

“salvation of the nations will open for them there a ready access to the royal throne. Nevertheless We have wished that through them this excellent witness to Our Pontifical affection should be delivered to You. For since Europe has more than once received with open arms ambassadors of the Persian Kingdom hastening to the Roman Pontiff, You are believed to be kindly disposed towards Us and the Christian name. Then again all men surmise that no light weight attaches in Your Highness’s mind to a commendation from that prince whose decision the most powerful Kings of the Christian commonwealth obey, whose friendship You, being Yourself so very renowned for might in war, have sought by letters and embassies. Undoubtedly since it appertains to a king to fill the world by the renown of His name, happily will the glory of the Persian ruler triumph in the approbation of Christianity, if by His protection and favour He shall defend the Religious, priests whom the Roman Church sends into the Kingdom of Your Highness to the most remote races, made to extend as she has been both beyond ocean’s farthest coast and the sun’s daily highway. Certainly those who have returned to Rome from Your land laden with marks of Your kindness have been listened to by Italy undoubtedly as most grateful proclaimers of Your outstanding deeds. Now those who will hand over to You these Apostolic letters are altogether worthy to owe a kindness to You as they long to offer themselves as acceptable victims to the living God for the salvation of Your provinces and the true bliss of Your Highness, for whom We Ourselves will ever be eager by solicitous prayer to gain the light of the Holy Spirit and the protection of the Divine Arm.

“Given at Rome at S. Peter’s under the Fisherman’s Ring 8th March 1629 in the sixth year of Our Pontificate.”

Almost contemporaneously with 'Abbas I there disappeared from the Persian scene—the world, in fact—two other figures who have figured prominently in these pages.

Sir Robert Sherley, in 1622 in Rome where as already mentioned two Briefs had been issued in his favour against his return to Persia, had in the following year been sent on a mission to Poland whence, in view of the favour Shah 'Abbas had been showing to Poles at that period, he had pressed the Praepositus General of the Carmelites to send back with him to Isfahan four Polish Carmelites, and where he fell ill.¹ In 1623 he had arrived once more in England and did not sail for the East until 1627, when he was accompanying an envoy, specially dispatched by the English king to Persia and other courts, Sir Dodmore Cotton.²

“Our kinge’s Majestie’s ambassador came safely hither in company of Sir Robert Sherley and his lady,”³

wrote President Kerridge from Surat, 4.1.1628, to the East India Company.

On 16.12.1627 they had sailed from Swally for Persia in English ships and landed at Gābrun in the early days of 1628:

“Don Robert has reached Isfahan in company with an ambassador from his king, going to see the Shah . . .”

occurs in a letter of Fr. Dimas from Isfahan, 2.5.1628.⁴ They were received by 'Abbas I at Ashraf on the Caspian, 25.5.1628:⁵

“Sir D. Cotton obtained a very gracious reception from Shah 'Abbas. . . . Sir R. Sherley was slighted by the Shah and his favourite, Muhammad Ali Baig. . . .”⁶

¹ MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, chap. 17, book 4, part 2.

² Or (Dormer?) Cotton—*Encycl. Brit.*, 10th ed., quoting Sir C. Markham’s *History of Persia*.

³ East India Company records.

⁴ O.C.D. 237 b., to Fr. Prosper.

⁵ *Encycl. Brit.*, cited.

⁶ According to Sir C. Markham’s *History*.