade the knights wearing gold and silver on their habits, and prohibited all games of hazard. He likewise greatly enlarged the store-houses built by Vignacourt; repaired all the fortifications throughout the island, and furnished them with every thing necessary to make an able defence. This prince distinguished himself particularly by his liberal conduct towards those families which had been ruined at different times by the infidels; and, during the whole of a reign of twenty-two years, he neglected nothing which could possibly contribute to the honour and splendour of the order*.

The general joy caused by the election of his successor, Zondodary, was much augmented by the capture of two large Barbary corsairs; and this victory was almost immediately followed by one still more important, in the taking of an Algerine vessel with five hundred men. Langon, who was then (1721) raised to the dignity of bailiff, still commanded the squadron appointed by the grand-master to guard the coasts of Spain, where no vessel of an enemy ever ventured to appear without being immediately taken. This being the case, it was no

* Died in January, 1720.

longer necessary to continue a cruise which had proved so advantageous to the king of Spain, and so glorious to the Maltese navy.

This grand-master did not long enjoy a post of which he had in every particular shewn himself so worthy. His uncommon piety and charity towards the poor were truly commendable; and he maintained a proper discipline throughout the whole order, still more by the prevalence of his own example than by his authority. Nothing, indeed, was wanting to fulfil the high expectations formed of his government, but that it should have lasted some years longer.

CHAP. VIII.

Villena, Grand-Master. New Fortifications built. Construction of Fort Manuel, since named the Floriana. Expedition of the Turks against Malta. Negotiations with the Porte. A Treaty nearly concluded with the latter. Presents made by the Pope to the Order. Despuig succeeds Villena. His short Reign.

ANTONIO MANOEL DE VILLENA, having filled the most eminent posts in the order in a very distinguished manner, was by universal consent chosen successor to Zondodary. Though his predecessors had made the greatest exertions to put the island in a state of defence against the incursions of the infidels, who were continually threatening to attack it, he did not think it sufficiently secure. He therefore built a considerable fort, which bore his name, Manuel. It is situate in the small island of the port Marsa Musceit, which the reader will remember was taken by the Turks at the famous siege of Malta, and was of most essential use to them on that occasion.

The grand-master was not satisfied with having thus secured one of the flanks of the citadel, but gave orders for tracing out a large spot of ground for a considerable suburb, to strengthen the land-side. This communicated with the city by the Port-royal, and was surrounded by the most magnificent fortifications hitherto seen. It originally bore the name of the founder; but has since has been usually called

by that of the engineer Floriani, who directed the works. That suburb, and the whole of the inclosure in which it stands, is named *la Floriana*. This engineer was a colonel in the service of the pope, who, at the earnest request of the order, had sent him to Malta. The knights had every possible reason to approve the choice of so able a man, and to be thankful for the condescension of his holiness in complying with their requests.

Villena caused two buildings to be erected in the same inclosure, which must ever be regarded as monuments of his magnificence and charity. These were two houses, the one serving for a retreat for old men, and the other for persons of both sexes whose maladies had been pronounced incurable. He endowed them out of his own private fortune; and till the year 1798 they continued to be the asylum of many suffering objects, who never ceased to bless the charitable hand which had thus secured them comfort in their old age, and consolation in their dying moments. This munificent prince also extended his generosity to the making provision for the maintenance of fort St. Elmo; for which he left a fund, that has always been employed for this useful purpose. His attention was not merely confined to the interior of the island; but, being not only a wise administrator but an able politician, he was determined to go beyond the limits hitherto thought impossible to pass; and accordingly eagerly embraced a fortunate opportunity of ingratiating himself with the court of France, and concluding a treaty with the most formidable

enemy the order had to fear; the only one, indeed, which could occasion him any real cause of disquiet for the safety and property of Malta, which he had strongly secured from the attacks of the powers of Barbary.

