

THE HISTORY
OF THE ORDER OF
ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK IV.—MALTA.—(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER II.

Now do we enter the memorable 1565, for ever glorious to the order of Malta. The captain 1565 general of the Spanish navies, the famous warrior Garcias de Toledo, by Valetta's advice, made Viceroy of Sicily as well—first instance of those two high dignities being united in one person—it was no small matter for the grand master to have acquired the gratitude of so potent a personage, suiting much of what follows.¹

Solyman had many political reasons for his expedition. It was now ready, after five years of hard labour, and was about to sail—such the best

¹ Bosio : par. iii., lib. xxiv. 489.

intelligence. Stupendous armament! Was it not the same Solyman who had taken Rhodes? Such artillery, heavy, light, of all sorts, so numerous, such immense stores of every kind, so vast an army, a cavalry so equipped and mounted, so magnificent a fleet, such various machines to besiege fortresses, beyond what the Ottoman house had ever before brought together! Nor did he neglect any resource, but to make the sure still surer, had likewise his spies everywhere. But principally at Malta, two renegade engineers, one a Slavonian, the other a Greek, who had noted every gun, and measured every battery there; and got back safe to the Golden Horn, where they assured the sultan Malta could be taken in a few days, without need to dig a trench, for that Borgo was without what merited to be called fortifications, and unable to resist a brisk *coup-de-main*. New buildings cannot possibly be strong, and whatever be pretended in show, yet in reality would not be tenable for a week, even less; and as for the fort of St. Elmo, it was too small to be of much avail, and would be quickly knocked to pieces by the Turkish heavy cannon. The rest of the island contained nothing to withstand the crescent a moment. Yet would Malta be a most serviceable conquest, and to defray the expenditure, were there not the bequest of the

late sultana, the wealth of who would not be backward for so holy a purpose; the large mosques, and other ecclesiastical endowments; the offerings of devout and rich Mussulmen; and even all the universities and pious associations of Islam in the Levant?

While the Grand Seignior, or his deputies, master of the whole Mediterranean and a large majority of Europe, might dictate laws, as universal lord, from that not unpleasant rock, and look down upon his shipping at anchor in its excellent harbour.¹

Nor was the grand master idle, but on Monday, the 9th of April, had a visit from Don Garcias de Toledo, who had asked his majesty for twenty-five thousand infantry, between Spaniards, Germans, and Italians, and now had come to Malta with twenty-seven galleys, to see it himself; so after having dined with the grand master, it was interesting to see those two celebrated warriors walk out together to examine the positions; which being done, Toledo, before the whole council, gave his word of honour to the grand master to be back with succours before the end of June; and smiling added, "I leave you hostage my son, whom I dearly love, and one thousand Spanish foot, a re-

¹ Bosio : par. iii., lib. xxiv. 490.

markably fine corps." His son was a promising youth, and took the habit.

Finally, Valetta, begging of Toledo some professional counsel for his conduct during the important siege, the experienced Spaniard, after some modest reluctance, uttered these three maxims; first, that the council-of-war be restricted to very few, and excellent veterans, it appearing to him best for prompt decisions and secrecy; second, not to allow sorties and skirmishing, but husband his people for resisting assaults; third, above all, to take care of his own person, on whom the whole depends; for that the sovereign's death has often caused overthrows, and loss of victories.¹

That nevertheless Valetta was not even then quite certain the Turk could come against Malta, or not rather against some other spot of Christendom, is proved by his letter to the Pope a moment after Toledo's departure, on the 10th of April, and wonderful it is how he could have written so quietly and wisely at so critical a juncture.²

Many of the preparations intended (like suspending the building of the new city months before, when the rock was only cut down half of what was prescribed by the model), with regard

¹ Bosio: par. iii., lib. xxiv. 500.

² Cod. Dipl. Geros., ii., cxcvi. 1.—Appendix, ccxix.

to sending the rest of the invalids out of the island to be supported elsewhere, at their country's expense, and similar, were broken off abruptly, by pressing and infallible tidings that the Turk was at hand. So ensued a parade of the different Languages as of old, drawn up each before its own inn, to be examined by a knight of another Language, with all the ancient details; and of the fourteen chosen knights-examiners, was Nuzza, Bailiff of the Eagle. Only what appears to me an adjunct is here precisely specified, that each individual had to fire three musket shots at a target, with a premium for the best. A roll showed them in all (knights and servants-at-arms), a little more than five hundred. But these were in the most perfect condition, ready for any grade, whether the lowest, or to act as superior officers to excellent troops; valiant and faithful volunteers, of all ranks and nations, and a not effeminate population.

What countries sent forth who participated in so famous a siege, so glorious a war, it is not just to deprive them of their due fame. Therefore, says Bosio, "here they are for an eternal memorial, as far as my brother and I were able to discover;" and they lived within some thirty years of the event.

	Knights.	Servants-at-Arms.
Provence	61	15
Auvergne	25	14
France	57	24
Italy	164	5
England	1	
Germany	13	1
Castille	68	6
Arragon	85	2

They together make five hundred and forty-one; besides whom there were several chaplains in the inns, and other clergy, as their bishop, who though members of the order, were never permitted to be fighting men.

Continentalists will find many of their most illustrious names. If Italians are singularly numerous, Malta was near; and the Bosios, as of Italian extraction, and writing in Italian, may naturally have taken more pains to have their countrymen's list complete. As to the hapless English Language, though mightily fallen, it was not utterly annihilated as yet. And those unwilling to circumscribe to one solitary one, the Englishman present at that magnificent danger, may prefer thinking that they disguised their names by some foreign termination; valiant hearts, unwilling to bring down persecution on their families at home.

Where emigration is necessary, perhaps masquerade may be so too. Their brothers in arms would have thought it a noble charity to accept them under translated titles, incorporated them into their own body, and giving them a new nationality, keep their secret. Nor is it easy to blame either such refugees or such donors. If they concealed their names, it is to be supposed they had sufficient reason for it; so leave them to the Lethe they chose. Or if that sound harsh, is it not remediless? Who is able to deter them, even were it not over late?

On the 8th of May, two hundred of the Spaniards, promised by Toledo, appeared, very jewels of prime soldiery. The Turkish fleet, proceeding towards Malta, were however traced every step, and the grand master exactly informed of each of their movements; how they suffered from storms, and in a calm were carried by the current on sandbanks, where, on one occasion, off Cerigo, they had one thousand men drowned, chiefly Spahis, and on another lost two of the heaviest cannons, and above eight thousand barrels of gunpowder, with one thousand three hundred cannon-balls of cast iron, which agreed with an ill-omen on their leaving Constantinople; so that the Turks were not the least surprised when they heard of these disasters;

nor even later, when they saw a pitiful remnant of that splendid expedition return without having effected any part of the projects for which it was sent.

At last Pasha Mustapha resolved to investigate the state of his armament, and it now consisted of thirty-eight thousand three hundred, all tolerably good, but not all select troops, without counting any of the great number of strangers, and hangers on of every description.

On Friday, 18th of May, their ships were clearly visible at sunrise, about fifteen miles to the south-east of Marsa Sirocco, at which St. Elmo and St. Archangelo fired each three cannons, preconcerted signal for the enemy in sight. Then was there a popular disturbance, which increased at the terrible advance of the infidels. In the memory of no living man any such thing had been seen. How grand, how numerous, how well ordered were those multitudes of sails! What sublime energy in those armed ships!

The dread signals being returned by other three cannonades from Città Vecchia (Notabile), and by three from Gozo, roused the inhabitants of both islands to a loud clamour of drums and trumpets, sounding and beating to arms everywhere. A violent commotion ensued, some labour-

ing with utmost diligence in polishing and preparing their arms and horses; others loading their beasts of burden and themselves with their household stuff and children, to convey them to a place of security; some gathering together and heaping the corn, already cut in many parts of the country, to transport it into the fortresses; and no few replete with horror, not knowing what they were doing, began running to and fro. In such universal disorder and peril, so ardent and near, the lower classes, that afterwards became so dauntless, were at that first encounter stricken with the wildest consternation. Even some who used to be held valiant and boastful, could not prevent their cheeks from turning pale, or such like symptoms of inward terror. But knights and soldiers, and the most experienced of the Maltese, as accustomed to arms, and intensely occupied, testified by their animated gesticulations their great joy at this splendid opportunity of fighting in defence of their creed, liberties, and country.

Bravest of the brave was Valetta himself; not the smallest sign of hurry or internal conflict was to be seen in him, but much tranquil intrepidity, as it were perfect security, breathed from his serene truly royal aspect, which set every heart at ease, and made it quietly resume its proper place

within the breast. And to act with unison and maturity of purpose and established rule, from the outset in this confusion, perhaps necessarily incident on the foe's sudden approach, and to consult on what would be the wisest on their proximate landing, he convoked a council of many of his grandees and chief knights, among whom was Sir Oliver Starkey, Lieutenant of the Turcopolier, the only real and avowed Englishman on that awful and most brilliant spot. There were many famous captains, generals, aid-de-camps, chamberlains, statesmen, secretaries, and distinguished men of all nations formed, as it were, into Valetta's personal guard, or military household, who never left him day or night, but accompanied him everywhere during the siege. This council advised him to send instantly to inform Don Garcias Toledo of the Paynim's arrival; and that he should despatch further details to his imperial highness as speedily and regularly as he could; and the officer was back from Sicily the third day. As yet on board, it seemed the intention of the Turks was, by their continually sailing alongshore, to distract the Christian, and then land without the smallest opposition, when and where he least expected.

