

“The Augustinians are at Isfahan as ambassadors of the king of Spain; the Carmelites “as guests sent by the Pope: the Capuchins are being sent by the king of France . . .”

are the words used in the ‘Report’ in *S.R.*, vol. 209 (chap. 21). At times there was no little friction.

Towards the end of that year matters had come to a head once more. Imam Quli Khan of Shiraz, to whom clearly was due, and not to his royal master in person (as histories so frequently make it appear), the initiative and initiation as well as the successful results of those extensions of Persian occupation and the Persian frontiers in the regions round the shores of the Gulf, had taken up the gauntlet:¹

“The Duke of Shiraz is making war on the Pasha of Basra and, as now more than ever “before he is marching in great strength, it is to be feared that he will make himself master “of that country. I have already written to him (Imam Quli Khan) and to others of “his principal men, acquaintances of ours, asking that, in case he should capture that “country, our house at Basra and the Religious in it should be recommended to his “protection. . . .”

Meanwhile, on another side the situation was becoming threatening. A new recruit for the Carmelites, Fr. Dominic of Christ “crossing the desert of Arabia” on his way out to Persia from Aleppo, noted:

“In these parts there is a great preparation for war. It is said that the Vizir, i.e. the “second person” (in Turkey) “after the Grand Signor, has an army of 30,000 to besiege “Baghdad. But I believe that, according to what they say, all will stop at that, for the “king of Persia has very well provisioned it (Baghdad) with food and munitions, and even “well fortified it. . . .”²

The MSS. *Hist. Miss.*³ remarks, with regard to the operations in southern Mesopotamia:

“Despite the defensive measure by the Arabs of flooding the country round Basra, Imam “Quli Khan’s siege of Basra seemed to be on the point of success, when in January 1629 “the news came—a bolt from the blue—that ‘Abbas I had expired at Farrahabad: and “the news was important enough to make him break off his campaign and retire with all “his forces.”

This event had occurred on 8.1.1629.⁴ For some time the monarch had been in poor health, it would seem. The Vicar Provincial of the Carmelites, Fr. Dimas, states in his letter of 18.9.1629⁵ from Isfahan:

“. . . They say that the king, Shah ‘Abbas, passed from this life at the beginning of “January of this present year 1629: and that, before he died, he ordered his grandees to “make the son of Safi Mirza king, as afterwards came to pass.

“About the 15th of the said month of January there arrived in Isfahan Khusru Mirza, “governor of this city, and he was met by an exceptional concourse of all the officials and “grandees of Isfahan: one can see that the Shah was already dead when the said Khusru “Mirza came to this city, and that he came solely to calm the populace, which had learnt “of the king’s death. Some eight days had passed since the arrival of the governor when “they began in the royal square (Maidan) to blow trumpets and beat drums, giving out “that Shah ‘Abbas was coming to Isfahan, ill; and part of the populace believed it for the “first few days, while others were in doubt and suspected that the Shah might be dead: “and so in the city some disturbances began to occur, and in particular thieves went about “stealing at nights but, being found at it, some were put to death, as also several other

¹ Fr. Dimas, Isfahan, 15.12.1628, O.C.D. 237 b.

² Fr. Dominic of Christ, 6.12.1628, O.C.D. 237 e.

³ Chap. 23, book 4, part 2. ⁴ According to Beale, *vide* Sir W. Foster’s *English Factories in India*. ⁵ O.C.D. 237 b.