A slave named Hali, who had been redeemed at Malta by Mehemet Effendi, ambassador from the Porte to Paris, having returned into his own country, formed a plan to take the island, and no one was better acquainted than himself with its strength and means of defence: he had been much esteemed and favoured by the knights during his captivity, and had been ten years at sea in the galleys of the order, during which time he likewise acted as *liman*, or chief of the slaves at Malta. This man gave the Ottoman minister an account of the situation of the island, and persuaded him that it might be very easily conquered by the assistance of the mussulman slaves, who only waited for an opportunity to revolt, and who were then nearly as many in number as the inhabitants themselves. The forces he required for succeeding in this enterprise were so very inconsiderable (he having only demanded ten ships of war), that the grand-vizier listened to the proposal, and gave the command of the fleet destined for this expedition to the admiral Abdi; bestowing the rank of captain upon Hali, with a promise of the greatest rewards in case of success.

This fleet made its appearance in a very short time (1722) before Malta, but no sooner approached the coast than it was

received in such a manner, as to discourage the smallest attempt to land. The admiral, on his retreat, sent the grand-master a letter, written in the most scurrilous and contemptuous language, in which the sultan demanded all the slaves who might at that time be subject to the miserable government of Malta; threatening him, should he refuse, with direful vengeance, and concluding with these words—*send your answer to Tunis.*

The grand-master, hoping to obtain the redemption of the Christian captives, scrupled not to reply to this insulting epistle. He accordingly addressed a letter to M. de Bonnac, the French ambassador at the Porte, couched in polite and dignified terms, such as no prince, still less a private individual, should ever depart from. It perfectly explained the real spirit of the order, which, contrary to the too generally received opinion, is not to make continual war against the infidels merely on account of the difference of religions, without having the power of being at peace with those who have formed alliances with Christian princes. “Our order is not instituted,” says Villena in his letter, “for the purpose of ranging the seas
“to make captives, but to cruise with its armaments to pro-
“tect the navigation of Christian vessels; and it only attacks
“those who obstruct commerce, and who, wishing to make
“Christian captives, deserve to be reduced to slavery them-
“selves. I have nothing so much at heart as to release the
“mussulman slaves from their chains; and if the intentions of

“ his highness are the same, I am ready to negotiate for the
“ reciprocal liberty of the captives, either by exchange or
“ ransom, according to the received custom between princes.
“ His mightiness therefore has only to declare his intentions,
“ which I will omit nothing to render effectual.”

M. de Bonnac presented this letter to the grand-vizir; and it was so well received, that he not only talked of the exchange, but of entering into a treaty with the order: and the French ambassador, being perfectly convinced that a peace between these two states would be both acceptable and advantageous not only to Malta but to the other Christian powers, was so zealous in the business, and employed himself so assiduously to conclude it with the grand-vizir, that the latter consented to sign the following articles, which had been already approved by the court of France, viz.

1. That the captives shall be reciprocally exchanged; and if there should be more in number on one side than the other, the remainder shall be delivered up at the rate of a hundred piastres each.
2. That no slaves shall be comprised in this exchange but those taken on board Maltese or Turkish vessels.
3. That this truce shall last for twenty years, and that when that time shall be elapsed each party shall be at liberty to negotiate a new one.
4. That the Barbary powers or African republics shall not

be comprised in this treaty, and that the Porte shall not assist them either directly or indirectly in their attempts against Malta.

5. That the Maltese shall enjoy the same privileges as the French in the Turkish dominions.

6. That this treaty shall be null whenever any Christian power shall be at war with the Porte.

The intelligence of this treaty was received at Constantinople with the most lively marks of approbation; but the captain bashaw was not a little displeas'd that any thing relative to maritime affairs should be transacted without his being consult'd; he therefore persuas'd all the officers of the navy to oppose it strongly, and thus induc'd the grand-vizir to hold a different language. This minister, perceiv'g the general discontent which reign'd amongst these officers, thought he ought not to conclude the negotiation; he however acquaint'd the ambassador, that his views were still the same, and that it would be very easy to bring forward the business once more, if some method could be contriv'd to gain the consent of the naval officers, whose personal interest would infallibly in the end prevail on them to accede to the proposition.

