

“princes through the intermediary of Your Holiness against the common enemy, the Turk, the other concerning matters of Religion: and, although the second may be the more important business, and the greater object of consideration for Your Holiness, and the more desired by me too as a Christian, still, because with the king of Persia the other has been perhaps the stronger motive in inducing him to do this, so with the permission of Your Holiness I shall begin with

“The business of the Confederacy.

“Your Holiness will already know of the great and ancient enmity between the two puissant monarchies of Persia and Turkey, and of what import it is to Christendom that that of the Turks should be brought low, as being the nearer and stronger:

“Discoursing with the king of Persia on these matters, and finding him a valiant prince, a sagacious warrior, desirous of humbling the Turk, and moreover well affected to the Christian people, I began to encourage him in this design: and, somewhat of a soldier myself, I proposed to him various plans, by which he could the better bring his desires to fruition, and, in order to get the more into his confidence, the more intimate with him, I also showed him various secrets of fortification and devices of our military training.

“3. Among other points I impressed on him what great importance friendship and alliance with the Christian princes would have for him, and explained to him their great strength, their constancy in whatever they have resolved, and their knowledge of the art of war, saying that by way of Hungary and by acting on the defensive a prince was inflicting as much harm on them” (the Turks) “as all ours together, at least the chief ones together with the Persian forces as well.

“4. When he ('Abbas I) then asked me how this union might be effected, I answered him that no intermediary would be so powerful as that of seeking to win over Your Holiness, as head of all the princes, and that, to move Your Holiness to do that, no method would be so effective as that of showing favour to the Christians, and granting them those privileges which are discussed under heading No. 2 of this negotiation.

“5. Then, as to this Confederacy, Holy Father, the point principally to be considered consists in knowing how it can be brought about or effected.”

The main points are these:

“Firstly, that there should be friendship and correspondence between the Christian nations and the people in Persia, so that in all matters business may be transacted with more familiarity than hitherto.

“Secondly, that Your Holiness and the other princes shall have your agents and ambassadors at that Court (Isfahan), and also the king of Persia his at Your Court and the Courts of the other princes who join the Confederacy.

“Thirdly, that it be a reciprocal Confederacy in war against the Turks, both an offensive war, if this can be managed, and a defensive war, because the greater harm would be caused to the common enemy in this way. As to a defensive war, it does not please the king of Persia that this only should be waged by the Christian princes against the Turks; but he would prefer the offensive, if it can be managed, and with this objective the king of Persia would desire that all ties and agreements of the Christian princes with the Turks be broken, as far as can be done. Defensive warfare being risky for the defenders, besides the waste of time, men, money and reputation, while the enemy's discipline and military skill increase. . . .

“8. Of an offensive war I shall say that just as it brings with it great fame, so it also brings alarm and peril to the enemy, seeing that it penetrates the more his defects and discovers the weaknesses, which this defensive masked; and that these weaknesses be far greater in the empire of the Turk than is thought can be understood in many ways, such as the following:

“9. All the flower of his armies he is posting in Hungary for a parade (of force) and intimidation, having no other occasion at present to employ them elsewhere, and these troops are more showy than efficient. The interior of his realm is without soldiers,