Appearances lead us to infer that poisoning the

wells was one of the ordinary defences of the times; for Bosio relates quite simply, as nothing unfrequent or astonishing, or at all criminal, that the chief physician was ordered over the whole island on that inhuman service, "attended with considerable success until the barbarians discovered the stratagem, and had the waters diligently *purged*."¹

The crescent sailing leisurely round its victim, so close to land that the ships were generally within a stone's throw of it; and where the rock was high, and projected out a little over the sea, they passed immediately under the feet of the Maltese explorers; so that these could look down perpendicularly on the decks, and numbered the shipping, and their number agreed precisely with the review off Greece. While that was going on, the poor from the *casali*, with their infants in their arms, and their other little ones on their shoulders, continued retiring into the forts. The Marshal Couppier, Knight of Auvergne, with his horse and foot, according to orders, kept marching along the sea-side, observing the hostile fleet, which, on arrival off Mugiazzo (Haintofecha), a few miles south of Citta Vecchia, opposite a large

¹ Bosio: par. iii., lib. xxiv. 514.

fountain head, with abundance of spring water, dropped anchor at once, but in such a manner as indicated a design to proceed on, since without a signal for the landing of any body, nor showed the smallest movement during the remainder of the day, but kept quietly reposing; the marshal too always standing with his troops openly drawn up until dusk; and at night shutting in, left videttes and sentinels, and a good guard in observation, to inform him every now and then of what was occurring, and drew off his little army to refresh at Citta Vecchia, whose citizens, seeing the Turkish fleet had anchored there, apprehending the first attack would be on themselves, sent to the grand master for either permission to abandon their city, and with their families and chattels retire into Borgo; or that he would send to Citta Vecchia a good guard of knights and hired soldiery, with requisite powder and artillerymen for the cannons which their walls had already, in which case the citizens to a man promised to do their duty. At that very moment the grand master was reading the rolls, and found his whole force, all comprised, came to eight thousand five hundred in round numbers:

Crews of the Galleys	600
Crew of the Galeon	100
Men of Borgo	500
Those of Bermola, and that part of the Island	300
Those of Citta Vecchia, and principal part of the Island	4560
Artillerymen	120
Household of the Grand Master	150
Garrison of St. Elmo and St. Archangelo	150
Hired Spanish Troops, those of Colonel Mas included	800
Volunteers of Medici	200
Volunteers of Sicily, Genoa, Piedmont, and Italian outlaws	675
	8,155

Which, with the knights make up the number a trifle more. The numbers were small, and the Maltese irregulars, but long marshalled under the knights, who indeed formed the leading officers of the whole array. When the grand master had done with the rolls, it was near midnight, and then he gave audience to those from Città Vecchia, bidding them tell the inhabitants to be of good courage, and resist, and that he would send them all they asked. And so he did at daybreak,

and moreover ordered the good knight and celebrated Melchior d'Eguaras to make Citta Vecchia his head-quarters for all the cavalry, retiring thither, and harassing the foe's rear, in case he should march to besiege Borgo, or St. Elmo. Therefore those of Citta Vecchia were quite pleased, and ever performed their devoirs with fidelity and valour.¹ That same morning, as soon as it was broad day, the grand master, accompanied by his council and his *azonini reali*, and engineers, went reviewing the walls of Borgo, prescribing various urgent repairs, strengthening everything with great assiduity, and assigning their posts to the different Languages, in the same order pretty much as in 1551. Every one might know where to go to prevent confusion, and all might be ready to move at the slightest signal, with the accuracy of clockwork.

In what was naturally the most perilous place on the only land-side of the triangle (for such is Borgo), and comprehends its whole front, were to stand the three French Languages, Provence, Auvergne, France. But art had rendered it the strongest now and most secure. The Italian Language, commanded by its head-admiral of the order, a knight of seventy, yet eminently daring

¹ Bosio: par. iii., lib. xxiv. 516.

and courageous to heroism the most romantic, a splendid and liberal man, a cousin of the late Pope Julius, and Governor of Castle St. Angelo at Rome, and one day to be Grand Master, Sir Peter del Monte, was to defend the whole island of Senglea and St. Michael's Fort. The entire curtain which forms the triangle's second side, from the extreme west of France unto St. Angelo, was entrusted to Arragon, including Catalogna and Navarre; and the third, from St. Angelo to Provence, would formerly have belonged to those of Castille and Portugal, of England and of Germany; but the first of these being by far the most numerous, it was thought best to station them in the most dangerous part, to wit, from the angle of Provence to where the riding house once stood, but was thrown down for that effect; and to Castille and Portugal succeeded the German Language; and next what should have been the English; but as it was reduced to a single individual, Sir Oliver Starquey, a body of hired soldiers were put under his command, to defend the rest of the curtain up to St. Angelo. And since the Auvergnese were not in sufficient number, the grand master planted some Genoese between the corner, where Provence ended and Castille began, whence that spot is called to this day, Post of Genoa. In the infirmary,

since it had gates towards the marine, they were closed, and parapets raised, where some hired troops were posted, under command of the officers of that house itself. The same regarding the prison. And the shipping in that much-frequented port received orders to raise their guns, so as in case of need to aid to defend it, if the enemy should try to force its entrance. The platform flat with the sea at the foot of St. Angelo's, opposite St Michael's Spur, where is fastened the chain that shuts the Creek of Senglea, was given in guard to a Spanish knight, who fortified it with the crew of his galley so well, and nine pieces of heavy artillery grazing the waves with their fire, and protecting the chain, that to touch it would have been a labour of vast fatigue and infinite danger. That chain had been made at Venice, and was three hundred paces long, and so thick, that nothing like it had ever before been seen in Christendom, and was linked to a most enormous anchor, that had belonged to the great karack, stoutly imbedded in the living rock, cut on purpose with much trouble and ingenuity; chain supported about three hands above the water, upon beams perforated by other as wide beams of the most durable oak, like a huge ladder in one continuous line, reposing on a quantity of empty casks, well smeared with

pitch and tar, and at the nearer end connected with a colossal cable tightened or loosened by several windlasses on the platform; nor could they be wrought, or the smallest boat pass without orders from the said knight.¹ Several other curious works, it is too tedious to describe.

Hired soldiers, as far as they went, were divided out to all the Languages. The Governor of St. Elmo being too old, he was not insulted by superseding, but under colour of captain of succour, a Bailiff, in the prime of manhood, with forty knights, and a corps of the choicest troops, were stationed there.

On the grand master's return to his palace, he found two men waiting for him, both of them villains unknown to each other, both of them spies, both renegades, sent to him by his Constantinopolitan emissaries, to advise him carefully of the true state of the Turkish fleet, in which they both had come in different ships, and landing with the earliest disembarkation, ran away, and bore him letters and countersigns. One was from Salerno, the other from Cataro. The former regularly in pay of the grand master himself; the other he had never seen. However, he brought proofs not to be doubted. Both agreed in the most minute parti-

¹ Bosio : par. iii., lib. xxv. 519.

culars; that most certainly the Turks, before going to Barbary, would try to take Malta; that though Mustapha might delay fighting till he had news from Dragut, in conformity with the sultan's injunctions, yet it would be solely not to lose time while his galley was going to Tripoli and returning, if he had the appearance of only reconnoitring the fortresses. And indeed the impatient pasha had already unveiled his intentions in a great degree; for though the fleet kept at Mugiazzo to deceive the marshal, thirty-five galleys from off the rearguard had received a portion of troops at night in deep silence, and sailing off with them, disembarked them quietly at Marsa Sirocco and the Cala before daybreak. About three thousand Turks, who kept continually increasing by other boatfuls in multitudes, they were intended to prevent the Maltese from carrying in the harvest, and to cut off the marshal from re-entering either Borgo or St. Elmo. Everything prognosticated that the first attack would be on St. Elmo. Then clearly did the grand master perceive the marshal's dangerous position, and instantly sent him orders to leave the cavalry at Citta Vecchia, and march with all the foot into Borgo without a moment's delay.

No longer lamentation; too late for that; he had

lamented before. Promises to him had been broken, and he taken by surprise after all, without half the hired troops he had bargained for, and stores he had purchased, but which had failed to be delivered at the appointed time, by no fault of his.

He took care that a right-valiant knight marched a body of troops in a quite different direction; so as to be visible to the Turks, and divert them from the marshal, who, however, had left Citta Vecchia at daybreak, to succour some skirmishers, who had lost their way in those embarrassing little enclosures, and then fallen into an ambuscade, which deprived the order of two promising young knights; one (a Portuguese), killed; and the other's horse the same, and under it fell its rider (from the heart of sweet France), and was carried off prisoner, severely wounded, to Mustapha, who rejoiced at such an opportunity of information, but could squeeze little out of him, though put to the torture, except that Malta was exceedingly strong, with a large army, which the Turks believed.

Of course, as soon as the marshal received the orders, he had his squadrons recalled, and making them follow him to within sight of Borgo, entered it with the infantry, and sent back the cavalry.

Indeed cavalry are generally of no use in Malta, but quite necessary at all times, on the coast of Barbary, where the Turks were to go next; so they had a considerable proportion of that arm with them, also because of inveterate custom; for what is a Turk without his horse?

Grievously did the mis-adventure vex Valetta; particularly to hear of capture, fearing that torments would force that unfortunate young knight to a disclosure of their unprovided state. Yet quite the reverse. He spoke but of the strength of the fortifications, and that even if there were not these, still would Toledo hurry from Sicily on the instant with a great army, which disturbed the pasha much.

But in the meantime, the grand master in Borgo, the admiral in Senglea, the bailiff in St. Elmo, kept readying everything day and night. Equally the Commander, Mesquitez, in Citta Vecchia. And now the whole Turkish fleet, no longer concealing their movements, sailed back to Marsa Sirocco, and disembarked most of the soldiery; who fortified their camp, from dread of the Christians, lest they might attack them of a sudden.

On this Valetta, who was very religious, summoned the bishop, and ordered him, with two other

priests, to exhort the people by sermons and processions, and to implore the divine succour; for it was the Lord's day, 20th May. And immediately on return from prayers, he bade the marshal to be drawn up at daybreak at the Casal of Alterscen (half way to Marsa Sirocco), with one thousand two hundred men of foot, and the whole of the cavalry, which he must immediately order from Citta Vecchia. So done; the horse under Sir Melchior d'Eguaras, and the infantry re-inforced with many knights volunteering—who to avoid observation, left their steeds behind in Borgo; but the marshal, perceiving the enemy were at Casal St. Catherine, a little further on, ordered Sir Melchior to advance. The Turks, as soon as they saw the cavalry, quitted their entrenchments instantly, and skirmishing, got nearer by little and little, with a great number of banderoles of different colours, and firing from wall to wall, killed several of ours, having a great superiority from the length of their guns, and wounding more and forcing them to recede—the rather, that our horses, impeded by the walls, could not effect much. At which moment, a renegade Frenchman, who had been taken in Barbary, fled to Sir Melchior; who sent him to Borgo to the grand master, with four of his dragoons, but previously questioned him a

little, and learned that the squadron before him consisted of ten thousand Turks, which made him bid his Ensign, Sir Stephen Clairmont, retire slowly with the standard; so very slowly, as to be unperceived, ever skirmishing ardently, until he decoyed the enemy into St. Leonard's plain, where the marshal had prepared with harquebussiers (sharp-shooters) all those enclosures called *chiuse* in Maltese; but which are simply diminutive fields, with dry stone walls, instead of hedges, and which cavalry, to get out or into them, must know the passes. Our horse and foot, thus aiding each other, fought to advantage.

