

"In order to disabuse some ignorant and impertinent persons I notify your Reverence that it is mere nonsense and madness to think that our Order has been in Persia only on account of the Pontiff and his correspondence with the Shah":¹

and he proceeded to press for the formation of a 'province' of the Persian missions. When Hurmuz fell 'Abbas I was still away in the East:

". . . The king went off to Kandahar with a very large army: and they say he has with him 190,000 horse. . . ." ²

Later in the year, i.e. before October 1622, he was successful and Kandahar once more changed hands:

". . . Having captured Hurmuz, the king has also taken Kandahar, and is somewhere there with his army," wrote Fr. Prosper, 22.10.1622.

From the time of the negotiations with the English³ in 1621 Shah 'Abbas seems to have kept the Carmelites at a distance and no longer to have allowed them to be intimate, or called into counsel.

"For three years past the king has not spoken to us; Your Reverence knows how important are good relations with princes,"

is to be read in Fr. Prosper's letter of 9.7.1624. He had already mentioned in his undated letter, cited above, of 1623:

"A heretic painter is thought to be influencing the king against us. . . ."

In such circumstances it is to be doubted whether the following Brief from Pope Gregory XV was ever presented (unless it were that "matter which caused annoyance to his Majesty", when Fr. Leander had an interview with 'Abbas I in July or August 1626, followed some months later by Fr. John Thaddeus—see Fr. Dimas' letter of 30.5.1627)—a document of much interest because it urged the restitution of Hurmuz to the Portuguese and spoke of dispatching to Persia in this connection that same Fr. Francisco Costa, S.J., whose previous mission had been so indecorously executed and damaging to European and Catholic prestige. In the appendix will be found the Latin text (see too Arch. Secr. Vat. Arm. XLV, vol. 21, p. 93, No. 116):

"Pope Gregory XV to the most puissant Shah 'Abbas, the illustrious king of the Persians. Most puissant king, greeting and the light of Divine grace.

"The old wisdom of the Greeks so despised the human race as compared with themselves that they called the rest of the nations of the world barbarians and so exalted with such great honours the abilities and talents of their own citizens that they rashly uttered the falsehood that by heaven itself a youth had been sought from a Greek isle to be ruler of the sun and parent of days. Yet they so admired the virtues of the Persians, whose arms they feared, that he who would describe in perpetual literary memorials the pattern of the perfect king cast his eyes nowhere else than on Persia, and therefrom out of the royal dwelling brought into the light of fame Cyrus, that outside nations and the whole of posterity might learn from him the true ways of ruling.

¹ O.C.D. 237 c., 31.8.1624.

² Fr. Prosper, 14.6.1622, O.C.D. 238 d.

³ Not for long were the English in favour: "The king, having finished with the English, is now beginning with the Dutch in these parts and, it is said, has made them captains-general of the straits", *vide* Fr. Prosper, 19.6.1624, and 9.7.1624, O.C.D. 238 d.