

“on the second day I felt better, eating biscuits—there was nothing else. Some Arabs came to rob us, but seeing us so poor went off. Four days away from Aleppo we met a caravan and that night remained to sleep with it for greater security. The diary and other books I was carrying were in a pair of knapsacks together with the biscuit for us and the fodder for the mule. The letters and Bible I kept always tied to my body. The courier (guide) put the knapsacks under his head: four robbers came, tried to take them and, being unable to do so, one of them gave the guide a heavy blow on the head with a stick; stunned, the guide raised himself up, and the robbers fled away with the knapsacks. I did what I could to get back the books, but nothing could be effected. I remained without the books, without biscuit and without fodder. The mule was tired and could not walk because it had nothing to eat. We had to go three days and nights on foot to find water and arrived on 14th May at Aleppo, I with my feet swollen and lacerated. I went to lodge with the Franciscan Fathers, making a donation of the mule to their ‘Casa santa’ in Jerusalem, as I had designed, should God do me the mercy of my not being robbed of it. And it was a great favour which God granted me, because, if the mule had been taken away from me, in my weak state I could no longer have walked on my feet: the guide would not have waited, since we had neither bread nor water: so I should have perished there and not have been the first. . . . I took the habit of S. Francis in order to be safer and able to say Mass. The Father Guardian was kind to me and gave me for the habit two pieces of cloth, valued at 12 piastres, which he recovered from me.

“Aleppo . . . the whole countryside is full of rebels. For 8 months past the captain-general of the Sultan’s (army) had been in Aleppo together with the Agha of the Janissaries, the Baiglarbaigi, and all the military forces he could gather, perhaps some 60,000 men. He had come to silence the rebels, but had done little, merely driven off from the town its rebel Pasha . . . and he dared not depart, for fear lest the rebels should recapture the town. When I was leaving, the Sultan had sent for him to go in haste to Constantinople. He was very severe. . . . In Aleppo I twice went in peril of my life; the first time because in Baghdad the renegade Maltese gave me a letter from the Pasha to the merchants (of Aleppo) urging them to go to Baghdad, saying that he would not maltreat them. (In Aleppo I was advised not to deliver it, as it came from a rebel and might easily have caused me some trouble, and I did not do so.) The (Turkish) General learnt that I had brought a letter from the Pasha of Baghdad, and sent one of his men for it to be given him, and they wanted to put me in prison. But, thanks to God and to my being in the habit of a Religious and to a Venetian merchant I escaped, because this latter said that I was a Religious and knew nothing about such things.

“In the other case I was in greater peril. Some Venetians were talking in the public square about my having come from the king of Persia and my carrying letters from him: and there were some Janissaries standing by. God willed that they did not overhear it, for otherwise no one save God could have saved me, for the General wanted to hang an Englishman, merely because he had come from Persia and someone had said he was a spy; and, although there was a consul for the English in Aleppo,<sup>1</sup> who was on friendly terms with the General, who shows him much favour, and, although the man could prove that he was a trader and produce a passport he had from the Sultan, it cost him great trouble to escape the danger, and he spent 700 scudi on presents for the General.

“In Aleppo I met Dominic Fernandes, who was on his way to Persia, sent by the viceroy of Naples with letters for the Shah, for the Englishman” (i.e. R. Sherley) “and two agents, whom they were placing, one in Aleppo, the other in Baghdad, because they” (the Spanish authorities) “were thinking of forwarding by couriers packets of letters that might come from Persia—the agent in Baghdad on to Aleppo, and the agent in Aleppo on to Naples by way of Constantinople—his Majesty being desirous of having correspondence

<sup>1</sup> Aleppo is one of the most ancient consular posts in the British service.