

"The Prior therefore summoned together the Armenians at Isfahan, and partly by exhortations, partly by more than 1,000 scudi, which he had brought from India, given by the archbishop for the purpose, he drew up a document (asking) for union, and it was signed by a bishop named David and some others, together with many priests and monks. With this letter the Fr. Prior (of the Augustinians) went off to Shamakha where was the Shah, who received him with much courtesy and showed him many marks of honour. The Father told him (the objective of) his deputation, and that he had come so that his (the Shah's) "Armenian Christians should yield obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff. Hearing the name of the Pope mentioned, the Shah replied that he was very pleased. But, when one day the Prior took him, for his signature to be appended, the letter" (i.e. that asking for union with the Holy See) "the king said that in no wise would he do so, and he got very angry with the Father. For some Armenians told him that the Father" (Prior of the Augustinians) "wanted to make them Portuguese and deprive them of the Faith they had kept for so many centuries. The king was greatly displeased at this because of the deep hatred he has for the Portuguese on account of the onerous impositions they daily in Hurmuz place on his (the Shah's) subjects . . . and so he burst into a rage with the" (Augustinian) "Father in question, and said many nasty things to him, and about the Portuguese that they were the women of the Turks. The Armenians as a result became so terrified and frightened of the king that in future they would not go to the house of the" (Augustinian) "Fathers, nor have intercourse with them as previously: and the king ordered that the (Augustinian) Fathers should take down a small bell which they had over the house, and with which they rang the hours for the Divine Office, saying that they were ringing it 'to summon the Armenians and make us devils'. This was the ruin of the Augustinian Fathers: and so great is the dislike the king has for them that he cannot bear to see them, so much so that, when we arrived, he sent to tell us that, if we were bringing (something) about the business of the Armenians, he did not wish to give us audience. That was the state of mind in which we found the Shah of Persia when we came. Whose is the fault is not known. The Armenians complain against the Augustinians that without any need the latter went and disclosed the business" (of the union with the Holy See) "to an infidel monarch . . ."

There is a slight variant of this incident in the report of the other Carmelite, Father Paul Simon:¹ when the Augustinian Prior made his *faux pas*, 'Abbas I used:

"other words which showed scant respect for the king of Spain: and so the Father was obliged to leave without obtaining anything. In Tabriz it was told the king that the Augustinian Fathers had put up a bell in their church" (i.e. in Isfahan) "and that for this reason there were many people sick in that town. The Shah bit his finger, muttering two or three times: 'Church with a bell! church with a bell!': and gave orders that they should immediately take it down, as they did. In many other actions he ('Abbas) demonstrated the small goodwill he had for Christians: and this increased to such an extent that, when we arrived in the city of Isfahan, he had given instructions for publication of an edict to the effect that all 'Frankish' Christians (in this term they include Christians of the Latin rite) and the Augustinian Fathers should quit his realm. . . ."

". . . The cause of so great a change that we found in this monarch God alone knows: the (Augustinian) Fathers say that in the beginning the king was merely pretending and that those demonstrations" (of affection and goodwill) "did not come from his heart. Other people attribute it to the many causes for annoyance the officials of his (Catholic) Majesty in Hurmuz have given him, of which mention will be made elsewhere: to the Christian princes, His Holiness, the Emperor, the king of Spain not having kept the word they had given to various ambassadors that they would make war on the Turks, when

¹ O.C.D. 234 b.