

“He discussed many matters with us regarding that Christian body and the desire he had of coming to Rome, if he had been able, as I shall tell elsewhere.

“On the 5th of the month (December) the Mihmandar again paid me a visit on behalf of the Shah, and asked whether we wished to go and have an audience. I answered that “he saw in what a state” (of health) “I was. If his Majesty would postpone it for two or three days I should esteem it a favour: if not, I should go as best I could, whenever he might command me. With that he went away. With rest, and after having been bled, and with the attentions paid me by the Augustinian Fathers, the fever left me on the 20th. All this time the Shah did not send to tell us anything about the audience, but he was endeavouring through the Mihmandar, who visited us frequently, and through the Englishman and others to learn the (purport of the) communication we brought, but was unable to do so. . . .

“When I had got rid of the fever little by little I gained strength. The Shah asked that English gentleman openly on what business we were coming, whether to negotiate for the union of Armenians with His Holiness. . . . The Englishman answered that he knew we did not come about that, but about matters which would give satisfaction to his Majesty, although in conversation he had not learnt what they were. The Shah told him that he would summon us soon (to the audience). Almost at once after our arrival he (‘Abbas I) had sent to the house of the Augustinian Fathers one of his men together with two professional soothsayers so that they might find out for what purpose we had come to his realm. The man who brought them remained in the courtyard, while the Mihmandar and Augustinian Fathers were with me: he bade those diviners see whether we came to do harm to the king. They opened their books and said ‘no’ . . . then they went away. A servant of the Fathers, who overheard everything without being seen by them, related it to them. That English gentleman and the Augustinian Fathers informed us minutely about the position with the Shah: and *we found it to be just the contrary of what they had written to His Holiness.*<sup>1</sup> . . . That we found the king in that ill-humour, especially with the fresh annoyance he had felt over the peace made by the Emperor with the Turks, was the reason why he did not receive us, as he had done in former cases, and that he delayed so much in giving audience to us. . . . While that English gentleman was one day at a banquet given by the Shah to certain Turkish Pashas, whom he has with him, the king enquired of him about my health. He answered that I was better. The king said, ‘Today has been the day for the Turks: another one will be for Fathers’. We were informed that it was customary to make some present to the Mihmandar: so we sent him some fruit and 20 sequins. Finally, seeing that his Majesty was delaying much in summoning us, I sent our Armenian with the other laymen to call on the Grand Wazir of the king and to tell him that we had arrived, now many days past, in that capital with letters and business of His Holiness for the Shah, and yet we had not been summoned, a most unwonted occurrence, as he well knew, and that he should arrange to ascertain from his Majesty what we were to do. In a kindly way he replied that he would do so (although we had learnt that he was a great enemy of Christians, and that he did not afford them any good offices with the Shah and—astute old man that he was—suspected that we were coming to make a church): and he made excuses for the Shah, saying that I had been ill, and afterwards his Majesty had been ill and had had other engagements. On the following day the Mihmandar came with the like excuses, saying that his Majesty would soon summon us.

“The holy festival of Christmas arrived, when we did not pursue the matter and did not care to be summoned. The Englishman invited the Augustinian Fathers and us to dinner with him, and another day we invited him, the Augustinian Fathers and the Mihmandar.

“On the 21st December the Shah went outside Isfahan because his ‘Lent’, in which Muhammadans do not eat during the daytime, had begun: and, since the Shah, who did not observe (the fast), did not wish to scandalize his subjects, he went off hunting. On

<sup>1</sup> This must allude to Fr. da Costa, Miranda and the Augustinians: possibly to Sir A. Sherley, too.