

HISTORY
OF THE
KNIGHTS OF MALTA.

BOOK I.

FROM THE FIRST ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ORDER IN MALTA, TO THE
FOUNDATION OF THE CITY LA VALETTA.

CHAPTER I.

The Order of St. John first established at Jerusalem ; afterwards in the Island of Rhodes. Rhodes besieged by Solyman. The gallant Defence made by L'Isle Adam. Number of his Troops. One of the principal Dignitaries of the Order put to Death for Treason. Surrender of the Island. Depredations of the Turks, which were almost immediately stopped, and the Arms and Escutcheons belonging to the Knights preserved. Solyman visits the Grand Master : their Conversation. The Knights embark, together with the Inhabitants, and take with them the Archives of the Order and the Relics. Their Fleet is forced, by a Tempest, to take shelter in the Island of Cyprus ; after which it arrives on the Coast of Naples, and anchors at Messina. The Pope issues a Bull to prevent the Knights quitting the Grand-Master. Trial of those Knights who had absented themselves during the Siege. The noble Manner in which a Knight named Newport,

the Captain of an English Ship, devoted himself to the Service of the Order. The Knights driven, by the Plague, from Messina. They repair to Civita Vecchia, and settle at Viterbo.

1552.
Villiers
de L'Isle Adam. THE order of St. John of Jerusalem was originally merely charitable (the knights were called Hospitallers); but it soon became military, and was established in the Holy Land, where it followed the fortunes of the Latin Christians in that country, which it was obliged to quit when they left it. The Order remained some time in Cyprus; and, after having conquered Rhodes, fixed itself in that place. The brilliant exploits performed by the knights attracted the attention of the Turks, who took up arms against them at different times*; but they were obliged to renounce their design of conquering the island. Solyman, however, was too vain of his success in Hungary, and too much irritated at having so powerful an enemy as the Order so near him, not to make another attempt: he therefore, in 1522, (June 26) landed an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men on the island, which he presently followed in person, and arrived, accompanied by still more considerable forces, which continued augmenting every day.

L'Isle Adam, who had been grand-master scarcely twelve months, was not discouraged by the appearance of this powerful armament. He placed himself at the head of six hundred knights, whose avowed principle it was, never to take account of the number

* See the Chronological Table.

of their enemies. They were supported by four thousand five hundred regular troops, together with some companies composed of citizens, all of whom determined to defend themselves to the last extremity.

A traitor to the cause was discovered among the knights, and was taken up and tried by order of the council. Neither his great age, the eminent services he had formerly rendered, nor even the distinguished post he filled (being chancellor of the religion), could save him from the rigorous sentence of the law: he was therefore degraded, and delivered up, according to the statutes, to secular justice; by which he was tried; and sentence of death being pronounced against him, it was immediately executed.

After a four-months' siege, and the most glorious defence that could possibly be made, the place was no longer judged tenable; which induced the inhabitants, and particularly the Greeks, to use the most pressing instances to engage the grand-master to capitulate: but neither their complaints, their threats, nor even the advice of the council, could shake his firmness: he alone persisted in his resolution of burying himself in the ruins of the place, sooner than deliver it into the hands of the infidels. Two months more were passed in bloody and repeated combats: but the stock of gunpowder being exhausted, owing to the treason above mentioned, and Solyman himself making propositions which were thought admissible, L'Isle Adam at last complied with the entreaties and prayers of both the greater and lesser council, and consented to deliver up the place; before which, according to the confession of

the Ottoman general himself, more than eighty thousand Turks had been killed by the knights, and as many more had perished from sickness.

Four thousand Janissaries entered the city, to take possession of it; and many of their comrades, under pretence of visiting them, pillaged it, profaned the churches, even ransacked the monuments of the grand-masters, and entered into the hospitals, and carried off the silver plate belonging to them. When Solyman was made acquainted with the disorders which had been committed, he was justly irritated, and immediately sent word to the aga of the Janissaries, that, were they continued, his head should be the forfeit. From that moment all depredations ceased, and there existed no longer any cause of complaint. It is but justice to say, that the troops belonging to a nation of all others the most adverse to the fine arts; which had destroyed so many celebrated monuments of antiquity; and whose generals, from a principle of religion, likewise destroyed the famous library of Alexandria;—these very troops, I say, would have thought it sullyng the splendor of their victory, had they possessed themselves of the arms and escutcheons of the knights, which they permitted to remain entire and uninjured, and which all travellers have ever since contemplated with respect and veneration.

Sultan Solyman* being desirous of visiting himself his new conquests, and showing proper respect to the vanquished, went to

* December 25, 1522.

the palace of the grand-master, who received him with the respectful attention due to so powerful a monarch. Solyman, in a visit so extraordinary in a sultan, treated L'Isle Adam with the greatest affability; exhorting him to support with courage this reverse of fortune, and assuring him that he might embark his effects at his own leisure; for, should the time agreed upon for that purpose in the articles of capitulation be not sufficient, he would most willingly prolong it. Solyman, upon quitting L'Isle Adam, turned to his general officer, saying, "It is not without some degree of pain that I force this Christian, at his time of life, to leave his dwelling."

The small number of knights who had survived this murderous siege, together with four thousand inhabitants, embarked on board the vessels belonging to the order*. The grand-master, after having taken leave of the sultan, like a tender parent watching over his children, was the last who entered the vessel; and thus abandoned the island of Rhodes, where the order of St. John of Jerusalem had reigned with so much splendor for near two hundred years.

L'Isle Adam carried with him the archives, together with many celebrated relics, long held in profound veneration by the faithful; for the conqueror, in the bloom of youth, though termed a barbarian by the Christians, felt happy in restoring to the conquered those articles which would continually call to their remembrance the acts of valour they had performed, and the piety for which they were celebrated; and, in so doing, gave an example of moderation

* January 1, 1523.

and generosity to the generals of the most enlightened nations, which, unfortunately, has since been scarcely ever followed.

The fleet belonging to the order was overtaken by a dreadful tempest; their vessels were dispersed, and obliged to take shelter in different ports of the island of Candia. L'Isle Adam, irritated at the blamable cowardice of the Venetians—who regarded with an eye of the most perfect indifference the fall of the holy place, which might be looked upon as the bulwark of Christianity—and also the loss of their possessions in the Levant, was eager to repair his vessels with all possible expedition, and to set sail immediately. Before he departed, he had an exact statement made of the persons who had followed the order; which amounted to more than five thousand. Many of the inhabitants of the islands belonging to the order left their habitations, and, attaching themselves to his fortune, contributed to augment the number of the fugitives.

In this critical situation, exposed to the danger of a difficult navigation, the grand-master neglected no possible precautions which could ensure the preservation of the order. Dreading the desertion of the knights, who were now destitute of a fixed place of residence; and fearing likewise a disunion amongst them, the event of which must be fatal, by offering a glittering bait to many princes who would be delighted to have any pretext for seizing on their immense riches; he did not lose a moment, but sent off dispatches to the pope; who immediately granted him a bull, by which he commanded all the knights, by the holy obedience due to him, to remain united under the authority of the grand-master; threatening

those who proved refractory with the heaviest vengeance of the church.

L'Isle Adam determining not to abandon the inhabitants of Rhodes, the greatest part of whom were sick, was one of the last who arrived at Messina, where the ships of war belonging to his fleet had been for some time. Before he landed in Sicily, he had been forced to touch at Gallipoli, a town in the kingdom of Naples, situated in the gulf of Otranto. The grand-master, upon landing on this hospitable island*, was received in the most flattering manner; which indeed his conduct truly merited. In order to prove himself still more worthy, he immediately—almost insensible to the honours paid him—established an hospital, not only in the palace prepared for his reception, but in the neighbouring houses; where, assisted by all the other knights, he himself attended the wounded. Imagination cannot paint a more affecting spectacle than these men, once so formidable in arms, animated alone by the spirit of charity, employed in the meanest offices—carrying broth to the sick, making their beds, and entirely occupied in contributing to their relief. Such was the fate of Sicily, that it was destined, more than two hundred years afterwards, again to see the knights of St. John, and to admire their charitable virtues in the exertions which they made for the relief of the unfortunate objects who escaped the dreadful catastrophe occasioned by the earthquake in 1783.

* Towards the end of April.

No sooner were the duties of that charity, so conformable to the first institution of the order, once fulfilled, than they proceeded to make a strict inquisition into the conduct of those who had been sent to procure relief for Rhodes. All who were cited before the full council assembled upon this occasion, presented themselves at it with a confidence which innocence and truth alone could inspire; and it was sufficiently proved, that, during the last two months of the siege, the wind had been so obstinately contrary, and the sea so dreadfully rough, that no one was hardy enough to set sail. It was a known fact, that a knight named Newport, of the language of England, an old naval officer, thinking (if I may so express myself) to subdue the raging waves by his superior skill, embarked at that time, and was thrown back again by the violence of the wind upon the point of Cape Desert; where the vessel, with all its cargo, was lost.

The tribunal having found no person guilty, “*God for ever be praised!*” exclaimed L’Isle Adam, “*who, in our common misfortune, has had the goodness to prove to me, that the loss of Rhodes could not be attributed to the negligence of any of my Order!*”

The plague visiting Messina, forced the order to quit that city; and they breathed a purer air for some time upon the coast of the kingdom of Naples. After making a short stay at Bayes and the environs of Cumes, the knights re-embarked, and arrived at Civita Vecchia.

CHAP. II.

The Grand-Master sets off for Rome: his Reception there. It is proposed to give up the Islands of Malta and Goza to the Order. Difficulties which occur. The Grand-Master conducts the Duchess of Alençon into Spain, and acts as Mediator between the Emperor Charles the Fifth and Francis the First King of France. L'Isle Adam's well-judged Answer to the Emperor. The Rights and Privileges of the Order are acknowledged in Portugal. The Grand-Master goes to England, where he is honourably received by Henry the Eighth, who likewise acknowledges the Privileges and Immunities of the Order. The King and Queen of England make rich Presents to the Grand-Master.

L'ISLE ADAM immediately determined to visit Rome, where his reception from the pope was particularly distinguished and flattering: he, however, only saw him once. After the death of Adrian, the guard of the conclave was entrusted to the grand-master and knights, who were not a little pleased with the election of Clement VII., he being the first of their order who had ever been raised to the dignity of pope. He afterwards obtained permission to settle at Viterbo; his navy remaining at Civita Vecchia. The different plans which were proposed to him, for forming an establishment, appeared either too difficult to be carried into execution, or contained clauses perfectly inadmissible. The first wish of the grand-master was the re-conquest of Rhodes; and the intelligence he contrived to receive from that place, promised, to all appearance, an

easy victory: but the scheme was discovered; and the enterprise, being thus rendered impracticable, was relinquished. He was therefore at last obliged to listen to an offer made by the emperor's minister, who consented to give up the islands of Malta and Goza to the order, adding likewise the city of Tripoli, with the territories thereunto belonging. But a condition was annexed to this offer which could not possibly subsist; and which, it was hoped, might be dispensed with in the course of time:—it was required, that the whole body of the religious should take the oath of fidelity to the emperor. This could never be conformable with the institution of an order, the independence of which constituted its utility; since to that independence alone was owing their being entirely employed in defending equally all Christians, of whatsoever description, against the infidels; for they never took a part in any war which subsisted between Christian princes, nor in the smallest degree favoured one party to the disadvantage of the other.

Whilst they waited in expectation of being able to soften the terms upon which this donation was to be granted, eight commissaries were sent to visit the new possessions destined for the order*; and, in the interim, the regent of France proposed to the grand-master to escort, in his galleys, the duchess of Alençon into Spain, whither she was going to visit her brother, Francis I., at that time prisoner to Charles V. L'Isle Adam set sail immediately, and proceeded quickly to Marseilles, from whence he conducted the

* June 25, 1525.

princess into Spain, and accompanied her himself to Madrid. The grand-master, in the midst of a court ever famous for its politics, proved himself as able a negotiator as he had formerly been deemed a great warrior: he had the honour of being admitted mediator between two powerful monarchs, whose interests were extremely difficult to conciliate, and to plead the cause of a noble-minded, frank, and generous king, against a haughty, interested, dissembling prince, who had the advantage of having his enemy in his power.

The duchess of Alençon employed every attractive charm of the wit she so eminently possessed, to soften the harsh and obstinate disposition of the emperor; but all in vain: and knowing it was designed to make her prisoner, should she exceed the time limited in her passport, she found herself obliged to leave Spain as soon as possible. Orders had been issued to detain her on the frontiers; but being informed of the plan, she eluded the pursuit.

The grand-master remained sole mediator in the cause. What a situation was his! Deprived of his own state, he found himself, on one side, under the necessity of asking the emperor to grant him a new one; and, on the other, to solicit the liberty of a powerful monarch, with permission to return to his dominions. His endeavours were, however, crowned with success, and his difficulties happily surmounted. He engaged the two princes to agree to a treaty, and consent to a meeting. He also mediated between them in an affair of, indeed, far less importance, but which required much delicacy. Charles V. and Francis I. going out together, the emperor gave precedence to the king of France, which that prince re-

fused to accept. The grand-master was called upon to decide, who immediately answered: "I pray God that no dispute of a more important nature may ever happen between your majesties." And, addressing himself to the king of France, he added: "Sire, no person can deny that the emperor is the first of Christian princes; but, being in his own dominions—nay, even in his own palace, I am of opinion you cannot refuse the marks of respect which he thinks due to the greatest prince in Europe." The emperor was pleased with his reply; and permitted him to depart, with the assurance that he would make the pope arbitrator in the infeoffment of Malta.

L'Isle Adam terminated a very important affair with Portugal, before he quitted Spain. The king, after the capture of Rhodes, thought he might either seize upon the possessions of the religion, or dispose of them to the prejudice of the statutes of the order: but upon the just representations made to the sovereign, of the seizure of those riches which had ever been employed to protect the Christian standard against the insults of the infidels, he solemnly promised not to molest the knights in the enjoyment of their commanderies. They likewise obtained a confirmation of all the rights and privileges granted to the order by the kings of Portugal, his predecessors.

Henry VIII.*, of England, made use of the same pretext as

* The comte d'Antraigues has communicated to me a history he has written of this monarch, which is so interesting a performance, that it is to be hoped it will one day be made public.

the king of Portugal, and formed the design of annexing the commanderies to his domains; as if the loss of Rhodes were to be followed by the total extinction of the order. When this intelligence reached L'Isle Adam, he was in France; whence he immediately sent an embassy to the court of London, which was received very coldly by a haughty prince, who thought he was entitled to the same marks of respect from the grand-master which had been shown to the neighbouring monarchs. L'Isle Adam, unmindful of his advanced time of life, braving the severity of the season (it being the month of February), set out for England. This proof of the venerable old man's zeal for the order affected Henry, and stifled all emotions of resentment in his bosom; he therefore received the grand-master in the most splendid and honourable manner, and sent some of the first noblemen of his court to meet him. Upon his arrival in the palace, Henry accosted him most graciously; and insisted upon his accepting of a superb apartment prepared for the occasion, where he was served with a magnificence suitable to his rank, and to the esteem felt by the king for so illustrious a guest.

Henry, who knew how to appreciate brilliant actions and military fame, frequently conversed upon the siege of Rhodes, and its noble defence. L'Isle Adam communicated to him the offer made by Charles V., of the island of Malta, and Tripoli in Africa; acquainting him, at the same time, with the conditions annexed to it, which were incompatible with the independence of the order; it being impossible for the knights to acknowledge, as

sovereign, any particular prince, without rendering themselves suspected by all others. Henry, after divers conferences, consented to give twenty thousand crowns; which he afterwards paid in artillery and small-arms. L'Isle Adam also obtained the confirmation of all the privileges of his order; which was indeed the principal object of his journey.

When L'Isle Adam had taken leave of the king, in order to return to Italy, Henry sent him, in his own name, and in that of the queen, a golden bason and ewer, enriched with precious stones, which were afterwards placed in the treasury, and constitute one of its most magnificent ornaments.

CHAP. III.

The Report of the Commissioners concerning the Situation of Malta, Goza, and Tripoli in Africa. Grant of the Emperor to the Order. Voyage of the Knights to Malta; their Reception. Miserable Situation of Malta and its Dependencies. Improvements soon made by the Knights. Troubles in Malta. The Knights in Arms against each other. Exemplary Punishment executed on the Offenders. Henry VIII. abolishes the Order in his Dominions. Death of L'Isle Adam. The English Knights provided for most generously. Mary, Queen of England, restores their Property: of which they are afterwards for ever deprived under the Reign of her Sister Elizabeth. The Language of England continues to be constantly respected by the Order.

THE report of the commissioners sent to inquire into the state of Malta, Goza, and Tripoli, was read in full council, and contained the following account:—That the island of Malta was merely a rock of a soft sand-stone, called tufa, about six or seven leagues long, and three or four broad: that the surface of the rock was scarcely covered with more than three or four feet of earth, which was likewise stony, and very unfit to grow corn and other grain; though it produced abundance of figs, melons, and different fruits: that the principal trade of the island consisted in honey, cotton, and cummin, which the inhabitants exchanged for grain: that, except a few springs in the middle of the island, there was no running water, nor even wells; the want of which the inhabitants supplied by

cisterns: that wood was so scarce as to be sold by the pound; which forced them either to use cow-dung dried in the sun, or wild thistles, for dressing food: that the capital of the country, named *Citta Notabile*, was situated upon a rising ground in the centre of the island: that the greatest part of the houses were uninhabited; and the circumference not more than one thousand three hundred and three paces: that the miserable walls which surrounded it were open thirty paces in breadth: that there were neither ports, bays, nor coves, on the western coast of the island: that the shore in that part was full of great rocks and shoals; but that on the opposite coast there were many points or capes, with indentures in the form of bays or coves, in which ships might anchor: that there were two spacious and very good ports in the island, capable of receiving the largest fleet; but with no other defence than a small castle, named St. Angelo, which was partly in ruins—its whole artillery consisting of one small cannon, two falcons, and a few iron mortars: that the island contained about twelve thousand inhabitants, of both sexes; the greatest part of whom were poor and miserable, owing to the barrenness of the soil, and the frequent descents of corsairs, who, without the smallest sentiment of compassion, carried off all the unfortunate Maltese who happened to fall into their hands;—in a word, that a residence in Malta appeared extremely disagreeable—indeed, almost insupportable—particularly in summer.

As to the island of Goza, called by the inhabitants *Gaudisch*, the commissioners reported, that it was only divided from Malta by

a narrow channel, named Freo, about a league and a half wide, in the midst of which were situated little islands or rocks, called Cumin and Cuminot: that Goza was eight leagues in circumference, three long, and one and a half broad: that they had seen no port of any kind in the island; which was so surrounded with shoals and craggy rocks, that the approach was extremely difficult;—the soil, however, appeared to be very fertile; and it contained about five thousand inhabitants, including men, women, and children, who were dispersed in different villages: that the people of the island, in order to secure themselves from corsairs, had erected a castle upon a mountain, which appeared badly fortified, and of very little importance; but, weak as it was, the commissioners judged it would not be prudent in the council to accept the island of Malta separately from that of Goza, since the vicinity of the latter would in that case be dangerous, as it might, at some future period, serve as a retreat for their enemies. Besides this relation, the commissioners presented a variety of private notes, made by the jurats of Malta and Goza, which contained very particular accounts of every thing worthy of notice, together with a plan of Malta, on which they had marked, in the most exact manner, many gulfs or bays, serving generally as retreats for fishermen, and, indeed, sometimes for corsairs. They therefore thought, so great a number of ports being extremely convenient for the armaments of the order, that the offers of the emperor ought not to be rejected, provided he did not insist upon the order's taking up arms against his own particular enemies.