Whilst this affair was negotiating, a Tunisian vessel accompanied by a tartan cruised between the islands of Maritimo and Pantaleria, and had taken two barks, the one a Sicilian and the

other a Genoese. The St. John ship of war, together with a frigate, went in chase of this vessel: the frigate came up with her, and, after an action which lasted four hours, the infidels were forced to strike. This vessel was an admirably fast sailer, and had been presented by the grand-signior to the dey of Tunis, whose patron he was. She carried forty-eight guns, with fourteen petararoes, and four hundred men. The action over, only two hundred and sixty-seven Turks remained; and this capture was the means of delivering thirty-three Christian slaves. The chevalier de Cambray commanded the frigate; and the St. John having taken the tartan, the two prizes were carried into Malta.

Such was the zeal of the grand-master, and the vigilance of the Maltese navy, in keeping off the pirates from the coasts of Italy, that pope Benedict XIII. as a conspicuous proof of his affection towards Villena and the order, sent a gentleman of his bedchamber to Malta, to present to that prince the estoc (rapier) and helmet, which had been blessed with great solemnity at the festival of our Saviour's nativity. This present Villena received with the deepest gratitude, and he regarded it as a fresh motive for signalising himself more than ever in the practice of all those virtues which distinguish the sovereign and the order. It was the constant exercise of such virtues which, during the whole course of his mastership, justly gained him the esteem of his brothers, the respect of his sub-

jects, the friendship of the European princes, and the paternal affection of the sovereign pontiff*.

Raimond Despuig, of a distinguished family in Majorca, succeeded Villena: his reign, though extremely short, was rendered illustrious by his great piety and wise administration †.

* Died the 12th of December, 1736; and not the 20th of February, 1737, as stated by the author of the Journal of Lewis XIV.

† Died at Naples, 15th January, 1741.

CHAP. IX.

Pinto elected Grand-Master, and on the Point of being made King of Corsica. A Conspiracy formed by the Slaves. A Bashaw of Rhodes concerned in the Plot, which was very nearly carried into Execution. The Manner in which it was discovered. Some of the Criminals receive Punishment.

EMANUEL PINTO DE FONSECA, the successor of Despuig, was descended from one of the noblest families in Portugal. His reign was long and glorious, though not distinguished by any of those striking military exploits which render princes illustrious in the pages of history; but it may be justly said, that the wisdom and vigour of his administration was such as to deserve and obtain the love of his people, together with the esteem of the neighbouring powers. The fame of his great qualities induced the Genoese to think of giving up to him Corsica, the inhabitants of which would not submit to be governed by Genoese laws: but the secret views of France, which from that time formed the plan of uniting that island to its possessions, together with other considerations relative to the political situation of the order, put an end to a scheme which, had it been carried into execution, would have been more glorious than solidly advantageous to Malta. It is well known that the Maltese were happy under the go-

vernment of Pinto, and that, during the constant wars which at that time ravaged Europe, the neutrality of Malta was always respected; but who can say whether, as king of Corsica, he could have ensured the happiness of a people who never yet were contented under any of the governments to which they have been subjected? or whether he could possibly have maintained that perfect tranquillity, which is seldom the lot of small states, when the greater powers, their neighbours, are in a state of warfare?

Malta, though constantly engaged in foreign wars, was perhaps the only state which could boast of having enjoyed an uninterrupted interior peace from the moment of its foundation. The infraction of this peace had its rise in a conspiracy, the particulars of which I will relate to the reader, as it proves that the Maltese people were too well convinced of the paternal government of the order, and valued it too much, to engage in the plot: it will at the same time shew, that the mildness of the yoke imposed upon the slaves had nearly proved fatal to the island.

The number of Turkish or Moorish slaves in Malta consisted, at that time, of about four thousand; some of whom were distributed on board the galleys, and formed the principal part of their crews, whilst others were employed in the different arsenals and magazines, and the public works at the ports, fortifications, &c. Individuals also received many into their houses as domestics; and most of the grand-crosses retained

them in their service, as valets, grooms, and cooks. The grand-master admitted them into his palace, where they acted in the same capacities. Two of them were particularly employed as valets-de-chambre, and slept in an apartment close to the bedchamber of the grand-master, into which they were permitted to enter at all hours, either by day or by night.

