

“whatsoever, the oppressors sent back to their convent the Fathers, who were content and honoured at having been found worthy to suffer ill-treatment and insults for the sake of the holy name of Jesus Christ.

“The persecution was not so soon allayed, for at once the Mulla mentioned above began once more to bring up this question, and brought pressure to bear on the Khan of Shiraz for the case to be referred to the magistrate.

“As the Khan of Shiraz was very well disposed towards the Fathers he made excuses, saying that the matter did not concern him, but Rustam Khan,¹ governor of Qazwin, who, learning of the business, sent some of his subordinates to summon the Fathers and those men, happening to meet a servant-maid of the Countess going to the church, arrested her and by dint of various insults and blows succeeded in finding out where the Countess, her mistress, was.

“The latter similarly they arrested and led, bound, before the governor” (the Daruga, or Rustam Khan meant?) “subjecting her to much violence and indignity along the streets.

“The Countess and the Fathers met in the house of the governor in question, and by them she was encouraged to confess the Christian Faith, and their exhortations were not without much advantage to her for, when the judge put her to the question, she showed the greatest constancy in professing it and declaring that, if it were need be, she would die for it a thousand times.

“When the judge heard her say that, he told her that she lied and he would have her burnt alive, if she did not make profession of the Muhammadan religion.

“But, as the Countess made no account at all of the threats, the judge said to her that he would have her thrown down from a tower . . . to this the Countess made a retort in like manner, saying that such a method would suit her better, because she would the more quickly have overcome death and attained to glory: and, waxing hot against the judge, she upbraided him severely and seriously, saying that this ill-treatment was not the reward deserved by her husband for his service to the Shah.

“Shamed and abashed by such a rejoinder, the judge put an end to the questioning and went off to report all that had passed in this affair to the governor who, when he learnt the result, sent away the Mullas who had been the prime movers in this persecution and dispatched the Countess to her house. He thoroughly satisfied himself on a later occasion that the Countess would not deny the Faith of Jesus Christ to embrace the Muhammadan religion and, at the request of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers, gave them a permit authorizing her to live without hindrance in the Christian religion, exempt from anyone making a charge against her on that account.

“With this decision an end was put to this business. . . .”

The other two more copious accounts add that during the final and most strenuous ‘trial’ Lady Sherley wore on her breast a small relic of the flesh of S. Teresa, given her in Madrid by the Carmelite Mother Beatrice, niece of the saint: and, after her impassioned defence and constancy, it was observed by several persons to be wet with tiny spots of blood. Without loss of time the Carmelites asked and obtained from the Khan of Shiraz a permit for her to leave Persia, and this was done in September 1629. References to her departure observed in the letters of Fr. Dimas preserved in the Carmelite archives in Rome are the following:

“18.9.1629. . . . The lady Countess Donna Teresa, who was the consort of the late Count Palatine Don Robert Sherley, leaves here for Rome: she is a lady of great spirit and valour . . . in these parts she has been an apostle, and a martyr confessed and professed. . . .”

“20.9.1629. . . . She has lost part of her effects and may have need of help. . . .”

¹ This was the former Khusru Mirza, governor-Daruga of Isfahan under 'Abbas I, a Georgian and a renegade to Islam (as the father of Imam Quli Khan of Shiraz, an Armenian, had also been), *vide* a letter from Fr. Dimas, 29.7.1633, to P. della Valle, Rome, in *S.R.*, vol. 104 (V), who mentions Rustam Khan then back in Georgia.