

On their return journey, within a fortnight of each other, in July 1628¹ both these Englishmen had perished of fever at Qazwin, and their plans been brought to naught. With the passionate conjugal feelings of her race Teresa Sherley determined to transport her husband's body back to Europe for burial: and so she came to emulate the even greater devotion of the 'Pilgrim', Pietro della Valle, who from the time his Chaldaean first wife, Ma'ani, died at Minab on the shore of the Persian Gulf, 30.12.1621, through years of wandering in Sind and India and Mesopotamia, always carrying her confined remains with him, rested not till he had deposited them in the tomb of his family in the Ara Coeli church, Rome, in the spring of 1626. Europeans of today who have some notion of the difficulties to be overcome in taking a corpse from the interior of the Middle East to England or neighbouring countries can but marvel at the courage such a task meant three centuries ago. Yet Shiah Muslims set the example with their piety towards their dead in transporting them often a thousand miles for the satisfaction of burial in the precincts of the shrines round Karbala.

When exactly Robert Sherley's remains left Isfahan has not been noticed in the correspondence preserved, for reasons of state prevented Teresa from taking them with her:

"She leaves deposited in *our* House the body of the Count, to be sent in due course, "wherever she may be . . ."

mentioned Fr. Dimas in a letter of 20.9.1629 to Fr. Paul Simon in Rome: and in another of 31.7.1631:

". . . We hold in deposit 20 Tumans of hers, with instructions to send it to her in "Aleppo . . . these 20 Tumans include 2 Tumans, which are to pay for the forwarding "of the Count's body, wherever and whenever she may direct me. . . ."

It was inside the famous Carmelite church of S. Maria della Scala, across the Tiber in Rome, that he was eventually buried, and where the inscription on his tombstone may still be plainly read:

D.O.M.

Roberto Sherleio, Anglo nobilissimo
Comiti Caesareo, Equiti Aurato, Rodulphi secundi Imperatoris legato
ad Scia Abbam regem Persarum, et ejusdem
Regis secundo ad Romanos Pontifices, Imperatores, et Reges Hispaniae,
Angliae, Poloniae, Moscoviae, Mogori, aliosque Europae Principes,
Inclyto Oratori
Theresia Sampsonia Amazonitis, Sampsuffi Circassiae Principis
filia, viro amantissimo, et sibimet posuit, illius ossibus,
suisque laribus
in Urbem e Perside pietatis ergo translatis
Annos nata LXXIX—MDCLXVIII

Even before the death of Robert Sherley, however, a very serious predicament had befallen his wife. The account with full details—presumably forwarded to Rome by the Vicar Provincial of the Carmelites, then Fr. Dimas of the Cross—either is no longer available among the archives of the Order, or has escaped the notice of the present compiler of these annals: perhaps the author of *En Persia* drew on it for the animated description of the scenes which he paints (not without discrepancies, however) on pp. 35–42, of vol. 3. There is besides an account, which MSS. *Hist. Miss.* has in chap. 21, book 6, part 3, differing considerably in parts and points and obscured by additions of 18th century, florid style. Hereunder is given in translation a contemporary version, which formed an enclosure to a letter addressed by the

¹ East India Company records.