So great was the fancied security of the order, and such their confidence in these people, that on board the galleys the slaves acted at the stern, and waited upon the captains and knights, who found them particularly exact and faithful; indeed, there was not one of the inns of the different languages where they were not employed in the kitchen. Among so great a number of slaves, those only were confined in the prisons or bagnios who were occupied in the public works; the others lived constantly with their masters, and the greatest part passed their lives so pleasantly, that very few were desirous of obtaining their freedom and returning to their own country: yet these very men were on the point of repaying such kindness by cruelly assassinating their benefactors! It is not however probable, that of themselves they would ever have formed so atrocious a design, had they not been excited to the act by conspirators, whose plots I am now about to unfold.

Some Christian slaves, who composed the crew of a Turkish galley, had revolted, taken possession of the vessel, and carried her triumphantly into Malta. The commander was the bashaw of Rhodes, one of the greatest men in the

Ottoman empire, and who had a brother, not only the chosen favourite of the sultan, but possessing one of the most eminent posts in the state.

The order, unwilling to draw upon itself the forces of the grand-signior, and desirous to conciliate the court of France, to oblige which the Maltese squadrons had discontinued cruising in the Levant, resolved to present to that power this illustrious prisoner, whom they immediately sent to the bailiff du Boccage, the French minister at Malta. At the same time the grand-master and the order at large wrote to his Christian majesty, who was much pleased with this action and the deference shewed him on the occasion.

The apartment of the bashaw was in a beautiful garden, situated in the Floriana. He was attended by his own domestics, who had been restored to him, and he was allowed to the amount of one hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling monthly, for the expences of his household. So great, indeed, were the attentions shewn him, that he was permitted to receive the visits of the Turkish slaves. But this generous proceeding had nearly been attended with the most fatal consequences.

A negro who had headed the revolt by which the Christian slaves had possessed themselves of the Turkish galley, together with its commander, and who was discontented with the reward he had received, only wished for an opportunity to obtain a still greater. In order to deserve it, he attempted one of those hardy enterprises, the event of which either leads

to the highest honours, or conducts to the scaffold. He therefore proposed to the bashaw to put him in possession of the city La Valetta, and consequently of the island, of which it was the capital, the principal fortress, and the residence of the order. Such an important service rendered to the Ottoman empire would, he thought, not only obtain his pardon for his original revolt, but ensure for himself the most distinguished favours and rewards.

The bashaw was justly sensible of the importance of such an enterprise, which, should it succeed, would be personally useful to himself, and entirely obliterate all remembrance of his having unfortunately lost his galley: at the same time he was convinced that his sovereign would be pleased with him for a conquest, which his predecessors had vainly attempted by the force of arms. These considerations induced him to neglect nothing in his power to promote the scheme proposed by the negro. Amongst his attendants was a secretary, a man of sense, and much better informed than the generality of the Turks; who spoke French and Italian extremely well, and was perfectly versed in most of the Oriental languages. This man was employed as principal agent in the affair; and it must be allowed, that a better choice could not have been made.

The slaves being permitted to attend the bashaw gave him an opportunity of holding assemblies in his own apartments, and it was in these meetings that this conspiracy was formed in the most secret manner. This plot was particularly

dangerous, because no person had the slightest suspicion of it.

The festival of St. Peter, and of St. Paul, the first patron of the island, was always celebrated at Malta with singular solemnity. The inhabitants of both towns and country repaired in crowds on that day to the Old City, as being the ancient capital of the island, and the residence of the bishop of Malta. The conspirators therefore made choice of this festival to attempt the seizure of the city of Valetta; the inhabitants of which, together with most of the knights, usually left the grand-master in the morning, and indeed frequently the evening before, in order to repair to the Old City. This absence the conspirators thought a favourable opportunity to possess themselves of the principal posts in the city; and the great heat at that time of the year inducing most people to indulge in sleep after dinner (in that country termed the *siesta*), they resolved to avail themselves of that moment to begin the massacre, not only in the palace, but in private houses.

