

“his letter had at once dispatched us with a reply to his Majesty, in addition to which we were also bringing him letters from the Cardinal of S. Giorgio and the viceroy of Naples. Having kissed and placed it on the top of his head, according to their wont, and called to him a German gentleman<sup>1</sup> who had at other times translated Latin letters for him, the Shah bade him translate the Brief of His Holiness, which he had himself opened, enquiring at the same time whether we had left Rome before the arrival of Fr. Paul Simon. To this we replied in the affirmative, and that this Brief was in answer to the dispatch brought by Fr. Paul: he turned to the person holding the Brief, listened with attention to the translation of it, which because of the usual impatience and violence of the Shah that German did briefly and in a shaking voice, with many interruptions. Hardly had he translated a quarter of the letter when the Shah began to toss his head, saying that those were mere words. Then, breaking out very angrily, he began to complain bitterly of the Pope and of the other Christian Princes, who for more than ten years past (he said) had given him” (nothing but) “words and mocked him with promises that they would declare war on the Sultan of Turkey, from whom in all that time they had not captured as much as a single kid. Then he bade the interpreter continue; but after a few more words he again got angry, saying that all those were empty words and lies and that they were deceiving him and the Christians did not want to fight the Turks, while he, without any acquaintance with artillery and his soldiers having no experience with arquebuses, had for so many years past waged war on the Turks and easily recovered all that had been filched from his predecessors: that never so long as he had breath would he cease to be a very bitter enemy of the Turks: just clothed like any poor soldier, and with a pair of rope shoes,<sup>2</sup> to which he pointed as he spoke, he was then going off to the army, resolute to expose himself to any fatigues and dangers, and remain out in the wind and rain with a morsel of bread like the rest of his soldiers and in a tent. But the Christian sovereigns did not do that—to their exceeding shame they, intent on their pleasures, were daily suffering fresh hurts at the hand of the Turk, daily allowing him to rob them of some fresh country (citing Rhodes, Cyprus and the kingdom of Hungary). And, even if the Emperor had made peace, why did not the other princes declare war, without sending to tell him twaddle and lies so frequently?

“To this Fr. John (Thaddeus) made answer that the present Pope was not the same as he who had first had dealings with his Majesty, and who had died; that it was but four months since the present Pontiff had begun to negotiate with his Majesty by means of us, and in that time, despite so great risk to life and such arduous efforts, they had gone to Rome and returned with the reply—no one else had yet displayed such rapidity and energy—that they were sure the intentions of the Pontiff were most sincere and that he ardently desired to satisfy him” (‘Abbas I) “and would certainly have succeeded before then had not certain discords between Christians, which arose years previously, prevented His Holiness from being able to accomplish more in the past: and that he (the Pope) was hoping to give him (‘Abbas I) satisfaction soon.

“To this the king replied afresh that these were all so many words, that, if the Christian princes were not agreed, the Pope, who was their head, was the cause of it: because he was able and ought to compel them to remain on peaceable terms with each other and unitedly make war on the Turks: and he (the king) ended by saying that he was then going off to his army, and that now was the time to wage war, but that he would wait patiently for another four months, during which it would be seen whether what the Pontiff wrote was mere words, or deeds: at the end of those four months, if he had not had news that the Christians had taken up arms against the Turks, he was determined that they should all look out for themselves, because he cared very little for friends such as those who served him only with lies and words.

<sup>1</sup> His name was perhaps Albert von Schilling, “of a noble Silesian family”, mentioned by P. della Valle as becoming a convert and his friend.

<sup>2</sup> In modern Persia *giveh* or *maliki* made of macerated rags, with canvas uppers.