

“mission, on which he had been dispatched to the princes of Christendom years before. . . .
“After having read the letters which he brought from the Christian sovereigns and seen
“the laudatory mention they made of his (Sherley’s) good sense, and his methods of pro-
“cedure, so prudent in dealing with business, the Shah determined to send him back once
“more, not caring to dispatch a Muslim on account of the bad reports he had had of all
“those who had gone to Europe, how they committed a thousand outrages and got drunk,
“to the great disgust of the European sovereigns and to his own discredit and dishonour,
“so different to Count Robert’s methods. So he (‘Abbas I) wished him (Sherley) to go
“back, taking the prisoners with him as an offering in India, and then go on to Spain to
“discuss important matters with the king there: and, seeing what honours his Catholic
“Majesty and His Holiness had bestowed on him and how they had belauded him in their
“letters, it appeared to the Shah that he would be acceptable to them, and promised
“himself a successful result. But to discover Sherley’s own mind on the subject the Shah
“went on” (for some time) “probing him, asking him what in his (Sherley’s) opinion
“should be done with those Portuguese prisoners: and he (Sherley) continued to reply that
“it appeared to him best to send them back in a decent manner and in no wise to lose
“the friendship of the greatest and most powerful king in Christendom, the one who most
“professed to be his friend. Several times the Shah asked him the question, and finding
“him firm and speaking ever in high praise of his Catholic Majesty the king resolved to
“reveal to him the project and, taking him one day to a hunting-party and paying him
“unusual attentions in order to place him (Sherley) under the greater obligation, told
“him that it would be rendering him (‘Abbas I) a great service, were he to turn back and
“undertake once more this journey and embassy.

“At those words he (Sherley) became very upset, his heart transfixed by an arrow as
“it were, recalling in his imagination all that he had suffered on” (his last) “so lengthy
“a journey. So he refused to go, making excuses as well as he could and saying that it
“was not yet two months since he had arrived, and that he had not had a single day’s
“rest after such protracted journeys and so many trials that he had suffered in company
“with his wife, and they would greatly desire that the Shah should desist and not
“send him to Spain, where he had been so discredited and made the object of baseless
“calumnies, nor to India, where he had been so persecuted by the Portuguese, who tried
“to deprive him of his life and, when they could not succeed, burnt and destroyed his
“belongings.

“None of this sufficed to satisfy the Shah, because he had set his mind on it and so
“pressed him (Sherley) very hard to make him agree. As he (Sherley) could do no more,
“he begged him to allow him a day to think over it well, and over the position of his affairs.
“The king granted him this: and then he (Sherley) went off to the Discalced Carmelite
“Fathers in order that they might commend the matter to our Lord and counsel him as
“to what was most expedient for him. When this had been done very carefully by the
“Fathers they came to the conclusion that he should undertake this embassy, for they
“were led to see that from it there could be secured the freedom of those Portuguese captives,
“which was endangered unless he should go on it; for they could otherwise never get their
“liberty, or else would receive it too late, as a risk was being run of some of them becoming
“Muslims, being young and inexperienced. Further, with his (Sherley’s) departure it
“would be as it were restoring life to Hurmuz which was in such great need, being without
“provisions for the food” (of the inhabitants) “and without water to drink, all of which
“had to come from Persia (there are only a few water-tanks there (Hurmuz) which are
“filled by the rain), without money for public or private use, because of the caravan trade
“with Persia having stopped, to such an extent that they had no money to pay the soldiers,
“and so each day they were mutinying and they stood in danger of the Persians recom-
“mencing the war, for the latter knew of all the above-mentioned straits in which they
“were . . . and with the great confusion which reigned in Hurmuz among the Portuguese
“themselves, the soldiers mutinying and others running away and the Muslims in the