

"tunity the progress of my journey, and not to do, as so many others who had been to Persia had done, viz. leave with promises to come back" (but had not done so). "He directed his councillors to order the Head of the Armenians of Julfa (the Armenians of Julfa are rich merchants, who have correspondents everywhere and are, as it were, the chief of the other Armenians) to give me men to conduct me safely to Aleppo," (threatening) "that if a hair" (of my head) "were lost, he would burn the 2,000 households¹ there were of them, without sparing women or children.

"Whilst I was with the Shah a courier reached him from his captain-general, Allah Virdi Khan,² who was then at 8 days' distance from Hurmuz and making preparations for war,³ with the news that 40 Dutch ships had arrived near Hurmuz.⁴ He told us about it, the Shah exhibiting delight at it. A few days later the Captain of Hurmuz, Don Peter Coutinho, sent another courier to the Fr. Prior of the Augustinians with similar news, begging him to write to him" (i.e. at Hurmuz) "with regard to the preparations for war, and the motives of the king of Persia. A little later the Shah set off for Mazandaran.

"The Wazir sent us to the house 1,500 scudi by orders of the king, and said that his Majesty would be displeased if we did not accept it, because Clement VIII had written him that we lived on alms. The Mihmandar (who brought the money) gets the tenth⁵ of whatever the Shah bestows on ambassadors: we gave it to him, and as much again for being a servant of his Majesty who would be able to assist us in affairs of Christians and those of the Fathers remaining in Persia a great deal, as in fact he does. Out of that money we gave his (the Mihmandar's) servants and our interpreters 130 scudi, as it was inconvenient to meet this from our own funds, as we were short of money. We sent back to the Wazir the 1,000 scudi odd which remained over, saying that we accepted them, but begged his lordship to distribute them among the poor, so that they might pray for his Majesty's good health, for at the time we ourselves stood in need of nothing. Other governors in Persia, like the one at Shirwan, presented us with horses and money, but from no one did we accept anything except victuals, when given us—of this I have brought a certificate from the Augustinian Fathers and Don Robert the Englishman, who were present when we sent back the money that the Shah had sent to our house. . . . After some days the Shah forwarded to me the letters . . . so that I might depart. . . ."

If the Persian original of the reply in writing to the 'Note Verbale', promised by 'Abbas I, were taken to Europe by Fr. Paul Simon, it has escaped the present search in the archives of the Vatican and the Carmelites: there remains only a version in Italian,⁶ and with the missionaries no longer young and novices in the Persian language it is permissible to doubt the accuracy of translation: this runs:

(After friendly compliments) "I have been for a long time past in alliance with the Christian princes, as you yourselves have now too suggested, to my satisfaction, how greatly I ought to be pleased with their goodwill and give my own in exchange. For if, as I consider certain, what you have related and testified to me be true—that the Sovereign Pontiff together with the Christian princes desires to enlist a large army and send it against the Turks, they will know on what side (it be best) to attack them. But, should they be of a mind to invade the enemy's frontiers by two routes, there is no doubt but

¹ This, doubtless not an exact figure, and perhaps very wide of the mark as usual in Persian estimates of figures, might mean a total of 8,000–10,000 souls, four years after the Armenians were settled at the new Julfa.

² This was the father of Imam Quli Khan, before him also 'viceroy' or governor-general of Fars and the South, (renegade) Christian Armenian by race, but of the country of the Georgians—see della Valle, letter of 22.4.1619.

³ Was this demonstration against the Portuguese at Gãmbrun? in advance of that actually pushed home in 1614?

⁴ This was perhaps one of the first, or the very first, occasion for a Dutch fleet to penetrate the waters of the Persian Gulf, where before long they were to become masters. 'Abbas I's delight was at the thought of playing them off against the Portuguese.

⁵ An interesting point in court life at Isfahan with foreign envoys, surviving perhaps till the late eighteenth century.

⁶ Vide Fr. Eusebius ab Omn. Sanct. in *MSS Hist. Miss.*, O.C.D. chapter 27, book 1.