

The two Carmelite Fathers found at Lar five Portuguese of some standing who had been arrested on their way from Isfahan to Hurmuz and thrown into a filthy prison, where they had been in chains for five months: all the Carmelites could do was to furnish these unfortunates with some money and give them the encouragement of an appeal to the mercy of the Shah on his return to his capital. The arrival of Frs. Leander and Louis Francis was hailed with relief in Hurmuz, where the position was desperate. Trade with Persia, whence provisions had come in the past, had been stopped: the fortress and island of Hurmuz lacked water, since Qishm, the wells of which had provided their supply for drinking, was in the hands of the enemy. No income was accruing to the Customs, because merchants had abandoned the port: Persian vessels commanded approach to the island; the hope of the Portuguese lay in the arrival of sufficient force from Goa. Don Luis de Gama wanted to gain time to put Hurmuz in a state for defence and, feigning to be sincere in the negotiations, dispatched Fr. Leander backwards and forwards several times during the heat of the summer months. A Jew, taken by the Fathers as interpreter, although well paid deceived them—"was as perfidious with men as his race with God": a Christian was even more iniquitous, writing to the Khan of Shiraz that the Carmelites were tricking him (Imam Quli Khan) and working only in the interests of the Portuguese. The Bishop of Cyrene, still in Hurmuz "before joining us", also complicated matters by corresponding surreptitiously with the Khan of Shiraz about the terms without informing the Captain of Hurmuz. One letter from Shiraz of Fr. Leander at this period has been preserved,¹ and the concluding part of it reads:

"Today, the 15th July," (i.e. 1615) "vigil of the solemn commemoration of our Lady" (i.e. of Mt. Carmel) "the prince of Shiraz has written me from his camp, 70 miles away, "to return to Hurmuz and inform the Captain that the latter must first send a present:² "otherwise peace would not be concluded. So after two days we shall leave (or three, "if my tertian fever continue): it has attacked me three times. I console myself that I "have done nothing more than hear the confessions of 12 Christians, reconcile (to the "Church) three apostates, baptize a female child, and take into the house to cure and "tend several sick Christians, who, thank God, have recovered; but that is reward enough "for greater suffering. It may be that peace will be concluded, but I consider it difficult, "as the minds and desires" (i.e. of the two parties) "are so contrary."

Fr. Leander of the Annunciation got back to Hurmuz and his pastoral work there, 20.8.1615.

Of the survivors from the siege of Gāmbnun and subsequent massacre more than fifty Christians had fallen into the hands of Imam Quli Khan and had been first confined in the fort at Lar. Transferred to Shiraz the viceroy called them before him, made them a little friendly speech, gave them suitable lodging and victuals while they were in the chief town of Fars. When orders came from the Shah to dispatch them to Mazandaran he bestowed on each of those of higher grade a tunic of cloth of gold, on the others a silk tunic, and on all cloaks (i.e. the Persian *'abba*) lined with fur to shield them against the bitter cold that prevails at that season of the year on the high plateau of Iran, and then sent them on horseback to Isfahan in the charge of one of his headmen. They reached Isfahan at the end of February 1615, and were confined by the Wazir, who gave orders to the guards to allow them to speak to no one. However a gift—a *douceur*—to the chief of the guards enabled the Carmelite Fathers at Isfahan first to have speech with the two senior prisoners, then with all the Portuguese. They were dirty, unkempt, and in a pitiable state: to alleviate it some thought of apostatizing, but rebuked and brought to their senses by the Fathers went to confession. Materially, too, the Carmelites did what they could to help them with provisions and money for a journey to last little less than a month.

¹ In the MSS. *Hist. Miss.* of Fr. Eusebius ab Omn. Sanct., from which the account of the incidents during the stay of the Bishop of Cyrene and of the loss of Gāmbnun have been taken for the most part, the writings of the Carmelites which were his probable sources are not quoted and apparently no longer extant in the archives, O.C.D. Much of the narrative connected with the fall of Gāmbnun is given in more or less similar wording in the other section of this work dealing with the Hurmuz mission separately.

² Presumably as a token of tribute, or recognition of inferiority, or compensation.