The commissioners were of a different opinion respecting the city and castle of Tripoli; and represented to the council, that they were situate upon the coast of Barbary, eighty leagues from Malta, without any fortifications; which, indeed, it would be almost impossible to erect upon a foundation of sand, and subject to inundation: that the ditches were small, and very shallow; and that the port and castle were commanded by a neighbouring mountain: that the city was surrounded by the territories of the king of Tunis, who would never permit Christians to remain long unmolested: that corn was still more scarce than at Malta; the soil being very barren, and producing nothing but dates. From all these circumstances they concluded, that if the order took upon itself the defence of this place, it would only expose the lives of those knights who should be sent thither. As to the sentiments of the inhabitants upon this occasion, they did not at first appear very favourable: for the Maltese, during the century which preceded the infeoffment of their island to the knights, had obtained great privileges from the kings of Arragon, their sovereigns at that time; and likewise a solemn promise, that they should never more be detached from their government: they were, therefore, greatly afflicted upon first hearing that Charles V., paying no attention to the assurance given them by his predecessors, intended to yield them up to a foreign power. Neither the strongest remonstrances nor the greatest opposition could engage the emperor to change his resolution. He, however, succeeded at last in consoling them, and that in a manner analogous to their interest and to their ideas of religion; for he

convinced them, that their island, once submitted to the government of knights who consecrated themselves entirely to the defence of the faith, would infallibly become the bulwark of Christendom. Such a motive made the most lively impression upon the inhabitants, who, as it will presently appear, received the order with the greatest demonstrations of joy.

We come now to show in what manner Charles V.* consented to cede Malta and its dependencies. He granted for ever, as well for himself as his heirs and successors, to the right reverend the grand-master of the said order and religion of St. John, an unlimited title, in fee-simple, to all the castles, fortresses, and isles, of Tripoli, Malta, and Goza; to have and to hold by the most ample tenure; together with power over the lives and fortunes of their inhabitants; and that without appeal to any lord paramount whatsoever. He at the same time absolved them from their oath of allegiance to him; empowering them to transfer it to their new masters, and abdicating all feudal rights heretofore vested in the imperial crown.

The only conditions on which he made this cession were, 1st, That the order should swear, never to suffer its new subjects to take up arms against the king of Sicily and his states. 2dly, An annual homage of a falcon to the said king, or his viceroy. 3dly, A renunciation on their part, to the king, of the nomination to the bishopric of Malta. The presentation to that dignity to be made from among three of their order, of which one should be a Sicilian

* See Appendix (No.V.) the Act of donation, by Charles V., of Malta, Goza, and Tripoli, with the oath taken by the viceroy of Sicily.

subject. 4thly, A promise, that the admiral, or his lieutenant, should be chosen from the language of Italy; as well as that those on whom the command of squadrons might devolve, should be persons in whom the king of Sicily could confide. 5thly, The absolute necessity of the king's consent to the transfer of the isle of Malta to any other power. In short, it was agreed, that commissioners should be appointed to settle, in an amicable way, the indemnities due to those individuals who possessed fiefs in Malta, in consequence of former grants from the king, and which the order might wish to take into its own hands.

The grand-master and the council having received the diploma of the grant, examined it, and accepted the clauses. Two ambassadors were immediately sent to the viceroy of Sicily, to whom they took the oath of fidelity; and received the act of investiture from his hands, in the name of the emperor. They then proceeded to Malta, accompanied by six commissioners named by the viceroy, who, in consequence of the power given them by the grand-master and the council, solemnly swore, in their name, to preserve for the inhabitants of these islands their rights, customs, and privileges.

The Maltese, and their neighbours in Goza, received the ambassadors with transports of joy; which were increased to the highest degree when they learned that their new sovereign intended to reside amongst them; as they expected, from his presence and favour, a degree of happiness of which they had long been hopeless.

The university, as a proof of its satisfaction upon this occasion, gave up, in favour of the order, the thirty thousand florins with

which it had discharged a debt incurred by king Alphonso and the Nava family, to whom the king of Spain, in reward of its faithful services, had given the castellany (government of the castle) of St. Angelo. The knights were put in possession of this fort, upon condition only of paying a pension for life to Alvarez de Nava, the head of that family.

A short time afterwards, the grand-master sent two galleys and a galleon, with a sufficient number of knights, to Tripoli, in Africa, in order to take possession of that ill-conditioned place; which the emperor absolutely insisted the knights should undertake to defend. Nothing now was wanting for the entire establishment of the order in Malta, but the landing of the grand-master and council on that island. The people from Rhodes, who followed the fortunes of the knights of St. John, were the first who embarked in five galleys, two large caravels, and other transports. The effects and titles of the order were shipped at the same time, together with goods, provisions, and ammunition. Immediately upon the arrival of L'Isle Adam*, the order gave into his hands, in quality of their chief, all monarchical power; after which he took possession of the sovereignty of the island. He was placed under a canopy, and carried by the jurats into the capital of the island, the gates of which were shut: but having sworn, upon his cross, to preserve the privileges of the inhabitants, the keys were presented to him; and he made his entry into the *Citta Notabile* amidst the acclamations

* October 26, 1530.

of the people. The same ceremony and oath take place at the election of every grand-master.

Every thing in Malta wore a different aspect when governed by the order. The most sumptuous edifices were shortly erected, both as places of worship, and as hospitals for the relief of the poor and sick of every country. The knights, worthy the admiration of all beholders, were constantly seen either praying with their accustomed fervour to the true God of battles, or visiting the infirmaries, where they bestowed the same care and attention on the unfortunate, which had formerly been paid them by the original hospitallers.

A regular and magnificent city was built upon a rough and barren rock. Neat villages adorned the island; whilst superb country-houses, erected in different parts, announced the flourishing state of Malta. The armaments of the order became every day more powerful; so that the corsairs were not only deterred from approaching the coasts of Malta and Goza, but were apprehensive for the safety of their own. The banners of St. John shone conspicuous in the front of the battle, during every war betwixt the Christian princes and the infidels. Thrice, in concert with the Spanish fleet, it was displayed before Algiers, in the last thirty years of the eighteenth century*, and always with equal glory. Twice the squadrons of the order accompanied those of France to chastise Tunis; and twice, likewise, its frigates were dispatched to

* In 1775, 1782, and 1783.

assist his imperial majesty against the Turks. No one was more sensible than Charles V., how truly serviceable the knights were to the neighbouring powers. In his first expedition to Africa, the gates of Tunis were thrown open to him by one of these knights; and in the second, a violent tempest having almost entirely destroyed and dispersed the Spanish fleet, the navy of Malta, which alone kept its post upon the raging waves, saved the remains of his army, which had fruitlessly endeavoured to rejoin their vessels upon a coast covered on all sides with the wrecks of the fleet. At the battle of Lepanto, three of the galleys belonging to the order, conformably to their right of pre-eminence, were placed in the post of honour, and maintained themselves in it in a manner worthy their ancient reputation. Every place, indeed, taken from the Venetians by the Turks, can witness the generous efforts made by the knights in its defence; who, during the long war in Candia, never failed to send squadrons thither every year. The same navy was not merely satisfied with spreading terror amongst the infidels, but was continually employed in bestowing comfort on the Christians. An earthquake having overthrown the city of Augusta, and even reached Malta, which it damaged considerably, the order, insensible to its own situation, immediately dispatched its galleys with relief to the unfortunate inhabitants. In 1783, Messina and Reggio, together with the whole coast of Calabria, suffered the same calamity, and in so terrible a manner as to be almost unparalleled in the annals of history. These two cities presented a dreadful spectacle, and were reduced to merely a heap of ruins: their miserable inhabitants,

scattered through the fields, were deprived of shelter, and even the common necessaries of food, &c. No sooner was the order of Malta informed of this disaster, than galleys were instantly sent, laden with every article that could possibly contribute to the relief of the sufferers, and soften the horror of their situation.

The only fortress in the island, formerly defended only by one cannon and two falcons, soon became surrounded by batteries; and Malta was quickly considered as the strongest place in Christendom. Twenty-one years after the knights arrived in that island, the famous corsair Dragut was obliged to renounce his design of conquering it; and, in fifteen more, the whole united Ottoman force miscarried in the same attempt before Malta, which resisted with all its strength, but which owed its safety still more to its brave defenders, than to the excellence of its fortifications. Indeed, the valour for which the knights of St. John were ever so renowned, still existed in its original purity: we may even venture to say, that the order never ceased to possess it; and if, for a moment, this sacred fire has seemed extinguished in the breast of some few of its members, be assured, it will shine out afresh, and blaze forth with double lustre, when purified from the effects of its recent misfortunes.—*Errare humanum est.*

Notwithstanding the members of the order were constantly employed in making the necessary arrangements for establishing themselves in Malta, the galleys still continued their excursions. They attempted to surprise the city of Modon; and succeeded in pillaging it, and carrying off immense riches. They likewise took a

great number of slaves, amongst whom were eight hundred women and girls*.

L'Isle Adam having ensured the safety of his new possessions, and regulated the finances in the exactest manner—having built a church and an infirmary, and provided for those Rhodian families which followed the order, by which they were constantly protected—had no further ambition, than peaceably to end a life passed in continual agitations, amidst the grateful benedictions of his people: but it was decreed that this hero should go through still severer trials; and that the greatest of his misfortunes should be reserved to embitter his last moments.

Disputes arose between the knights of the different languages, which ended by their taking up arms against each other; and the most precious blood in Christendom was shed by Christian hands. A false point of honour stifled every idea of the true; and, for the first time, the knights engaged in a most bloody war. These disorders being at last suppressed, the severity of the law took its course: twelve knights were banished Malta, and many others thrown into the sea. Just as was their punishment, L'Isle Adam felt equally grieved at the offence and the chastisement of the offenders.

* A young Turkish woman, of exquisite beauty, became the property of the viscount de Cicala, who married her; and she bore him a son, named Scipio Cicala. This young man, after having met with various adventures, went to Constantinople, where he turned Mahometan, and, by his great valour, became commander of the Turkish army; in which capacity he sufficiently revenged the cause of the Turks for the sacking Modon.

To complete the miseries of this venerable old man, Henry VIII. abolished the order in his dominions*. This prince began by injustice, and ended in cruelty. From sectary he became persecutor; and in order to commit crimes with impunity, he no longer acknowledged the head of the church; who could never be induced to believe, that Christian morality could conform to the caprices of mankind, and become subservient to their passions. Henry, therefore, declared himself supreme chief of his new religion, which he insisted upon all his subjects embracing: and though this religion appeared founded upon principles of tolerance and independence, he caused scaffolds to be erected, and prisons to be opened. All those who, though contented as subjects to submit to the laws of the land, thought themselves entitled to liberty of conscience, underwent the most cruel persecutions. Amongst the knights of Malta whose blood flowed for the faith, we feel a melancholy pleasure in tracing the following names, transmitted to us by history, viz.: Ingley, Adrian Forrest, Adrian Fortescu, and Marmaduke Bohus, who, refusing to renounce the belief of their ancestors, perished by the axe of the executioner. Thomas Mytton and Edward Waldegrave, imprisoned in a horrible dungeon, chose rather to die honourably in their confinement, than to purchase their liberty by the crime of perjury. Richard and James Bell, John Noel, &c. likewise preferred the true and solid consolations christianity affords to those who suffer in its cause, to the deceitful

* 1534.

and transitory pleasures of a court; they therefore passed the remainder of their days in an honourable exile. Many knights having with difficulty escaped from Henry's pursuit, arrived in Malta without any means for their future subsistence. The grand-master received them with a parent's affection; ensured them a proper provision, and endeavoured to comfort them under their misfortunes. Alas! who more than himself was in need of consolation?

Thus, in the midst of such cruel afflictions, died L'Isle Adam; upon whose tomb were engraved the following simple words, so truly expressive of the events of his life:

"Hic jacet Virtus victrix Fortune."*

"Here reposes Virtue triumphant over Misfortune."

Upon the death of L'Isle Adam, care was taken to make a permanent provision for the English knights in the principal place of residence of the order. True charity never repulses the sons of misfortune: these knights, therefore, remained amongst their brethren, by whom they were always pitied and relieved, beloved and respected. The first hospitallers, as they very well remem-

* The family of L'Isle Adam continued to subsist in France; but was reduced to a state of such indigence, that, towards the end of the seventeenth century, a gentleman of that name was under the necessity of driving carts loaded with stones, in the neighbourhood of Troye in Champagne, in order to support his father. See *l'Art de vérifier les Dates*.

bered, possessed no property attached to any particular language, but exercised their charity indifferently to all—relieving equally the wants of the hospitallers, and those of the sick and poor.

The English knights, stripped as they were of their possessions, preserved all the dignities belonging to the language. Their brethren would have thought it derogatory to their own honour, had they endeavoured to deprive them of these advantages: indeed, so much did they respect their misfortunes, that they not only permitted the name of the language of England to remain; but not one of the other languages would have dared to usurp the dignity of grand *turcopolier*, which had ever been attached to it. The pope, a long time afterwards, gave the grand-master permission to appoint to that post. The language of England was constantly represented in the council, and in the election of a grand-master; and the most ancient brother of the order was always *pillier* for that language. Two centuries afterwards, a new language was formed, styled the *Anglo-Bavarian*; the knights of St. John not choosing to let sink in oblivion a name so long cherished by the religion. Indeed, the language of England still preserved its post at the siege of Malta, where it was placed on the mole on the Burgh side, assisted by those of Castille and Germany.

The English, who, before the abolition of their order by Henry, had places in the council, or were in the land or sea service, continued to act in the same capacity, and were allowed to vote at the election of a grand-master: those, likewise, who, constant in the faith of their ancestors, were afterwards desirous of entering into the

order, were received, and held equally capable with the other knights of obtaining commanderies in the priories into which they had been admitted.

Under the government of the successors of L'Isle Adam, we again see English knights appear upon the scene; but, alas! in a very different manner. One, in a transport of jealous fury, assassinated his mistress; for which, according to custom, he was delivered up to the common law, tried, and sentenced to be taken one mile from the port, put into a sack, and thrown alive into the sea: whilst another, an English commander, of the name of Upton, one of the bravest knights in the order, placed himself at the head of thirty knights, together with four hundred of the inhabitants, and thus opposed the disembarking of the infidels upon the first descent of Dragut on the island, which happened during the grand-mastership of John d'Omedes. This valiant knight lost his life in consequence of the wounds he received in the action.

Towards the conclusion of the same grand-mastership, Mary mounted the throne of England, and, being a Roman catholic, restored the wealth of the order, which had been annexed to the crown by her father, to its original possessors. This fortunate intelligence was carried to Malta by captain Hosmadon; and we need not say how much the whole order, and particularly the English knights, were delighted by this intelligence. To show their gratitude to the queen, the grand-master and the council bestowed the priory of St. John of London upon sir Richard Seeley, who had, indeed, greatly contributed to this restitution.

This priory, independent of the considerable revenue attached to it, enjoyed a very great privilege—that of sitting in the English parliament as the first baron of the kingdom. The consent of this assembly, in which the liberties and interests of the nation frequently triumph over the majesty of the throne, was necessary for the re-establishment of the Roman catholic religion. Cardinal Pole was invested with the dignity and power of legate from the pope*. He abolished all schisms, but without daring to insist either upon penances or the restitution of church-lands. It was necessary, in the beginning, to pardon faults which it would have been dangerous to punish: he was, therefore, obliged to remain satisfied with the proud submission of the English, who received the favour of the holy see in a manner which sufficiently showed they had not sought to obtain it: indeed, the power of the pope was, very shortly after, entirely annihilated in England, and the possessions of the knights of St. John once more wrested from them.

If upon this occasion the church had reason to regret its separation from so powerful a nation, the order had equal cause for affliction, in being deprived of its illustrious nobility.

* Julius III.

CHAP. IV.

Peter Dupont appointed Grand-Master. Expedition of Charles V. into Africa. Acts of Valour performed by the Knights; one of whom presents the Keys of Tunis to the Emperor. Didier de St. Jaille succeeds Peter Dupont. A Corsair, surnamed Chasse-Diable (Drive-Devil), is repulsed from before Tripoli. John d'Omedes Grand-Master. An unfortunate Expedition to Algiers. Services rendered by the Knights and their Navy. Memorable Action by two Maltese Galleys. Capture of Africa; in which the Knights had a principal Share. Descent of the Turks in the Island of Malta. They present themselves before the old City. Their Re-embarkation. They seize upon Goza, owing to the Cowardice of the Governor. The Punishment he received.

CHARLES V., as has been already observed, had soon reason to congratulate himself on the concessions he had made to the order. Some celebrated corsairs, having long been thieves and pirates, became, by degrees, the conquering party. The Barbarossas likewise had possessed themselves of some powerful states on the coasts of Africa; which, joined to continual prizes taken from the Spaniards, and their frequent descents upon the coasts of Italy, induced the emperor to declare war, and to communicate his determination to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

Peter Dupont, by birth a Piedmontese, who succeeded L'Isle Adam, sent out a squadron with land forces to assist the emperor; who, thus supported, obtained a complete victory over Barbarossa.

This success induced him to attack Tunis, which, he very well knew, contained the treasures of this famous corsair. On approaching the city, he was greatly surprised to perceive a knight of Malta, named Simeoni, coming to meet him, accompanied by six thousand brave Christians, who, with himself, had broken their chains, and taken possession of Tunis. Charles flew to embrace him, saying: "Courteous knight, blessed forever be the resolute valour which has enabled you to break your chains, to facilitate my victory, and to increase the glory of your order!"

Didier de St. Jaille, who had greatly distinguished himself at the siege of Rhodes, succeeded Peter Dupont* (1535). During his mastership, *Chasse-Diable* (Drive-Devil), a victorious corsair, who rivalled Barbarossa in courage, and surpassed him in ferocity, attacked Tripoli; but having been wounded in the assault, whilst acting the part of a valiant leader, the town escaped for a short time falling into the hands of the infidels; for the corsair's troops, perceiving the misfortune which had befallen their chief, lost all courage, and abandoned the place, leaving behind them, under the wall of the fortress, the bodies of many of their comrades who had been killed in the action †.

* Died November 12, 1535.

† During his reign, the chevalier de Bourbon, grand-prior of France, ordered a hanging of tapestry to be made, on which were represented the portraits of all the grand-masters, taken from excellent original paintings brought from Rhodes. The ground of this magnificent furniture was of silk embossed with gold: and when it was finished, he sent it to Malta, to be placed in the principal church of the island. —Bosio, book viii. Vertot, book x.

On the death of Didier de St. Jailles *, John d'Omedes was elected grand-master (1536) by the Spanish faction, which, owing to the protection granted by Charles V. to the order, began to show an inclination to take the lead in the convent. The troubles this occasioned during the mastership of Omedes, and afterwards, during that of Cassiere, will presently be perceived; so true it is (and it cannot be too often repeated), that on the independence of the order must ever rest the power of protecting the Christian cause.

The emperor having reason to complain of the government of Algiers, fitted out a most formidable armament, with an intention, as it appeared, entirely to extirpate the infidels from the coasts of Barbary. He, in consequence of this resolution, demanded from Malta all possible assistance. The whole of the knights offered themselves to join the expedition; but only four hundred were permitted to embark, each of whom was accompanied by two servants in arms. In order to appear more conspicuous to their enemies, they wore upon the breast a covering of crimson damask or velvet, upon which shone a white cross. The first sally made by the garrison of Algiers, gave them an opportunity of signalling themselves in the most valiant manner: it may, indeed, be said, with truth, that their exertions saved a great part of the Christian army from being cut to pieces. The advanced posts had been surprised—the infidels were proceeding towards the emperor's quarters, when

* Died at Montpellier, September 26.

the arrival of two Spanish regiments, together with the knights of Malta, happily stopped their progress. Villegagnon, a French knight, distinguished himself most eminently*. With the natural impetuosity of his nation, he rushed into the midst of the enemy, and was wounded in the left arm by a Moorish cavalier; but having parried, with his right hand, a second stroke of a lance from the same cavalier, he sprang upon the horse of his assailant, and stabbed him to the heart. Savignac, likewise a Frenchman, carrying the standard of Malta, pursued the infidels to the very gates of Algiers, into which he struck his poignard, as a proof of the courageous part he had taken in the attack.

