

*The harbour of Famagosse in Cyprus.*

Sunday, August 28, the night of the beheading of S. John, we anchored our vessel in the harbour of Famagosse. We were greatly astonished to see so strong a city. For vessels cannot come nigh by reason of the rocks, and the walls too are terribly thick, and there are fosses lined with masonry along the town. Hence you may gather that one might attack it from without yet be unable to injure that city. It is small, and has the most beautiful houses possible, but they were destroyed what time the king of England took vengeance for his sister whom the king of Cyprus had killed, thinking to debauch her, but the good lady, who was returning from the holy voyage, had fain rather suffer death. And as soon as her brother heard the news he vowed to God that he would avenge her, as he did. The walls of Famagosse are all freshly repaired, and there is a very grand boulevard. In brief it is an impregnable city if it had a sufficient garrison. But there are only 800 soldiers in the pay of the Venetians, for they have the whole land of Cyprus under them. By a custom of no long standing to keep at peace with the Turks they pay them a heavy tribute; but the peasants pay it well. They are heavily taxed, and have no trade except with Venice. Along the sea on the other side there is fine level country, which supplies produce in plenty. It rains only from All Saints to Candlemas (November 1 to February 2). The rest of the year it is so hot that men go into the fields by night only, and then there is a heavy dew. Two days after our arrival we went for our pleasure to the place where S. Catherine was born, and left at daybreak. The distance is only about two leagues, but we thought we should die of heat on the way back, and we had made no long stay there. For we found neither bread nor dinner, only a little chapel where are two altars; hard by is a ruined church. It is the spot where the fair dame went to learn our law: a quarter of a league away one sees the prison into which she was thrown when it was known she was a Christian. All this part, which used to be the city of Famagosse, is now called in our tongue Old Famagosse: one can still see the arches on which were the pipes which brought water from the mountains to the city. All the rest is destroyed and swept away. So we crawled back two leagues or so and stayed until the following Friday. We lived, my companions and I, in a church of S. Nicolas, and by reason of the heat remained therein all day until it was time for supper. This church is fine, and vaulted throughout. During the six days I was in Famagosse I spent the sum of 48 gros.

Friday, September 2, after supper my companions with whom I ate every day, that is to say Jehan du Bos, of Soignie, and three churchmen who had accompanied us to Venice, wished to leave on foot to go to a place called Salline, where there used to be a great city, now there is only a village. When they were debating about going on foot (the distance was quite eight French leagues), I tried to defeat their plan, alas! this travelling on foot was the cause of their death. I begged them to take a mule each, and to come and take their pleasure and see the country, for in any case we had to wait until our vessel was loaded with salt, and they took fully fourteen days to fill up. I pleaded with them that the rest of the pilgrims were taking each of us a mule to travel all night through to Nicossia, a great city, and that we should get good value for our money. They replied that they would spend more in the village. Alas, they had enough of it fifteen days later, for they were near their end, as you can hear. At last I saw I was wasting my time, and went and engaged a mule, and agreed with the muleteer that he should come with me, for everyone else had left. And for the whole journey as far as Nicossia it cost me but twenty gros. And even when I had mounted my mule I came back to our lodging to see if my companions had not changed their