One of the Turkish slaves, who attended on the grand-master as valet-de-chambre, and who was much beloved by his lord, was fixed upon to enter Pinto's apartment to cut off his head, and expose it from the great balcony of the palace. This was to serve as a signal to the other slaves to murder their masters. Some indeed amongst them were to be spared this crime, by the commission of one, if possible, still more dreadful; poison being distributed to all those who were employed in the

kitchens of the palace and the inns of the different languages, by which means every one who sat down to table that day must have infallibly perished.

It was likewise proposed, that, whilst this massacre was taking place, other slaves should rush into the palace by the four different doors, who, being reinforced and assisted by those employed within, should disarm the guard, and forcing their way into the armory, distribute arms amongst their comrades, who, scattered about in different parts, would assemble together at the first signal. These villains thus armed were to form themselves into different corps, which were immediately to repair to the city gates, the arsenal, fort St. Elmo, and the two cavaliers near the royal gate. Once possessed of these posts, they had agreed on a signal to be given to the flotilla belonging to the Barbary powers, who were already acquainted with the plot, and whose arrival was the more impatiently expected by the conspirators, because the success of their enterprise entirely depended on their assistance; for the slaves were perfectly convinced, that their force alone would be very insufficient to maintain them for any length of time in a place so well defended by extensive fortifications as the city Valetta.

This dreadful conspiracy was planned with consummate art and secrecy, but was discovered by an event entirely foreign to the plot.

A young Persian, who had been forced to quit his own

country and wander about the world, had enlisted himself a few months before as a common soldier in the grand-master's company of guards. The negro, who was the original conspirator, cast his eyes on this young man, as a person who might be extremely useful in the affair. He therefore contrived to seduce him from his duty, and commissioned him to change the cartridges of the soldiers on guard at the palace. These two men usually met in a coffee-house solely resorted to by the slaves. It was kept by a Jew, who had a wife and child; he himself was a new convert, and was not only acquainted with the conspiracy, but was to act a principal part upon the occasion.

The negro and the Persian, in one of their meetings at this coffee-house, became heated by the fumes of tobacco, and the spirituous liquors which they had taken too freely: they began to dispute most violently, and in the heat of argument some imprudent expressions escaped them, which were overheard by the Jew's wife, and gave her the greatest uneasiness.

From words the negro and Persian proceeded to blows; and the former was so carried away by passion, that he drew his stiletto, and attempted to stab his adversary, who however made his retreat unhurt. Terrified at the danger he had escaped, and reflecting upon the still greater which threatened him, the Persian did not lose a moment, but flew to the commander de Vignier, who was commandant of the grand-

master's guards, and throwing himself at his feet implored his protection, and declared all he knew of the conspiracy. His officer received him well, put a variety of questions to him, and, after listening attentively to his answers, dressed himself hastily and repaired to the grand-master, accompanied by the Persian.

In the mean time the Jew reproached the negro in the bitterest terms for his violent conduct, which had exposed them all to the most imminent danger; but he received no other answer than threats and curses. The moment the negro quitted the coffee-house, the Jew's wife, terrified at all that had passed, entreated her husband to go without loss of time, and reveal the whole affair to the grand-master himself. He accordingly set out immediately for the palace, and appearing alone before Pinto, fell on his knees, and declared every particular relative to the conspiracy. At the same moment arrived the commander de Vignier with the Persian, who, being confronted with the Jew, confirmed the truth of what he had advanced. The grand-master was convinced of the reality of the plot, and orders were given to apprehend the negro.

A tribunal was instantly formed to take cognizance of the affair, and no one was refused admittance. The Castellan (that office was always filled by a knight, as representative of the sovereign), according to custom, presided in this assembly, composed of the judge in criminal cases, some learned

and upright magistrates, together with four assessors chosen from among the most able in the profession.

