

“had learnt of Mustafa Pasha being there, engaged in rebuilding Kars, but trusted that the Turkish general would not succeed in this undertaking, because, were the latter to persevere in it, he” (Shah Muhammad Khudabandeh) “would be bound to prevent him: in fact, should Mustafa Pasha not desist from such a plan, he (the Shah) would rebuild it with the heads of Mustafa’s Turks laid instead of stones.

“When the Turkish general received this letter, he had 30 Persian prisoners brought into the presence of himself and the Persian envoy, and the heads of 29 of them struck off: the one left alive along with these heads he had placed on the ramparts instead of stones, and then told the ambassador to return to his king, and report all that he had seen, giving him also two mule-loads to take, one of cannon-balls, the other of arquebuses, and adding that he was to tell his sovereign that he (Mustafa Pasha) was unable to send any other present, as his army was not bringing with it any other kind of fruit than these he was dispatching.

“The ambassador set off and reported everything to his king, who was loth to credit it, as it seemed to him impossible that in such a short time he (the Turkish commander-in-chief) could have carried through so immense a piece of building. Desirous of becoming better enlightened, he (Shah Muhammad Khudabandeh) once more sent off one of his personages with carpets and fruit as presents for the Turkish general, so that the envoy might the better investigate and see for himself whether it were true that the town of Kars was being rebuilt, and how far the construction had proceeded. When that personage had appeared in the Turkish camp, the General asked him what news he brought, and he replied that he had been sent by his sovereign to discuss terms of peace with him. On that the General agreed willingly enough, and spoke nicely to him, and afterwards sent him with some *chaoushes* inside the new town in order to show him the works, and he was taken round the ramparts. When he was on a high tower, one of the ambassador’s men was pushed over and precipitated down, and this was done by the General’s orders to frighten the enemy. When the envoy had returned to the tent where he was lodged, which was near to the castle in the town, the (Turkish) general commanded that at night-fall on the walls above the castle, and on the forts, and even on the tops of the pavilions, lights should be hung and flares, and all the artillery fired off in the town and in the forts and camp, and that the shots should pass over the ambassador’s tent, so as to awe him. . . .”

Later in 1579, in connection with the fighting round Tiflis, Mustafa Pasha summoned the Persian ambassador, told him what had occurred, and in anger had all those with the envoy killed, the ambassador himself imprisoned in the castle at Erzerum.

The prince of the Tatars proceeded to raid Ganjeh, Karabagh, Ardabil and up to near Erivan. However, the Grand Vizir dying that year in Constantinople, Mustafa Pasha was summoned there in consequence of the machinations and accusations of his enemies. In his place Sinan Pasha, who had been Pasha of Baghdad at the opening of hostilities, was nominated commander-in-chief, and proceeded to Erzerum, 8.5.1580: on arrival with the army in Kars, 15.7.1580, he found there an envoy from the Shah of Persia with letters addressed to Mustafa, suggesting terms of peace. These he sent on at once to Constantinople, and then, leaving Kars he marched to Tiflis, which was besieged. He abandoned it and retired on Kars about 8.9.1580. Thence, desirous of “drawing the Persian fire” to discover their plans, he dispatched a woman’s dress to the Persian monarch. Leaving a garrison in Kars he then returned to the army at Erzerum, only to learn that the Hungarians had begun to fight the Turks in Europe, while the Sultan was wanting to make an attack on Corfu. Mustafa Pasha, by then Grand Vizir, protested that the Ottoman resources were not equal to fighting on three fronts simultaneously, but died not long afterwards.

When he learnt the position the Persian ambassador burnt the letters he had brought containing Shah Muhammad Khudabandeh’s offers in order to secure peace, saying to the Turks that he had been dispatched to learn whether they were prepared to restore the places captured