

“quickly routed and most captured, with them three *sanjaks* (? captains), whom he had put to death very cruelly, one roasted alive, one quartered into four pieces, and the third sawn in two. After this enterprise, Isma'il pushed on with his men towards Erzerum, in which town was Iskandar Agha the Baiglarbaigi with a quantity of cavalry: but the latter, who had learnt of the sudden attack by the Persians on those at work on the fort, not knowing how many the attacking force might be, did not leave the town. Hoping to bring off a fine coup the Persian contrived to keep the greater number of his men in ambuscade, and appeared in sight of the town with but few, hoping by this means to draw the Baiglarbaigi out of the town into the open country. Just as he had planned, he succeeded, for the Baiglarbaigi, seeing that the men who had appeared in sight of the town were few, so as not to allow them to raid the countryside, sallied out and made two squadrons of the men he had ride with him. . . . When the Persians saw the Turkish troops outside coming against them, they drew themselves up to fight and began a skirmish, but after a short time feigned flight. Thinking to have routed them, the Turks pursued, and the Persians drew them so far on that they led them into the ambush. So the Turks being in the midst of so many soldiers, at least three times more numerous, and incomparably braver, were for the most part cut to pieces, save some captured, and the Baiglarbaigi fled away wounded and badly handled with another seven men of his who followed him until they were able to save themselves by throwing themselves down into the fosse round the walls of the town, having no time to enter by the gate. Having accomplished this feat, the Persians camped under the walls, but seeing later that they were unable to take it by storm and that winter was coming on them they took to devastating all the countryside, and laid everything waste on a vast scale, leaving nothing that could be burnt and destroyed, taking away men and animals, as many as they could carry off. After they had laid waste that region they went raiding round Ersinjan. . . . Similarly they devastated the district of Van, and then entered that of Diarbakr, raiding and ruining the country until near Baghdad they turned back to their own land. . . . The extent of the regions laid waste by the Persians is thirty days' journey in length and about eight in depth.¹

“Informed by the Baiglarbaigi of Erzerum of the ruin and hurt which had been caused by the Persians, and the fear in the countryside of further depredations, the Sultan dispatched the Grand Vizir, Rustam Pasha, his son-in-law, with a force of 80,000 men and 800 Janissaries under their Agha, who left Constantinople in September; but, the policy of Rustam Pasha being to remain never far distant from his sovereign, so that in case of the latter's death he might contrive that one of the sons of the favourite Sultana succeed to the crown, which rightly would come to Sultan Mustafa as first-born, who had been born of another wife and for various causes was a great enemy of the Pasha in question, he moved off on the expedition unwillingly and slowly, halting now in one place now in another, so that only in the month of November did he arrive in Konieh, a town situated in Lycaonia . . . where he received letters from Constantinople informing him that Sultan Sulaiman was seriously ill, and in such fashion that there was scant hope of his recovery. . . .

“Mustafa was so greatly beloved by all the soldiers of the empire that every one of them desired nothing more than that the sooner the opportunity would come about for him to succeed to it: and this was derived from the rare virtues by which he had captivated and drew the hearts of people to esteem, love and revere him, and the more particularly because of his great liberality and humanity.

“By the time Rustam Pasha reached Constantinople the Sultan had got better and recovered. . . . Later the Grand Signor caused war against the Sufi” (i.e. Persia) “to be proclaimed in Constantinople, and announced his intention of proceeding in person

¹ This would, if literally exact, mean a front of some 450-500 miles and a depth of 160. Throughout this account they are called not “Persians,” but “Suffiani” and “Sophiani”—“Sufi-ites,” indicating how notorious in the eyes of the Turks were the tenets of their kings.