

Persia. Warfare had already been ablaze in Georgia. In 1590, unfavourable for Persia, peace was made, Tabriz and some Caspian ports remaining with the Turks: and that frequent bone of contention, the cursing of the Khalif 'Umar by the Persian Shiah, was dragged in by the offended Turks insisting on cessation of the practice. Already as early in his reign as 1592 the prowess of the young 'Abbas I as a warrior and successful fighter against the Turks had reached Rome, for on 30.9.1592 Pope Clement VIII wrote a Brief (Arch. Vat. Arm. XLIV, vol. 38, p. 54), and invited the Persian monarch to join a Christian league against the Sultan of the Turks, against whom the Pope fulminated a tremendous denunciation. The translation runs:

“Pope Clement VIII to the illustrious 'Abbas, the most puissant king of the Persians, greeting and the light of the spirit of truth.

“In so lofty and renowned a position is Your fame installed, and so great is Your glory gained by many and very important achievements that, though there is no mutual acquaintance, yet We are led by the very widespread reputation You have to desire for You everything, and to yearn for the bringing low and crushing of the unbearable pride of the tyrant of the Turks, a man the foulest of all and the enemy as much Ours as Yours and that of all good men. For just as virtue in even absent men wins for themselves good wishes, so do their vices antagonize. Now, what are the vices of that fellow? the height of cruelty and of avarice and of rapaciousness, and an insatiable lust of gaining everything by doing harm of the worst kind: no regard for his oath and no keeping faith. Whom has he not harried? whom has he not provoked or from whom has he not ravished lands, cities, provinces? How many injuries has he caused us; on the Arabs, Greeks, Germans, Pannonians, Italians how many slaughters has he inflicted? The cozenings and oath-breakings, whereby he has grown, are well known, as it is by these and not by fair wars and proper victories that he has waxed strong. Armistices and treaties even, if it seem good, he makes with his neighbours whom he gathers are able to harm him; when he has tied their hands by this trick, then against one of them, in regard to whom he thinks it will be the most convenient, contrary to his engagement, contrary to the oath, he begins a war, though in no way injured; meanwhile the rest stay peaceful remembering their pledged word and the oath that he has always thought fit to be despised. So aggrandized by the wealth and spoil taken from each separate people he attacks the rest with an ever stronger hand till he annihilates one and all.

“He is straining every nerve now to make us his sport by the same wiles, but We think they are not hid from Your prudence.

“So We have thought that plans should also be shared in the common cause and resources collected to crush that plague spot. We, however, think this can be done in the opposite way to that by which he deals with the rest: he attacks them one by one: now it behoves each and every one to attack him. Let us at this juncture combine in the handling of this business, and so let us make a league with the rest of the princes of Christendom and attack him with joint forces and arms.

“But there is great need for You also personally to assail him on Your quarter. Now, as he is said to be very much stronger than You in engines of war and of fire and in a very inflammable material, which retains its heat very persistently and acts most violently in setting on fire everything else, whereof You yourselves lack artificers (since Persian nobility would never yield in valour and arms to chattels of the vilest description), We shall not suffer You to be inferior in these devices.

“You know that with regard to these matters and the dispatch of artificers of these things there has been much negotiation in Your name with previous Pontiffs, in which, if there was then no means of satisfying You, at least goodwill was never wanting. Now, therefore, if while our energies are bent on war You also decree to start and carry on war in your quarter, We shall seek artificers and send them. Now victory will be most certain, first if God, from Whom all good things are, take vengeance on the crimes of