

The Turks had somewhat slackened their efforts, and retired to pass the winter, which was unusually severe, on a site more convenient and farther from the city. But as soon as the season allowed of safe navigation, and the renewal of warlike operations, an immense quantity of men, ammunition and provisions began to pour into the camp, brought by galleys and vessels of every kind. They arrived from every quarter, particularly from the neighbouring shores of Caramania and Syria. So great was men's eagerness to take part in the enterprise that report said that after the fall of Nicosia more than fifty thousand Turks came over to Cyprus. Many of them were neither enlisted nor paid, but came attracted purely by the hope of booty, for the Pasha had set afloat a cunning rumour that the spoils of Famagosta would exceed those of Nicosia. The boasting humour of the Turks magnified the size of the attacking force, and by means of certain citizens who had come out to treat for the ransom of prisoners sent threatening messages to the besieged that the Grand Signor had sent so vast a host that if every man of them had thrown a slipper into the ditches of the fortress they would have filled them up, and made a platform reaching to the top of the walls. When the army was thus reinforced and supplied with necessaries some larger pieces of artillery were brought from Nicosia, and about the middle of April began to work at the trenches, to move up to the city, and to build various forts. These works required incredible labour and wonderful industry. From the winter camp to the city, a distance of three miles, they dug out the earth, and where they came on the rock pierced it with picks and chisels, until they had made roads so wide and deep that not only infantry, but even mounted men, could travel along them under cover, as it were, for scarcely the points of their lances could be seen above ground: and between these roads, working at night when they were safe from the guns of the fortress, they cut many trenches, throwing up the earth in front of them to such a height that they could work behind it during the day without fear, and complete their plan. The pioneers threw the earth they dug out as far as they could in front of them, so that between the trench and the mound there remained a platform on which the soldiers could stand, while the earth heaped up in front of them served as a parapet behind which they could in all safety aim their musket shots at the walls, and the ditches and shelters were so many, and so well arranged, that the whole army could be drawn up within, and though quite close to the city, every man would be under cover, buried as it were, out of sight among these mounds of earth, and anyone standing on the city walls would see nothing of the attacking force but the tops of their tents.

On the same plain the Turks built ten forts at varying intervals; the face of each was fifty feet broad, and strengthened with beams of oak, interlocked with remarkable skill, and so solid that, when the space within was filled with earth, trusses, Syrian ash, bales of cotton and the like, the forts could offer a lively resistance to every kind of attack: and even were they partly damaged by the guns of the city, so large was the force of pioneers that they could with great speed be restored to their original strength. Thus the walls for more than five hundred paces, that is to say, the whole distance from the Arsenal to the Limisso gate, were continually and violently battered by shot.

Such were the forces, the preparations and the plans of the enemy. The besieged on the other hand, both soldiers and citizens, excited by them to greater industry and vigilance, and spurred on by their own courage and the greatness of the peril, left nothing undone to strengthen their defences. And from the very first, although their small numbers did not allow them to meet their assailants on equal terms, they tried incessantly by sallies and skirmishes to harass the Turks while at work on their trenches, to show their own courage and spirit, and to shake the confidence and boldness of the enemy. With anxious care they