No sooner was the negro brought before the tribunal than he confessed his crime, and impeached several of his accomplices. They successively appeared, were heard, and their depositions taken, without the name of the bashaw being mentioned. The causes of suspicion were however so strong, that it became a necessary precaution to secure the persons of those attached to his household; as to his own it was sacred, and under the safeguard of the king of France, from the moment the grand-master and council had committed him to the care of the French minister. Many of his domestics were accused, and brought before the tribunal; the rest were forbidden to hold the smallest communication either with the slaves belonging to the order or with those who were the property of private individuals.

Nearly a hundred of the conspirators had been apprehended and convicted, and the inhabitants of Malta had testified the greatest joy at being delivered from such a perilous situation, when a discovery was made that they were still threatened by new dangers.

Such of the conspirators as had not been denounced preferred risking their lives in the execution of their plot, because there remained some chance of escaping the rigorous sentence of the law. This consideration made them resolve to make one last effort; and on this occasion (alas! there are but too

many examples of it), the human heart evinced its greatest depravity. Benefits conferred were no safeguards against the blackest ingratitude, nor could the remembrance of acts of kindness wrest the dagger from the murderous hand raised to strike its benefactor. Those very slaves who, loaded with favours by their masters, preferred their service to returning free to their own country, persisted in the cruel design of assassinating them. Neither the knights nor any of the inhabitants met with one example of a heart open to the sentiments of compassion and gratitude; and if the grand-master escaped from the murderous steel of his confidential valet-de-chambre, it can only be attributed to want of energy at the moment of execution, and not to the smallest remorse of conscience, which, by making the conspirator feel the enormity of his crime, would have prevented the attempt. This wretch, to whom Pinto was singularly attached, and whose post gave him an opportunity of entering at all hours into his master's apartment, the day after the discovery of the plot went several different times into the bedchamber of the grand-master, who, though surprised and vexed at such frequent interruptions, the cause of which he was far from suspecting, spoke to him with the greatest goodness and gentleness, saying, *Che voi figlio?—Cosa voi?* "What do you want, my child?—what do you want?" To these words the Turkish slave made no reply, but, melting into tears, retired. He however continued for twenty-four hours afterwards to perform his functions as

usual, without revealing the crime he was on the point of committing. That he had not been impeached was the only remaining hope left this monster; but that was destroyed the following day, when being accused by his accomplices, and sent from the palace, he immediately confessed the truth of the charge. Pinto could scarcely be induced to believe the villany of his valet-de-chambre; and such was the attachment of this excellent prince, that he even went so far as to express a sentiment of regret at being deprived of the services of this most criminal of men.

The bashaw still remained behind the scenes: not one of the criminals had as yet mentioned his name; but he was at last accused, and all the subsequent depositions sufficiently proved, that, if he were not the original planner of the conspiracy, he was at least perfectly acquainted with the whole affair;—that it had been submitted to his opinion; that he entirely approved of it; and that the conspirators looked up to him, as to their chief. His secretary, being apprehended, proved his guilt still more clearly, by confessing the contents of the letters he had written to Constantinople, Tunis, Algiers, and Tripoly. This last avowal furiously incensed the Maltese people against the bashaw, and they clamoured loudly to have him given up to justice: he was however saved, though with great difficulty, out of respect to his most Christian majesty; and in order to preserve him

from the resentment of the public, he was sent to fort St. Elmo, where he remained till the arrival of a frigate from Toulon, in which he sailed for Constantinople.

Nearly sixty of the most criminal among the conspirators expiated their crimes on the scaffold. Several of those who perished by the hand of the executioner were converted to the Christian religion before their deaths, and shewed signs of the deepest remorse; some of those who remained firm in the faith of their ancestors displayed the most uncommon fortitude, and died with almost incredible stoicism. The negro indeed, was of all others the least courageous; but the secretary of the bashaw in his last moments was distinguished by firmness truly Christian, and at the same time by rather a singular circumstance. Having been particularly acquainted with the chevalier de Turgot, who acted as godfather at his conversion, he intreated him, through the intervention of the French minister, to recommend the children he had left at Constantinople to the protection of the king of France; but the instant before his execution he reflected that such an act would be a want of confidence in the divine goodness of the Saviour of the world: he therefore requested that the French minister might not write in favour of his family; adding, that the same God who had so lately saved him from perdition was sufficiently powerful to protect those whom he left behind him in the world below.

