

CHAPTER XII.

THE CITY OF FAMAGUSTA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

THE city of Famagusta was formerly called Arsinoe, after the sister of Ptolemy Philadelphus, its founder. Its actual name Famagusta is a corruption of Ammochostos, which means, buried in the sand, from the sandy soil which surrounds it. It lies on the eastern shore of the island. As you approach the walls the city is scarcely visible, for the land outside slopes so as to hide all but a few feet of the highest buildings. It is built on a rock, with a circuit of two miles. The walls are stout and broad, sloping in at the top, and surrounded by a ditch carefully hewn out, very deep and 20 paces wide. There are twelve old fashioned towers disposed round the city, with walls four paces thick, and an inner breadth of five paces. Within there is a cavalier, three bastions, a curtain with two ranks of artillery, and a citadel. It was fortified by Guy de Lusignan in 1193: the Genoese, who held it for 90 years, strengthened it, as did also Jacques the bastard, when he got it back into his power, and lastly the Venetians.

There are two gates, each with its drawbridge; one on the land side, the other towards the sea; the latter gives access to the port, which is entered by a narrow opening, still closed every night by a chain fastened to one of the bastions of the harbour. Only empty vessels can enter, not from any defect in the entrance, which is deep, but because the harbour is nearly choked up. On the east it is guarded by a reef of rocks,