The plan acted excellently well, to the enemy's great detriment; but at length the marshal, fearing to get surrounded by the Infidel myriads, and calling to mind his instructions, began retreating till under the walls of Borgo, whose artillery drove the enemy back; and from the counterscarp issued several bodies of foot and horse, the grand master having been unable to restrain the rush, and eight hundred fresh harquebusses hurried to succour the marshal. And his soldiers, encouraged by this reinforcement, flung themselves all together on the foe with such daring animation and order, kept up by the marshal and his intrepid and experienced officers, who added to their repute this day, that

at length the Turks commenced by turning in confusion, and ended by fairly running away. Conquered and broken, many of them were slain, and a few given quarter; but much greater would have been the result had the cavalry been sooner on the spot. But conformably to the grand master's first instructions, the marshal had sent them back towards Citta Vecchia, when from a rise seeing what was going on, they wheeled about, and came to join us at full gallop; and indeed lanced thirty or forty of the Paynims, but not in time to catch them on the open space, where they could have acted freely. Not that the victory cost us nothing, for besides a few slain, badly wounded was Sir Melchior himself, who had to pass the command to Sir Peter Coupplier, of the magisterial household, who led back the cavalry to Citta Vecchia; while Sir Melchior had to enter Borgo to be healed, not only from his wound but also because of the dreadful bodily weakness consequent on remaining three days without food or repose.¹

In this action a Navarrese knight, Sir John de Morgut, killed a sumptuously-dressed Turk, who wore on his right arm an armlet of gold, on which were engraved some words in Arabic, to be

¹ Bosio : par. iii., lib. xxv. 522.

translated thus: "I do not come to Malta for wealth or honour, but to save my soul." Curious and later proof than is easily imaginable, how the religious enthusiasm, or fanaticism as some please to call it, which produced the holy war, was not limited to the Christians; who were not in truth even the inventors of the name, but the Mahometans themselves.

Slowly did the Turks begin and proceed, while day and night, not only men, but women, with their *animals* of burden, laboured at bearing in earth from the country, and making mounds of it in Borgo, wherever was judged best. The Salerno renegade, having gone twice or thrice backwards and forwards from our army to the Moslem, by the grand master's orders, came to him early on the morning of the 21st of May, to inform him that the two pashas had determined on making an armed recognisance up to the very ditches of Borgo, not only to display the bravery of their soldiers, but also to strike terror into the Christians, at that most potent Turkish array. That they would not disembark their military stores, till they had examined the harbour better; and also it would not be until after dinner, when men are usually more daring. So all the artillery were loaded, and the Languages

ordered by the grand master to their posts ; and he exhorted their leaders to be extremely attentive that day, for that much depended on repressing the first impetus of the Turks ; and to be very careful as to the gunpowder, so that no disorderly explosion should take place on that day. And recollecting Don Garcias de Toledo's maxim, he at first resolved to admit of no sortie or skirmishing ; but on further thought, deemed it expedient to except the enemy's first approach to the ditches, lest it might be taken for timidity, whereas it was necessary to show him a bold face. Nevertheless, to avoid any of the disorderly enthusiasm of the preceding day, which had not pleased him, he determined on sending out only six hundred of the very choicest of their musketry, under the Marshal and Colonel Mas, and the renowned standard-bearer, Medrano, to entrench themselves in St. Margaret's, within a musket-shot, in a straight line in front, from between the bastions of Auvergne and Provence. The cannon of those posts, without any injury to our own, could do great harm to the enemy, if he ever approached that small country church. He likewise sent two other expert knights, with four hundred foot, armed with pikes and corslets, and some musketry, to descend into the covered way of the counterscarp ; and other com-

panies of soldiers, and as many of the people as chose, with ensigns, banners, and a loud noise of drums, should show themselves on the top of the posts to be assailed. And because of his desire to keep his knights for cases of need, he forbade any of them to go out; which more inflamed their ardour to get face to face with the Turks, whence he was so tormented, that he yielded permission to some of them, which caused a violent disorder, that there was danger of his being left alone in Borgo; for the other knights, thinking it a mark of shame to remain shut up there, while those of St. Margaret's had leave to begin with the enemy, who was now appearing in sight, all ran from their posts to the gates, to go out. It was necessary for the grand master in person to present himself to shut them. Scarcely was he able to curb his own knights; it required all his authority to prevent them from forcing them open; and before he had been able to have their shutting compassed, a great crowd of knights had got out. Yet after remedying that nuisance, he was himself to blame for exposing his person to a great danger, contrary to the advice of his assistants, by ascending into the bastion of Provence; where he remained almost the whole day with extreme peril, taking high delight in observing the fine

shots of the artillery breaking, injuring, sweeping away whole ranks of the infidels, whose army, covering the whole country, and estimated at forty thousand, or little less, drawn up closely in form of a crescent, marched direct on St. Margaret's; extraordinary and superb view! For not only all were in rich, gaudy, resplendent dresses, but carried a quantity of triangular banderoles, of different lively colours; and the magnificent armour and arms, and standards and flags, made the whole, at a distance, seem infinite multitudes of flowers in a meadow or luxuriant pasture; nor delightful only to the eyes, but also to the ears, from the various instruments, melted down by the air into exquisite harmony. But to this harmonious sweetness soon succeeded a rude and horrible dissonance from our cannonades and theirs, and the harquebusses of both. The marshal had commenced properly what lasted several hours, during which myriads of turbans went flying—little pebbles thrown among them with remarkable generosity—play which the artillery joined in finely. Those long-robed gentlemen were observed to run about, far more nimbly than could have been imagined. Our musketeer, too, managed his weapon much better, as the Moslems learned to their cost, for their muskets, seven or nine palms long,

could not be charged as rapidly as ours, or discharged, which gave us a great advantage; only resting on a wall, they had a rather longer range.

Bravely skirmishing for a considerable length of time wearied our troops, while the enemy, from their numbers, were always renewing theirs with fresh ones; neither bridled by the slaughter from the Giaours in the church, nor from the Borgo artillery. Each new corps of infidels kept driving forward what survived of their force; which the marshal perceiving, not to lose any more good soldiers, and valiant knights in vain, some of his being already killed, was obliged by his instructions to abandon what had been only meant for a temporary obstacle.

The Paynim, with their accustomed shouts of triumph, erected on its gable the standard of a sanjac-bey (major-general), and round it various other banners. At that same moment a monstrous mischief had threatened the grand master while urging the artillery to augment their efforts; for besides the Turkish fusillades that poured down on all sides, so that a soldier next him was shot dead, and one of his pages wounded in the neck, one of our own cannon being discharged, the wind carried a spark to another cannon, and fired it off unex-

pectedly, killing four of our people in that same bastion, and more or less maltreating a multitude of others of them; among whom Don Frederick de Toledo, son of the viceroy, in his cheeks and hands—and much worse another knight of a renowned family in Syracuse, who died of his wounds a few days afterwards.

Yet that gun regained our esteem by its next shot, which most opportunely cleared the marshal from his greatest difficulty, carrying away many a turban into the air, and extending their wearers' corpses, who an instant before had been so full of pride and temerity in pressing on our outpost; which so completely humbled the misbelievers, that their vanguard refused to advance a step, and on sight of a small corps emerging from the counterscarp to aid the marshal, they turned and fled; and being followed by a cannon-ball that killed a few, it struck the rest with such a panic of terror, that the whole Turkish army halted, and could not be induced to come nearer. Only half-a-dozen straggled from the wings, to plant and lose a few banners near the ditches, while ours were employed in retaking St. Margaret's. And retake it they did; not but that some of our knights were slain, and one severely wounded in an eye, which had just dropped from its socket; he

was not hindered by that from killing the sanjacobey with whom he was engaged; nor desisted from the tremendous duel, until he wrenched from his dying grasp one of the principal standards of the Grand Seignior's armies, which was hung up subsequently in St. Leonard's Cathedral.

It is not astonishing that in an action of six hours in an open country, against such odds, where the Turks lost from nine hundred to a thousand of their best troops, we should have had a loss of twenty-one, comprehending those in the Provence bastion, and those blown up in a house near Bormola. During the skirmish at St. Margaret's, Mustapha, mounting and accompanied by his advisers, favourites, engineers, and that French knight taken near Citta Vecchia, rode to the top of a hillock called Asieli by the Maltese, whence could be seen the post of Castille, and ditch, and flank and casemate of Auvergne; and after gazing intently for some time, called Sir Hadrian de la Riviere, and promised him liberty if he indicated Borgo's weakest point, to which his reply was, "Highness, the weakest point is that fronting you." Scarcely had ours discovered Mustapha, from his beautiful Arabian horse (and in truth the Turks had brought several beautiful ones) than they directed a piece at him with such accuracy, that not to be hit, he was forced to

descend; and then, in striking contrast with his habitual clemency, was the arrant cruelty with which he had the gallant and high-minded Hadrian put in irons, and driven aboard to be bastinadoed to death, and bid farewell to sweet France.

Then the Turkish army divided into three, and set about robbing and devastating the island; but one of their divisions approaching St. Michael's and Senglea to reconnoitre, out sprang the old admiral, and gave them too severe a lesson for them ever to return.

