

“The king has given us a larger house<sup>1</sup> than that of the Augustinian Fathers, and in it “we have made an oratory smaller than that those Fathers have, but much more decorated “with the pictures we brought from Rome and some ornaments we have had made. . . . “The king does not regard them with so pleasant a countenance as he does us on account “of the past business over the Armenians. Now there is arriving Fr. Antonio de Gouvea, “who was one of those Fathers who came here first: he is being sent by the Archbishop of “Goa, viceroy of India, with letters from the king of Spain and presents for this king of “Persia.”

In a different handwriting the letter goes on:

“Fr. Antonio de Gouvea arrived here on the . . . June” (i.e. 1608) “sent by the “Archbishop of Goa, who is now viceroy of India, owing to the death of the last lay viceroy “who died in the post. He brings a letter from the king of Spain in which the latter rejoices “over the victories that the Shah has had over the Turks, but complains that he (the Shah) “has taken the fortress of Bahrain from the Shaikh of Hurmuz, who is his (king Philip’s) “friend: he brings various presents worth 1,000 scudi, or a little over. When the king of “Persia learnt that this Father was coming, he did not give orders for any mark of courtesy “to be shown him nor did the Mihmandar go out to receive him, as is the custom, nor have “they assigned him a house, but he has gone to stay with their Fathers, his companions. “. . . The king was staying for many days in Isfahan after the arrival of the Father, but “would not give him audience. Later he left for a place of recreation, where he was to “marshal his army and dispatch it against Baghdad this autumn: from that place he sent “word to the Father that, if the latter wanted anything of him, he had better go quickly. “So it will be two weeks ago that he (Fr. de Gouvea) went off:<sup>2</sup> we shall acquaint Your “Reverence with the issue.

“When Fr. Antonio came, together with his own” (Augustinian) “Fathers and the few “Franks who are here we went to meet him a mile outside the city where he was waiting. “He received us with the minimum of pleasure and with much coldness, paying no atten- “tion to anyone: we accompanied him to his house. Later, in some conversations we had “with him he told us that the king of Spain had brought such pressure on the Pope that “we should not be allowed to come to these parts that His Holiness had sent after us to “Poland to bring us back,<sup>3</sup> but we had already passed on thence” (i.e. in Muscovy): “and “that the king of Spain is so annoyed about our coming here that . . . he has given a “good trouncing to his ambassador in Rome, telling him that he had not done his duty in “letting those Fathers go out to Persia by that route, because he (king Philip) did not want “the Shah of Persia to have any other relations but with him. We do not know what harm “we have done to the king of Spain, nor to these (Augustinian) Fathers for them to oppose “us so strongly: and we think that this must be the work of the Devil in order that there “should not be much (evangelizing) success. . . .”<sup>4</sup>

As to the Armenians,

“we have thought it might be well if one of us were to go and live among them here in “Isfahan, as they beg us, and that the other should go and stay with those Armenians in “Nakhchiwan, who for so long past have been without their Archbishop, because that one “whom we left behind in Rome died on the journey. . . . To obtain results such as there

<sup>1</sup> This was the *second* site assigned to the Carmelites, viz. after the representation of Fr. Paul Simon in January 1608, where the Sherleys were married.

<sup>2</sup> This would date this letter of Fr. John Thaddeus about July–August 1608.

<sup>3</sup> This assertion hardly appears well founded in view of the letters sent from Rome to them while in Poland, i.e. till end November 1605, six months after election of the new Pope, nor is there trace of it in the Briefs in the list given.

<sup>4</sup> In one passage of this lengthy letter the Carmelites cite reproachfully against the bias of the Augustinians and the king of Spain their own “diligence which we used in order to get Fr. Nicolas de Mello freed”.