This conspiracy, in some of its inferior branches, extended even to the Maltese galleys*; and it had been planned that on the same day, the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, their crews should revolt, and the slaves attending on the knights murder their masters. Fortunately, however, an advice-boat arrived in time to acquaint the general with the plot, who took proper measures to prevent its execution, and to preserve the most perfect tranquillity on board his galleys.

* These were commanded by the bailiff de Maraselly, a Florentine, who at that time was cruising on the flat shores of the Roman coast.

CHAP. X.

The Christian Slaves on board a Sultana revolt, and carry the Vessel to Malta. The Court of France purchases it, and restores it to the Grand-Signior. The French Squadron joins that of the Order. Ximenes Grand-Master. A Conspiracy formed by the Priests. Capture of St. Elmo. The Rebellion soon quelled. Remarkable Conduct of the Bailiff de Rohan. Death of Ximenes.

THE great dangers Malta had escaped rendered it absolutely necessary that some method should be adopted to prevent them in future. Orders were therefore issued, that from that time the slaves attending on the knights and private individuals should be obliged to retire to the bagnios, or prisons for the slaves, at sun-set; and there remain till sun-rise the following morning. The next consideration was to bestow some reward on those who had discovered the conspiracy. The Persian soon proved unworthy the favours conferred on him, and was sent out of the island: as to the Jew, a pension was granted to him and his descendants; he had too a house assigned him, over the door of which was an inscription, stating the important service he had rendered the order. The grand-master and the council, wishing to perpetuate the memory of this event, caused the anniversary to be constantly celebrated; and it continued to be observed till the

fatal period when other conspirators, whose crimes were of a very different nature, delivered up Malta into the hands of the French.

The deference and respect shewn to the court of France by the order, in the affair of the bashaw of Rhodes, were afterwards amply recompensed by his Christian majesty, whose interference again prevented the Turks from besieging Malta; the grand-signior being particularly incensed against the order, on account of the capture of one of the principal vessels belonging to his navy, which happened in the following manner.

The bashaw Mehemet, going to levy the taxes in the islands of the Archipelago, anchored towards the end of September (1760) at Stamio, where he disembarked the greatest part of his crew. The Christian slaves who were left on board determined to take advantage of his absence to possess themselves of the vessel; they therefore, to the number of seventy-three, fastened down the hatches on the rest of the crew, and, cutting the cable, set sail. After a voyage of eighteen days, they reached Malta; the inhabitants of which island perceived, on the 6th of October, a large Turkish vessel making signals that they could not understand. It was some time before they ventured to approach her; but at last they boarded her, and towed her into the great port. This vessel was a first-rate, very richly laden. The Christian slaves generously presented the ship to the order, and divided its cargo among themselves.

The grand-signior, irritated beyond measure at such a

considerable loss, prepared a powerful armament the following year (1761), to revenge himself on the order; which, on the other side, neglected nothing to put itself in a proper state of defence, calling together the knights who were dispersed in different parts, and who all eagerly hastened to their respective posts. But the solicitations of the court of France prevented this affair being pursued, and it was terminated by his Christian majesty's sending the bailiff de Fleury to Malta, where he purchased the Turkish vessel, which he immediately sent as a present to the grand-signior.

France, the powerful support of Malta, had in return a faithful and zealous ally in the order. That court being dissatisfied with the Tunisians, who had not respected the French flag, declared war against them, and gave notice of it to the grand-master, who felt particularly happy in reinforcing the French fleet with a squadron of galleys, and at once shewing the tenacity of the order to the duties of its institution, and its gratitude for past favours.

The two united squadrons began by bombarding different places on the coast of Africa; and the Maltese galleys never quitted the French fleet till it was resolved that they should both return to their respective ports. The commander of the French squadron, M. de Browe, expressed the high sense he had of the zeal of the order, as indeed did his sovereign, and bestowed the warmest encomiums on the conduct of the knights and the good behaviour of the crews.