On Tuesday, May 22nd, before daybreak, two other renegades came into Borgo, having been won over by the Salernitan, who was afraid of returning any more to the Moslem camp; so on his last visit corrupted two of those about the person of Mustapha—the one spy having promised a generous recompence to the other—which they now came to merit, by recounting that both the pashas, Mustapha for the land service, and Piali for the sea, had had a long conference in a garden; the nautical showing the risk they were running by keeping asunder, for that in certain weather it would be very hard to re-embark at Marsa Sirocco. So they determined to reconnoitre St. Elmo that very day; and if it was so easy as the engineers told Solyman, it could not resist above four or five days; and

their fleet might be in perfect security at Marsa Muscietto—and it would be a kind of conquest of the whole island—and they might come and go as they liked; that the principal Turks were glad, for they had begun to fear it was destined they should never embark again, but all die at Malta; that on the fleet everything depended, not for them only, but for all Islamites; and that the fleet's destruction would be destruction to the entire Ottoman Empire.

Much did these tidings please the grand master too, and he showed it; for thus he would be left time to finish the ramparts of St. Michael's, and what remained to be done at Borgo. He informed the bailiff, and sent him succours of a hundred knights, and a body of hired soldiers under the renowned Colonel Mas and the knight, his brother and lieutenant, in hopes the bailiff would hold out until the arrival of those from Spain, bidding him be exceedingly careful not to allow of skirmishing and sorties; that he considered St. Elmo the key of Malta; that in defending it, he would insure his own merit, for to him precisely, and to him alone, the whole intelligent world would attribute the final victory. "Yes! Bailiff d'Eguaras might rest assured that he individually would be considered the

real protector of Malta, and that the grand master would be only second in universal fame."

But the recognisance of St. Elmo could not but cause a fierce contest, in which some were slain on each side, but incomparably more on the Moslem's. By land, the whole way from Marsa Sirocco, did the Turks draw their heavy artillery up Scheb-Erras (Maltese for the mountain on whose top St. Elmo stands), each enormous cannon (as could be distinguished clearly from St. Angelo's fort) besides a multitude of men, had twelve pair of oxen. At such ardour in the infidels, the grand master began to be afraid St. Elmo would be irrevocably reduced previous to Toledo's rescue. Was he unfortunately to be too true an augur?

The council advised him to despatch his own nephew, a most trusty knight, and the spies themselves to Toledo instantly, with the whole recital of all events at Malta hitherto; and entreat his viceroyal goodness to transmit the succour without further delay, and the same as to whatever hired troops the order's own authorities had succeeded in levying. If possible, that they should all come with the galley's return. An ambassador extraordinary, Sir Camillo de Medici, was by the same ship sent to the Pope, imploring him to urge all the Christian potentates to prevent Malta being lost, their own

irreparable loss. And by the same opportunity the grand master wrote a circular to all his priors, that not only they should instigate the several sovereigns, but likewise appeal to all the Christian people in Europe; and in reply, many gentlemen adventurers of every nation marched. His Catholic Majesty issued orders to his whole army to assist Malta. But to give and to effectuate are very different things. Yet would Malta have been a dangerous place to let fall into bad hands. Its ports are too secure a refuge to belong to any not trustworthy. But Don Garcias de Toledo had also sent to Malta. The ships crossed each other without knowing it. Laudatory or not, the viceroy's letter, whatever opinions it exhales, shows a firm and fervent predilection for the order in general, and the grand master in particular. Not a doubt of it. Such the first impression; though in several of his suppositions he be headstrong, or quite wrong, his last words evidently came from the bottom of his soul: "Believe me, not one of its own members bears a sincerer affection for the order than myself, nor for your individual happiness. Well, by the account I have to render to the Almighty I swear, that what I told you is what most becomes you and your illustrious brotherhood. I conjure you to have great care where you trust your person, in respect of

fusillades and everything of the kind; for on the day (which God forbid!) of such a calamity, Malta and all belonging to it, may consider themselves completely ruined."

The whole of that night, and the next day, the Moslem artillery were being dragged up Scheb-Erras, while ours had some houses thrown down for the aim; and high over the old platform, containing the guns, on a level with the water, to defend the chain, was erected a new one, nearly as lofty as Scheb-Erras itself; and on that novel eminence were placed the weightiest of our cannon, and the stoutest, and were pointed against the spot made ready by the Turks for their batteries; only we were forced to economise our powder a little, and keep it for the assaults, for, although a good provision of it had been laid in, yet it was not sufficient, as was visible towards the end of the siege; so vast the consummation necessary for muskets, cannonades, mines, and all sorts of military fireworks, rockets, and mortars, the endless items of a protracted leaguer.

With wondrous rapidity and ingenuity, the mis-believers continued, and deserved encomium of indefatigable and transcendant ability in trenches, and underground works, of what denomination soever. Although nearly the whole island of Malta

is rock, the ditches round its fortresses are exceedingly deep, but chiefly those of St. Elmo, extending for little less than a mile; nevertheless, the Turks overcame each difficulty, and impeded as they were in every way, contrived to use pickaxes, spades, and shovels, with cleverness and daring, equal to their amazing toil, transporting to such a height fascines and timber, from shrubs and trees cut down throughout the island, except, alone, the *Boschetto*, kept in reserve until towards close of the war; so that already had they burrowed and formed subterranean passages to within a firelock's reach of St. Elmo, not a Moslem being disheartened by its never-ceasing cannonades. The batteries of the Turks were ornamented with a quantity of banners, and when they got closer we learned, to our own cost, what capital musketeers they were. Often were they seen to hit what foreheads soever peeped for an instant above the Christian parapets.

At length Bailiff Eguaras sent one of his bravest officers, a Spanish nobleman, captain in the service of the King of Spain, to ask the grand master for succours and stores, his little citadel being closely pressed. And on the chief of chiefs asking him in public, for on the square of Borgo their meeting chanced,—“How is St. Elmo?” replied what he ought only to have hazarded in secret, in the ma-

gisterial palace, and private closet, not to frighten the people: "Sire, St. Elmo is too small to be ever able to resist such considerable forces!" At which Valetta, highly displeased, directed to him a disdainful look, and conceiving an unfavourable opinion of him at once, thanked him ironically for the information, exhorting him to do his duty, in a very high tone of voice; otherwise that "he would go himself with the other troops, and protect the fort from every harm." Not but he that same moment sent a corps of two hundred chosen Spaniards, led by Gonzalez de Medrano, famed for his intrepidity, and delighted at being named to that service.

Then came a Spanish renegade from the Moslems telling they had planted fifteen of their heavy guns, and would infallibly begin firing them within three or four days; and never, from that hour, was the firing to stop, or be suspended a single minute, day or night, until St. Elmo was taken, and the crescent in full possession of Marsa Muscietto; and that the Turks spoke no more of going to Goletta, or any part of Barbary, but only not to quit Malta till they had entirely reduced it.

Fortunately no great effect is produced by firing cannon, however weighty, from above to beneath, otherwise those from the summit of Scheb-Erras

could have destroyed all the shipping in the harbour at Malta, and all the works of Borgo.

Sir Melchior, being now better of his wounds, contrived to return to the cavalry at Citta Vecchia, and on the very same day, Pasha Piali approaching to see the wondrous mounds of earth that in a stony island like Malta, the Turks were able, in so short a time, to gather and erect about St. Elmo, one of its cannon sent a ball against a rock, some of whose splinters wounded him in the face.

But, on Tuesday, the 29th of May, when ours losing patience at the near blockade, attempted a sortie, under Mas and Medrano, what was our surprise, when the smoke of the artillery blew off, at beholding the counterscarp occupied by the Turks, and ornamented with their banners, all along its edge! Certainly it was a grievous though beautiful sight! And little by little they built up a wall, at first obstructing the view, and eventually enclosing the fortress.

At length arrived Dragut, and the sultan's firman was read out, that, considering the King of Tripoli's great military experience, neither of the pashas should undertake anything of importance without his consent, which naturally tickled the corsair's vanity; and a council of war was held, in which he

proposed attacking "Gozo first, and Citta Vecchia, which should not be left in the enemy's hands, to disturb our rear, but either quite our own or utterly destroyed." Yet he finally assented to what the Aga of the Janissaries argued for, and nearly all the other officers. "St. Elmo, not for any other reason," exclaimed Dragut, "than that it becomes the reputation of the Turkish army not to retire ever from what it has once begun!" And reconnoitring St Elmo, he assured Mustapha that, to save time, he ought to take the ravelin, at what cost soever of his bravest troops.

Various gallant actions daily fought by our cavalry proved the wicked policy of the corsair's proposal. Not an hour of idleness did those who held the country about Citta Vecchia indulge in certainty; and among them some Maltese of conspicuous valour.

Nor did the Turks not exert themselves to finish their general battery, and proceed to assail St. Elmo. Thus (as they had brought from Constantinople the pieces of timber all prepared to be joined together and formed on the spot) that immense machinery was erected early before sunrise on the last of May; after labouring on it for fourteen days, from their landing at Marsa Sirocco. Placid was the weather and quiet the waves that morning,

when forth burst from that awful battery an echo that reverberated everywhere; and those infernal engines, with too fair order, began opening furiously against the doomed fortress. In one straight line from northeast those dreadful batteries extended on the pinnacle of Scheb-Erras, so as to be on a level with the great cavalier of St. Elmo, at one hundred and eighty yards' distance, as noted in the journal of the order's engineer at that time. Fourteen standards of different colours were planted thereon; with as many cannon, ten sending iron balls of eighty pounds each, three colubrines of sixty each; and a basilisk of one hundred and sixty. Thirteen had wheels; but the basilisk, another sort of machinery moving with more ease to aim better and recoil less; as those most excellent of artillerymen showed to perfection. Wonderful! Those monstrous guns struck point blank what smallest mark soever; and continually passed through our port holes and overturned our cannon. The grand master that morning stood a good hour without once moving, admiring the various effects of the Turkish battery; some of whose balls after hitting their first mark, rose and went hissing in a direct course up towards heaven, crowned as they flew with a fiery circle; and then descending gave a second blow, and often several blows—killing

many of our people at each. Nor did those blazing orbs not drop by times upon the sea, and rebounding seek the distant sky—charming, but for us terrible to witness.

