

defence of that post, kept renewing the fight with fresh soldiers, relieved the weary, kept the enemy at bay where they were most active, hurled back those who began to give way, and showed himself everywhere a wise and brave commander.

The Turks, thus repulsed, to leave nothing untried, devised yet a new way to harass our men, whose troubles and difficulties were already unbearable. They filled the whole space between the gate and the ravelin with firewood and fascines, and set the stuff on fire, throwing also into the midst various compounds to increase the blaze. Our soldiers were sorely tormented with the heat, and with the stench of a certain wood grown in the island, called by the peasants *tezza*, which gives out a strong and most unpleasant odour. This fire lasted for many days, until the defenders, who had tried in every way to extinguish it, could hardly remain on the spot. Yet, in spite of all, these brave fellows persisted in the defence. So keen was their daring, and so determined their resolve to hold out to the end that even old men and women defied the natural weakness of age and sex, and kept their posts on the walls, performing all the duties of soldiers. But things had come to such a pass that toils endured and perils braved were all in vain. The strength of the enemy outside kept increasing, new reinforcements of men and munitions came up daily, while within men, munitions and victuals were daily failing. A large number of the bravest soldiers had died at their posts; the wounded lay almost abandoned for want of doctors and drugs. The few who were still sound were worn out by fatigue and hardship; they were eating the flesh of asses, horses, dogs, and such like nauseous food: wine and vinegar had failed entirely, and they had water only to drink, so that they were reduced to such a pitch of weakness that it was a brave spirit rather than strength of body which kept them alive.

The citizens were now fully aware that the place could not possibly hold out much longer, and resolved to beg the civil and military chiefs to provide, before the end came, for their safety.

Matteo Golti was their spokesman. He dwelt on the loyalty and constancy of the inhabitants, on the dangers and hardships which so far they had borne with signal patience, and in the name of the whole city implored the magistrates that, now that they saw the desperate state of affairs, they would not allow the total ruin of their country to be a miserable memorial to mark the loyalty of the people of Famagusta. Its salvation should be the reward of their deserts. To the double glory of the defenders it should be made manifest that their generous spirits, which no fear of the enemy could tame, had stooped to the love of friends, and to the wish to secure to them, not indeed the lot they could have wished, but at least all that fortune would grant. He urged that, if there were but a gleam of hope, the readiness and bravery which had been shown hitherto would not even yet fail. If they could with their blood ransom their fatherland from the heavy and cruel yoke of these barbarian unbelievers, and preserve it under the just and mild government of Venice, not a man would shrink. What inspired their request was certainly not the fear of death, a matter lightly esteemed of men who had lost so many relations and friends, all indeed that was dear to them, and to whom life could no longer offer any pleasure: rather was it the anxious prescience that they might remain alive to see still heavier and longer troubles, their country enslaved, themselves and their children in bonds, and their everlasting salvation imperilled. They asked them in all humility, in all affection, in the name of their most loyal city, that the authorities would consent to treat with the enemy, a course the Turks themselves were daily proposing, and under honourable conditions endeavour to preserve what might yet perhaps be left of so great and noble a kingdom.

Having heard the prayer of the people, the magistrates and principal commanders