The order lost seventy-five knights in the two first sallies; and they were preparing to engage in fresh combats, when a most dreadful tempest arose. The ships which conveyed the provisions were, in the space of half an hour, either dispersed or destroyed. Fifteen galleys and eighty-six other vessels perished. Nothing could possibly equal the horrors of the scene upon the shore, which shortly appeared covered with pieces of wreck and dead bodies. The soldiers and sailors who were able to swim, perished on the coast; for the Moors and Arabs wandering in the fields, repaired to the sea-side, and massacred, without the smallest sentiments of compassion, all those who attempted to land. On an occasion so memorably disastrous, the Maltese navy rose to the highest pitch of glory. The galleys of the order alone resisted the fury of the

* See *La Relation du Siege d'Algiers, adressée au Pape Paul III. par le Secrétaire de son Legat.*

waves; and when Charles V. was told that some vessels appeared still to live at sea, he exclaimed, "They must, indeed, be Maltese galleys which can outride such a tempest!" The high opinion he had formed of this fleet was fully justified; for the standard of the order was soon in sight.

The sailors belonging to a very old galley endeavoured to sink it, which the commander opposed with the greatest firmness; and on their representing to him, that the vessel having been employed twenty years, the loss would be very trifling, he drew his sword, and told them: "This galley was entrusted to me by the order, and the first person who attempts to destroy it shall receive his death from my hands; for I will either save the vessel or perish upon the spot." The heroism and firmness of the commander inspired the crew with courage—every one assisted at the pumps—and their attempts to save the galley were at last crowned with success. The order had nearly lost another galley by a misfortune which could only have been remedied by an act of the greatest intrepidity. The rudder being carried away, the vessel drifted with the waves, and was nearly thrown upon a rock, where it infallibly must have gone to pieces, had not two hardy sailors, stripped, and lashed together with ropes, suffered themselves to be lowered down; where, without tools, employing their hands alone, they succeeded in shipping a fresh one, which fortunately had been provided in case of such accident.

In this disastrous retreat made by the Christian army, the knights of Malta, though most of them had been wounded in the

action, still maintained, as usual, the post of honour. They composed the rear-guard, embarked the last, and were fiercely pursued by the Moorish cavalry.

The coasts of Africa were destined soon to receive a second visit from the knights of Malta, who conducted themselves in the same glorious manner, and fortunately with more success.

Africa, a powerful city, with a considerable fortress, where the celebrated corsair Dragut, who reigned over a great extent of country, kept his principal forces, was besieged by the Christians*. The knights of Malta, for a great length of time, had possessed the exclusive privilege of heading all attacks: but the emperor's troops, commanded by the son of the viceroy of Naples, and likewise by the viceroy of Sicily, determined to have the sole honour of taking the place by assault. They therefore commenced the attack without acquainting the knights with their intention: but they were repulsed with great loss, which would have been still more considerable, had not the Maltese troops flown to their relief.

The bailiff de la Sangle, who some time afterwards was chosen grand-master, commanded upon this occasion. Though exposed to all the dangers of war, he regarded hospitality as his first duty; and contrived a kind of hospital and infirmary in his tents, where the sick and wounded were received and properly treated. The other knights followed his example:—they attended the sick in turns; and were admired throughout the army, not only for their

* 1550.

courage, but their charity. The town was assaulted a second time: when the commander Giou first mounted the breach, planted the colours of the order upon it, and was killed by a shot from the enemy. He was immediately replaced by the commander de Cossier, who, during the whole action, though exposed to a constant fire, and enveloped in a cloud of arrows from the cross-bows, still held exalted the banner of St. John. At the very moment when they despaired of carrying the place, and the Imperial troops appeared to give way, the commander de Gimeran forced his passage into the city, which was immediately taken and sacked. Dragut's soldiers, fearing the reproaches of their leader more than death, rushed upon the swords of the Christians, and, refusing to ask for quarter, were all cut to pieces.

In this manner was taken the strongest city at that time existing on the African coast. The emperor, desirous of preserving the memory of the warriors killed upon the ramparts, ordered, upon quitting the place, their remains to be transported into Sicily, and deposited in the cathedral at Montreal; where they arrived in two separate cases:—and the viceroy erected a mausoleum, upon which he engraved the following epitaph—“ Though the hand of Death has terminated the existence of those whose ashes are entombed under this marble, the remembrance of their rare valour can never be effaced. By faith these heroes have obtained a seat in heaven; and their courage has ensured their everlasting glory on earth; so that the blood which issued from their wounds, has, for one transitory life, procured them durable immortality!”

Dragut, enraged at the loss of Africa, together with his treasures and slaves contained in it, which he attributed principally to the knights of St. John, determined upon revenge: he therefore presently appeared before Malta with a formidable fleet. Such were the obstinacy and avarice of the grand-master, that the knights were in a most destitute state; notwithstanding which, they never forgot what they owed to themselves and to the order. At no time had they appeared more resolute: and their very aspect struck their enemies with awe. Dragut commanded the fleet under Sinam, Solyman's general; who, upon viewing the situation and batteries of fort St. Angelo, refused to attack it, though ardently pressed by Dragut to risk the assault.

The Ottoman troops proceeded to the coast near the Old City, which was not only undefended, but filled with miserable peasants, crowded one upon another, whose despairing state gave very little reason to expect much from their assistance. They however applied to Omedes for relief; who refused them, and at the same time declared, that the whole armed forces of the order were not more than sufficient to ensure his own safety. The person charged with this commission, cruelly hurt at being forced to deliver so severe an answer to the commandant of the Old City, entreated (according to the orders he had received on his departure) that the grand-master would at least consent to send Ville-gagnon—the same knight whose gallant actions have already been mentioned in this history; and who, greatly flattered with the high opinion entertained of his courage, accepted, with equal modesty

and resignation, the dangerous mission with which he was charged: but he represented, at the same time, that there was very little reliance to be placed upon a troop of peasants shut up in a city, who naturally were fearful of danger, and who were insensible to the shame annexed to those who avoid it; that, in the present circumstance, the governor was in want of intrepid men, who were led on to action by motives of religion and principles of honour: in a word, that, in order to save the city, it would at least be necessary to send one hundred knights to its relief. The courageous Villegagnon, whose frankness had frequently offended Omedes, could obtain nothing from the grand-master; who, wearied with such solid remonstrances, bluntly answered, "That he expected courage and obedience, and not reasons, from a knight: that if he were afraid, it would be easy to find others, who would think themselves honoured by such a commission." Villegagnon, piqued at a reply which seemed to strike at his honour, instantly said: "I will presently show you, sir, that an idea of fear never made me avoid danger." Upon which he immediately departed, accompanied by six French knights, his particular friends; and in order to reach the city before day-break, they threw themselves, without saddles and bridles, upon some horses which were grazing in the moats of the castle, and thus arrived near the besieged town. In the darkness of the night they glided to the bottom of the wall, and having made the proper signals, a rope was thrown over, by which they all seven, together with their guide, entered the fort without being perceived by the enemy.

The presence of Villegagnon produced as great an effect as the arrival of a strong re-inforcement. All the inhabitants, with the country people, solemnised his entry by exclamations of joy and discharges of musquetry. These demonstrations struck the enemy with terror; which was still heightened by their having received false advice that a Christian fleet was at sea and making sail towards Malta.

Sinam issued orders for his troops to re-embark; but, that it might not be said his expedition entirely failed, the troops determined to attempt a descent upon Goza, which succeeded, owing to the cowardice of the governor—the only instance of the kind which had ever happened in the order. One English cavalier alone fired upon the Turks; but this brave man being killed by a shot from the enemy's battery, no one had sufficient courage to take his place.

The commandant of Goza, named Galation, made known to the bashaw his readiness to capitulate; but proposing such honourable terms as could only be granted to those who had made a glorious defence, they were rejected with contempt. Sinam gave liberty to only forty persons; and Galation had not only demanded his own, but that of two hundred inhabitants chosen by himself.

The Turks immediately entered the castle, and at the same time pillaged the governor's apartments; he himself being obliged to carry some of his furniture upon his back on board the infidels' ships. He was then stripped of his clothes, and bound like a slave. Six thousand Christians, of all ages, and both sexes, were, through

his abominable cowardice, reduced to the same state, and never ceased reproaching him as the cause of their misfortunes*.

* A Sicilian who had been settled for some time in Goza, preferring death to slavery, and dreading the consequences of the latter for his family, in a transport of rage and jealousy stabbed his wife and two daughters to the heart. Being determined not to survive them, he armed himself with a musquet and cross-bow, and having dispatched two Turks, rushed impetuously into the midst of the enemy, where, after wounding several, he at last met with the death he so eagerly sought.

CHAP. V.

The Siege of Tripoli. Insurrection of the Troops. The Capitulation violated. Remarkable Defence made by one of the Servants-of-Arms. The French Ambassador at the Porte redeems the Slaves. The Grand-Master endeavours, by underhand Contrivances, to ruin the Ambassador and the Governor of Tripoli. Villegagnon, a French Knight, undertakes to defend their Cause. The Ambassador leaves Malta. The Governor of Tripoli, together with three Spanish Knights, imprisoned and tried. Infamous Conduct of the Judge. Many Members of the Council courageously oppose the Execution of the Sentence. Henry II., King of France, demands that Justice shall be done to his Ambassador. The Grand-Master prevents the Vindication being sent to France. Villegagnon discovers that the Grand-Master has suborned the Judge: and attacks the former upon the Subject in full Council. The Grand-Master is obliged to sign the Ambassador's Vindication, and to commit it into the Hands of Villegagnon. New Fortifications erected at Malta. Fort St. Elmo. La Sangle elected Grand-Master. Honours paid him by the Viceroy of Sicily. The Grand-Master fortifies the Burgh; which takes the Name of City La Sangle. Dreadful Ravages occasioned in less than Half an Hour, by a Siphon or Water-spout. The extraordinary Accidents it occasioned. Dragut makes a Descent on Malta; but is obliged to re-embark his Troops.

THE capture of Goza induced Dragut and Sinam to pursue their good fortune; they accordingly set sail for Tripoli, which was not only extremely difficult to defend against the enemy, but was left in a very destitute state by Omedes, who could never be prevailed

upon to send necessary relief. Omedes, however, when it was too late, induced Gabriel D'Aramont, the French ambassador at Constantinople, to dissuade the Turkish generals from attempting the siege of Tripoli: but on reaching their army he found it already begun; and he was not only unable to prevail with them in any respect, but they contrived to detain him among them, on different pretences.

Scarcely had the enemy's batteries begun to fire upon the fort, when the Spanish and Calabrian troops sent thither by the viceroy of Naples and Sicily, being but just levied, and unaccustomed to stand fire, began to mutiny; and, what is very astonishing, they were encouraged in their insurrection by two or three Spanish knights, particularly by one named Errera, who acted as treasurer. The marshal of the order, Vallier, of the language of Auvergne, was commandant of Tripoli. He was universally esteemed a brave man; and made use of every effort in his power to quell the sedition. He was supported by all the other knights, except those already mentioned; but their exertions were fruitless—neither threats nor entreaties were of any avail: so that at last the marshal, perceiving the dignity of commandant no longer existed, and that obedience was out of the question, found himself obliged to enter into a capitulation; the articles of which, however, were never carried into execution. The Spanish and Calabrian rebels, convinced that their liberty was specified in the capitulation, went to meet the conqueror, who stripped them of their possessions, loaded them with chains, and reduced them to a state of abject slavery.

What, at such a moment, must have been the reflexions of those men, who, being themselves the cause of this shameful surrender, were reduced to drag on life in humiliating self-reproaches and fruitless despair! Equally disregarded by their enemies and their former protectors, they were left, without pity, to languish in chains, and to groan in a captivity brought on by their own treason and infamous cowardice.

Desveches, a servant-of-arms, commanded a small fort near the entrance of the port: and though the garrison consisted of only thirty men, he would not listen to any terms of composition with the Turks, but forced them to raise a battery against his inconsiderable fort, which, in course, was instantly reduced. Desveches, with his troops, had the good fortune to escape in a boat during the night, and to gain the open sea.

The French ambassador succeeded in obtaining leave to ransom the knights, which he did without distinction of country. This permission, however, was obtained with difficulty, by the means of presents, and paying a large sum out of his own private fortune.

D'Aramont embarked for Malta, accompanied by the knights he had thus ransomed. But he had scarcely begun to taste the heartfelt satisfaction of restoring his valiant companions to their order, when, in the midst of the blessings bestowed upon him by those whose chains he had broken, he was informed that the grand-master accused him of having given up Tripoli into the hands of the infidels. Omedes was, in truth, dismayed upon receiving intelligence that the town was taken; though he was more uneasy

than grieved upon the occasion, fearing, with reason, that the loss of so considerable a place would be attributed to him. He very well knew that complaints had been made in the convent of his having neglected the fortifications of Tripoli, and of his having embezzled the money destined for that purpose, in order to provide for his nephews. The loss of that place might possibly revive those complaints, and occasion a strict examination into his conduct, which might, perhaps, end in his being deposed. In order to escape from so dangerous a situation, he determined to render the ambassador suspected, and to accuse him, together with marshal Vallier, of having occasioned the loss of Tripoli. His friends immediately began to propagate false reports with respect to the conduct of D'Aramont: they even secretly wrote letters to the different knights dispersed throughout Europe, to accuse him of being in league with the Turks. The language held in Malta on this subject, and the reports thus malignantly spread, soon reached D'Aramont: but no words can express his surprise on the occasion. He instantly demanded an audience; to which he was summoned to appear in full council. He took his seat next to the grand-master; and, thinking it unworthy his character and situation to condescend to refute such false reports, he only requested, addressing himself to Omedes, that "he would please to remember, that his journey into Africa was in consequence of his repeated entreaties; and that in order to induce him to comply with this request, the grand-master had represented that the interests of Christianity were concerned." He likewise noticed the great affection with which the king his master

had ever honoured the knights of St. John; and finished by enumerating the services he had rendered the order on so important an occasion. The grand-master answered in few words, and with an air of distant coldness. D'Aramont, perceiving, that, in the present disposition of men's minds, it would be useless to endeavour to make the grand-master sensible of his injustice, or indeed to complain of it, departed a few days afterwards for Constantinople, but not without acquainting his sovereign, Henry II., with all that had passed.

The absence of the ambassador gave the grand-master an opportunity to contrive the marshal's ruin. It was decided in council, that he, together with the knights, should be forced to give an account of the motives which induced them to capitulate. Three knights, of three different languages, were appointed to take cognisance of the affair, and the grand-master took care to name three of his own creatures for this commission; but as these commissioners, being in a religious order, were incapable of judging in a criminal cause which struck at the lives of the accused, it was determined that a secular should be named as head of the commission, who, after having examined the report of the three knights, should pronounce judgement on the criminals. The grand-master contrived that Augustin de Combe, a secular officer in the island, who owed all he possessed to Omedes, should be appointed to this office. This man was easily corrupted, being always ready to sacrifice his conscience to his love of money. He also made choice, for the attorney in the commission, of another secular, who was a Spaniard by birth, and whose only merit was a blind submission to his will.

Upon a petition given in by the official attorney, the marshal was apprehended, together with three knights, named Fuster, de Sousa, and Errera, who had likewise a very great share in the capitulation, though from very different motives from those which actuated the governor.

Depositions against the marshal were received from the most noted villains—men whose lives had been stained by the blackest crimes; whilst worthy men saw with grief that the ruin of Vallier was determined, let what would be the consequence; for so powerful was the cabal against him, and so odious had they contrived to make his cause, that no one ventured to say a word in his favour.

Villegagnon alone possessed sufficient generosity of soul to undertake his defence; and he acquitted himself in the affair with the most undaunted courage—declaring boldly, that it was very extraordinary, when the town was lost by the negligence, perhaps indeed by the avarice, of those who were employed to fortify it and to carry in supplies, that any one should attempt to make the marshal responsible for the crimes of others. The friends of this illustrious knight, together with the greatest part of the French, concurred in the justice of this defence, and began to open their eyes to the truth. The grand-master, perceiving the change which was taking place in the minds of those who composed the assembly, wished to hurry the business to a conclusion. The official attorney, in concert with Omedes, produced fresh witnesses. These, Villegagnon discovered, had been bribed; he therefore made a complaint

to the commissioners, and brought proof of the corruption. His representations obtained a delay of eight days, in order to give a hearing to the witnesses in favour of the marshal. More than sixty persons of known integrity appeared in this short space of time, whose testimony entirely crushed the depositions given in by the false witnesses.

After hearing the report of the commissioners, and afterwards the sentence pronounced by the provost, it was declared, in full council, that the loss of Tripoli was not occasioned by any treason, or co-operation with the enemy, on the part of the marshal or the knights, but entirely to be attributed to the cowardice of the Calabrians; that, in truth, there was no imperial constitution, nor any law, which, in such a case, decreed any particular punishment for the governors and officers; but that, according to the statutes of the order, any governor might be dismissed from his charge, who, without an express permission from the grand-master and the council, abandoned a fort which was entrusted to him to defend. In consequence of which it was concluded, by universal consent, "That the marshal, together with the knights Sousa, Errera, and Fusta, should be deprived of the habit and cross of the order, for having contributed to the loss of Tripoli."

A sign of discontent which escaped the grand-master, sufficiently proved that he was dissatisfied with this sentence. The truth was, he never would have included the three Spanish knights in the accusation, had he not wished to take off all suspicion of his having persecuted the marshal from national hatred: and he had

flattered himself, that, the marshal once out of the way, he should have found an opportunity of absolving his countrymen from all blame. Thus disconcerted by the sentence of the provost, he represented to the council, that, in an affair of such importance, it appeared to him that the judges had been too precipitate in their sentence, and that they ought to have made a great difference both in the crimes of the criminals and in their punishments; that, in his opinion, they should, at present, only execute the sentence against the marshal, and delay that of the officers till each had been separately tried.

The judge, finding the sentence he had pronounced against the accused had offended the grand-master, shamelessly changed his opinion; and in order to appease him, regardless of the judgement he had just passed, pronounced a new one; and the Spanish officers were left out of the general sentence. This alteration he endeavoured to explain, by declaring, that, though he had condemned them all to the same punishment, their crimes were of a very different nature. Upon which the bailiff de Schilling, addressing the judge, exclaimed:—"Are you not the most wicked of men, thus lightly to change your opinion, merely from a sign of disapprobation from the grand-master? After having judicially declared, that the accused, being all guilty of the same crime, were subject to the same punishment, you immediately change your mind, require that distinctions should be made in these said crimes, and sentence in consequence delayed."

"He has given judgement like the wretch he has proved him-

self to be," said a knight named Noguez, of the language of Castille, who at the same time, turning towards the grand-master, thus continued: "Never will I suffer the sentence to be executed on the marshal, unless the accused knights are equally punished, and at the same moment."

The whole assembly joined in this opinion, in which the grand-master feigned to coincide, and the affair was put off till another time. Notwithstanding all his endeavours, the grand-master could not succeed in having the same judge appointed again; who, finding himself loaded with reproaches, gave up the office; pretending, that, having already pronounced one sentence, it was impossible for him to give another in the same cause.

Henry II. being informed of the reports spread against the conduct of his ambassador, dispatched a gentleman of his household with a letter for the grand-master, which he received at the moment the first sentence was passed upon the marshal.

The king of France complained in the strongest manner of the infamous accusations brought forward against his ambassador; and desired to be explicitly informed, whether or not D'Aramont was guilty of the crimes laid to his charge.

Omedes, fearful of exposing himself, and wishing to get rid of so perplexing an affair, carried the letter of the king to the council, and, having read it, asked advice of the members how he ought to act upon the occasion. The whole assembly were unanimously of opinion that an answer should be sent to Henry, assuring him that the order, so far from having cause of complaint against this

ambassador, had every possible reason to thank his majesty for all the good offices he had rendered it. The council immediately ordered the secretary to draw up such a letter as soon as possible, to have it signed by the grand-master, and given either to the king's envoy, or to Villegagnon, who intended to accompany him to France.