Yet less with what happened before his corporeal eye was the grand master then occupied, than with revolving deeply vexatious tidings received that very night. And when asked what, he called a council to hear a letter from Toledo, who had detained his nephew's galley at Messina, and now wrote by this Maltese felucca that his promise had been on the clear understanding he should be lent the order's galleys, and galley slaves during the siege; when they could be of no use at Malta, or worse, for the former might fall into the enemy's clutches, and the latter were useless mouths at least, and required being looked after; that the Hospitallers could not expect him to keep his promises, if they broke their own; that the proper way was for each party to perform what they had promised, and then he would punctually execute his. The grand master's reply (and his council applauded it) was that it was no fault of his, but the Turks had taken him by surprise and made it quite impossible for him to send slaves and galleys, as the viceroy would know himself if he were here; so that it required at least fifty knights and

troops of confidence to keep the galley slaves down, and he had not the force; that he was now in Borgo without more than two hundred soldiers; all the rest being in Citta Vecchia, St. Elmo and the other forts; that if he sent away the two hundred from Borgo, its citizens would undoubtedly leave the town, with infinite disorder for consequence; that therefore, to receive the galleys and galley slaves, Toledo must send another corps without losing a moment, besides the one thousand men, with whose aid even it would be very hard for him to hold out until he came with the army to liberate him entirely; that already the Turkish guns had destroyed the cavalier of St. Elmo and taken its counterscarp; that he entreated him to be quick and come himself soon, and not to fail sending the one thousand men instantly.

On the 1st of June, a cannon ball having cut the staff of the standard of the cross and it falling down, there rose a loud shout from the Moslems; for it being Friday, they reputed it an omen of victory.

The fierce contests are beyond recounting. Dragut objected to the fewness of the pieces, and that not fourteen but one hundred he would have had; and fifty at a time playing, while the other fifty reposed, thus keeping up a continuous discharge

night and day without even for an instant ceasing; and to follow his advice at least in part, another battery was added by these Turks (who have no equals for moving earth expeditiously) and another basilisk and fifteen as heavy guns as the others: so that poor St. Elmo was now thundered at by thirty of the hugest of artillery, brought nearer to thirty-five short yards.¹ Nor can we assuredly be unamazed at so small and defective a place resisting such a tremendous fire, and not at once in cinders. Yet despite all, it continued—that superhuman resistance.

On the 3rd of June, when by a singular coincidence falls St. Elmo's day, the Turkish engineers, from the counterscarp which they had taken, perceived (by striking with their harquebusses) that the ravelin had no flanks—discovery they could not have made but for want of care, which ours were almost obliged to have, from the vigilance of those most excellent harquebussiers and surest aimers in the whole wide world, the Janissaries; so as to render it utterly impossible for a man to let himself be seen an instant over the parapet without being infallibly shot dead, which constrained the guard to lie down, and it fell asleep; including the sentinel, who ought to have occupied the angle. It

¹ Bosio: par. iii., lib. xxv. 539.

might not have been wholly without excuse that the sentinel (if there were one) without sleep for so long a time should have been thrown by nature into a slumber, contrary to his best efforts; particularly in such a posture. Others report he received a bullet through his skull, which slew him too instantaneously to be able to cry out. This would be a more serious affair and argue some inexactitude in making the rounds, for why not have replaced the dead sentinel with a living one without a moment's delay? Blame was given to the chiefs. Yet was it not to be over severe? Did they not act in the main, regarding so many other things, incomparably well? There are narrow bounds to man's noblest energies. Still must we own, it was not exactly proper, to have left none of the knights to oversee so important a post, but entrust it entirely to forty soldiers however choice, partly Spanish and partly Italians, under a corporal—though even of De la Cerda's.

The Moslem engineers, entering by an embrasure not much higher than a tall grenadier, astonished to observe no one, and unobserved themselves, since the angle was a dead wall, ran instantly and told Pasha Mustapha, who happened to be near, and without a moment's loss called some of his fiercest and most ferocious Janissaries, who at once leaped into the ravelin

with such sudden swiftness, that the guard had not time to form, and the corporal being killed immediately, his soldiers shamefully fled in a panic out of the work. Then but for the valiant sergeant-major stationed in the covered way, who, with a tremendous shout rushed forward, followed by his superb corps, and shut up the passage with their wedged bodies, and defended it with such rare heroism with pikes and muskets, that they stopped the invaders, who were making for the inner drawbridge—but for him and his, St. Elmo's loss had dated from that day.¹

Attempts the most desperate to retake the ravelin were all fruitless. A Pisan knight, Sir Francis Lanfreducci, did wonders; but nothing could retrieve the lost.

How dreadful to us from Borgo to see that famous ravelin crowded with turbans and their banners stuck all along its line of parapets! What use our efforts? In less than an hour the ravelin was levelled so open, that the Turks could walk into it carrying logs of wood and fascines to cover themselves from our musketeers above. The bulwark of defence has ceased to exist. But can still be of offence! And take what it failed to protect! "Lions of Islam" (roared a dervish, just as they

¹ Bosio : par. iii., lib. xv. 541.

were about rushing again to the assault), "Let the sword of the Lord separate their souls from their bodies, their trunks from their heads, liberate spirit from matter. Oh ye who believe in one sole God, now is your time! Your perspiring enemies are delivered into your hands. Bind them not! Soil not your hands with touching them, but cleave them to the earth! Too nauseous to touch! Their very touch would blister you. The canine idolators must be thrust down into Gehenna! Soldiers of Paradise, penetrate into their accursed den and spare nothing; not yourselves, much less the Giaours! Hesitate, and they require more venom! This is your day of judgment, O infidels! Allah Keram!"

Which truly caused a momentary verbal altercation soon to be followed by deeds too horrible for words, and on the Christians raising a shout, thus the Moslem: "No shouting, Giaours, till out of the wood!"—"But you heartless Paynim, you mangy dogs, there are no woods here; but as much of arid rock as you like! On which, by the blessing of God, your bones shall bleach and your flat skulls be found by future generations and exhibited by surgeons as a curiosity."¹

The Spanish knight who had the dispensing of

¹ Seb. Paoli : Serie ii.

gunpowder, and the care of bathing the cannons with vinegar when they were too heated, was slain, which caused no little delay and confusion. The bailiff, severely wounded in a leg, seeing the brave serjeant-major had lost an arm, so many knights killed, and soldiers; while the enemy was augmenting with fresh numbers, and that it would be nugatory to lose more of his men, resolved on an orderly retreat to within the main body of the fortress itself. At which sight the enemy chased us with violent fury; but when they presumed penetrating into that sacred square between the cavalier and body of the hold, were met with such a storm of fire, and wildfire of every description, the hideous rush down of weighty stones, torrents of boiling oil, volleys of musketry, and several cannons vomiting destruction, that multitudes were reduced to atoms—not a man of the survivors but was glad to draw back. Yet had they reason to exult that they had taken the ravelin; so hoped to be master of St. Elmo as well this same day. Transported with the joy of victory, and a most rash and uncivilised daring, against the merest rudiments of the art of war, they determined on the assault, and like brute beasts, void of the least glimmer of reason, in disdain of evident and most manifest death yawning and staring them in the face, they ran

open-mouthed to set their persons as a mark for our musketeers, and close to the jaws of our cannon, which enfiladed them on both flanks, and were intended to defend the approaches of the ravelin—by that very lane they rushed into the ditches, holding a multitude of scaling-ladders, and placed them against the rock and the walls of the castle. Though the ladders were almost all too short, yet a few of those infuriated savages contrived to get as high as the parapets, so as to display their banners to our defenders, who easily threw them down backward; and since muskets are of little use in such a situation, and that heavy stones are far more efficient, and artificial wildfire, and above all liquid pitch at a boil—for this sticks as well as scalds, and inflicts a certain death of torture—these, and similar, were poured most profusely on their naked heads, and obliged them to desist, in a rage not to be able to take St. Elmo yet awhile, but retire in shame.

The action had lasted from sunrise to an hour after noon, during which whole period, the roaring of artillery, volleys of harquebusses, and horrid screams and shouts, in every language, smoke, and flames appeared, as if the globe was splitting asunder. Throughout this conflict not one instant of intermittance in the brazen bellowing, where

effects could be produced, of theirs, or ours. Of the flower of the Turkish troops, fell two thousand; of ours, of course much less in number, but far more significant in reality. The knights alone were twenty, among whom was the brother of Colonel Mas, and a Portuguese knight of the celebrated family of De Britto, and a Frenchman of Choiseul.¹ None of the whole score of deaths but showed something of striking heroism, or a placid devotion, or both. One, a French knight, having received a bullet that lodged in his chest, was assisted off by another knight, for a little while, until the mortally wounded said, "Now, my sweet Achilles, return and combat valiantly for our faith." And then scrambling alone to the chapel of St. Elmo, reached the steps of the altar, and after recollecting himself for some moments there, dropped dead. Of their hired soldiery, about sixty privates were killed; for, of the wounded, no account was kept by any party, on either side. Only Bailiff Eguaras' lieutenant, Don Juan de la Roche Pereira, a Castilian knight, was most dangerously wounded; to whom, though young, this high place had been given as a recompense for his practical valour; and, during that murderous contest, when the bailiff went out to try to win back the ravelin, the entire command of

¹ Bosio : par. iii., lib. xxv. 542.

the interior was left to De la Roche; so he and the sergeant major had both now to be sent to the infirmary at Borgo. Couppier, for some time captain-general of the cavalry, and another knight, sent by the grand master to inspect St. Elmo, declared that to take back the ravelin was quite impossible, and all that could be done was to keep St. Elmo itself to the last extremity; but that, in its present state, it was indeed a most dangerous post, and barely tenable by the bravest for a very short while. All which the grand master wrote to Toledo; and that, in spite of the most heroic efforts, it could hold out but a very few days, or less.

“However, had I the one thousand soldiers your excellency promised, I think I could defend Borgo still. As for St. Elmo, you who have inspected it, will repute it lost, as well as I.” Yet so great was Toledo’s desire to increase his Catholic Majesty’s fleet with the Maltese galleys, that he sent for them, affirming that it was the only means to enable him to vanquish the Turks, and save Malta. And at the same time he forwarded Captain Miranda, real leader of those troops, at St. Elmo—Medrano being only his standard bearer—under hope of that chieftain’s great experience, ability and valour finding a way to set things to rights.