Pinto continued constantly fortunate in all his undertakings, and died January 24, 1773, after a reign of thirty-two years, greatly regretted by his order; which, however, he had governed in a much more despotic manner than any of his predecessors: he was, nevertheless, sincerely lamented by all his subjects, who had enjoyed the most perfect tranquillity under his firm and vigilant administration. He was endowed with an elevated mind, engaging manners, lively wit, and much learning. He was highly esteemed by all the Christian powers; and such was the great energy of his conduct, that during the various wars which disturbed the peace of Europe his neutrality was constantly respected.

His successor, Francis Ximenes de Taxada, was named to the grand-mastership at the age of seventy, and did not possess that activity and vigour of character so necessary in some particular situations of a state. Malta, which had so lately crushed the conspiracy of the slaves, was upon the point of seeing another burst forth, which had been formed and nourished in the very heart of the government.

The order having obtained leave from the pope that the jurisdiction of the inquisitor and the distribution of patentees should be subject to some restrictions, the ecclesiastics of Malta wanted no greater cause to shew their discontent. This corps was very numerous, and the privileged or patentees belonged to some of the greatest Maltese families, consequently had no small influence in the island. They had

also a still greater, on the score of religion, over the minds of a superstitious people; and they took advantage of this circumstance to induce them to throw off the authority of their legitimate sovereign.

Notwithstanding the particulars of this plot were closely concealed, it however transpired that the minister of a power which had been long ambitious of possessing a port in the Mediterranean had been concerned in the affair. The marquis de Cavalcado*, minister to Catherine II. has since been named; but he absolutely denied that he had acted in a manner so unworthy that great princess. What, however, gave the greatest cause of suspicion that some crowned head supported the rebels was the natural question, what they could possibly hope from the success of their enterprise, without some very powerful foreign assistance?

Whatever might have been the intentions of Russia at that period, she has since made ample reparation for the conduct imputed to her; for to her the order owes its preservation: at the same time that it must be grateful to England, for the restitution of its principal place of residence.

In all elective states, there are constantly some persons near the throne who either aspire to the sovereign dignity themselves, or are jealous of the rival who holds the reins of government; it was therefore reasonably suspected, that some

* Ransijat.—See Mirabeau, *Doutes sur la Liberté de l'Escaut*; and *Recherches Historiques et Politiques*, page 106.

among the members of the order were not ignorant of the plan formed by the conspirators, whose plot at last became manifest, and from three to four hundred possessed themselves of the fort St. Elmo. The bailiff de Rohan, universally esteemed by the knights, was immediately appointed general of the land and sea forces. The valour and unanimity of the members and troops of the order, under the command of so respectable a chief, presently succeeded in retaking the fort, and destroying the root of the sedition. Some of the principal rebels were delivered up to justice: whilst others were either banished or imprisoned;—a pernicious and ill-timed clemency, since we have seen the same turbulent spirits make no small figure in the late disasters of their country.

The people could never be prevailed upon to join in this rebellion, notwithstanding those were concerned in it who had the greatest influence over their minds. They felt too happy under the government of the knights to wish for any change: and the plot was entirely formed by two orders of men; the first of which was composed of the priests, who wished to throw off all temporal and legitimate authority, to submit themselves to a spiritual and illegal power, from which they promised themselves the dangerous privilege of governing the consciences of their fellow-citizens. The second consisted of some Maltese of infamous characters, who, finding themselves without resource under a wise and enlightened administration, hoped to profit by the general disorder which always

reigns during the destruction of an old government and the establishment of a new one.

The general indignation which took place among the Maltese at the dreadful conduct of the priests and some few of their fellow-citizens did not console the grand-master for this terrible event, the first of the kind which had ever sullied the annals of the order : so great indeed was his affliction, that he survived it but a very short time*.

* He died November the 9th, 1775.

END OF THE FIRST PART OF THE SECOND VOLUME.