

“previously from the Turks by the king of Persia.¹ There is an ancient palace with “marble columns, and other curious things which show that in ancient times it had been “a large town. Without our seeking it the Khan sent provisions for our food to the house, “but insufficient . . . and he gave orders for one of his men to attend to us. The following “day the Khan summoned us: we went and he asked us how we were, bade us welcome, “with other ceremonious words they employ. We thanked him and begged him to have us “given horses at our own charge (as we had need of them, since none could be had in the “town without his orders) because it was necessary for us to go as quickly as possible to “his Majesty. He replied that he was going off to Shamakhi,² the capital of the province “where he had his residence, and that we should go with him and thence to the king. “Before visiting him we had heard that he wanted us to go to Shamakhi so that we might “see his grandeur and he might entertain us, as he was unable to do so at Baku, where “he had arrived to hunt two days previously: so we thanked him for the favour but begged “him to allow us to go to his Majesty straightaway, because by going to Shamakhi the “journey would be lengthened. He said that it would not be longer: and so we left him. “Two days later he invited us to dinner: we went. He had invited many people, and “made us sit a short distance away from himself, on one side together with the laymen, “who had come with us, it being the custom in this country, when they invite a foreigner “and want to flatter him, to give seats to his servants also at their tables, which is a sign “of the respect they have for the guest. On the other side sat the Persians. The fare was “of various kinds of rice, meat, poultry, fruit and sweetmeats: the floor of the room was “covered with rich carpets: the Khan sat on the ground according to the custom of the “country in the front of the room. His gown was of coloured cotton, his jacket of rich “brocade, lined with sable. On the carpets they spread three cloths, one for himself and “three or four of his notables, which was of silk and gold; another for us and the third “for the other Persians invited were of coloured silk. The Khan received us with courteous “words: then immediately there was brought the dinner which lasted but a short time. “Before quitting him once more we begged him to allow us to go by the shortest road to “his Majesty, as we knew that he was making us go to his town of Shamakhi only to enter- “tain us and show us his grandeur. . . . He replied that the road via Shamakhi was the “shortest, and he was setting out thither immediately and would leave behind some of “his men who the next day would accompany us and give us horses and everything neces- “sary. . . . The following day we left on horseback for Shamakhi, where we arrived in “two days: the whole countryside was abandoned, and we never saw any dwellings until “some three or four miles distant from the town.

“In Shamakhi the Khan gave us lodging in the house of an Armenian priest, and sent “us provisions daily: the same day that we arrived he sent three of the chief men to visit “us and bid us welcome, and gave orders that they should not allow us to want for “anything.

“The town of Shamakhi is large and formerly had been very populous, with an abun- “dance of bread, wine, meat and other commodities for subsistence, and rich by its trade “on account of the quantity of silk produced in that province. The inhabitants are Turks “and Armenians, and the latter had a church there. Some ancient buildings are to be “seen, and a Christian church in marble which now serves as a mosque. The town of “Shamakhi embraces three walled towns, one in the upper part and the fortress where “the ‘viceroy’ resides, the other two down below. When we entered it, they were altogether “in ruins, as the King of Persia, who had captured it but a month previously,³ had had all “those inside it killed, without sparing either women or children, and had had the two “lower portions of the town, which are situated below the fortress, levelled by gunfire; “because the Shah himself in person had stopped there 6 months without the town

¹ This dates, 1607, the end of the Turkish possession of Baku.

² Shamakhi is the Persian form of the name; Shamakha is found on maps.

³ In September 1607, therefore the capture of Shamakhi had taken place.