It afflicted the grand master sadly that Toledo

fixed the 20th of July for the date he could come with the succours; but he counterfeited other feelings, and only opened his mind to his nephew in a retired chamber. For, alas! his doubt was—could he hold out so long? So he despatched express orders to his two galleys in Sicily, to receive on board whatever succours his own prior had ready, and to return with them at every risk—even that of going down.¹ In a letter to Toledo he supplicates for even five hundred men, within an hour, and that he is delighted with Captain Miranda, whose valour and military talents will certainly delay St. Elmo's surrender a little.

Miranda after reviewing it, assured its assembled garrison that far from wishing to display any authority given him, he came very willing to die in such honourable company; determined to be their servant to the knights; and to the soldiers a companion and loving brother; not to exhort them to conduct themselves valiantly, for he knew it unnecessary; but to serve and aid them and run the same fortune with them. And "though the place was small and weak, yet so much the more honour." And to acquire popularity he hurried off a message to the grand master that nothing in war was better than to try to keep the soldier pleased and content;

¹ Bosio: par. iii., lib. xxv. 543.

and that nothing conduced more to this than allowing of his handling money, to pass the noisome hours at gambling, and buy wine and some additional dishes to please the palate and restore bodily strength; for which he begged his highness to make them have good living and good cash. And the grand master at once complying, the soldiers got back into the best possible good humour and forgot their disasters.

As long as that furious cannonading of the Turks continued, he had the soldiers kept out of all danger—only a rigid look out on the sentries. And thither were sent up the one hundred harquebussiers of various nations from Citta Vecchia making it be their own request; and also some knights volunteers, who desired to follow Miranda's fine example. And the grand master and council hearing the wound of Bailiff Eguaras in the leg was getting worse, sent him word to come be healed at Borgo; for that it was not at all well the supreme head of a fortress in such straits should lie under any impediment. To which he replied that, though he certainly felt a little uncomfortable, he nevertheless was resolved not to quit the fortress! "But," added the noble veteran, "if the grand master have in his eye any one of greater experience and ability than mine for this weighty

charge, let him be sent freely by all means; for it will give me great satisfaction to resign, in respect of the order's service; only allow me to remain here likewise; for my desire is to sacrifice my person for Christendom. Feeling myself aged, I do not think I could spend my few remaining days of life anywhere so well as where I am." So the only magisterial resolution come to, was that in case of his death, Colonel Mas should succeed him; but that so long as the valiant Bailiff lived, he should not be superseded. The consequence was that he became more oporose than ever, and took a hand in everything, even the meanest offices. Often were he and Broglia, somewhat his elder, seen to go side by side to work at the repairs and carrying baskets of earth to encourage the others; for necessary had it become, they should all concur if they wished for the least shelter from the enemy's artillery, which eat away by degrees every one of their defences. The Turkish basilisks pierced through more than eighteen palms of solid masonry. The insupportable fatigues increasing, chiefly the whole night, and the burying in the parapets of bowels and limbs of men all torn to pieces and pounded by the hostile cannon, to such a pass had the hapless besieged been now reduced; what with never stirring from their posts, but sleeping there and eating; with all other

human functions, in arms always, and prepared for combat; by day exposed to the burning sun, and by night to the cold damp; privations of all kind, from the blasts of gunpowder, smoke, dust, wildfire, iron, and stones, volleys of musketry, to explosions of enormous batteries, insufficient nutriment or unwholesome, they had got so disfigured, that they hardly knew each other any more. Ashamed of retiring for wounds not manifestly quite dangerous and almost mortal, those with the smaller bones dislocated or shattered, and livid faces bruised with frightful sores, or extremely lame and limping wofully; these miserably bandaged round the head, arms in slings, strange contortions—such figures were frequent and nearly general, and to be taken for spectres rather than living forms.

Justly can it be averred that this was one of the most perilous, direst, cruelest sieges in the memory of man; only as to food, some other besieged people have been still worse off. If here was no drought or famine, it is to be put down to the grand master's praise, and his kind foresight; for if the commissaries had calculated well as to eating, they had miscalculated as to what is perhaps more important, the liquids; and the cisterns were much sooner drunk dry than thought; so Valetta at one time feared we should have been

left without water, with a renewal of our sufferings in Barbary. But thanks be to God, this did not happen.¹ Also the order had to feed about seven thousand of the poor Maltese, excellent creatures, who well deserved our care; for while some others deserted to the Turks, not one native Maltese did.

The indefatigable Turks next turned their ideas towards cutting off all communication between St. Elmo and Borgo, and realized their project in a great degree. It was now the sixth of June, and their horrid, most merciless artillery bellowed and raved night and day just the same, it seeming their design to pound the fortress into ashes. Now few cannons remained to the Christians. In spite of all his efforts to prevent them, the Moslem built up a wall on the ravelin, as high as St. Elmo's parapets, and enclosing it.² The only momentary repose of ours was to scrape together a little clay from the underground vaults within the fortress, and well wetting it, wrap themselves up in it as in a blanket, to lie down on or near the new parapets, which they made of wooden boxes, filled with earth, and covered with mattresses and bags of wool instead of fascines; of which they had no

¹ Bosio : par. iii., lib. xxv. 545.

² Id. : id., id. 547.

more, and earth too waxed scarce, of which refuge they were finally deprived, and it consumed their small residue of force. A variety of contrivances to take ours captive encountered an intrepidity that made them all fail. But our most signal heroes went dropping; Medrano's serjeant was killed; Miranda declared longer defence impossible, and engaged Bailiff Eguaras and Governor Broglia to convene a council-of-war. There was Medrano instructed to relate the whole to the grand master, and that they every minute expected to be blown up with the rest of the fortress, which leads immediately to the conquest of the whole island; and then Toledo's coming would be useless. The only way to save the order's best nerve, "so many of its most valuable troops, is instantly to call into Borgo the survivors, where they perhaps may hold out until the Spanish army's arrival." Medrano obeying, got with some difficulty to Borgo, and secretly, in the grand master's own private room, told him and his council the entire unhappy verity. Whence after profound consultation he received this answer: "We know very well that in a mere military point of view St. Elmo is untenable; but our oath and profession is freely to sacrifice our lives for Christendom. We are absolutely obliged to undergo a certain and

manifest death to save the Christian people, and our order, in this case when our liberators are so near; and therefore this council and I determine that they must not abandon St. Elmo, even if they were alone; but that we will instantly join them if necessary, and die with them."

As to blowing up, they had before been told it was out of the question, the fortress standing on a rock; which however was contrary to what the unfortunate besieged saw and heard, for several mines exploded with a smothered noise under them, and the rock and the fortress both went rocking, and casks of vinegar rolled about their hall, and quantities of earth in the ditches.¹

So on Medrano's return with fresh troops, and some timber and old sails and other stores, sorrowful was the greeting. Horrible the dread of being buried alive; not even able to fight, but see shaking about what must infallibly soon fall and crush you. Not one by any possibility could hope to be saved from that hideous end.

The Bailiff, Miranda, Mas, and most of the knights, frankly and enthusiastically expressed their resignation, as well as the new comer, Captain Vagnone; but the rest thought it a cruel sentence, and De la Cerda (with some who consulted their

¹ Bosio: par. iii., lib. xxv. 550.

personal safety), under pretext of wounds, departed for Borgo, not without disapprobation; but gained shortly afterwards the valiant and honourable death that became him in defending that town. Others, that is, of the privates (for not one of the officers would sign it, much less any knight of the order, though some few of them were thought internally to assent to it) wrote to the grand master with the intention of obliging him to recall them. "We came to defend a fortress, this is such no longer, but without counterscarp or ramparts. The ravelin has been built up to the roof; we can neither offend the Turks, nor defend ourselves. So send no more succours, for they would be only so many more lost; for unless boats come take us away this very night, at the toll of nightfall, we are resolved to force a sortie, and die as becomes soldiers. June 8th, 1565."

The grand master's only reply was that on his word of honour Toledo's re-inforcements were on the point of arriving, and that a renegade just arrived from the Moslem camp had assured him the Turkish engineers had discovered St. Elmo could not be mined, as planted on a living rock; that they had tried to mine it, but totally in vain; but however, if resolute to abandon St. Elmo, to let him know first, that he might send gunners to

nailed the guns, and boats to receive them and all, for St. Elmo lost, every hope of having succour from Toledo was lost also. And grand master and council decided likewise to name three commissioners to take an ocular view of St. Elmo, a Spaniard, a Frenchman, and an Italian—all three grand crosses of the order—to give in a regular report. These found the soldiers ready to depart, having already sacked the ammunition and public store of every kind of arms, and in the very act of throwing all the spades, shovels, and pickaxes into the cistern, when stopped by Colonel Mas, who had still some authority with them; which rebellious misconduct caused more surprise and terror in the commissioners than if they had seen the Turks in possession. As to speaking in private to Miranda, Mas, Eguaras, or Broglia, it would not at all be allowed by the mutineers. These notwithstanding, returned in a short time to their duty. Whoever liked to leave the place, might; since for every one who returned, four offered to succeed him; on which all resolved to stay, nor would an individual of them undergo the shame of being the first to retire. All determined to remain and ask the grand master's pardon; that they would lay down their lives willingly, and

defend St. Elmo as long as any others could, though desperate its condition indeed.

Fifteen knights were sent as aid; and what is astonishing, two Jews volunteered to go and die with them.¹

Then Miranda had the colours hung out on various spots, to make the Turk think we had received great re-inforcements, and cried to ours with a soldierly speech,—“So let me see you sell your lives dear; and let there be a loud noise of drums and trumpets, and several volleys of musketry, and some discharge of cannon too, as wild rejoicings.”

But this irritating the Infidels, their battery's dreadful bellowings were worse than ever. The grand master's consolation at the garrison's sublime coming about, was darkly overcast by tidings that the two galleys he recalled had come—perhaps, too, with some supplies—and in strict conformity with his letter, had put into Hayntofecha; but on finding it in possession of the Turks, returned forthwith to Sicily. As to Toledo's succours, they were coming, though delayed; and that viceroy may have been too careful. Will they not come too late for poor St. Elmo?