The grand-master began to repent having communicated a letter to the council which had been privately addressed to himself, and employed every possible method to prevent the answer being dispatched. Such frequent delays gave cause of suspicion to Villegagnon, and made him imagine Omedes was plotting some fresh mischief. He accordingly took all imaginable pains to inform himself of what was going forward, and at last discovered that the grand-master had frequently private interviews with the judge, whom he reproached with weakness of character for giving up his office, assuring him that he was sufficiently powerful to put into his hands the same action a second time, but that he would never pardon his again changing the sentence. In order to oblige the judge to be faithful to his word, he insisted upon his entering into an engagement to pay him (the grand-master) five hundred golden ducats, in case he did not conduct himself throughout the whole proceeding in the manner prescribed to him.

Villegagnon learned further, that the grand-master had given the judge a memorandum of facts and different articles on which he was to interrogate the accused; and if the marshal either denied these facts, or refused to answer to the charges, his orders were that

he should be put to the question, that from the violence of the torture he might be induced to confess that he had given up Tripoli to the Turks by the instigations of the French ambassador.

No sooner was Villegagnon informed of this dreadful conspiracy, than he repaired to the council, and demanded, in the name of the king's envoy, that the letter intended for Henry should be committed to his care. On the difficulties started by the grand-master to delay the departure of the envoy, and on his questioning Villegagnon on the motives which induced him to press the sending the letter, the latter, after some preliminary explanations to the assembly, turned towards Omedes, and thus addressed him: "Since you command me to explain my particular reasons for wishing these papers to be sent into France, I will acquaint you with them; and that not only with the sincerity and openness I have ever possessed, but with the respect due to your person, and to the august assembly before which I stand." Then, raising his voice with all the pride of conscious rectitude, he thus proceeded: "Reports the most injurious to your honour, my lord, have for some days past been spread abroad. It is publicly declared, that, in a private conference with La Combe, you have agreed with him that he should undertake a second time to bring an action against the marshal; that the same iniquitous judge should, by torture, extort confessions of crimes he never committed, for which he should be sentenced to die; and that, after his execution, such confessions should be substituted in lieu of the letter ordered by the council to be written to the king. This, it is said, is the sole reason why the secretary has,

upon various pretences, delayed to deliver this letter to the king's envoy."

The grand-master could not possibly listen to a discourse of this nature without the most lively emotions of resentment: his eyes flashed fire; and, boiling with rage, he commanded Villegagnon to declare to the assembly who was the author of such infamous reports. "It is not yet necessary to name my informant," modestly replied the knight; "and all we wish to know is, whether the fact is true or false."—"Extremely false," exclaimed Omedes.—"Declare then before this assembly," said Villegagnon, "that you free your judge from the bond you insisted upon his giving, to pay you five hundred golden ducats in case he did not condemn the marshal to suffer death."—At words so terrible, the grand-master showed the greatest signs of confusion. His presence of mind entirely forsook him; and, irritated beyond expression at being thus accused by an inferior, he loaded Villegagnon with a torrent of abuse. But, satisfied with having informed the whole council of the wicked designs formed against the marshal, this intrepid knight immediately quitted the assembly.

The grand crosses, and the other members of the council, justly incensed at such a perfidious conspiracy, named another judge, and ordered the secretary, under very severe penalties in case of disobedience, to deliver the letter for Henry II., couched in the terms heretofore prescribed to him, either to the envoy or to Villegagnon; and that this should be done the very same day, and in preference to all other business of whatsoever nature. The grand-master had

still sufficient influence over the secretary to induce him to alter some passages; which Villegagnon perceiving, carried it immediately to the council, and made his complaints. The members, ashamed of such a piece of fraud, drew up themselves the plan of the letter, which, after all that had passed, the grand-master could not possibly refuse to sign*.

Henry II. had copies taken of this letter, which he sent to the ambassadors at different courts, that, by publishing the contents, all the evil reports spread by the enemies of France might cease. That nation was certainly extremely indebted to the zeal and adroitness shown by Villegagnon on this occasion. Indeed, this knight made use of his pen with as much success as he handled his sword, having published some excellent Latin memoirs, not only in Malta, but throughout all Europe, which still remain to posterity.

The marshal was still detained in prison, where he continued until La Valette was grand-master; but the Spanish knights, who were alone culpable, obtained their pardon in a very short time. So true is it, that, in governments of every description, he whose power enables him to grant favours and bestow dignities, but too often contrives to mould men's minds at pleasure, and to make them sacrifice their own free-will to his wishes. Omedes possessed sufficient credit to induce those grand crosses who composed the council, to consent to the liberation of the above-mentioned knights.

Thus ended an affair, which has been detailed at large, in order

* It is given at large in M. de Thou's History. See vol. vii.

to give a just idea of the essential principles of the Maltese government; to show the extent of power granted by the law to a superior over an inferior; and how far, without derogating from that power, an inferior may venture to resist a superior.

The last descent made by the Turks on the island, joined to the loss of Tripoli, showed the necessity of fortifying Malta; which the knights foresaw the infidels would not fail to attack the very first opportunity. Strozzi, grand prior of Capua, together with three other commissioners, having surveyed the island, and examined the different situations with the greatest accuracy, represented to the council, that the burgh, where the convent usually resided, though fortified by the castle St. Angelo, was likewise overlooked by Mount St. Julian, a point of land jutting into the sea; that it would be proper to build a fort upon this mount, to defend its approach from the enemy; that the port Marsa Musceit was open and undefended; and that, in order to prevent the entrance of an enemy's fleet, a new town must be built on Mount Sceberras, the most difficult place of access in the whole island, whither indeed, some time or other, it would become necessary to remove the convent; and, in the mean time, a fort could not be too soon erected on the point of this rock, to defend the entrance into the port Marsa Musceit. The commissioners concluded their report by exhorting the grand-master and council to fortify all those points of land, which, being longer than broad, formed a kind of port in the interval between each.

The council approved the plan proposed by the commissioners for raising fortifications; but as building a town would have ex-

hausted the treasury, they were obliged to content themselves for the present with erecting the other forts; postponing until happier times the commencement of so considerable an undertaking.

The order sent to Sicily for masons and other workmen, who laboured indefatigably in their several occupations. The Maltese peasants were employed in removing the earth, driving carts, and carrying materials. All the knights, to expedite the business, repaired to the workshops, and relieved each other by turns. Every order in the state—knights, burgesses, and peasants—applied themselves with so much ardour for the benefit of all, that, in less than six months, the burgh was no longer in a state to fear a siege, and a castle was built and armed with artillery on Mount Sceberras. This was named Fort St. Elmo, in memory of one of the towers which defended the entry of the port of Rhodes, and which bore the same name. The fortress built upon Mount St. Julian was called Fort St. Michael.

It is the indispensable duty of an historian to do justice to the noble disinterestedness of the knights of that time; to which indeed was greatly owing the expedition employed in building these different forts. Not only those who resided in Malta and in the convent, but all the absent commanders, conformable to their vows, dispossessed themselves of every thing, and sent their money and plate to the public treasury. Those knights whose only riches consisted in a gold chain, an ornament much in use among the warriors of that day, bestowed it with pleasure towards paying the workmen. In the course of this history, many instances of the same nature will

be seen, and the same spirit of perfect devotedness in the knights appears to have been perpetuated in the order.

It is impossible to express the satisfaction and joy felt by the knights and the inhabitants of Malta, at seeing forts, which, by the diligence of the directors of the works, seemed to spring up miraculously, to shelter them in future from the frequent incursions of the infidels.

The order fitted out an expedition for the coasts of Africa (1522), in which the intrepid valour of the knights shone forth in its usual lustre, but which was of very small advantage to Malta. The grand-prior of Capua took possession of Zoara, which he was obliged to surrender with considerable loss: the fear of seeing the standard of the religion fall into the hands of infidels, occasioned a most bloody battle. The knights were determined to defend it, and proceeded in a body to the sea-shore, whither they were followed by the infidels, who charged them with redoubled fury; but the knights, with their accustomed courage, sword and pike in hand, faced them in so undaunted a manner, and made so formidable an appearance, that, notwithstanding they were exposed to a very brisk fire, they were fortunate enough at last to reach their shallops, though at some distance from the shore. La Cassiere, who carried the standard, held it constantly exalted during the whole of an action in which the greatest part of the knights were killed; and, by such perseverance, added not a little to the fury of the enemy.

Claude de la Sangle was at Rome (1553) when he was elected

grand-master in the place of Omedes*; and, passing through Sicily, the greatest honours were paid him. The viceroy, fearing to act contrary to the inclinations of his court, consulted the most celebrated lawyers in Messina † on the rights and privileges of the grand-master, and the degree of rank which should be accorded to him. The result of these inquiries was, that the grand-master of Malta had, in all ecclesiastical dignities, precedence over the cardinals. In consequence of this, the viceroy (who likewise had received the emperor's orders by an extraordinary courier) proceeded, with the whole council, the body of the nobles, and the magistrates of Messina, to escort the grand-master from the admiral's galley; they went even to the stem of his vessel; and, in order to show him still greater honour, the viceroy, upon quitting the galley, insisted upon walking alone before the grand-master, in the same manner as he would have attended his sovereign. This prince entered Messina amidst the discharge of cannon; the garrison and citizens were under arms; and he was lodged in the most magnificent palace, where he was received and served, both at chapel and at table, with all the marks of distinction formerly paid to the ancient kings of Sicily.

The emperor then made a proposal to the order to establish itself in Africa—a powerful and strong city, the environs of which

* Omedes died the 6th of September, 1553.

† See *Chassané—Gloire du Monde. Article des Dignités Ecclésiastiques.*

were both fertile and populous; but the council rejected this offer, and their deputies induced the emperor to approve their determination.

The prizes continually taken by the Maltese greatly enriched the order; and at the same time the grand-master added new fortifications to Fort St. Elmo, to the Burgh, and, above all, to Fort St. Michael. This point of land advanced into the sea, was open on all sides, and had only a very small castle to defend it. La Sangle ordered the side of the castle opposite to Coradin to be enclosed with thick walls, which were fortified with bulwarks and bastions; to which were added, in different places, necessary flanks. Sea-water was also let into the ditches. The whole of these fortifications were entirely at the expense of La Sangle: the knights, therefore, to show their gratitude for such noble disinterestedness and such repeated favours, changed the name of this peninsula, which was formerly called Fort St. Michael, to that of Isle la Sangle, by which title it has ever since been distinguished.

Malta, through the generous attention paid by the grand-master to its interests, and by the bravery of the knights, became every day more flourishing; but, on the 23d of September, this state of prosperity was greatly diminished by a very unforeseen event. At seven o'clock in the evening a most dreadful storm arose in the port, of the kind to which seamen give the name of waterspout, and which the modern Greeks call *syphe*. This tempest was occasioned by violent and contrary winds. The waves swelled to an enormous height. Many vessels were sunk, and some thrown

out of the water even as far as the shore. Brigs and galliots were dashed to pieces; and, what was still more deplorable, four galleys were turned upside down, by which means most of the officers, soldiers, and crew of galley-slaves, were either drowned or crushed by the weight of the vessels. The houses near the port were thrown down, and the inhabitants buried in their ruins; even the castle of St. Angelo was shaken, and the staff, on which waved the grand standard of the order, was torn up, and thrown to the distance of half a mile. The violence of the wind, the torrents of rain, the waves which rose mountains high, presenting the most frightful abyss to the astonished sight, seemed to threaten the entire destruction of Malta, when, in less than half an hour, this shocking tempest ceased, and that as suddenly as it arose. The most perfect calm immediately succeeded; and, had not the ruins of houses and dismantled and broken vessels proved the fact, no one could possibly have believed that the port, now so tranquil, presented but a moment before a scene of the greatest horror. More than six hundred persons, consisting of knights, officers, soldiers, slaves, and galley-slaves, were either drowned or crushed to death by the overturning of the galleys. The grand-master, having heard of this extraordinary overset, ordered the galleys to be bored, and some of the planks to be lifted up. A monkey was the first that appeared, after which a knight called Excure (afterwards known by the name of Romegas), with many more knights, were drawn out: they had passed the whole of the night up to the chin in water, clinging with their hands to the under part of the vessel, with scarcely sufficient

air to prevent suffocation. On emerging from this confined situation, they all appeared pale and chilled, and when exposed to the fresh air, the greater part fainted away; but, with proper assistance, were perfectly recovered.

The lost galleys were soon replaced. The grand-master built one at Messina; the crew of which was furnished by the pope. Philip II., of Spain, presented the order with two well-armed galleys. Du Broc, prior of St. Gilles, likewise sent a large galleon to Malta, commanded by his nephew: it contained provisions, ammunition, and soldiers in readiness to be immediately employed at sea. Almost at the same time, Francis of Lorrain, grand-prior of France, entered the port with two galleys, and offered his services to the grand-master.

Whilst the order was thus employed in repairing its sea-forces, the corsairs from Barbary infested the coasts of Malta and Goza. Dragut even attempted a descent; but he was soon forced to retire, leaving the booty to the slaves he had made on the coast.

The Maltese galleys once more became the terror of the infidels; and the grand-prior of France, with only four galleys, attacked six Turkish ones close to Rhodes; three of which he put to flight, and, after sinking two others, brought the sixth to Malta, whither he returned covered with wounds and with glory.

The exploits performed by the knights at sea became every day more considerable, and I greatly regret my inability to enumerate them to the reader: I cannot, however, possibly pass over in silence the heroic and generous manner in which a Gascon knight

devoted himself for the order (1551):—animated by the example given by his general, and hurried on by his own spirit of bravery, he rushed into a Turkish galley; and, finding all escape impossible, boldly set fire to some gunpowder, and was blown up, together with the vessel. This remarkable action took place in the same year with the death of La Sangle.

CHAP. VI.

La Valette elected Grand-Master. A new Expedition to Africa. The Knights send thither Vessels and Troops. Exploits of the Maltese Galleys. The Order of St. Stephen created by Cosmo, Grand-Duke of Tuscany. Council of Trent. An Ambassador sent thither by the Order. The Bishops dispute Precedence with him. Decision in his Favour. The Attention paid to Demands made by the Order. The Reason given for such Conduct. The Fortifications of Velez in Africa, though till then judged impregnable, destroyed by the Maltese Squadron. The Galleys take a large and valuable Turkish Galleon, which induces Solyman to besiege Malta.

ON the demise of La Sangle*, the universal voice was in favour of La Valette; under whose government the order recovered its ancient authority, which was greatly diminished in some of the provinces in Germany, and in the Venetian states. He likewise succeeded in his endeavours to recover from thence the revenues which were due to the treasury, but which for a great length of time had not been paid in.

Almost immediately on his election, he exerted himself to repair an injustice which had but too long subsisted. Marshal de Vallier, late governor of Tripoli, whom Omedes had persecuted with such unparalleled acrimony, still lived:—The grand-master, La Sangle, had indeed relieved him from chains and imprison-

August 17, 1557.

ment, but various reasons had prevented his restoring him to his former situation. La Valette, more courageous, and convinced of the merit and good conduct of the marshal, thought it his duty to do him the strictest justice; and, after an exact revisal of the proceedings against him, he acquitted him of the unjust accusations with which his enemies had endeavoured to blacken his character: he likewise conferred on him the title of grand-bailiff of Lango (1559).

The order, at the emperor's request, sent a supply to the viceroy of Sicily, of four hundred knights, fifteen hundred troops, and two hundred pioneers. The original plan was the re-conquest of Tripoli; but, contrary to that, and to the opinion of the grand-master, the viceroy applied himself in preference to the taking an inconsiderable island called Galves; where he retained his army for the purpose of erecting a fort, to which he gave his own name. This ill-judged vanity had the most fatal consequences; but, fortunately, the powerful detachment furnished by Malta had returned thither before the entire defeat of the Christian army (1560). Three Maltese galleys, which still remained with the fleet, had the good fortune to escape. The bashaw, Gara Mustapha, attacked the imperial fleet, and obtained a complete victory. Doria, commodore of the fleet, together with the viceroy, saved themselves with difficulty; the latter reached Malta, where he endeavoured to bury in oblivion his imprudence and misfortunes; whilst the Turkish admiral returned to Constantinople, carrying with him twenty-eight Spanish galleys, fourteen store-ships, and twelve thousand

prisoners. Many of the knights fell victims to sickness in this expedition.

The Mediterranean being at that time infested by a swarm of infidel corsairs, who were equally able and enterprising, the grand-duke of Tuscany was desirous of securing himself in future from their incursions. He therefore formed a naval corps, and, to induce the officers to attach themselves to his service, he created an order of knights, who have since been under the tutorage of those of Malta. This order was instituted under the patronage of the pope St. Stephen, whose festival was celebrated on the 12th of August—a most fortunate day for Cosmo de Medicis, whose generals, a short time before, had gained the battle of Maciano against the Florentine exiles. This prince gave orders to the commanders of his galleys to join those of Malta, whenever they happened to meet; to sail together, and likewise to attack all corsairs that might present themselves.

A short time afterwards the general of the Maltese galleys met four Florentine galleys; the commander of which first saluted the admiral's galley, and then, going on board, demanded permission of the commodore to follow him during the cruize. The Tuscan general constantly went in person to receive orders from the commander of the Maltese galleys throughout this first expedition; which proved a very fortunate one; many Christian vessels being re-captured, many others saved from the pursuit of the infidels, and many corsairs taken. The Maltese and Tuscan galleys separated at Point Corfu, each returning to their respective ports, and con-

gratulating themselves on having formed an association so truly useful to the Christian cause.

Never had the order been so powerful at sea as at this moment, and never could it boast of so many celebrated naval officers. The king of Spain was so persuaded of this fact, that he entreated the grand-master to allow him one of those captains to command the Sicilian galleys.

The council of Trent being convened, the order was of opinion that it had an undoubted right to send an ambassador to an assembly held entirely for the good of the church. This ambassador being the last who arrived at Trent, the bishops claimed precedence over him; alleging, as a reason for their conduct, that it was not just that a member of a simple religious order, and the deputy of a society of friars, should be ranked among ambassadors, and, as such, take place of bishops. Notwithstanding these remonstrances, the Maltese ambassador took his seat with those of other Christian princes.

Villegagnon had been named for this embassy, but was unfortunately taken ill immediately before the time appointed for his departure. Royal de Portabrange, his colleague, was therefore obliged to proceed alone to Trent. The demands made by the order, through its ambassador, were thought by the pope to be of a nature entirely out of the province of the council; his legates consequently took all possible pains to have it forgotten that they had ever been mentioned, and to avoid all discussions on that subject. Notwithstanding this disinclination on the part of the pope, the

order only solicited for a grant to confirm its immunities, and to maintain its regulations and statutes in the different Christian states; which could alone enable it to preserve the means of keeping the infidel corsairs at a distance, and prevent their landing on the coasts of Italy and Spain, whither they continually threatened to carry both fire and sword. Such had been the demands made by the ambassador, who, after having spoken in the most magnificent terms of the origin and heroism of the first knights hospitallers, added, that if the knights of the present day were inferior to their predecessors, it was owing to various causes, particularly that the protestants had seized upon some of their commanderies; and that the catholic prelates and princes, contrary to the customs and privileges of the order, frequently applied to the pope to be put into possession of priories and the richest commanderies. He concluded his harangue by entreating the fathers of the council, in the name of the order at large, to have a proper consideration for its antiquity, nobility, and the services it had for so many centuries rendered the Christian cause; to issue an order that all commanderies thus usurped should be restored; that for the future they should only be bestowed upon knights, according to their seniority; and that this decree should be followed by a most solemn confirmation of all the privileges granted to the order since its original foundation.

