

him the Daruga had various houses in the town, belonging to Imam Quli Khan shown to the Carmelites: not finding among these any suitable, Fr. John Thaddeus sought and discovered one privately owned for sale:¹ and on 5.8.1623 the Carmelites entered into occupation of it, Fr. John Thaddeus on the 6th August saying the first Mass in the largest room. Though the rooms needed alteration for the purpose, the premises, with a very large garden containing many pomegranate trees (but a scarcity of water), were considered suitable and convenient, being outside the town *on the road to Lar and Hurmuz*. They belonged to minors, and the valuation on their behalf, 60 Tumans, i.e. 600 gold ducats, was subsequently deemed excessive by the next Visitor General and others, and in fact proved a heavy burden for the Persian Mission for years ahead, a source of litigation as late as 1634. The new missionary at Basra, Fr. Basil, and the Vicar Provincial from Goa rendered sterling aid in collecting and borrowing money to pay off the purchase price, though the latter in his distant port had not been consulted regarding the opening of this mission and prior to the purchase.² No precise details have been traced in the correspondence preserved in the archives which would enable the site of this Residence to be fixed, even approximately: it is doubtful whether the present town of Shiraz, destroyed by an earthquake at the close of the 18th century and altered by Karim Khan Zand, has the same boundaries on the road to Lar it then had: and no monuments or tombs *in situ* are known. In any case that site was sold and changed for another in 1656.

Here, as well as at Basra and at Tatta in Sind, the Hermits of S. Augustine were moved by emulation to establish themselves simultaneously. Two of them had asked for a house and they owed it to the pleading of Fr. John Thaddeus that they were authorized at Ab-i-Kurang by Imam Quli Khan to proceed to Shiraz at the same time as the Carmelites and to reside there. But difficulties were made to their finding suitable quarters, and within five years they had abandoned the enterprise, as they did at Basra later.³

The Shirazis are of an enquiring, receptive cast of mind for any doctrine or philosophy, and in the early years of their establishment those Fathers, who were at that Residence, were hopeful of results.

“. . . Up to three months or so back,” wrote Fr. Dominic of S. Mary in June 1625,⁴ “there were crowds coming to our house (and to that of the Augustinian Fathers, where there is a Religious of theirs), people coming for *tamasha*, as they call it, i.e. sightseeing. “But two or three months ago the ‘locum tenens’ of the Daruga, or governor, asked Frs. “John and Dimas to be so good as not to allow women of the country to enter our church: “and a few days later they proclaimed by public crier that no one was to go to our house, “for which reason the attendance has greatly diminished: only some of the notables coming “sometimes. . . . Eight persons have been baptized, two or three of them Muslim people, “the others children of Christians. . . . Still, were the traffic to and from Hurmuz and “that road reopened, the new mission-post should give little trouble in the matter of its “maintenance,” opined Fr. Dominic.

The compiler of the MSS. *Hist. Miss.* avers,⁵ without citing the name of the writer:

“The common people . . . began to visit the church. . . . They stopped to gaze at the “façade, which had been painted with fresco representations of the Last Day, Death, “Judgment and Hell.⁶ It became a common term to say that they were going to the “church for *ziarat*⁷ and homage to Jesus and Mary. . . . Some from afar used to make “obeisance towards the church, others took candles, oil and money to offer for use in it. . . .”⁸

¹ The Prior, Fr. Prosper, in his letter, 23.9.1623, stated: “I had given instructions that, if they had a chance of buying, “they should not lose it. . . .” ² *Vide* Fr. Basil, 22.7.1625, O.C.D. 241 g.

³ *Vide* Fr. Dominic of S. Mary, letter of 27.9.1626, cited: Fr. Dimas, 24.10.1631, O.C.D. 237 b.

⁴ 18.6.1625, O.C.D. 238 o. ⁵ Chap. 23, book 4, part 2. ⁶ Such scenes still exist in the cathedral in Julfa.

⁷ The word used in Persia for pilgrimages to Shiah shrines, not to Mecca.

⁸ There are Armenian churches in Chaharmahal where still (or till 1915 at any rate) Muslim women would bring votive offerings when they had recourse to the Virgin Mary.