

“are working with great gusto on them: I did not wish to make use of the Armenians until “Khwajeh Nazar and Khwajeh Safar begged me to take them on also for the building. . . .”

Three years later, his letter of 3.1.1619 to Fr. Benignus refers once more to this translation of the Psalms—how he had been to Qazwin<sup>1</sup> and how Shah 'Abbas I had graciously received his offering of the finished translation of the Psalms.<sup>2</sup> Strange to say, that manuscript today lies in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, No. 3776—through whose hands it passed, how and by what agency it reached England it would be interesting to know fully!

From Qazwin he had followed the Shah to Sultanieh,<sup>3</sup> where the camp was, and finally the Carmelite Vicar Provincial reached Ardabil (for the peace with the Turks of 1614 had not long endured—there was once more warfare between the two empires, and the Persians were hard pressed in the district of Ardabil).

“There” (i.e. at Ardabil) “so great was the apprehension because of the Turks and the affliction of that town that the king had thought for nothing but the war, and more war. “Those who were fit for fighting were to remain: the others were to flee and save themselves, “women, children, servants with their possessions—even to witness this was painful. At “that juncture the Shah gave audience to no one; although from his abode he gave direc- “tions for everything himself. I did not want to be importunate at such a” (critical) “time, but only that he should know and see that I was there. So, on the few occasions “when he came out and I greeted him, he showed himself well disposed. I was awaiting “a better opportunity when a letter from Fr. Dimas came saying that the Fathers in Isfahan “were unanimously of opinion that I was wasting time. This reached me on 14.9.1618, “Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, and disturbed me: the question was how to get leave “to depart from the Shah, for at that time he had 100,000 Turks opposed to him, one “day’s march from Ardabil: and it was extremely difficult to get speech with him. . . .”

Through the Daruga of Isfahan, a great favourite with the Shah, Fr. John Thaddeus eventually succeeded in getting the injunction he sought against anyone making difficulties for the Convent over the premises and the graveyard, about which he had already spoken to the Shah: he left Ardabil, 10.10.1618, and a few days afterwards arrived in Isfahan (28.10.1618): news came that the Shah was proceeding to Mazandaran,<sup>4</sup> and would not be in Isfahan till Epiphany of 1619.

(From the material left by the Carmelites during the reign of 'Abbas I a considerable amount of evidence as to that monarch's movements is to be had: it is noteworthy that even privileged Europeans after visiting his Majesty in his camps or other towns would obtain his permission to leave before returning to Isfahan.)

The long report by Fr. John Thaddeus, dated 3.1.1619,<sup>5</sup> has been quoted at length in regard to the financial position of the convent of Isfahan (this already having become difficult) in the section of this work dealing with the government and finance of the Mission, and also with regard to the lack of title for the occupation of the convent premises. Among the many arresting word pictures he paints, the following at least, even at the cost of repetition, deserves quotation here—how

“the house, previously regarded as a stable for camels, is now known as a decent place

<sup>1</sup> Accompanied by Abdullah Gioerida, eldest brother of della Valle's wife, says Fr. Eusebius in *Hist. Miss.*, chap. XXI, book 3, part 2.

<sup>2</sup> This was on 18.6.1618 (see farther on) “the same day received cordially by the Shah on the Maidan of Qazwin without ceremony, on business for his Order” (*vide della Valle's letter of 22.4.1619*).

<sup>3</sup> The Shah had been in Georgia from February 1617 to the end of that year, it would seem from “P. della Valle having wasted nearly all 1617 in Isfahan for the Shah to return from Georgia” (*vide Fr. Eusebius in MSS. Hist. Miss.*, quoted above).

<sup>4</sup> *MSS. Hist. Miss.*, chap. XXVII, book 3, part 2, states that 'Abbas I's troops gained an unexpected victory over the Turks one day's march from Tabriz, and on 20.10.1618 the latter sent in an envoy to sue for a truce. At Sultanieh Imam Quli Khan of Shiraz had also been visited by Fr. John Thaddeus and della Valle.

<sup>5</sup> O.C.D. 237 m.