The proctor answered in general terms, and in the name of the council, that proper regard would always be paid to the preservation of the commanderies and privileges of an order which had

ever proved itself so useful to the church. This was the only reply made to such just demands ; but the reason is obvious ; for it is a well known fact that the popes were never at any time very scrupulous with respect to the methods they employed to enrich their nephews and dependents : indeed most of them disposed of the richest commanderies of the order to the detriment of those to whom, in justice, they were due ; not only from seniority, but from the services rendered that very church, the chief of which thus deprived of their rights its most zealous defenders.

At the very moment when this assembly neglected the interests of the order, and when no Christian power dared to advance a word in its favour, the knights of Malta took Pignon de Velez, a strong fortress, which the whole forces of Spain, two years before, had attempted, but without success. It is situated on the coast of Africa, forty leagues from that of Spain, and had always been considered as impregnable till attacked by the knights, when it yielded to the fire of two galleys and one galleon. In less than twenty-four hours a large part of the wall, with some of the turret, gave way, and the knights entered without suffering any loss. All the strong forts on the coast of Africa at that time in the possession of the Spaniards, had been formerly taken by the knights, whose purest blood had been shed in their service ; notwithstanding which, the Spanish minister at the council of Trent remained silent, and never attempted in the smallest degree to forward the interest of such generous allies.

Though the pope and the other Christian powers seemed de-

terminated to do nothing in favour of an order which was continually making sacrifices for their benefit, the knights redoubled their efforts to destroy the infidels; being resolved at least to inspire admiration, if they could not obtain justice. Hardy and intrepid, they ventured on the most difficult enterprises, and fearlessly opposed their galleys, which in general carried only three large guns on each side, against a man of war, which they sometimes succeeded in taking.

Giou, general of the Maltese galleys, and Romegas, commander of those belonging to the grand-master, did not hesitate to attack a large Turkish galleon, laden with the richest merchandise of the east, having on board two hundred chosen Janissaries with bowmen, and a battery of twenty large brass cannons, with more than forty of a smaller size. After an engagement of five hours, and the loss of a hundred and fifty Christians and eighty Janissaries, the Turkish commander was forced to strike.

The capture of this vessel, which belonged to the chief black eunuch of the seraglio, was more noticed at Constantinople than the loss of an important fortress would have been. No sooner was the intelligence communicated to Solyman than he vowed the destruction of Malta; and destined for that purpose, not only the formidable armaments which had been long preparing in his different ports, but all the Barbary corsairs, which he ordered to join his fleet; together with the celebrated Dragut, and the Algerine fleet.

CHAP. VII.

The Grand-Master prepares to stand the Siege. Number of his Forces. His Harangue to the Knights. Awful ceremony which succeeded. The Turkish Fleet is discovered. The Infidels land and attack Fort St. Elmo. Misunderstanding between the Garrison and the Grand-Master. La Valette displays great Firmness and Skill in reconciling the Parties. Different Attacks. All Communication cut off between Fort St. Elmo and the Convent. The besieged reduced to the last Extremity. Their glorious Defence. The Knights all perish. Atrocious Conduct of the Turkish General. La Valette orders Reprisals to be made.

THE intrepid La Valette* neither felt nor expressed any apprehension on being acquainted with the preparations made against him by the sultan, but immediately turned all his thoughts towards

* Though Vertot has been accused of inaccuracy in the particulars he has given of this siege, I have not scrupled to quote him in the principal events, since there is not one that I cannot strictly prove from the most authentic testimonies and writings of those days, and of which Vertot was perfectly well informed. His answer, therefore, to some representations made to him on the subject, that "his siege was finished," was not founded on a dislike to being furnished with any essential and new information he might receive relative to his work, but from the thorough persuasion that the facts he transmitted to posterity, being taken from the archives of the order, and from all the contemporary writers, were perfectly sufficient. Those who applied to him on the occasion, as he had frequently experienced, had no other object in view but to request him to make mention of different knights, their relations, with whose genealogy they wished to acquaint him.

The authors of *Des Siècles Littéraires de la France*, a work published by N. L. M. D'Essarts, justify M. de Vertot in the fullest manner, and clear his memory from the smallest reproach.

the defence of Malta and Goza. From that moment the galleys were entirely dedicated to the transport of provisions, ammunitions, and troops, for the service of those two islands. The knights, dispersed in different parts of Europe, availed themselves of the opportunity offered them by these transports to return to Malta, and signalise their zeal in the cause of religion. No relief could be expected from the other Christian powers: France was at that time too much weakened by civil wars and intestine divisions. The emperor of Germany feared for his own frontiers, which were from time to time invaded and ravaged by Solyman. Pope Pius IV. contributed indeed the slender sum of ten thousand crowns; and Spain alone expressed an inclination to assist the grand-master; but the great length of time taken by that court to decide, added to its constant fears for Sicily, which it was very well known the sultan had some idea of attacking, gave very little hopes of any essential aid from that quarter.

The grand-master, exposed to such serious danger, placed all his dependence in that God in whose cause he had taken up arms, and in the intrepid valour of the warriors under his command. The inevitable perils he foresaw, had no other effect than to animate him with fresh courage; for the firmness of La Valette rose superior to events, and his natural bravery inspired him with an indifference for life. He had filled all the different offices of the order, and each promotion had been a proof of, and a reward for, those memorable actions which at last raised him to the dignity of grand-master.

His first step on this interesting occasion was to make a strict review of all who were able to bear arms, and he found that he might reckon upon seven hundred knights and eight thousand five hundred soldiers. These last consisted of those employed in the galleys, of regular troops in the pay of the order, of burgesses and peasants which had been formed into companies of militia. The different languages undertook to defend the posts assigned to their care, and the above-mentioned soldiers and militia were divided among them. The safety of the City Notable and Goza were taken care of, though many of the members of the council advised that they should be left to their fate.

La Valette afterwards assembled the knights, and having informed them of the magnitude of the danger they were about to encounter, and of the uncertainty of receiving relief from foreign powers, he with noble firmness addressed them in the following terms :—“ A formidable army, and a swarm of barbarians, are upon the point of rushing upon our island ; these infidels, my brethren, are the enemies of Christ ; and it must now be decided whether our holy faith and the Gospel must or must not give place to the Koran. Our God, at this awful moment, demands the sacrifice of that life, which, in our profession, we have dedicated to his service, and but too happy are those who, in so good a cause, shall be the first victims. But in order to render ourselves worthy of so glorious a fate, let us hasten, my beloved brethren, to the sacred altar, there to renew our vows, and to obtain, through the precious blood of our Saviour shed for us, and by our faith in his sacraments,

that generous contempt of death which can alone render us invincible." Thus saying, he proceeded to the church, followed by all his knights, who, approaching the holy table, performed their Christian duties, and returned like men newly regenerated. No sooner were they filled with the bread of life, than every species of weakness disappeared, all divisions and private animosities ceased, and, what was still more difficult, they broke through every tender engagement so dear to the heart of man. From that moment they gave up all connexion with the other sex, of however innocent a nature. The knights embraced each other with that tender effusion of heart which universal charity must ever produce, and loudly protested that they would shed the last drop of their blood in defence of the Christian religion and its holy altars.

At the conclusion of this solemn ceremony, the grand-master appointed the knights to their different posts, and prepared every thing for the defence of the various strong places of the island.

The Turkish fleet at last appeared off Malta. It was composed of one hundred and fifty-nine vessels with oars, containing thirty thousand land troops, Janissaries and Spahis, the bravest soldiers of that nation. A considerable number of store-ships followed the fleet, carrying heavy artillery, the horses belonging to the Spahis, together with provisions and ammunition.

The Turks landed at St. Thomas's Creek, by some called the Ladder-port. Some of the troops separated themselves from the main body in order to pillage in the country, but they were killed by the military dispersed throughout the island, and thus perished

more than fifteen hundred infidels. The grand-master had at first permitted this kind of combat in order to familiarise his soldiery to the manner of firing, and cries of the Turks; but he now put a stop to it, and placed all his forces in the different fortresses. Solyman's general determined first to attack St. Elmo, situated on a point of land which divides the two great ports. The garrison usually consisted of only sixty men, and was committed to the care of a knight named Broglio, an old Piedmontise officer. But such was the importance of this post, that the bailiff of Negropont with sixty knights and a company of Spanish infantry were sent to support it. The grand-master was still more anxious for its safety, because the viceroy of Sicily had promised relief from the king of Spain on condition only of this fort remaining in the possession of the knights.

The bashaws Mustapha and Pioli were so expeditious in their attack, that, on the 24th of May (1565), the Turkish artillery began to batter in breach, and the fort was immediately fired upon from the land side by ten eighty-pounders, two culverins (sixty-pounders), and an enormous basilisc, carrying stone balls weighing one hundred and sixty pounds. This was followed by an attack from the seaside, on which occasion the infidels made use of long culverins, which greatly distressed the fort. In a few days the breach was opened, and the most bloody actions took place. These must have soon destroyed a garrison consisting, at most, but of three hundred men, had not the grand-master continued sending re-inforcements. Boats arrived every day from the convent with fresh troops, and carried back, during the night, all the wounded. Lacerda, a Spanish

knight, was sent to the grand-master to give an account of the state of the fort, and to solicit supplies. In order to obtain them, this officer, made eloquent by fear, exaggerated the danger of the garrison: La Valette appeared surprised at his account; and felt greatly incensed against him for having been so imprudent as to declare, before a great number of knights, that no one could expect so weak a place could hold out more than eight days—"What then has been your loss," replied the grand-master, "that you thus call out for succour."—"My lord," answered Lacerda, "the castle may be compared to a worn-out patient, whose strength can only be kept up by medicine and constant nourishment."—"I myself then will act as physician," said the grand-master, inwardly offended and indignant, "and will carry others with me, who, if they cannot succeed in curing you of your fears, will at least, by their valour, prevent the castle from falling into the hands of the infidels."

This prince certainly did not flatter himself that he should be able to hold out the siege for any time, and he secretly deplored the fate of those knights who were employed in so dangerous a service. But the safety of the island entirely depending on the preservation of this fort (the viceroy of Sicily having promised relief only on those terms), La Valette was resolved to go thither himself, and perish with the rest, sooner than be forced, by a feeble defence, to enter into a precipitate capitulation with the infidels. He was therefore preparing to head the re-inforcement, when the council and the whole convent strongly opposed his departure; and so many of the knights entreated to be honoured with this commission, that

the only difficulty was in the choice. The fort was incapable of containing more than from three to four hundred men, and with this handful of heroes alone it stood the siege still four weeks longer.

The storming of the raveline lasted from day-break till noon, and cost the Turks three thousand men. The order lost twenty knights and a hundred Christian soldiers. A great number of knights and soldiers were also wounded. Bridiers de la Gardamp, a French knight, having received a shot through the body, and perceiving his comrades preparing to lift him up—"Look upon me no longer," cried he, "as among the number of the living; your time will be better employed in defending your other brethren." He then crawled with difficulty into the chapel, and breathed his last at the foot of the altar. This circumstance was related to the convent on the return of the wounded, and greatly affected the grand-master; who, on the other side, was extremely incensed at perceiving Lacerda amongst those brave men—he having taken advantage of a slight wound to be sent back to the Burgh. La Valette was the more afflicted at such a proof of cowardice, it being the first instance of the kind which had ever happened in the order; and, though the weakness of this Spanish knight inspired him with some degree of pity, he nevertheless ordered him to be apprehended and sent to prison. What a contrast does the conduct of the bailiff of Negropont and the commander de Broglio present on this occasion! Though both wounded and far advanced in years, they for the first time thought themselves dispensed from the duty of obe-

dience, and refused to return to the convent, declaring, for excuse, that they were determined to perish at their posts, and die in the bed of honour. They therefore continued constantly under arms; and with faces scorched and absolutely disfigured by the sun, these respectable knights, decrepid as they were, employed themselves in carrying earth to the places which it was necessary to fortify, and in administering relief to the other knights, whose confined situation rendered them liable to be wounded every moment.

The infidels, insensible to the losses they continually sustained, pursued their attack with unexampled ardour; and the garrison, perceiving the ravelin taken, the whole fort exposed, the greatest part of the artillery dismounted, the ramparts in ruins, with very few soldiers to defend them, deputed Medran, a knight greatly esteemed for his valour, and whose report could never be suspected either of exaggeration or of proceeding from a sentiment of fear, to wait on the grand-master, and represent to him, that such was the deplorable state of the place, that it must necessarily be taken by storm; and, to prevent the garrison undergoing the same fate, they requested boats might be sent to convey them to the Burgh. The situation of St. Elmo being perfectly well known to the council, the greater part of the members were of opinion, that it would be more prudent to evacuate so very weak a fort, which cost the lives of so many men, and which, by such constant supplies, would by degrees exhaust the island, and leave all the fortresses without defence. These reasons, just as they were, did not convince La Vallette. He owned, indeed, that it was impossible not to feel the

greatest pity for those knights who, constantly exposed at so dangerous a post, perished daily ; but he insisted, that, on some occasions, it was necessary to risk the lives of individuals, to preserve the body at large ; and that he had been credibly informed, the safety of Malta depended on the duration of the siege, the viceroy of Sicily having declared he would no longer employ the fleet and troops of the king his master to defend the rest of the island, if once fort St. Elmo was either taken or evacuated ; therefore, cost what it would, the siege of this post must be continued as long as possible. The council feeling the force of these arguments, Medran returned, and declared, that the garrison must prepare to be buried under the ruins of the fort, into which the grand-master was determined to retire, and perish with them. Many of the knights, particularly the most ancient ones, protested, on hearing this answer, that they would die on their posts sooner than quit the fort. But the greater part of the officers of the garrison were of a contrary opinion ; and thinking the answer of La Valette too rigid and cruel, they sent to him a second time ; declaring, in a letter signed by fifty-three knights, that unless boats were immediately sent to convey them from inevitable death, they would follow the dictates of their despair, and immediately sally forth sword in hand, preferring to be thus cut in pieces to being crushed to death beneath the ruins ; that they were perfectly convinced the Turks had advanced a mine very far under the fortifications, which they soon purposed to spring ; and that they could not bear the idea of being slaughtered like wild beasts, or exposed to all the torments invented by the ingenious cruelty of the infidels, which

would inevitably be the case the moment the fort was taken.—La Valette, who never ceased deploring in his heart the cruel situation in which he was placed, with a courage which always rose superior to events, wrote for answer—That, in order to die with the same glory with which they had lived, it was not sufficient to fall sword in hand, but to sacrifice themselves to the obedience due to him, and to submit themselves to the fate imposed on them by the circumstances of the times; adding, that in a fort built on a rock, they had no cause of apprehension from the effects of a mine.

In order to give them fresh courage, or rather to gain time, he sent three commissaries to make a faithful report of the situation of the place, and to declare how long it was possible it might hold out.

Two of the commissaries, who were prudent and able men, and who wished to bring over the discontented knights to their way of thinking, expressed their surprise at so wretched a fort, reduced to such a ruinous state, having held out so long: they declared it appeared like the skeleton of a fortress; nevertheless, they were assured such valiant knights would maintain themselves in their posts a few days longer, in order to give the viceroy of Sicily time to come to their relief, and to force the Turks to raise the siege.—The third commissary, Constantine Castriot, a descendent of the famous Albanian hero Scanderberg, maintained boldly, that the place was not reduced to such extremities, and that it might still hold out some time. The knights, to whom he addressed these words, thought they were meant to insult them, and the most unpleasant dispute arose, which might have been attended by dreadful conse-

quences, had not the commandant of St. Elmo, to appease men ever alive to sentiments of honour, from which they never deviated in fact, though they might mistake the proper means of proving it, sounded the alarm, and every one flew to his respective post.

The commissaries, on their return to the Burgh, frankly owned they thought it impossible the garrison could stand an assault: Castriot indeed, either to support his first opinion, or out of resentment to the knights, declared the fort to be still tenable, and offered to maintain himself in it. La Valette, who very well knew what must happen, accepted this proposal; and Castriot instantly assembled together a number of well-wishers to the cause, who eagerly advanced to be enlisted for this service. The garrison of St. Elmo was apprised that a body of new-raised troops was appointed to take their place; and the following letter was written by the grand-master: "Return immediately to the convent, where you will remain in greater security, whilst we shall feel infinitely more easy about the preservation of an important fort, on which depends the safety, not only of the island, but of the whole order."

The discontented knights felt in the severest manner the indifference, indeed the contempt, comprised in these few words. Humbled to the dust at the idea of being succeeded by such troops, and dreading the reproaches they would receive from the whole order if they permitted such a change to take place, they instantly resolved all to perish sooner than give up their posts to these troops, or abandon them to the Turks. The commandant informed the grand-master of this resolution, who, from his perfect knowledge of the

elevated and delicate sentiments which had ever before distinguished these knights, expected this event. But though he had himself excited the emulation and jealousy which he knew it would produce, he determined at first to reject their offers: he therefore wrote, that he should ever prefer a well-disciplined militia to old warriors, who pretended to be themselves the arbiters of their duty, and to judge in what manner they should perform it. The knights were thunderstruck at this reply; and asking pardon in the most submissive terms, the grand-master began to soften, and his resentment was at length appeased.

During these commotions, defensive preparations were continually making against an enemy who neglected nothing towards an attack. A kind of fire-work was invented, which had the greatest effect in the assault afterwards made by the Turks. Hoops, composed of the lightest wood, were first dipped into brandy, then rubbed with boiling oil, and then covered with wool and cotton, soaked in other combustible liquors, and mixed with saltpetre and gunpowder. This preparation being cool, the same process was repeated three several times; and, on an assault, when the hoops were on fire, they were taken up with tongs, and thrown into the midst of the battalions. Two or three soldiers frequently got entangled in these flaming hoops, and were in danger of being burned alive if they could not contrive to throw themselves immediately into water.

The bashaw, ashamed of having remained so long before so insignificant a place, and piqued at the little success which had hitherto

attended the Turks, determined on a general assault, which he commanded in person, followed by all his troops, on the 16th of June. During the whole course of the night, his artillery had never ceased its fire, and the wall was rased even to the rock on which it was built. The Turks entered the ditch, which they had nearly filled up, to the sound of warlike music; and, on the signal of assault being given by the firing of a cannon, instantly flew, with the most determined courage, to the assault. They were supported by four thousand archers, or bowmen, who shot continually from the trenches at all who appeared on the breach, which was lined by many ranks of Christian soldiers. To encourage and support them, a knight was placed at every third man; and in these forces consisted the whole strength and only hope of the castle. Armed with pikes and spon-tons, these noble warriors seemed to form a fresh wall, through which the enemy in vain attempted to penetrate; but an encounter soon took place; and never since the commencement of the siege had there been so fierce an action. After having stood a reciprocal fire, and broken their swords and pikes, the Turks and Christians frequently began to grapple; and on these occasions the poniard decided in favour of the strongest and most skilful. The artillery and small shot continued firing on each side, and both parties threw fire-works among the adverse troops. The knights made great use of the above-mentioned flaming hoops, which falling in the midst of the enemy, inevitably burned to death those who were near the spot where they fell. The cries of these wretches, those of the combatants—the groans of the wounded—the thundering noise of the

cannon and muskets—spread universal terror, without however inducing the Turks to retreat, or the knights to give up an inch of their ground.

The castle of St. Angelo and the Burgh being only divided from Fort St. Elmo by the breadth of the port, every thing that passed in this terrible and bloody action might be clearly seen from those places. The knights, and all those who witnessed so furious a combat, were so agitated and so interested in the event, that they appeared as if they themselves were exposed to the assault: their cries, and the different emotions painted on their countenances, plainly showed the advantages gained and the losses sustained by the garrison. The grand-master, whose undaunted courage would not allow him to remain an idle spectator, ordered the batteries at Fort St. Angelo, at the Burgh, and at La Sangle, to fire continually on the besiegers. He also frustrated an attempt made by thirty officers of the Turkish galleys to possess themselves of two of the weakest bulwarks. They had placed ladders at the foot of the parapet, and had mounted without difficulty to the top of the bastion; but La Valette planted two cannons against them, which killed twenty persons, who first made their appearance; and the ten others, terrified at their companions' fate, threw themselves very quickly into the trenches.

