

Riza suddenly raised his voice in the shrine, crying that the Imam had restored his sight. The populace began acclamations, but 'Abbas I had the man brought before him. "How long is it, my good man, that you have been blind?" "I was born blind," replied the cheat. "Now, I guarantee that you can see well," replied the Shah, and showing two colours of his clothes asked what colours they were. "One white, the other red," was the reply. "Ah! you liar!" exclaimed 'Abbas: "you were born blind, and yet immediately can distinguish the colours and know what each is. I do not want it to be a lie that you were blind," and he ordered that forthwith the man's eyes should be removed from their sockets.

A report intended for the Praepositus General in Rome¹ (undated but from its contents evidently written between May 1608 and January 1609, probably in August 1608) by Fr. John Thaddeus, runs:

" . . . As to us, the Father (Paul Simon) left us with all the money we had, 250 gold "scudi (or ungari), which at 15 giulios each make 375 scudi in Roman money, with orders "that this was to last us for two years—all the rest there was he took with him for his journey. "Expenses in this country are very high, and, though we keep them down, we do not know "whether it will last for a year and a half on the basis of what has been spent up to now. "For we are four mouths to feed—a cook, a lad who serves at Mass and *we two*, which is "the least there can be. To this there must be added that some Spaniards come here, so "poor that it would be great cruelty not to give them at least something to eat; and our "Fr. Paul (Simon) is well aware that he left with me in the house a servant of Fr. Francisco "de Acosta (together with two other servants of his) whom his master sent from Astrakhan "to beg some assistance from the Shah, and he arrived without any money: and, because in "Astrakhan his master helped us to get out of that country, we support him out of gratitude, "and to admit him is an act of charity—he is still in the house at our expense. Here there "is no hope of anyone giving us alms, except the Shah alone. The Augustinian Fathers "are furnished by the king of Spain with 100 pardaos each, and in addition they have some "Mass stipends which are sent to them by their Fathers at Hurmuz: besides the Archbishop "of Goa remits to them money to give in alms to the Armenians: and they have told me "that, when they have need of it, they use it for themselves. There is no need to think "that these Fathers assist us: because we have found out that by experience, and they "themselves have told me that they would be glad to see us go away from here on account "of the insufficiency of funds" (to be obtained locally). . . .

A year had sufficed to enable Fr. John Thaddeus to see more clearly into the character of 'Abbas I than Fr. Paul Simon with his shorter acquaintance and lack of sufficient Persian had been able to do:

" . . . As to the character of this king, he is at heart a Muhammadan, and all he has "done in the past has been feigned: now that he has won so many victories over the Turks, "he does not care (a jot) for all the Christian Princes and publicly mocks at them because "they do not make war on the Turks, and (if they do so) at their winning nothing. You "should not think that he will give us a church or permission to make Christians of his "subjects: on the contrary he is always trying, when he can, to get Armenian Christians, "Franks and those of any other race to become Muslims. We give Your Reverence a report, "one by one, on the matters about which you left us instructions. "(a) There are two kinds of Persians—those they call Qizil-bash, who are the soldiers, "and the rest, the people at large, all of them, without exception, excessively sensual in "every form of vice, dissimulating, liars and prone to rob even their own fathers and "brothers. They have the greatest hatred for the Christian religion, and, if outwardly they "show a liking for it and admit it to be true, that is all pretence and policy in order "to extract money or some other advantage. Lastly, compared to them the Turks are

¹ O.C.D. 236 a.