

themselves masters of Nicosia, where were collected the riches of the kingdom. Its conquest would ensure them the possession of the island, of which Nicosia, from its position, dignity and wealth, might be called the heart. Famagosta had been held by the Genoese for a space of ninety years without disturbing the Lusignan kings in their safe and peaceable possession of the rest of the kingdom. Supposing the Christian forces to arrive, the place could easily be recovered, for it was weak and situated in a corner of the kingdom. The honour and interest of the Empire counselled the removal of the greater difficulties: nor could they doubt but that were Nicosia taken, the victorious ensigns of the Grand Signor would be planted on every fortress in the island.

The camp was then moved towards Nicosia. The Turks found no opposition on the way: the inhabitants, through inconstancy of temperament, or because the yoke of slavery imposed on them by the Cypriot nobles made them flatter themselves that they might find better luck under a new master, even offered them provisions, and gave them the fullest information as to the position of affairs and the condition of the island.

The confusion of the commanders, and the alarm of the people of Nicosia at the appearance of the Turkish army was incredible: they were as unready as though the event were wholly unexpected. The city, through the negligence of its chiefs, was poorly provided with grain: the trenches were not thoroughly dug out; the inhabitants were not disciplined, for up to this time so confident had they been that they would not be attacked that they had quite lately disbanded the island troops called *Cernide*, and left the town undefended. Niccolo Dandolo had the chief command, a man unfit for so important a post: but generals were few, and a certain reputation acquired at sea seemed to point him out as competent to act under the direct orders of the Governor-General. But this post was unfortunately vacant.

Everything was in confusion, but what measures the lack of time and of experience allowed the commanders took. The *Cernide*, who had scarcely got back to their villages, were recalled, and a decree was published allowing everyone who brought food-stuff into the city to sell it on his own terms. It was of little profit, for the peasants generally had become stupid and confused, and a very large quantity of grain, which might have been brought in for the use of the garrison, remained outside, at the disposal, and to the advantage of the Turks. Their daring increased accordingly. They pitched their camp, set up their pavilions, and put their guns in position, while not a single Cypriot sallied from the town to interrupt the work.

The Ottoman main camp extended from Santa Marina to Anglagic, facing the space covered by four of the city's bastions, while large bodies of horse and foot were posted at various points to prevent ingress to and egress from the besieged fortress.

Meanwhile soldiers and citizens were disposed within to the best possible advantage, and they began to discharge their cannon, of which there was abundance, and created some confusion in the Turkish camp. After many objections on the part of the generals, a skirmishing party of a few *Straliois* left the city. They dared not, on account of their scanty numbers, get beyond the protection of their guns: and even so Andrea Cortese, their captain, advanced too far, and was surrounded and killed. But the more the besieged kept on the defensive the more the courage of the Turks increased. They harassed the walls with cannon, drew trenches close to the ditch, and with a dense hail of musketry and arrows drove the defenders from their posts; and having with incredible speed run up some forts they fought even at a vantage, filling the city with terror and confusion.

There were ten thousand infantry in Nicosia, all untried men collected from the villages of the island, and a reserve of fifteen hundred Italians. The number of pioneers was large,