The Turks were not more successful in their attempt on the grand cavalier which surmounted the fort. They employed the whole strength of their artillery for a considerable time against this enormous mass of earth, which was supported by its own weight;

and when they endeavoured to scale it, they were vigorously repulsed. The knights, after having stood an assault of six hours, though covered with wounds, scorched by the sun, and exhausted by such a long defence, had at last the consolation to find that the Turks were the first to desist from the attack. The bashaw having lost more than two thousand men, was forced to sound a retreat. The Christians shouted for joy; and their shouts were re-echoed by the loudest acclamations from the inhabitants of the Burgh. This glorious defence, which could scarcely have been expected from so weak a garrison, must be entirely attributed to the generous despair which actuated the greatest number of the knights; who had, indeed, devoted themselves to certain death, and owed their conquest to a contempt of life, which induced them to rush upon the enemy, hoping to revenge their destruction by that of the infidels. Seventeen knights were killed in the breach; and three hundred soldiers either perished or were disabled. The grand-master sent a re-inforcement of one hundred and fifty men; and so great was the heroism and the wish to sacrifice themselves in the cause, that La Valette only made choice of those officers and soldiers who voluntarily offered their services on this occasion.

The bashaw seeing so many recruits pass from the Burgh to the fort, began to apprehend the siege would most probably last as long as there remained one single knight on the island: he therefore determined to leave no means unemployed to cut off all communication between these places; and, by the advice of his first engineer, he unfortunately succeeded. Having made a kind of covered-way behind

the trench, under the counterscarp, they contrived to pass through to the sea-shore opposite Renelle. This line was guarded by numbers of archers; and by means of these works, at which the Turks laboured night and day, the fort was at last invested, and entirely enclosed on all sides; so that it was impossible for any boat to approach without being immediately either stopped or sunk by the enemy. The Turks having completed this business, resolved continually to storm a place which was alone defended by the undaunted courage of about three hundred men. On the 21st of June they returned in crowds to the assault, their whole army being in the trenches and at the foot of the wall. The bashaw, elated by the hopes of carrying the place, did not spare his soldiers; but he always met with the same courageous resistance from the besieged. Three times were the infidels repulsed, and three times did they re-commence this furious assault. Numbers of knights perished; and had not the close of day put a stop to the combat, they would no longer have been in a situation to resist the numerous enemies which pressed upon them on every side.

This little respite gave them an opportunity of examining the great loss they had sustained; and they passed the night in listening to the groans of the dying, and in dressing each other's wounds. The bailiff de Negropont, L'Amirande, Dumas, and all the principal chiefs, gave every possible assistance to the poor soldiers; and thus, like true Hospitallers, worthily performed the duties of their profession. Reduced to such a dreadful extremity, they neglected nothing which might contribute to their safety, or at least delay their

ruin as long as possible. They therefore employed an expert swimmer to cross the port, and represent the deplorable situation of the fort to the grand-master; who was much less surprised at this afflicting intelligence (which indeed he expected), than moved with compassion at the loss the order was about to sustain in so many valiant knights. He still endeavoured to contrive some method of sending them relief, and commanded five large boats to be armed, which were presently crowded by numbers of knights, all burning with zeal, and inspired by never-failing courage; but all their efforts were fruitless, and they found it impossible to reach the fort. Those who defended it, having lost all hope, determined to die like good Christians and religious knights. To prepare themselves for this event, they took the sacrament during the night; and having tenderly embraced each other, they returned to their posts, there to die, and to yield up their souls to their Maker in the performance of their duty. Those whose wounds prevented their marching, were carried in a chair to the breach, and, with their swords grasped in both hands, waited with heroic firmness the arrival of those enemies they were incapable of seeking.

The Turks began the assault at day-break, and shouted with the assurance of a victory which could now no longer be disputed; but the Christian soldiers still defended themselves with invincible resolution; and the certainty of dying with the knights, seemed to inspire them with an equal degree of courage. Some threw stones and fire-works, whilst others proudly advanced towards the enemy, whom they approached with the boldness of conquerors.

Even those who were unable to stand, never ceased firing their muskets. But, after having stood the assault four hours, sixty men only remained to defend the breach; but these heroes proved themselves more than mortal, and, nobly despising death, still inspired their enemies with terror. L'Amirande, finding this post was on the point of being forced, called to his assistance some soldiers, who, till that moment, had maintained their place on the cavalier which had been made before the fort.

When the bashaw perceived the breach thus re-inforced, he immediately put a stop to the assault. As if disheartened by such an obstinate resistance, he pretended to retreat; but only with the view of sending his Janissaries to take possession of the cavalier which had just been abandoned, and, at the same time, to seize on the superior posts of the breach, from which the fort might plainly be perceived.

The besieged took advantage of this respite to bind up their wounds; not with the idea of saving the remnant of a miserable existence, but to give them strength to continue the combat a short time longer. At eleven in the morning the Turks returned to the assault with redoubled fury; and the Janissaries on the top of the cavalier, together with those posted in other parts, seemed to make choice of those they wished to destroy. Most of the knights were killed by the enemy's fire; and the few remaining soldiers, overpowered by numbers, perished in the breach. This terrible assault ceased at last, merely from want of combatants; not one knight being left alive.

The bashaw entered the fort; and, struck by the insignificance of

the place, rightly judged that the conquest of the Burgh could not be effected without much difficulty. "What resistance," exclaimed he, "may we not expect from the parent, when the child, small as it is, has cost us our bravest soldiers?" It is indeed well attested that the Turks lost eight thousand men at this siege; but, alas! the loss of the order was much more essential; three hundred knights and more than thirteen hundred soldiers having perished on this occasion.

Mustapha, who was naturally cruel, wishing to revenge the death of his troops, and at the same time intimidate the knights at the Burgh and in the other fortresses, commanded search to be made among the slain for all the knights, whose breasts he ordered to be opened, not even sparing those who still breathed, though confounded with the dead; and, having torn out their hearts, he, with unexampled barbarity, and as an insult to the sign of our salvation constantly worn by the knights, had their bodies cut in the shape of a cross; then covering them with their *soubreveste*, and fastening them to planks, he commanded them to be thrown into the sea, hoping, as was the case, that the tide would bear them to the foot of the castle St. Angelo, and towards the Burgh.

So cruel, so affecting a spectacle, drew tears from the eyes of La Valette: but his affliction being succeeded by the justest indignation, he, by way of reprisal, and to teach the bashaw not to make war like a common executioner, ordered all the prisoners to be immediately put to death; and, loading cannon with their still bleeding heads, fired them into the enemy's camp.

CHAP. VIII.

The Grand-Master disappointed of the Supplies promised by the Viceroy of Sicily. He harangues the Knights and the Inhabitants. The Siege of the Burgh, and of Fort St. Michael. Proposals sent by the Bashaw. The Grand-Master gives Orders to have the Envoy hanged, but permits him to return unmolested. A Turkish Flotilla conveyed by Land. Attack made from the Side next the Sea. Wonderful Acts of Valour performed by the Viceroy of Algiers, and his Lieutenant, Candelissa. Repeated Assaults. La Valette's Nephew killed.

THROUGHOUT the whole siege of Fort St. Elmo, the grand-master never ceased importuning the viceroy of Sicily for the so often promised supplies, but all in vain. Indeed the viceroy was placed in a difficult situation; for he had never received orders to join battle, nor had he a sufficient force so to do: besides, should Sicily be lost, his life would indubitably be the forfeit.

La Valette, dreading lest the loss so lately sustained by the order should make some fatal impression on the minds of his troops, assembled them together, and, marching through the ranks, addressed them in the following terms: "We are soldiers of Jesus Christ equally with yourselves, my friends; and should you be so unfortunate as to lose us all, together with the rest of your officers, I am firmly persuaded you would not fight with less courage; and that, in such a case, you would require no superior orders to induce

you to follow the dictates of your own brave hearts." These few words, spoken with firmness, and tempered by a gentle familiarity, inspired his hearers with the noblest sentiments. It was then resolved, that in future no prisoners should be made, but that every one should be put to the sword. This was done, not only to show the Turks that there were still some left to avenge the cruelties exercised on the knights at St. Elmo, but to prove to the soldiers and inhabitants, that, to whatsoever extremities they might be reduced, no hopes remained of any terms of composition between them and the enemy; consequently, their own safety must ever depend on that of the island.

The bashaw, in the mean time, sent proposals to the grand-master to surrender: he immediately ordered the envoy, who was a miserable slave, seventy years old, released from his chains for the occasion, to be hanged; but this order being only given to frighten the deputy, he was sent back, after having been offered his liberty, which he refused to accept. The knight employed to escort him from the Burgh, made him pass through the midst of several ranks of soldiers, who were purposely under arms; and, when he arrived at the counterscarp, he showed him the different fortifications, together with the very deep ditches which surrounded them, saying, "this is the place we mean to surrender to the bashaw, and we reserve it on purpose to bury him and his Janissaries."

This answer convincing the bashaw that nothing but the force of arms could make him master of the island, he immediately raised nine batteries against La Sangle, St. Michael, and the Burgh.

Seventy large cannons began to batter in breach ; after which the trenches were opened ; and, where the rock was too hard, the Turks raised walls of dry stones. But what they particularly aimed at, was to block up the Christians in such a manner that they could have no communication either by sea or by land. Before the passage by land was entirely closed, a small re-inforcement arrived, composed of forty knights, with some other gentlemen of different nations, who, favoured by a thick fog, fortunately landed in the Black Stone Creek ; after which they contrived to gain the port, or rather the Ladder Cove, where they found boats, which conveyed them in safety to the Burgh. Galleys were indeed dispatched by the viceroy of Sicily, who wished to be informed whether Fort St. Elmo still held out. One of the persons employed on this occasion made use of an innocent artifice, and acquainted the viceroy, that, without immediate assistance, St. Elmo must be inevitably lost. The first object of the Turks was to reduce La Sangle and its castle, which they constantly fired upon from a battery erected on the heights of Coradin, which commanded them both. The besieged were at that time cut off from all communication except towards the sea ; to deprive them of which, the bashaw undertook so bold a measure as can scarcely be paralleled in the annals of history. In order to execute his project, it was necessary to transport boats by land from Port Marsa Musceit to the grand port, it being impossible for them to pass any other way without going under the batteries of Fort St. Angelo, which would have sunk them immediately. Fortunately for the order, Lascaris, a Turkish officer of the illustrious

house of that name, having deserted from his party, discovered the plan. His intelligence was of the greatest consequence to the knights, who had not the most distant idea of being attacked on their flank from the sea-side.

No sooner was the grand-master recovered from the surprise occasioned by so hardy and difficult an enterprise, than he took every possible method to prevent its success, by fortifying those parts of the coasts and the port where it was probable the infidels, by means of their boats, might be able to land. But, above all things, it was particularly necessary to prevent the Turks from approaching the wall of Fort St. Michael. It was therefore decided, that the whole way from the Coradin rock to the end of the island a staccado should be formed, by driving stakes into the sea, which should be fastened together by means of iron-rings on the tops of these stakes, through which should pass a long chain. In those places where the water was too deep, or the bottom and rock too hard to drive in the stakes, they were supplied by nailing together long sail-yards and masts of ships, which, with the chain, would render the passage impracticable. They also made other staccadoes, to prevent the enemy coming near the coast, where the English and German languages were posted, and likewise to protect the port of the Infirmary. The Turkish artillery playing constantly on them, prevented their carrying on those operations during the day : they were, however, entirely completed in nine nights. The bashaw was not a little surprised at the sudden appearance of such extraordinary works, raised, as it were, from the bottom of the sea, which presented a serious obstacle

to the passage of his boats and the landing of his troops. But he was too able a man, and possessed too much courage, to relinquish his original plan. He flattered himself with the hopes of removing the stakes from the staccado, and thus opening a passage for his small flotilla. He therefore selected some Turks who were good swimmers, and who, with hatchets in their girdles, contrived to reach the pallsades; then, climbing up the sail-yards, waited with great perseverance to cut them asunder. The noise they made presently discovered their design, and cannon, with small shot, were discharged against them; but the firing from above failed of success. Admiral de Monte, commandant of the island, fought them with their own weapons; and employed some of the most capital swimmers among the Maltese, who, throwing themselves entirely naked into the sea, and carrying swords between their teeth, presently joined the Turks, whom they pulled off the first staccado, and, killing or wounding part of them, closely pursued the others, who betook themselves to flight, and had no small difficulty to reach the shore. The following morning the Turks returned to the charge; and, without being perceived, fastened cables to the masts and sail-yards which formed the pallsade; and, by means of capstans, which they found on the shore, endeavoured to loosen and draw up these large pieces. But the moment they were discovered, the inhabitants of Malta, being almost all expert swimmers, plunged into the water, and with their sabres cut the cables asunder, and thus frustrated the bashaw's second attempt. These different skirmishes by sea having ceased, the bashaw ordered his batteries to fire all at the same time;

and by so doing soon opened various breaches in the advanced fortifications of the Burgh and Fort St. Michael. But the Turkish generals would not attempt an assault till the arrival of Hascen, the viceroy of Algiers; who very soon landed in the island at the head of two thousand five hundred men, all of whom were old approved soldiers, whose determined courage had acquired them the name of the brave men of Algiers. The young mussulman who commanded them, being the son of Barbarossa and the son-in-law of Dragut, wishing to render himself worthy of those great names, of which he was not a little proud, and at the same time to render illustrious his own, entreated the bashaw to let him have the honour of storming Fort St. Michael, which he boastingly said he would soon carry sword in hand. The bashaw, who was an old general, rather wished the presumptuous youth might learn from experience, and at his own risk, how great was the prowess of the valiant knights he was going to attack: he therefore obligingly told him, he made no doubt of his success, and that he willingly consented to yield to him the whole glory of the action whenever the affair should be communicated to the sultan.

Whilst the Turks were endeavouring, by the ruinous effects of their artillery, to open a passage into the island, all their slaves, together with the crews of their galleys, were employed in carrying a prodigious number of boats across Mount Scerberras and Marsa Musceit post; which they effected; and, having set them afloat, Hascen's lieutenant manned them with part of his brave men of Algiers. The name of this officer was Candelissa. He was a Greek re-

negado, cruel and sanguinary in his nature, but a very able seaman. Two thousand picked men from the bashaw's army were added to the Algerine troops; and the boats, thus armed, proceeded forward to the sound of drums and other Barbaresque music. These were preceded by a long boat, filled with priests and religious Mahometans of different descriptions; some of whom, by prayers and hymns, implored the assistance of heaven; whilst others held open books in their hands, and read aloud the bitterest imprecations against the Christians. This ceremony gave way to more formidable arms. The Turks advanced proudly towards the staccado, which they in vain attempted to break through. Their intention was to make use of it as a bridge; and for that purpose they brought planks with them, which proved too short to reach from the last pallisade to the shore. The Christian batteries, during the whole operation, incessantly fired, and caused great ravages among them: many of the boats were sunk, and many others obliged to retreat.

Candelissa presently rallied his soldiers, and perceiving one part of the staccado which did not entirely cover the island, he made an attempt to land. This was commanded by Gaimazan, an ancient knight, who permitted the enemy's boats to advance till they were within gun-shot, when, instantly discharging his cannon, together with a volley of small shot, he sunk great numbers of their vessels, and, as it is said, killed by these means four hundred of the Turks. But Candelissa, who had been educated in a camp, and early accustomed to the disasters of war, effected a landing while the Christian gunners were employed in re-charging their pieces,

and, placing himself at the head of his Algerines, contrived to reach the shore; where fresh dangers awaited him; for Gaimazan, when he ordered his artillery to fire, had reserved two cannons charged with cartridges, which he now pointed against the Turks, and killed great numbers. Their general, whose intrepid valour never forsook him, perceiving part of his soldiers beginning to stagger, and others preparing to fly to their boats, endeavoured, by prayers, threats, but principally by his own example, to induce them to remain on shore; and, to prevent the possibility of a retreat, he ordered the boats to a distance; thus proving to his soldiers that the exigence required they should either conquer or die. Despair, on this occasion, more than supplied the place of courage, and led them to perform actions almost supernatural. The Algerines, who headed the attack, holding a sabre in one hand and a ladder in the other, endeavoured to mount the intrenchment. Each strove to outdo his comrades, and gain so dangerous a post. Equally fearless, they all showed a perfect contempt of life; and pursuing the attack with the most resolute order, after a combat of five hours reached the top of the intrenchment, where they planted seven standards.

The knights, though reduced to a very small number, no sooner perceived these standards, than, filled with shame, and fired with the spirit of emulation, they returned to the charge, and, headed by admiral de Monte, renewed the attack. But it was greatly to be feared, that, some part being killed, and the rest entirely exhausted, the affair would turn out unfavourably; when the grand-master, whose watchful care, though absent, made him

acquainted with all that passed in these different combats, sent some troops to their assistance. These were commanded by De Giou, who, pike in hand, advanced at their head, and, charging the infidels, tore up the standards, drove every thing before him which attempted to resist the strength of his arm, and at length forced the enemy to abandon the top of the rampart, where they were already preparing to take up their quarters.

The Algerines and Turks, pressed by the knights, who pursued them sword in hand, hastily threw themselves off the ramparts.—Their commander, Candelissa, though he had hitherto showed the most resolute bravery, was one of the first of the fugitives. But having lost all hope of keeping his post, and fearing he might fall into the hands of the knights, who gave no quarter, he had no other resource than to recal his boats, into which he eagerly precipitated himself before any of his troops. The brave Algerines, though thus abandoned by their chief, made a running fight, in which they acquitted themselves with wonderful courage. This obstinate resistance incensed the knights, who, accompanied by some soldiers, rushed out of a casemate, sword in hand, surprised the infidels, and charged them so briskly, that, after several had been killed, the others thought it more prudent to re-embark. But they were equally ill-treated at sea, their boats being destroyed by the discharge from the batteries. In vain they threw themselves at the feet of their conquerors to implore mercy; they received no other answer than what was termed the pay of St. Elmo; and, by way of

reprisal, they were all cut to pieces. Of four thousand men, who engaged in this expedition, scarcely five hundred remained, the greatest part of whom were most desperately wounded.

The order, independent of soldiers, lost a hundred knights and secular gentlemen, whom zeal for the faith had brought to Malta. The son of the viceroy of Sicily was very particularly regretted. This young knight, whom, from consideration for his father, the grand-master had constantly retained near his person, hearing of the extremity to which the knights were reduced, made his escape, and flying precipitately to the most dangerous post, was killed by a cannon-shot on that memorable day. La Valette could not possibly induce several of the wounded knights to go into the infirmary, they being resolved to remain on the spot where they received their wounds, instead of quitting the action merely for the purpose of having them dressed.

The same dreadful carnage on each side took place on the attack made by the viceroy of Algiers, who, after having given the signal for assault, by a cannon-shot, advanced fiercely at the head of his troops towards the breaches made by his artillery on the side next Burmola and the castle of St. Michael. The Algerine soldiers he retained about his person were those whom he commanded to begin the attack, which they did with wonderful ardour and resolution; so much so indeed, that they hoisted their ensigns the whole length of the parapet. A colonel of horse, named Robles, not only celebrated for his valour, but for his great experience in military

affairs, commanded in this place, and opposed this first impetuosity of the infidels with the whole strength of his artillery, which he had purposely charged with cartridges, and which he fired through the thickest battalions of the enemy. This caused a dreadful slaughter; and the Algerines, unable to stand so violent a fire, slipped along the parapet, and gained a breach, where they hoped, from the report of some deserters, they should meet with less resistance. The commander in that part having been disabled, was succeeded by admiral De Monte; who, finding it impossible with his few remaining troops to dislodge the enemy, called to his assistance those knights who had just repulsed Candelissa in so courageous a manner. They instantly flew to the charge, at the head of a troop of brave inhabitants; and, as if the victory so lately obtained had been a token of future success, their presence immediately changed the face of the affair, and inspired fresh courage in the bosoms of those troops who remained on the post, and who, one and all, fought with such determined resolution, that the viceroy was unable to withstand their united efforts; but, after having lost the greatest part of his brave Algerines, was forced to sound the retreat, and to retire from the charge.

