

“this (proposed) embassy from Hurmuz should not be dispatched to Persia, and that there should be no further treating, as it is time wasted, but that war should be begun and nothing else. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

The Shah did not return in September to the capital:

‘That autumn (1620) ’Abbas I fell so seriously ill at Farrahabad in Mazandaran that his attendants despaired of his life. His soldiery, largely a personally controlled element, with the master’s hand removed and probably aware of his critical condition began to get restless, so that he had Imam Quli Mirza, his third son, declared as his heir. His health taking a slight turn for the better, he changed his mind; and this son, having fallen from favour or become an object of suspicion like his elder brother, was in his turn blinded by his jealous parent. Then ’Abbas I had himself borne on a litter in the sight of the troops and taken to Firuzabad (Firuzkuh ?), where his condition improved. In the following year, 1621, similarly he had himself transported to Khurasan, whence he prepared to seize and reconquer Kandahar, while he charged the Khan of Shiraz’ (Imam Quli Khan) ‘with preparations for a fresh attack on the Portuguese whose land troops at that time numbered about 3,000 only, many of them in poor condition—with no water on the island. . . .’<sup>2</sup>

In May 1621 there returned to Persia, as first Visitor General of the Carmelite Missions in Persia and the East, Fr. Vincent of S. Francis, one of the three pioneers of 1607, and founder of the Residence at Hurmuz, who after reverting to work in Italy about 1616 had become prior of the convent at Palermo, and of that of S. Paul in Rome: a purport of the instructions given him as to his duties will be found in the section of this work dealing with the administration of the Mission: the ‘directions’ he left on his departure, dated 22.9.1621, are to be found in O.C.D. 236 a: they include some of his own views as expressed in his letter of 3.6.1613 from Hurmuz, such as that in Isfahan city the missionaries might not ride on horseback, except in cases judged serious by the Superior. With him there came four Fathers: Dominic of S. Mary, Basil of S. Francis, Prosper of the Holy Spirit, Peter Thomas of Jesus; the first three of whom, a Cremonese, a Portuguese and a Spaniard respectively were all to have important careers in the missions, the two latter being of marked ability. After their arrival Fr. John Thaddeus laid down his offices of Vicar Provincial, which he had exercised since 1614, and of Prior, in which he had acted since the departure of Fr. Redempt in 1615. Fr. Leander, by that time established at Goa, was appointed Vicar Provincial: Fr. Prosper was elected Prior.

Fr. Vincent brought with him a Brief from Pope Paul V addressed to Shah ’Abbas.<sup>3</sup>

Before June of that year the Shah was back in his capital from Khurasan, restored to health; and a striking account<sup>4</sup> has been left on record by the Visitor General of an audience at which he was present, 5.6.1621.<sup>5</sup> The audience was a double one—to the Agent, then Edward Monox, and other representatives of the East India Company, who at that time were preparing for important negotiations and had gifts to present to the Shah; to counterweigh those sent by the king of Spain through Don Garcia, no doubt—and to the Carmelite Visitor General. Fr. Vincent’s account begins:

“There are in Persia some English merchants, Lutherans and of other sects, here to buy silk: and one of them who is the Chief and whom the rest obey resides in the city of

<sup>1</sup> della Valle, vol. 2, VIII, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, chap. XXXVI, book 3, part 2.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix for Latin text: it was dated 16.7.1620 (Arch. Vat. Arm. XLV, vol. 14, p. 249). He also had another of the same date, addressed by the Pope to the “Discalced Carmelites in Persia, Sind and Hurmuz” (Arch. Vat. Arm. XLV, vol. 14, p. 250). It is interesting because it bids them “. . . strive . . . especially to bring back to the Church the heretics, above all the English merchants, who trade in Isfahan, but strengthen by teaching and frequent administration of the Sacraments those who are secretly Catholics among you. . . .”

<sup>4</sup> In Spanish, O.C.D. 235 e (?).

<sup>5</sup> della Valle, who states that he was not personally present, gives a shorter account, which he had from the Carmelites, in his vol. 2, VI, p. 285.