An invention of the war in Hungary, under

¹ Bosio : par. iii., lib. xxv. 553.

Charles V., to be used instead of gunpowder in besieging or maintaining a siege—circles of fire—were much in request with the order, who almost alone had the secret. And a most infernal one it was; but now published by Bosio as quite easy to make, and much practised against the Turks at the siege of Malta. Of these two, three, even five were enveloped in the same fiery circle, the wider, and the more victims, the better. No escape, but for all to agree instantly, and rush together into the sea. For the rest, the Turkish harquebussiers were far superior to ours, so that twenty-five of our sentries were shot dead in one morning. Strange; but Toledo seemed to care more for what is not unfitly called the little succour, than for all in Malta. But it was seeming only, for in reality he was a stanch friend to it. His precise commands to the commander of succours were, not to land them if St. Elmo was taken, or Citta Vecchia; for in case of either, neither Borgo nor St. Michael could make any resistance. But on the 16th of June four galleys sailed from Messina to Malta, with eight hundred soldiers and stores.¹ Exactly that day had the Turks selected for their first general assault on St. Elmo. Their galleys and Draguts having come round from Marsa Sirocco, followed by the whole

¹ Bosio : par. iii., lib. xxv. 560.

Moslem fleet—the idea being, that when these light vessels had essayed and forced the passage, then the heavy should enter and choose their stations—firing at St. Elmo as they passed, and landing the maritime to join them to the land forces, and advance all together to storm the Giaours in their castle. Thus like a thick forest was the sea at the harbour's mouth. Towards sunset, and during part of the night, the galleys proceeded to batter the mark, for the purpose of keeping the besieged without repose, and have them weary when the real assault should begin. About two hours before day-break, was heard a single loud voice, and clear singing out of certain words in a foreign tongue, to which the whole army replied in a low murmur; and we learn from persons practised in their rites, that it was a delegate from the Grand Mufti, their High Priest, making a kind of confession in the name of all, and after it an absolution, explaining the happiness of a future existence, according to the Koran's promises, to all who intrepidly advance to death in support of the law of Mahomet. Next a long profound silence, during which they reinforced with four thousand harquebussiers all the trenches of the counterscarp quite round, and ravelin, both in front and towards Marsa Muschietto, as well as the part near the spur of the Cavalier.

Which most patient and attentive harquebussiers holding their harquebusses pointed up towards the fort's parapets, no sooner was observed the crest of a morion, or a vizor opened, than they hit it, not permitting one of us to be seen, before the Turk and ours came to the grapple; for then those sharpest of sharpshooters, not to hurt their companions, ceased; though happen it sometimes did, that the same bullet killed both a Christian and a Turk. Indeed stupendous and admirable were the punctuality and diligence of that corps during the whole war, especially in assaults, when the harquebussiers slew more of ours than artillery, archers, those enormous engines, or any other weapons of offence whatever. The enemy also sent armed men (as many as they could hold) into the ditches immediately round the fortress, with multitudes of ladders. And little noise as they made, we discovered it; and did our best to disturb them with artificial fire and fragments of hard limestone, which last made a great figure in all this deadly siege. Very ineffective indeed, we repeat, is the musket in repelling scalers, at least as a firearm, when the aim is straight down. And if with the bayonet, it becomes a sort of pike; but the real pike is better, as lighter, longer, and more manageable. But stones are still better, if of a weight to upset the ladders; for

then a whole line of men fall, some of them killed, and all wounded.

At sunrise, up sprang a furious dissonance of cannonading from the batteries and ravelin, for about an hour, making the earth tremble, and the sea. Nor was it an exaggeration, but sad reality. It lay before their eyes. Then, and during the whole siege, many lives were saved by having people who attended to nothing else than at the smoke of the priming of the cannon, to shout out; at which cry every one threw himself on his face until the ball passed. Yet this at present was only the harbinger of a stately pomp, since advanced a body of eight thousand Turkish horse, led by Mustapha, with the great standard confided to him at Constantinople by Solyman's own hands; and it was now planted in face of the chief bridge before St. Elmo's principal front—signal for the assault general, which Eguaras, Mas, Miranda, and the new governor Montserrat prepared to withstand valiantly; and our garrison too, which those late reinforcements had restored nearly to its proper number, all eminently brave. Then, and in subsequent conflicts, a knight was put between every three men, to observe these, and make them do their duty. Three corps of aid stood under Miranda, Eguaras, and Montserrat. Heaps of heavy stones lay arranged along

the parapets. A corps of who from wounds or age could not be able fighting men, had to carry about certain large deep plates, with wedges of bread steeped in wine and water, to refresh and invigorate our combatants without their having to move from their places. Others had for office to draw out the corpses from between the feet of our living heroes, lest they should be shackled in their motions, or struck with horror at trampling on their dead companions. Not far from the parapets were placed barrels sawn across in two, full of a sort of vinegar and water for the soldiers or knights to dip into when the wildfire caught their clothes, for that lotion extinguished the flames at once.¹ Large assortments of circles, pikes, trumps, pots of wildfire, were everywhere at hand. Some of the most expert warriors were to walk about from post to post, investigating each. Others, in regular order, were appointed to measure out the gunpowder; others to hand the harquebusses to the harquebussiers; others to present the balls and cordage. But how make the wildfire? Gunpowder, saltpetre unrefined, ammoniacal salt, pounded sulphur, camphor, Greek pitch, powdered varnish from the grains, are the ingredients. The exact proportions are well known (says Bosio), and it is sold in the shops potted up. The pots of

¹ Bosio: par. iii., lib. xxv. 562.

earthenware, badly baked on purpose, to break the easier (that day St. Elmo showed many thousands of them), each large enough to be thrown by a man's hand twenty or thirty yards. The mouths of such pots were narrow, and after their being charged as above, had to be kept shut up carefully with linen or thick paper, tied very close crosswise with harquebuss cords presenting four ends covered with sulphur, first liquified, and then dried; which ends, when they are well lighted, you throw the pot, which breaks, and never fails setting fire to the mixture, most voraciously burning and consuming whatever it touches. Trumps are by the turner, round, concave tubes of wood, two palms thick in circumference, and three long, to be nailed or fitted tightly to the handle of a halbert, or partisan, and filled as the pots, only rendered more liquid by a little linseed oil, in such a manner that when you light the trump, it continues a long time snorting and belching vivid, furious flames, and large, and several yards long—not unlike an enormous furnace excited by a most powerful bellows—and with a violent impetus devours the opponent. Striking the face or head of a man, it either kills him at once or throws him down frightfully wounded. Pikes of war ought to be very acutely pointed, and become pikes of fire when you put a little of the mixture into a purse

two fingers long, placed in such a way towards the head of the pike, that its flames are nearly as effective as the trumps; and it finishes by firing two small cylinders of iron or brass, loaded with very fine gunpowder, and exploding leaden bullets like those of a harquebuss. Other execrable utensils of the sort are omitted for brevity; seek them who will in my authorities.

On rush the Turks and Delhis with their atrocious howl, unchained demons. The defence however was as intrepid! The noise was heard in Borgo, whence also men saw (or thought they saw) the assault and glorious resistance. Perhaps an attack more obstinate has never been read of. Thirty of the most noted warriors of Islam, rash barbarians, who had bound themselves by a solemn compact to penetrate into the fortress this day, or die together in the attempt; they advanced most brilliantly during the hottest of the conflict, which the grand master observing (as he could very well from the top of St. Angelo), and that they were close on storming the corner of the cavalier defended by Colonel Mas, had two pieces of heavy artillery brought to bear on them; the first of which, instead of good did us harm, for the gunner, keeping a little too much to the right, killed not only some of the enemy, but likewise

eight of our own knights. Still the second made amends by striking in the exact middle of those choicest Islamites, and swept away twenty of them, which was such a thunderstorm to the rest, that they fled, and never could be got to return. Of Spahis and maddened Delhis various parties next flew forward; and Janissaries with reiterated efforts, often refreshing with food and exciting drinks, but were as often driven back. Dervishes, emirs, sheriffs, and the whole band of Santons, with the most fanatical of sectaries, the Arapies, utterly regardless of their lives, endeavoured to scale the cavalier, but were unsuccessful the same. The circles of fire rolled down on them, and several, by half-dozens at a time, were consumed, tearing each other, and shrieking in spasms of the most frantic torture. Lofty this mountain! There sparkle the waves a thousand feet below you, into them if you can! Whirling, tossing with fiery convulsions in every direction, rolling too wild to look at, a blazing hurricane, with a most agonized human voice, now excruciating and loud, in various tones of intolerable pain—now so faint; at least the death they yelled for (though slow to their impatience) came in less than half an hour.

Nevertheless, two of the very wildest of the desperate fanatics, cheered on by Mustapha him-

self and Dragut, were given each a splendid banner. But all was useless. Above six continuous hours had lasted that terrific drama. With the rudest scorn the bannered lunatics were rebutted, their rich banners taken and spit upon, and then torn to fritters.

Of other four banners that we took, one was in a sortie by Medrano, and flung by his own hands into the fort. The magnificently-dressed Turk who bore it, had set it on one of the gabions, at which our said captain rushed out, killed the infidel, and wrenching the banner from his final grasp, had scarcely time to fling it up to us, much less to draw himself back, when a Moslem ball pierced his forehead, and the frank and valiant soldier fell dead, to our infinite regret. With us was his ensign, who resolute to die at his master's feet, leaped forth in a twinkling, and jostling, overturning, slaying, or wounding several Turks, was at length overcome by numbers, and killed, as he desired, at foot of that glorious corpse, which they endeavoured to pull off with them, but could not, for ours came and bore it in; and it afterwards was carried to Borgo, where it was buried in St. Leonard's, among the order's grand crosses.¹

Victory was ours; but at severe cost. At Borgò

¹ Bosio : par iii. 563.

the grand master and council went in public procession to church to thank the Almighty donor of all good gifts. But besides our wounded (so dangerously, that one of them died in the boat to Borgo), several of our knights were slain, and three hundred of our gallant troops.