The bashaw, hopeless of vanquishing the knights by any other means than exhausting their strength, and reducing them by constant fatigue, resolved to give them no respite. He therefore, though the combat had already lasted five hours, continued the assault, and re-placed the Algerines by some Janissaries sent him

by the grand-seignor purposely for this expedition. These soldiers, the principal support of the Ottoman empire, behaved with a courage that braved all danger; and it was against such enemies that the knights of Malta, parched with thirst, and worn out by heat and fatigue, were obliged once more to take up arms. The first discharge being made by each party, they faced the enemy, and having joined the Janissaries sword in hand, each man attacked a particular foe, and thus changed a general battle into as many single combats as there were soldiers in the field. The Janissaries equalled the Christians in courage, and never spared themselves in the smallest degree. Universal terror pervaded each party, and the danger was reciprocal. A Turk having witnessed the terrible carnage that a knight named Quiney made among his comrades, advanced towards him, and fearless of danger, provided he succeeded in putting him to death, shot him through the head with a musket-ball, and was instantly afterwards run through the body by a knight: but the death of this soldier poorly revenged the loss of the gallant Quiney.

Simiane, at the head of a troop of inhabitants, composed of men, women, and children—who threw stones and fire-works into the midst of the enemy—forced the Turks to abandon one of the breaches of which they had taken possession: and in order to repair it, he immediately sent for pioneers, who, by his command, and in his presence, placed barrels and wool-packs into the breach; behind which, openings were made, well fortified by intrenchments. Whilst

thus employed in works so urgent and necessary for the preservation of the place, regardless of his own safety, his head was unfortunately taken off by a cannon-ball. Independent of these losses, more than forty knights, and near two hundred soldiers, perished in this last affair.

Neither the extreme danger, nor the numerous difficulties of this siege, in the smallest degree discouraged the bashaw. He contrived a sort of raised bridge, by which he thought his troops might be enabled to mount to the assault. Twice the Christians attempted to burn this bridge during the night, but without success; it was therefore determined to destroy it by day; and the grand-master, to prove he did not spare his own relations more than the rest of the knights, intrusted this commission to his nephew, Henry De la Valette. This youth, full of fire, and nobly courageous, sallied forth in full day-light, accompanied by his best-beloved friend, the chevalier De Polastron, together with a sufficient number of soldiers. Their plan was to fasten cables and strong ropes to the principal wooden stakes which supported the bridge, and afterwards by manual strength draw them out, and thus overthrow this curious piece of work. The soldiers began their operations with much courage; but being exposed to view, they were presently attacked by a discharge of small-shot, which forced them to retreat even to the ramparts of the castle, where they sheltered themselves from so terrible a fire. Polastron and the youthful La Valette, animated by the true spirit of bravery, placed them-

selves on their post, without perceiving whether or not they were followed by their soldiers; but no sooner had they reached the foot of the bridge, than they were both killed on the spot by musket-shots. The bashaw having promised a reward to those who brought him the heads of any of the knights, several Janissaries immediately came up to the bodies, to behead La Valette and Polastron; but the Christian soldiers, in despair at the part they had acted in abandoning their officers, were determined to perish rather than return into the fort without at least carrying off their remains. The bodies were disputed in the most violent manner by the two parties, and many were killed on both sides; but at last the Christians, either from superior strength or firmness of resolution, obtained the victory; and having gained this melancholy advantage, returned to the fort.

The grand-master bore his nephew's death with the greatest firmness, and by such resignation added not a little to those other great qualities which had shone forth with so much lustre throughout the whole of the siege. When several ancient knights endeavoured to console him for so great a loss, he answered them in the following terms: "Every one of the knights is equally dear to my heart. I look upon them all as my children; and the loss of Polastron affects me as much as that of La Valette. After all, indeed, these two young men have only perished a few days before the rest." Such were the sentiments of this great man, who in all things proved himself so worthy of his post, and in whose presence alone

consisted the principal strength of the island. Of his own safety he was still more careless than that of others: and after having been shown the spot where his nephew perished, he ordered the wall to be opened facing the bridge, and having placed a piece of artillery in the cavity, he fired this cannon with so much success, that he presently beat down the bridge, and the following night set fire to its remains.

CHAP. IX.

The Turkish General and Admiral having formed fresh Plans of Attack, storm the Fort on the 2d and 7th of August. Intrepid Courage displayed by the besieged. The Women distinguish themselves by Acts of Valour. A successful Sally made from the Old City. The Turks' Hospital surprised and ransacked. Bloody Assault on the 18th of August: the Burgh narrowly escapes being carried. The undaunted Firmness of La Valette, who exposes his own Life, notwithstanding the repeated Entreaties of the Knights. The Assault continues the Whole of the Night, but without Effect. New Attacks on the 19th. A huge Machine, filled with Gunpowder and Grape-Shot, thrown among the Knights; who throw it back again before it catches Fire. The Explosion occasions dreadful Mischief. The Grand-Master is wounded. Gallant Conduct and Death of the Governor of Bosnia. The Fort most obstinately attacked on the 21st and 23d. The Knights informed beforehand of the last Assault, by a Note thrown into the Place. The Council of the Order agree to abandon the Burgh, and retire to the Castle St. Angelo. The Grand-Master opposes their Plan.

THE bashaw, fearing the grand-seignor might attribute these repeated failures to some fault in his conduct, called an extraordinary council of war. After mature deliberation, it was determined that Mustapha, in conjunction with the viceroy of Algiers, should continue to storm La Sangle; that admiral Piali should besiege the Grand Burgh and the castle of St. Angelo; and that Candelissa should continue at sea with eighty galleys, to prevent any relief from abroad. In order to execute this plan, the Turkish generals

kept up a constant fire against the posts allotted them to attack ; and on the 2d of August the bashaw began to storm Fort St. Michael. The assault lasted six hours ; and the officers made their soldiers renew the attack five different times ; but they were always opposed with the same undaunted courage. After an interval of five days, Fort St. Michael was again stormed, and this at a moment when, by way of deceiving the besieged, the assailants threatened to attack the Castille bastion. The Janissaries, to whom was committed the real assault, advanced boldly to it, making the air, as usual, echo with their shouts, which were only answered by a heavy fire, that destroyed numbers of men before they could possibly reach the foot of the wall. But notwithstanding death reigned on every side, they intrepidly pushed forward, and, stepping over the bleeding bodies of their fellow-soldiers, succeeded in mounting the breach. The fight lasted four hours ; and on that memorable day the whole of the Christians, and even the women, signalised themselves most gloriously against the Turks. Whilst the peaceful inhabitants of the country, together with the citizens, joined their forces to defend the island, their wives and children performed actions which in some degree equalled the resolute valour of the knights. If paternal and conjugal affection inspired these men with a strength and courage hitherto unknown to them, some of the women likewise nobly exposed themselves to the greatest dangers, in order, if possible, to save by their exertions husbands, fathers, brothers, and children. Part of these resolute females were employed in carrying stones, arrows, food, and different refresh-

ments, to the combatants, whilst the rest boldly mixed among them, and threw fire-works, boiling water, and melted pitch, into the midst of the Turks. The dread of being deprived, not only of their liberty but of their honour, should they be taken by the infidels, made these valiant women rise superior to the fear of death. The Turks, naturally fierce and cruel, were so incensed at being opposed by such weak though courageous enemies, that they showed them no quarter, but slew a great number with the sword, and destroyed others by throwing, in their turn, fire-works amongst them.

The bashaw, in the mean while, grasping his sabre in his hand, flew from the foot of the breach, where he had posted himself among his troops, whom he alternately exhorted, entreated, and threatened: he even slew with his own hand two of his Janissaries, who, pressed upon by the knights, had thrown themselves from the top of the breach to the bottom. But at the very moment when the grand-master began to fear for the fort, Mustapha, to the great surprise of both Christians and Turks, gave orders to sound the retreat. The reason of his conduct was afterwards explained: and it was discovered, that the governor of the Old City, having made a sally, had taken possession of the hospital of the Turks, which he had burnt and entirely pillaged. Those who had the charge of this department, and who were fortunate enough to make their escape, gave out that it was taken by the advanced guard of the Sicilian troops, who were just disembarked, and were proceeding forward to raise the siege. This intelligence soon reached the bashaw, who, being assured that in a moment of general consterna-

tion to attempt to convince them by reason would rather increase than diminish their fears and their belief in the danger, gave way to public opinion, and was under the necessity of sounding the retreat, and of proceeding to meet an imaginary enemy: the real one, indeed, had retired from the charge, and the bashaw had nothing further to apprehend from that quarter.

La Valette, in the interim, received intelligence that the viceroy of Sicily had determined to come to his assistance, and that his fleet would be ready to sail towards the end of the month. Comfortable as was this assurance, the grand-master did not relax in the smallest degree from the constant attention he paid to the security of the island. The fort was in the most dangerous situation. Mines had been formed in many places, which the knights, notwithstanding all their efforts, could never fill up.

Mustapha and Piali, in despair at what had happened, agreed between themselves, either to lose their lives at the foot of the breach, or each to carry the place he had undertaken to attack. Nothing but the testimony of the historians of that time could possibly persuade posterity that a small number of warriors could have so long withstood, not only such repeated attacks, but such constant watchings and unremitted fatigue.

The Turkish generals determined, before they parted, to make a new attack, and to continue it, if necessary, both night and day; hoping, at least, by these means to wear out the knights, if they could not overcome their unbounded valour.

They fixed on the 18th of August for this purpose, and the two generals advanced at the head of their respective troops, making choice of noon-day for their attack, from the idea that the Christians, oppressed by the intense heat, would most probably choose that hour to retire to rest behind their ramparts.

The bashaw marched his soldiers to the breach at St. Michael's, and the admiral to the bastion of Castille. Indeed, the former fort had been very fiercely attacked some hours before by the infidels, who had fired upon it in so terrible a manner, that neither walls, fortifications, nor intrenchments, could possibly resist their fury. The bashaw afterwards commanded his soldiers to mount to the assault. They being the flower of his troops, animated by the spirit of bravery, and fighting in the presence of their general, it is not wonderful they should exert themselves in an extraordinary manner. The knights opposed them with their usual intrepidity, and, though worn out by fatigue, and the greatest part of them wounded, they never proved themselves so perfectly superior to all idea of danger. After a combat which lasted more than six hours, they repulsed the enemy—more indeed by the excess of their courage than by the force of their troops.

The attack made by the Turkish admiral on the bastion of Castille was equally dangerous and bloody. He had deferred his purpose a short time, imagining that some of the troops stationed at that place might possibly be dispatched to the relief of Fort St. Michael; but finding that the soldiers still continued on

their posts, he commanded his men to set fire to a mine situated in a spot the least suspected by the Christians; and no sooner had the explosion thrown down a part of the wall, than the besiegers prepared to begin the assault, and, loudly shouting, immediately mounted the breach. The fort would undoubtedly have been carried, had the knights who were upon guard at this place been sensible of fear, or shown the smallest sign of discouragement.

Brother William, who was the chaplain belonging to the order, perceiving the flag of the infidels hoisted at the foot of the parapet, flew precipitately to the grand-master, and, terrified beyond description, made him a sign to retire instantly into the Castle St. Angelo. But this intrepid old man, placing a light morion on his head, without even waiting to put on his cuirass, boldly advanced to meet the infidels, and, accompanied by the knights who were immediately about his person, charged them so impetuously, that, unable to resist such efforts, and perceiving a re-inforcement of inhabitants coming to join the grand-master, they began to make good their retreat, though they constantly continued discharging volleys of small-shot.

Such was the situation of La Valette, that all around him earnestly entreated he would retire from the action: one of the knights even kneeled to implore him to attend to his safety; upon which the grand-master, pointing to the Turkish standards, which waved in the wind, answered, that, before all things, he was determined to pull down the trophies raised by the infidels. All the surrounding knights immediately rushed forward, and a fresh com-

bat took place, in which perished the bravest part of each army. The standards, however, were at last overthrown, and the Turks retreated in the greatest disorder.

The grand-master, being resolved not to quit his post, thanked the knights for the interest they had taken in his safety. "Is it possible," added he, "for me, at the age of seventy-one, to die more gloriously than in the midst of my brothers and friends, in the service of God, and in the defence of our holy religion?"

The infidels, as the grand-master had expected, returned the very same night to the assault, which consisted only in firing muskets and cannon; for the Turkish soldiers, disheartened by frequent disappointments, never stirred from their posts, merely striking on their shields, in order to deceive the bashaw; who was not long the dupe of this artifice. Accompanied by his officers, he endeavoured, by entreaties and blows, to induce them to march; but all in vain: he was therefore obliged to defer the continuation of the siege till day appeared. Accordingly, the following morning (August 19), Mustapha, by a general discharge of cannon, gave the signal of assault to the two different besieging parties, and the Turks presented themselves before Fort St. Michael with redoubled ardour. What inspired them with the greatest confidence, was a machine invented by one of their engineers. It was shaped like a long barrel, encircled and covered with iron hoops, and filled with gunpowder, iron chains, nails, and all sorts of grape-shot. A match was fastened to this machine, which passed through the whole of it; and the Turks contrived to let it fall on the ravelin, in the midst of the

knights who defended that post. But these warriors, the moment they perceived the smoking machine, hastily threw it towards the enemy before it had time to take fire; and great numbers being assembled on the breach to observe its effects, the explosion made dreadful havoc among the besiegers, who were thrown into such confusion that they betook themselves to flight as fast as possible. The attack of Piali on the bulwark of Castille was more dangerous, and continued longer. The infidels at first overthrew all who presented themselves to oppose them, and thus gained the top of the parapet, where they hoisted their colours; but the cries of the Turks, who thought themselves masters of the fort, were heard by the grand-master, who, being at no great distance, immediately rushed forward, sword in hand, and furiously charged the enemy. Thus exposed to perils, it was impossible he should escape, and he was dangerously wounded in the leg by a splinter from a grenade. During the whole of the action, he took no notice of his wound; but by words, though indeed still more by his own example, he animated the common soldiers; who fought with as much courage as their officers, or as men to whom the love of fame was the principal object. The zeal inspired by religion had such an effect on the minds of both peasants and citizens, that it softened the horrors of death. Every one of the combatants displayed equal bravery on this dangerous occasion. Many of the knights gloriously lost their lives in the cause. Succours were continually sent to both parties, during the whole of the action, which by that means lasted till the close of day; but at length the knights, who fought under the com-

mand of the grand-master, performed such wonderful achievements, that they retook the parapet, and drove off the infidels.

The bashaw, who never gave the smallest respite to his own troops or those of the enemy, returned to the assault the following day (August 20th), at the head of eighty thousand men armed with a kind of morions which reached as low as the shoulders: these were musket-proof; but, though made of a light wood, and rather thin, the soldiers could not support their weight; wherefore, throwing off so inconvenient a covering, they advanced bare-headed, in the most resolute manner, to storm the fort. They were commanded by the sangiac or governor of Bosnia. This old warrior, having promised the bashaw to carry the works, boldly presented himself, clothed in a superb vest, and in every particular most magnificently dressed. He gave orders to the officer who carried the colours to keep them continually hoisted. This officer being almost immediately killed, and the colours consequently laid low, he had them taken up; and though the post was so exposed that the Turks who carried them were successively killed during the assault, they were constantly elevated in view of the enemy; till the last ensign having experienced the same fate as his comrades, the sangiac took them himself, and hoisting them in one hand, whilst he held a sabre in the other, fought with the most determined courage, animating, at the same time, his soldiers to follow his example. The magnificence of his attire, but still more his heroic valour, pointed him out to the enemy; and he was killed by a musket-shot levelled at him by one of La Valette's pages. His

place was instantly taken by a Turkish officer, who earnestly exhorted the soldiers to revenge the death of their general. They consequently at first behaved with great resolution; but, having a long time disputed the possession of the body of the sangiac, and having carried it off, the Turks, contented with their triumph, quitted the field of battle. Among the various knights of different nations who fell by the hand of the enemy, was the chevalier Lacerda, who, wishing to retrieve his reputation, and make some reparation for the weakness of his conduct at the siege of Fort St. Elmo, had boldly sought his death in many different engagements, and at last died bravely in the breach on this memorable day.

The Turkish soldiers began to be a little disheartened by so many bloody and unsuccessful attacks: the bashaw, therefore, granted them three days rest. A note thrown into the Burgh, in which the word Thursday was written, sufficiently explained the writer's meaning. Accordingly on that day, which was the 23d, fresh assaults were made on Fort St. Michael and the bastion of Castille. These continued till night, and the success was equal on both sides; but at last the Turks succeeded in making a platform above the parapet of the bulwark of Castille, and their musketeers, continually firing on the besieged, swept away all who appeared either on the breach or the parapet.

In this deplorable situation the council of the order assembled, to deliberate on the measures necessary to be had recourse to. The Burgh was mined on every side, as were the ramparts; the enemy was in possession of the outworks, and the breach was

blocked up by a kind of cavalier, which touched the wall. The greater number of the grand crosses proposed to La Valette to abandon this post, to blow up the remainder of the fortifications, and, with the ammunition and provisions, to take shelter in time in the Castle St. Angelo, which was still whole and secure. The grand-master rejected this advice with the same sentiments of horror as if it had been proposed to deliver up the island to the infidels. He represented, amongst a variety of other reasons, that the castle of St. Angelo was incapable of containing the soldiers, inhabitants, and different classes of people, who must be removed from the Burgh; that the cistern belonging to the castle would not supply them with water; and that the scarcity of so necessary an article must, in a few days, either expose them to perish from thirst, or force them to open the gates to the Turks. In answer to these representations, the members of the council insisted that the grand-master should take with him their relics and archives, and himself retire to the castle. But the firmness of La Valette was not to be shaken, and he continued constant to his first resolution; thinking, with reason, that, should the most valuable effects of the order be transported to the castle, the soldiers would believe they were no longer safe in the breach. Having, therefore, rejected this second proposal, he added, "This is the place, my brothers, where we must either all perish together, or succeed in driving away our cruel and implacable enemies." With these words he quitted the assembly, and immediately ordered retirades, openings, and intrenchments, to be made behind the damaged places. The above-

mentioned platform alarmed him the most ; but, by the advice of a skilful engineer, he ordered the wall to be opened in the quietest manner possible. This was so ably performed, that they surprised the Turkish soldiers who were upon guard on the spot ; and having taken possession of the platform, fortified it in such a manner that the infidels never dared to make another attack on that side of the fort.

CHAP. X.

The last Assault is made on the 7th of September. The Bashaw, being apprehensive of a Famine, and a Scarcity of Ammunition, makes an unsuccessful Attempt on the Old City. The besieged receive Reinforcements. The Troops land, and the Turks immediately re-embark. The Bashaw gives Orders for them to return and land a second Time; when they are beaten by the newly-arrived Troops. The Raising of the Siege occasions universal Joy among the Christian Powers. La Valette receives Presents and Congratulations from different Princes. The Arsenal at Constantinople is burned by Order of the Grand-Master, who lays the Foundation of the City La Valetta. Ceremonies observed on the Occasion. Several Spanish Knights revolt. Their Trial and Escape. A Florentine murders his Wife, but escapes the Punishment due to his Crime. The Pope's vexatious and unjust Conduct towards the Order. Death of La Valette. Honours paid his Remains. Peter De Monte succeeds him as Grand-Master.

