

the astonished soldier dropped his hand. As they passed, the populace variously expressed compassion out of regard for kindnesses received, or hostility on account of dislike of proselytism. The Wazir, before whom they were taken, was sitting with his officials and greeted them politely and asked them to sit down: he was taken aback on learning of the treatment meted out to them by the officer who had made the arrests, and threatened him so that the man feared for his life and Fr. Dimas interceded for him. The Wazir and his assessors began to ask questions about the Christian Faith and, at Fr. Balthazar's replies, realized that those before him were the 'missionaries of the Pope',<sup>1</sup> and that he or the officers had made a mistake in the quarry; for it appeared that the Shah had sent him instructions to remove the "Portuguese Fathers" (i.e. the Augustinians) to Shiraz, on account of Portuguese activity in Basra against Persian interests and forces—doubtless in connection with the raid against Basra mentioned just above and similar movements.<sup>2</sup> Hastily, therefore, the Wazir sent off messengers to bring the Augustinian Fathers to his tribunal, but courteously. The Carmelites were allowed to go free and returned to receive the congratulations of many of the inhabitants, albeit they regretted that they had missed the expected guerdon of martyrdom: they won further respect by declining to make complaint to the Shah about their treatment. The Portuguese Augustinians had, however, to depart from Isfahan and gave the keys of their house in charge of the Carmelites. From an independent source<sup>3</sup> it is learnt that this expulsion of the Augustinian Hermits from Isfahan lasted well into 1627:

" . . . The Augustinians have been allowed to return to Isfahan, declared innocent of 'the 'troubles' . . .'"<sup>4</sup>

But there would seem to have been internal unrest as well as a certain atmosphere of uneasiness and suspicion abroad, a habit to which the Persian official mind has been prone at all times past and present; for, on the occasion of the Vicar Provincial, Fr. Leander, accompanying from Goa, Portuguese territory, the Visitor General, Fr. Eugenius, to a 'Congress' of the Carmelites in 1626—they arrived at Shiraz, 1.5.1626; Frs. Dominic and John Thaddeus were also there—the last-named wrote:<sup>5</sup>

"The governor of this town and province of Persia did not allow them (the Vicar Provincial and Visitor General) to pass until he had communicated with the Shah and the 'duke' (i.e. Imam Quli Khan who must have been away in the north). They gave notice, and permission arrived, and they had been already seen off (passed out) by the officials and were on horseback, about to issue from the gate of the town, when the governor by a servant sent to tell us that, although it was true he had given us permission . . . still, for all that, it was necessary that permission should also be sought of the 'Sultan', son of Imam Quli Khan.

"On the following day, in public audience, they gave us the order that I should remain for some days at Shiraz. So Fr. Eugenius of S. Benedict is departing" (i.e. from Persia), "and because of the disorders and turbulences of the perilous juncture he has not dared to take with him some letters which I had ready to send to your Reverence. . . ."

From 1622 onwards the sojourns of Shah 'Abbas I in Isfahan, his capital, appear to have been brief: when not on campaign he passed much of his time in the palace he had made at Farrahabad near by the Caspian Sea: and for that reason, if no other, interviews with the Carmelites must have become rare, apart from the loss in intimacy, and the coolness in the Shah's attitude which had supervened. That he retained some regard for Fr. John Thaddeus

<sup>1</sup> See farther on, in comment on this phrase.

<sup>2</sup> This incident would appear better dated in 1625, with the Portuguese threat to Hurmuz and action at Basra; but other evidence fixes it as in 1626.

<sup>3</sup> A letter from Venice, in *S.R.*, vol. 209, p. 21, dated 2.10.1627.

<sup>4</sup> "Troubles", perhaps they were suspected of having instigated the Portuguese fleet to oppose Persian designs on Basra.

<sup>5</sup> O.C.D. 237 m., letter of 5.7.1626.