

The other ordinary captains of the Stradiots, with one hundred horses, went to Famagosta. Meanwhile some of our Cypriots went off with their vessels and scoured the seas of Caramania and Syria in pirate fashion, taking some prizes. But rumours of war reached them from Syria and other Turkish lands, and they made for home, bringing over some of our monks and priests, who advised us of the immense preparations which the Turks were making for the war against Cyprus. At the end of March the Pasha sent forth from Constantinople Murad Rais, with twenty-five galleys bound for Rhodes, to cut off help designed for Cyprus. On April 17 Piali Pasha left Constantinople with eight galleys and thirty galliots. When Cubat Chawush returned from Venice bearing a more spirited reply than had been anticipated, twelve chawushes were at once sent to isolate the Bailo of Venice and his staff, a chawush and some janissaries being left on guard to prevent news of any kind reaching him, and to cut him off from all intercourse, consultation and conversation. Then with all possible diligence they hastened the despatch of the rest of the fleet, and on March 16, 1570, Ali Pasha sailed with thirty-six galleys, twelve flats, four Turkish vessels and two Venetian, the galleon of Mehmed Pasha, eight lighters, forty horseboats and many *caramussali*, full of men, provisions, guns, ammunition and other necessary stores, for the conquest of Cyprus. General Mustafa Pasha commanded the whole force. Piali Pasha had left before, and at Tenos, a little island belonging to the Venetians, slew many Christians: on March 28 he took Negropont, and loaded with provisions left for Rhodes. He caught up the rest of the fleet on the way; with great rejoicing they united their forces, and arrived June 1 at Rhodes.

From Rhodes they went to Finica, whither the army had been sent overland, this being a port of Anatolia, near Cyprus and convenient for crossing thither. About June 20 they sent six galliots to Cyprus to get news: they reached a village called Lara, near Alexandretta, and while their crews were chasing some herdsmen twenty-nine of our Stradiot horse fell upon them, and drove them on board, killing a good many Turks. Not one Christian fell, only the horse of the lieutenant of these Stradiots, who, hoping to get some reward for his gallant exploit, came to Nicosia with a number of prisoners and many heads. The magnificent Dandolo showed his liberality by refusing him even an advance of pay to buy another horse for the service of S. Mark.

Meanwhile the right reverend bishop Contarini made an oration in the vulgar tongue in S. Sophia, urging every man to be loyal and strenuous in the struggle; holding out to them the warm and grateful affection which the Republic bore to Cyprus, with such warm and graceful eloquence and strong persuasiveness that all were moved to tears of enthusiasm, and each man resolved to die in defence of his plighted word, his country and his kin. When he came down from the pulpit he was embraced affectionately by the high officials, the counts, barons and knights, and warmly thanked. Then Count Giacomo, in the name of all the Cypriots, addressed the bishop and the officials.—“All Venice knows, and everyone can see, our loyalty, devotion and obedience to the Republic, a fidelity of so long standing. Everyone shall know again at this crisis, in these perils which beset us, by our brilliant deeds, by our very blood, how loyal we are; how we would rather die by the edge of the sword than change our masters.”

They were active in carrying provisions into the fortresses, and the high officials went to Aschia, to meet the general commanding at Famagosta, and to arrange about grain, cattle and other matters necessary for such an undertaking. For all they could do an immense quantity of wheat and barley remained outside, while they took possession of the larger part of our cattle, both small and great.