THE bashaw continued to attack Fort St. Michael without the smallest intermission (1565); and his troops seized upon almost all its bastions, after each party had fought a considerable time with equal fury. The invincible courage displayed by the knights at last overcame the obstinate tenacity of the Turks; and the bashaw had no other hope remaining than to reduce by famine those whom neither artifice nor force could succeed in conquering. The bashaw, however, soon learned that he had more cause to apprehend a famine than the knights, his commissary of stores having informed

him that the stock of flour would be expended in twenty-five days ; and, to add to his alarm, the artillery-officers declared they were on the point of wanting gunpowder. In this perilous situation, fearing the sultan would punish him with death for having failed in this expedition, he resolved to make a last effort, and attack the City Notable ; flattering himself that, should he succeed in his attempt, and carry off the inhabitants in chains, so splendid a victory would soften Solyman in his favour.

In pursuance of this determination he left the camp on the last of August, accompanied by four thousand Janissaries and spahis. The fort having been described to him as weakly fortified, he hoped to carry it by scalade : but the strength of a place consists less in bulwarks and bastions, than in the valour of the troops, and the skill of the generals who command in it. The commander, Musquito, the same brave Portugueze who had surprised the Turkish hospital, was governor of the city ; and, though his troops were few, he affected to appear proud and resolute. The ramparts were lined with cannon and soldiers ; and the latter seemed more numerous, from their being joined, not only by the inhabitants of the country, but by several women in men's clothes. This formidable appearance alarmed the bashaw's engineers, who unanimously declared it would be impossible to attempt a scalade against a fortress so completely furnished with troops and artillery ; upon which the bashaw, incensed and grieved at his disappointment, returned to the camp, not knowing what to resolve, nor where he could possibly renew his attacks. He had, indeed, but one resource

left, which was in a very high wooden tower, contrived by his engineers. This was placed upon rollers, and pushed to the very edge of the breach at Fort St. Michael. During the night a port-hole was opened in the wall, immediately opposite to the breach, where a culverin was placed charged with chain-shot; but this piece broke after the first discharge, and was very soon entirely destroyed.

The viceroy of Sicily set sail with his fleet on the 1st of September. The general rendezvous was at the small isle of Linosa, where the viceroy found letters from La Valette, to inform him, that, towards Mugiario, and the flat shore of Melecha, the landing was safe, and the bottom sound. The wind became very high in the night, which, joined to rain, thunder, and lightning, separated the van-guard from the rest of the fleet. The viceroy put back to Sicily, and ordered his troops to disembark; but a tumult arose among the soldiers, who noisily insisted on again setting sail. The officers were not displeased that these men should thus boldly be the interpreters of their sentiments on this occasion. The viceroy presently read in their countenances what passed in their hearts; of which indeed it was very easy to judge, by the profound silence they maintained in the midst of a tumult raised by soldiers under their command: he therefore yielded to the general wish, and they re-embarked on the 6th of September. The same day, in the afternoon, the fleet came in sight of Malta, and, on entering the straits or canal of Goza, the soldiers, and indeed the whole crew, made the air echo with their acclamations of joy. The viceroy not choosing to risk a descent in the evening, much less during the night, com-

manded the fleet to cast anchor (September 7th), and to ride near the small islands of Cumin and Cumino. The next morning the vessels entered the creek or cove of Melecha, where they disembarked the troops, arms, provisions, and ammunition, with every thing that could contribute to the relief of Malta; but the viceroy merely landed to take a survey of the whole, and, after having seen the re-inforcement begin its march towards the City Notable, he, according to the orders he had received from the king of Spain, returned to Sicily.

Mustapha and Piali having always judged, from the information of their spies, that the viceroy intended to attack the Ottoman fleet, and bring in his supplies at the Great Port, had employed all their marine forces in that place; had blocked up the entrance by a chain composed of sail-yards, stakes, and boats; and, from the moment the Christian fleet first appeared off Linosa, the Turkish admiral and all his fleet held themselves constantly in readiness to weigh their last anchor in order to defend it. But when they learnt that the supplies had been landed in an entirely different part of the island, they, without inquiring into the number of the newly-arrived troops, precipitately raised the siege, recalled their garrison from Fort St. Elmo, leaving behind them even their heavy artillery, and immediately re-embarked with a dispatch that had the appearance of absolute flight.

No sooner had the bashaw entered his vessel, than he felt ashamed of the sudden panic with which he had been seized. Trembling for his head, and dreading the reproaches of the sultan for re-

treating before so feeble an enemy, he called a council of war, when a majority of only two voted for a new disembarkation. The bashaw, incensed against himself for having so suddenly raised the siege, courageously vowed either to conquer or die; choosing rather to lose his life at the head of his few remaining troops, than, by returning unsuccessfully into his country, to risk perishing by the hand of an executioner. He therefore immediately landed; but his troops, fatigued and harassed by so long and bloody a siege, were very unwilling to follow his example; and it became necessary to tear them (if I may so express myself) by force from their vessels. The Turks marched towards the City Notable, where they hoped to fall in with the Christians; whilst the viceroy of Algiers remained on the sea-shore, with fifteen hundred men, in order to facilitate their retreat and re-embarkation in case of failure. La Vallette acquainted the newly-arrived Christian troops with the motions of the enemy; and it was taken into consideration, whether they should advance towards the infidels, or wait their arrival in the advantageous situation in which they had intrenched themselves. The general advised the latter plan; but the majority voted for the attack. The Maltese battalion therefore immediately began their march towards the enemy; whom La Sande, an officer of distinguished reputation, at the head of the knights, suddenly and briskly charged; whilst Ascagne de la Come, commander of the newly-arrived troops, whose opinion had been given in favour of the defensive plan, sufficiently proved that those who are sometimes accused of too much circumspection in council, are not the least valiant in the field; for

he took the field with the knights, and undauntedly exposed himself to the greatest dangers.

The victory was long deciding; for the Turkish soldiers, who had been so forcibly dragged into action, so far from exerting themselves to obtain the victory, could scarcely be prevailed upon to engage; and they had no sooner discharged one volley of small-arms, than, being vigorously pressed by the Maltese battalion, they shamefully betook themselves to flight. The bashaw, thus abandoned, and fearing being taken by the enemy, was under the cruel necessity, notwithstanding his exemplary courage, of following his cowardly troops. Twice he fell from his horse, and twice he must have fallen into the hands of the Christians, had not some of his officers, at the risk of their lives or their liberty, steadily assisted him, and given him time to re-seat himself in his saddle. The knights pursued the infidels with the greatest spirit; but they were so inebriated with success, that they no longer preserved either ranks or order, and threw off their cuirasses, to enable them more speedily to overtake the fugitives. On arriving at the place where the Turks were to embark, the viceroy of Algiers, who was in ambuscade behind the point of a rock, rushed out at the head of his troops, and finding the knights and Christian soldiers in disorder, fell upon them with great fury, killed several, and took others prisoners. Fortunately for the Christians, De Sande arrived with some battalions during the combat. These rushed headlong among the Algerines, carrying all before them, and released the prisoners. The Turks, thus situated, had no other resource than to embark as speedily as possible. A new

kind of battle took place ; and, in order to favour the retreat of the Turks, Piali, their admiral, kept up a constant fire from his ships. But the fury of the Christian soldiers was so great, that they pursued the fugitives into the sea, and killed a great number of them.

The admiral having embarked the poor remains of his own formidable army, set sail and proceeded towards Sicily. The viceroy seeing the fleet from the top of the castle of Syracuse, learnt, without the information of a courier, the happy effects of the assistance he had afforded, and the raising of the siege.

La Valette no sooner perceived the first embarkation of the infidels, than he instantly filled up their trenches, and destroyed all their works. Every one of the inhabitants, men, women, children, and even the knights, were indiscriminately employed night and day on this occasion ; and that with the pleasure and dispatch of prisoners who wish to escape from captivity. In the mean time the grand-master placed a garrison in Fort St. Elmo ; and the Turks had the grief and mortification to see, from their ships, the ensigns of St. John waving in the wind.

Thus ended this memorable siege, in which twenty-five thousand infidels were slain ; and two hundred and sixty knights, together with more than seven thousand soldiers and inhabitants, fell victims to the Christian cause. In fact, at the moment when the Turks departed, there scarcely remained six hundred effective men, including the knights in the Burgh ; and even the greatest part of that number were severely wounded. The newly-arrived troops retired near the City Notable, in order to refresh themselves after the

flight of the infidels; and, during their stay in that place, the principal chiefs, together with all the knights belonging to that army, proceeded to the Burgh, to pay their compliments to La Valette, who, with the knights and all the inhabitants, gratefully received them as their deliverers from the most imminent danger. The knights embraced each other with marks of the greatest friendship and tenderness; but, when they reflected on the cruel loss they had sustained in the most illustrious and bravest members of the order; when they considered the deplorable state of the besieged fortresses, the ruined walls and fortifications—the artillery mostly dismounted—the houses either thrown down or shaken in their foundations—the magazines emptied of powder, provisions, and ammunition—the inhabitants pale and disfigured by fatigue—the knights and the grand-master himself unshaved, dishevelled, their dress dirty and disordered; the greatest part having never taken off their clothes for months; many indeed of these brave warriors still appearing with bandages on wounds so honourably obtained;—when, I say, all these affecting images presented themselves to their imagination, they reciprocally shed tears, and not only wept at the remembrance of their misfortunes, but for joy that at last Malta was saved. In order to commemorate the great actions so lately performed, the Burgh, which had been the principal theatre of the war, was called *Citta Vittoriosa*, or the Victorious City, which name it has ever since preserved.

The intelligence of the siege of Malta being raised, was quickly

spread throughout Christendom, and occasioned universal joy. It was announced at Rome by a general discharge of cannon from the castle of St. Angelo, and celebrated by bonfires and illuminations. The same rejoicings took place all over Italy, Sicily, and Spain; and the different sovereigns of Europe hastened to congratulate La Valette on so brilliant a victory. The king of Spain presented him with a sword and a poniard, the hilt of which was of gold enriched with diamonds. When Philip II. sent him this present, he gave orders to his envoy to address the grand-master in full council, and to assure him that the king his master regarded him as one of the greatest captains of the age, entreating him to make use of those arms in defence of the whole Christian world.

Pope Pius IV. made him an offer of a cardinal's hat, as the most distinguished favour he could possibly bestow. D'Aubusson, the glorious defender of Rhodes, had formerly accepted it. But even this example had no weight with La Valette, who refused the proffered dignity; alleging, as a reason, that he feared confounding together the grand-mastership and the cardinalship. "These two great titles," added he, "require different functions; which, instead of supporting, will continually interfere with each other."—It appears that La Valette, justly considering himself as an independent sovereign, thought it derogatory to so high a title to accept an inferior dignity.

These flattering marks of favour from so many sovereigns, did not, however, prevent the grand-master from entertaining just ap-

prehensions for the future. Intelligence received from the East, announced, that the grand-seignor, incensed at the failure of his troops under the command of his generals, had declared, that he would place himself at the head of a formidable army, and attack Malta the following spring. Those who reflect on the deplorable situation of that island when abandoned by the Turks, will easily conceive it in almost as great danger as during the siege. Added to the misfortunes already enumerated, the country was nearly depopulated, most of the casals or villages burned, the cisterns drained, and no money left either to buy provisions or repair the ravages occasioned by the siege. But what rendered the case most desperate was, that very few soldiers, and still fewer knights, remained: indeed their number was insufficient to defend the island against the attack of the most inconsiderable army.

In this cruel situation, many of the members of the council were of opinion that the most prudent measure would be to evacuate Malta. But La Valette, elated by the glory he had obtained in its defence, declared he would sooner be buried in the ruins than consent to abandon it. In this dreadful dilemma he had but one resource left, which indeed nothing but such desperate circumstances could justify, and which many generals would have scrupled to employ. Solyman, he well knew, would never attempt to attack Malta without a most formidable fleet: he therefore caused the arsenal at Constantinople to be burned to the ground, and thus destroyed a great number of vessels intended for this expedition. The person charged with this enterprise remained long in-

cognito; and the order reaped the advantage of so daring an attempt*.

The grand-master having no longer any thing to apprehend from Solyman, at least in the ensuing campaign, resolved to take advantage of this respite to re-build the fortifications so completely ruined by the Turks. He was very well aware of the importance of the situation of Fort St. Elmo, and therefore immediately began to repair it; but, it having been represented to him as much too small, he resolved to enlarge it, and add several new works; as also to build a town on the same point of land, which should be fortified in the strongest manner that art could effect. When this war should be finished, he meant to transfer the convent thither, and make it the principal place of residence for the knights, who would undoubtedly be much more secure there than in the Burgh, which was commanded on all sides by the surrounding hills and rocks. The most powerful assistance, however, was necessary to complete so great an undertaking; and La Valette sent deputies with the plan of this new town to all the Christian princes, who unanimously expressed their approbation of it. The pope promised to contribute fifteen thousand crowns, and the king of France a hundred and forty thousand French livres, to be paid from the tenths or tithes of his kingdom. Philip II. granted ninety thousand French livres, and the king of Portugal thirty thousand crusadoes. Most of the

* An historian asserts, that the burning of the arsenal at Constantinople was by way of reprisal; Selim II., the son of Solyman, having caused the arsenal at Venice to be set fire to before the beginning of the war.

commanders, nobly disinterested, stripped themselves of their property, and even of their most valuable moveables, the profits from which they sent to Malta.

La Valette, thus generously assisted, sent for engineers and other workmen from different parts of Italy; and, the foundation having been marked out, this prince, in his grand habit of ceremony, accompanied by the council and the whole of the knights, proceeded to Mount Sceberras, and there laid the foundation-stone* of the new CITY, on which was engraven in Latin the decree of the council, conceived in the following terms: "The most illustrious, most reverend brother, lord John de la Valette, grand-master of the hospitaller and military order of St. John of Jerusalem, considering the danger to which the knights and the people of Malta were exposed from the infidels during the late siege, has, with the consent of the council, and in order to oppose any fresh enterprises formed by these barbarians, decided to build a city on Mount Sceberras; and on this day, the 28th of March, in the year of our Lord 1566, after having called upon the holy name of God, and implored the intercession of the holy Virgin mother, together with that of St. John the Baptist, tutelar patron of the order, to draw down the benediction

* The first stone of the City Valetta was laid and filled up with mortar by the grand-master himself, on the Point of St. John's Bulwark. Under this stone he deposited a variety of gold, silver, and copper medals, with inscriptions; the best of which was *Immotam Colli dedit*. The conventual conservator distributed sequins, golden crowns, and silver coin, of two, three, four, and six-tarin pieces, with the grand-master's effigy, among the people. This expense amounted daily to fifteen hundred or two thousand crowns.

of Heaven on so important an undertaking, the sovereign lord grand-master has laid the first stone, on which are engraven his arms (a lion or, in a field gules); and the new city is by his command to be named the City la Valetta."

In order to preserve to the latest posterity the remembrance of so important an event, a great number of gold and silver medals were thrown among the foundation-stones. These represented the new city, with the following inscription, *Melita renascens*. On the exergue were engraven the day and year when it was founded.

This ceremony was followed by the most assiduous application to the completion of the work. Every one, without distinction of rank, was employed on the occasion, and that with an eagerness and pleasure inspired by the hope of speedily finishing an undertaking on which the public safety so materially depended. In this military republic, all regarded themselves as concerned; and the grand-master himself, during a space of two years, never neglected to overlook the workmen. He passed whole days in this employment; and not only took his meals like a common artisan, but gave audience and issued out orders in the midst of the workmen.

The commander De la Fontaine, celebrated for his skill in fortifications, was the principal director and superintendant of these works; but the want of money to carry them on was soon sensibly felt. The order, therefore, to supply this deficiency, caused copper to be coined, and annexed a different value to the pieces, according to the size into which they were cut. On one side were represented two hands clasped together, and the other bore the arms of La Va-

lette, quartered with those of the order, with the following legend—*non aes, sed fides*. The punctuality with which payment was made the moment money was received from the continent, established so perfect a confidence among the people, that they never made the smallest complaint against the circulation of this copper coin; nor were the works ever discontinued, nor at any time in the least neglected.

The last moments of La Valette were, like those of his predecessor L'Isle Adam, embittered by intestine troubles in the convent, and by exterior vexations relative to the preservation of the possessions of the order. Some young Spanish knights, intoxicated with joy at the Turks being defeated, allowed themselves the most improper liberty of conduct. They lived in a very irregular manner, and even ventured to write satirical songs against the reputation, not only of the bravest knights, but of the principal ladies of Malta. These songs were soon publicly known, and complaints made to the grand-master, who, being a strict disciplinarian, was very justly incensed at such excesses; he therefore immediately commanded the council and the principal officers of the order to take cognisance of the affair. The authors of these defamatory libels were discovered, and an action brought against them. Whilst the proceedings were carrying on with great activity in full council, these unruly youths, without the smallest respect for the grand-master, who acted as president, rushed in crowds into the council, and snatching the pen, with which he was writing the sentence passed on the culprits, from the vice-chancellor's hand, threw his inkstand out of the win-

dow. This done, these headstrong youths, being favoured in their retreat by their friends and some other unknown accomplices, precipitately quitted the hall, reached the sea-shore, embarked in light feluccas, and escaped into Sicily. La Valette, irritated at such a scandalous act of rebellion, deprived them of the habit of the order, and ordained, that, in case they should be apprehended, they should suffer perpetual imprisonment. He likewise sent to Sicily to reclaim them as deserters and rebels. But they were too well acquainted with the firm and inflexible character of the grand-master to remain in that island; they therefore contrived to return as fast as possible to their own country.

The effects of this disagreeable affair, which afforded so dangerous an example to the knights, were not entirely suppressed when La Valette had fresh cause for affliction. A Florentine, settled in Malta, having married a most beautiful young woman, a descendant of one of the faithful Rhodians who had followed L'Isle Adam from that island, instigated by the dæmon of jealousy, assassinated his wife; and, notwithstanding the greatest precautions were taken, made his escape from the hand of justice into Italy; that is to say, into a country where murders of that nature were more frequently winked at than punished.

The pope, who had so lately offered the cardinal's hat to La Valette, and who had also by different briefs promised never to interfere with the order in the enjoyment of their rights, when the grand-priory of Rome became vacant, made no scruple of bestowing it on his nephew. The grand-master complained with reason of

such an open violation of his rights made by his holiness; who, together with his ministers, pretended to think that La Valette had not been sufficiently moderate in his expressions. The court of Rome, therefore, to mortify and punish him, added outrage to injustice, and forbade the ambassador of the order to appear there in future.

— Such a succession of vexatious circumstances greatly afflicted La Valette, and threw him into a profound melancholy. Wishing to divert his mind, he amused himself by hunting: but this amusement proved a fatal one; for he was struck one day by what in those climates is called a *coup de soleil*, and, after an illness of three weeks, he breathed his last; and thus ended in the most peaceful manner a life which had been spent in all the tumults of war*.

Peter de Monte, who succeeded him as grand-master, was especially attentive to performing the last duties towards his predecessor, whose remains were first deposited in the church of *Notre Dame de Phileme*. They afterwards, by command of the whole order, were placed on board the admiral's galley, which was disarmed and dismasted, and thus towed by two armed galleys hung with black cloth. The banners, standards, and arms, taken from the Turks and other infidels whom he had conquered, were likewise towed by the same galleys, and suffered to drag through the water. These were followed by two other galleys, which had parti-

August 22, 1568.

s 2

cularly belonged to La Valette, covered also with black cloth and other sepulchral ornaments.

The reigning grand-master, the lords of the council, the commanders, and the principal knights, embarked on board these two galleys; and thus, in funeral pomp, this dismal train left the Grand Port, and proceeded to that of Marsa Musceit, where the household of the deceased—consisting of his officers and domestics—in deep mourning, landed the first. The greatest part of them carried flambeaux, and the rest the colours taken from the Turks. These were followed by the clergy bearing the body, and chaunting the service of the church; and, immediately after, the grand-master, the members of the council, and the majority of the knights. The body of La Valette was thus carried to the church della Vittoria erected at his own expense in the city La Valetta, and there, according to his request, he was interred. His remains were consigned to the grave with all the usual ceremonies of the church, and every honour paid him due to the memory of so great a man.