So with shame and disappointment the Paynim folded the imperial standard, and left us acknowledged victors—"for to-day" (muttered the malicious Paynim)—"but to-morrow shall be your last."¹

It being necessary to replace our losses, and the grand master declining any but volunteers, the Neapolitan knights stood forth instantly in a body, priority of courage highly praised at the time; and the heroic example was followed by various of the most renowned knights of nearly every nation. From all which offerers, thirty knights were selected; to whom were added from the men of Borgo what made up the three hundred; and all were boated to St. Elmo, while Marshal Couppier with the cavalry from Citta Vecchia created a most opportune diversion by attacking the rear of the Turks. Since their universal opinion imputed their ill success to three things: 1. That the Giaours had still one heavy gun left. 2. The

¹ Bosio: par. iii. 564.

fresh succours. 3. The interference from fort St. Angelo; their engineers went with Mustapha and Dragut to review the situation, where it was determined how to prevent that gun from having effect; how to keep off succours by land or sea; how to screen out St. Angelo's fire; and to make a drawing of such devices. But while about it, was shot a cannon ball, which striking a rock, one of the splinters flew through Dragut's enormous turban; and though he was carried off to the commander-in-chief's tent, the famous corsair expired—to Christendom's great comfort.¹

Another splinter killed the aga standing by Mustapha; who did not however stir until the drawing was finished. And then likewise was it determined to execute what truly was the immediate cause of St. Elmo's final ruin—a covered way by which the Moslem could advance unseen as far as even the wall they had to storm.

And behold! on the 19th of that same month, the covered way was finished completely and in full use. Yet prior to that a small cannon from the top of St. Elmo killed the head master of the Turkish artillery, which made them add to their battery; so that St. Elmo was now under the fire of thirty-

¹ Bosio : par. iii. 565.

four heavy cannons, as lugubriously ceaseless as ever.¹

About then we had another mishap. The mill for grinding gunpowder at St. Angelo's blew up; and not only a large quantity of the composition was worse than lost, but likewise the materials for composing it burned, and ten of the workmen killed; and to inquire if merely accident (as it was) a commission was sent from Borgo of two; one of whom was Sir Oliver Starkey, and twenty-five stone weight of gunpowder was administered from Citta Vecchia for immediate use.

The heavy Turkish battery still on the increase were now thirty-six.² A second general assault was given, worse than the first; because by the covered way, St. Elmo was entirely insulated and cut off completely from all mortal succour. Still it refused to surrender. The word capitulation had indeed altogether ceased to be named by either party. In this second, Montserrat was among the killed; and Miranda, Eguaras, and Mas of the dangerously wounded. None of them so blind as not to be quite aware of their situation, as not to know it was contrary to military calculation; yet the tenderness of honour and sublime devotedness to the Christian creed, kept them perfectly reconciled to

¹ Bosio: par. iii. 566.

² Id., id. 568.

their sufferings, or rather they prized them very highly, and were quite gay and hopeful, and told the grand master's messenger they could hold on still; although that knight saw how certain and proximate was their ruin, and that they perceived it as well as he; nor was his own coming and returning without excessive danger. For coming, his companion sitting next him had his head swept away by a cannon ball, and in returning one of his rowers was shot dead by a harquebussade.

Valetta himself was astonished at the eagerness of his knights to be appointed to that most forlorn post. In the second assault general two hundred of that male garrison were stretched corpses; whom their companions, little by little, had removed a few paces inward from the parapets. It was all they could do; wounded and weary, more was impossible.

Except that after reposing some moments, they were able to join in shouting Victory! victory! joyously; yet with something of the solemn was it heard at Borgo, which knew the cry of that voice.

"Promptitude, or St. Elmo is totally gone; for two-thirds are killed, and not one of the rest unwounded, and so tired, that they scarcely exist. Yet at daybreak comes the third assault general." Such the tidings in a letter brought towards

evening by a swimmer, under water. Dismal were the Turks, by a consciousness of disgrace; under any circumstances can they blush? With admirable magnanimity did the grand master, with an air of satisfaction, affirm the Christians had a glorious victory, and were in hopes that with succour they could resist until Toledo's arrival; when knights, soldiers, citizens, offered themselves immediately, to the grand master's great wonder. He had but to choose from numbers contesting for election. But he would only suffer a few remarkably brave to go, with much food and ammunition, leaving it at liberty to the chiefs of St. Elmo either to accept the succours, or come back with them, for which he took care to leave room enough in the five boats; his intention being to save that honoured residue, and abandon the dilapidated fortress.¹ But the boats, in spite of every precaution, were obliged to recede, for eighty galleys, and other vessels, and guns innumerable, closed the pass hermetically.

Meantime, the besieged (nor should a Christian deign putting them on a level with Leonidas), showed a tranquillity above all praise, confessed one to another, and embraced cordially and devoutly, as all utterly equal. What other sacra-

¹ Bosio: par. iii. 571.

ments could they expect? They died doing their duty, and had no fear.

The merciless Turk knew they were too weak and wounded a handful to resist, and therefore his third assault general on a few disabled wretches.

It was the vigil of St. John's day, their patron saint. Their resistance was far greater than could have been imagined. But all their military stores were nearly out; of circles, or wild-fire, none; and even gunpowder so scarce, they gathered the grains of it that might remain in the pockets of their dead companions. "Incomparable valour, generosity, high-mindedness," exclaims Bosio, proud of his order, as they deserved.¹

They were soon but sixty alive. For four long hours did they fight, with no other arms than common pikes, swords, stones. Miranda having had such a shot as prevented his standing, got seated on a chair near the parapet, with a pike in his hands, as if to defend it. Through several breaches had the Turks now broken in, and could take deliberate aim at whatever seemed to have still some corporal strength. Then did old Bailiff Eguaras (he too having been forced to sit from his wounds) send a command for part of those on

¹ Bosio : par. iii. 572.

the cavalier to descend, a last resource. But on their coming, the enemy retired, with perhaps a feigned panic. There was breathing time, even some hours.

But lo! when least they expected it, and bandaging their wounds, and otherwise seeking some refreshment, at ten forenoon, sounded is the fourth assault general, and suddenly the foe rushes, and finds a passage open on every side. Already knowing by experience that we were wholly without defence of wild-fire, gunpowder, or anything, and rendered quite harmless from wounds and debility, the infidels no longer employed the least screen, but swarmed and menaced all round.¹ Colonel Mas, seeing all was lost, and determined to sell his life dear, like a brave soldier, since his leg was fractured, had himself seated on a log at his post of command, and brandishing a great two-handed sword—a weapon he used to manage with singular skill—slew several Turks, most valorously, to his ultimate gasp; after which he was cut up into minute bits, by exasperated pigmies. Universal massacre ensued, and all defence ceased. Sir Francis Langfreducci, severely wounded as he was, in many places, contrived to hobble to the post opposite Rennella, and there, where the wooden drawbridge

¹ Bosio: par. iii. 573.

once stood, kindled a smoke, according to the express instructions he had received from the grand master, ultimate signal of the loss of St. Elmo; which the savages observing, and all the hundreds of corpses on the ground (for none had ours been able to bury since many a day), a loud command was heard for Janissaries and Spahis to hurry in, to consummate the butchery of the Giaours, who could no longer hurt them. Then with shouts to deafen the air, in rushed the crescents, and found men only half alive. Yet, even in that hopeless state, heroic were the deeds of several of the knights and highly generous. Honour, though but a word, to their expiring feats! Aged Eguaras, desperately wounded as he was, seized a lance, and limping advanced resolutely, and with the brightest courage opposed the first Janissaries that dared pass the door of the fortress. But few instants, and a scimitar cuts the bailiff's white head sheer off. Sir Paul Avogadro, of Novara, to prevent the savages from, in cold blood, putting him to some strange, atrocious, ignominious death, darted forward like an enraged lion, and chased them wildly out by the breach, wounding them woefully, until he was hurled down headlong into the ditch.

Nine knights alone, and these too severely wounded to be able to make the slightest defence,

were carried away prisoners, not by the Turks, but by Levantine corsairs, from lucre of gain—to sell them into slavery, or perhaps for their ransom. The Turks obeyed Mustapha's orders to give no quarter, but immolate every human creature in St. Elmo; and that he would pay four crowns apiece for every head brought him, which, however, is said to have been commanded by Constantinople. Whether the crime was Solyman's or Mustapha's, admits of hesitation. There it lies between them; it were not unlike either. Five Maltese, who saved themselves by swimming, were the only persons who really got free.

Mustapha entering St. Elmo with the imperial standard, very much wondered so small a place showed so many dead bodies; and judging from the son what the parent must be, perceived he had embarked in a far more difficult adventure than he conjectured.

A fact recounted to this day at Malta is, that of the knights found dead, as well as those of them so wounded that they could not move in bed, and were pulled out and killed with fiercest torments, from each of them (martyred saints!) he had head and hands lopped off, and their arms extended and nailed to two timbers formed like a cross, planted in a hole made with the scimitar through the breast

and back; and fastening those most disfigured relics of humanity in a long line, he had them thrown into the sea, hoping the tide would waft them into Borgo—as indeed it did—by way of a salutary lesson what punishment would follow any resistance to his will.

The Christian deaths in total were one thousand two hundred, including a hundred knights and three servants-at-arms of the order, whose names are registered at full by the good Bosio.

Provence	15
Auvergne	15
France	18
Italy	31
Arragon, &c.	11
Germany	5
Castille, &c.	18

113

Immense the Turkish joy for its taking; and Mustapha stimulated it, as if the rest of Malta were an easy matter now. And deep Valetta's grief, no doubt; nor could he bear abiding any longer in the palace from whose windows he had been blasted with the sight of Islam banners on that famed fortress. So he kept changing house after house; but whatever his internal anguish, outwardly his noble

countenance remained serene, and fine his address to the council: "If St. Elmo's fall give us concern, it was also splendid, and exceeding holy, nor should cause us any consternation! Not at its fall should we wonder, but exult that the noble few could hold out so long!"¹

¹ Bosio: par. iii. 577.