

“Thaddeus wrote in September 1622 to Imam Quli Khan of Shiraz, asking that in conformity with his intentions and the wish he had manifested for our Fathers to be in Shiraz he (the Khan) would do them the favour of granting them a permit to have a house there. . . .”¹

Imam Quli Khan replied from Shiraz, 4.10.1622, that for the time being he had no authority from the Shah to give such permission, but sent on Fr. John's answer to 'Abbas I, and the monarch gave no answer then. It was only when an Augustinian Father made the journey to Farrahabad on the Caspian early in 1623 to obtain sanction for the Augustinians to go and come freely to and from India, that 'Abbas I, while giving directions to the Khan of Shiraz on that matter, also informed the latter of his permission for the Carmelites to reside at Shiraz. At that time the energetic viceroy of the South was acting as engineer-in-chief or as in charge of the works at Ab-i-Kurang, some 30 farsakhs (=112 miles approximately) from Isfahan, where this stream, which is thought to be a branch of the head-waters of the Karun (the greatest river of Persia, which flows out through Khuzistan into the Shatt-ul-Arab at Muham-mareh) is separated by one mountain only from the Zayandeh Rud, the river which traverses Isfahan city, and is insufficient for the needs of that great city, drying often to a trickle. In modern times, and particularly since 1920, there have been discussions and projects for bringing the waters of the Karun into those of the Zayandeh Rud, so as to provide the city and district of Isfahan with a sufficient water-supply all the year round; but such projects have hitherto come to nothing, chiefly through want of the capital required for such an engineering work. Three centuries earlier, in 1623 and possibly already in 1621 (when, as already mentioned, he was passing the summer at Ab-i-Kurang and the Visitor General went there to seek his *congé*) the indefatigable Safawi monarch had already conceived this engineering feat, and, having no modern machinery to effect it, had embarked on it with human labour and press gangs:

“. . . Ab-i-Kurang, a place where many waters have their sources and beginnings, the water from which the king is having brought to Isfahan with great show and at vast expense in cutting through mountains, filling up valleys, piercing channels and other works, having given charge of the undertaking to the said Khan,”

the letter of Fr. Dominic of S. Mary explained.

Shah 'Abbas' permit for the Carmelites to have a Residence at Shiraz having been brought by the Augustinian Religious to Imam Quli Khan at Ab-i-Kurang, the viceroy wrote to Fr. John Thaddeus that he had received the royal sanction, and invited him to visit him. On 8.7.1623 Frs. John Thaddeus and Peter Thomas, a recent recruit, rode off from Isfahan and arrived at the *urdu* or encampment, where the Khan of Shiraz was with the soldiers and men, 13.7.1623. On the 15th they had audience of Imam Quli Khan, presented a letter of recommendation from his brother, Daud Khan, and were promised orders for the Daruga of Shiraz, Bahram Baig, that a house to the satisfaction of Fr. John Thaddeus was to be found them.

While the rescript was being prepared,

“On the 18th (July) to show attention to and entertain the Fathers the Khan sent his chamberlain, with all the pomp and circumstance of the Khan himself, to conduct the Fathers to and point out the springs and sources and beginnings of Ab-i-Kurang not far away and the mountain, through which the king was having a cutting made in order to carry the water to Isfahan: they passed that day there, and saw many things to interest them and admire. . . .”²

Leaving the camp, 22.7.1623, they entered Shiraz, 1.8.1623. On the instructions given

¹ For the continuation of the vivid narrative of Fr. Dominic regarding the founding of Shiraz see the section of this work dealing with the sites and vicissitudes of the various missions.

² *Vide* the letter of Fr. Dominic of S. Mary, 7.9.1626, cited.