

"After a long discussion which ensued on those points he finally concluded by saying that, as it concerned their religion and on a point which from their ignorance was considered a lapse into the heresy of Nestorius, it seemed to him best to assemble his bishops and Vartapets in order to discuss more profoundly with them this business, and that, as far as he was concerned, he would always support the Catholic verdict in all those difficulties.

"We are now waiting to see whatever our Lord will bring out of this: and on our part we shall not fail to assist the business in all possible ways. Their (Armenian) Bible, book of canons, etc., which are those ordinarily used and esteemed among them, according to what I understand, cannot be had for less than 1,000 scudi, unless by some extraordinary fortune, which is almost improbable. . . ."

In that year Fr. Philip of the Most Holy Trinity was at the convent in Isfahan, and in his book *Voyages d'Orient*<sup>1</sup> he speaks thus of the Armenian Religious at Julfa:

"It (Julfa) has six or more churches; but there is in particular a monastery of Religious, who call themselves monks of S. Antony, and who are very like us in their way of life: for they fast a great deal, observe abstinence from flesh-meat . . . are clothed in a black mantle of the shape of habit in which S. Antony is depicted. Their cowl ends in a point behind the head. They wear underneath a vest, or a garment of the same durability: they have hair-shirts constantly next their skins. On the other hand they do not go bare-foot: they wear beards: their cells resemble tombs, so small as hardly to take their bodies, and they sleep on a mat on the ground.

"They are very kindly towards us (i.e. the Carmelites) on account of the similarity between their Observance and ours, and especially in abstinence from flesh-meat. They celebrate Mass rarely, but, when they do, it is with great solemnity. . . ."

At this period already the Carmelites were busy fitting themselves by learning Armenian.<sup>2</sup> But the Definitory General rather hampered relations by regulations made without full appreciation of local conditions. Thus in his 'Instructions' for the missionaries in 1630 the Praepositus General, Fr. Ferdinand of S. Mary, had been strict on many points, including this:

"Our Religious are in no wise to drink in the houses of Armenians or Muslims, should they have to visit them. . . ."

On this the Vicar Provincial<sup>3</sup> wrote to the Praepositus General, 24.6.1631, and explained:

". . . If on some occasions in the year food was eaten outside the house it was in the convent of certain monks in Julfa, who live more than 3 miles away from our own convent: and this is done to keep up and foster fellowship with those Religious. For both they and their patriarchs and bishops are very well disposed towards us, making us substantial alms from time to time: and it is not a month ago since they sent us a mule-load of flour: and on every occasion, when serious affairs occur, they assist us greatly, always giving us credit with the Armenians also. We too have always maintained good relations with them and shown them kindness when they come to visit us: and the whole serves as a means to their conversion, and to dispose them to it. . . ."

Such were the pleasant, friendly terms between the Gregorian schismatics and Catholic Orders up till 1630, and indeed later. The Vicar Provincial continued:

". . . Eight days ago I received from the Vartapet Moses, Patriarch of the Armenians,

<sup>1</sup> Published 1649, translated in French 1652, vol. II.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Fr. Melchior of the Kings, 9.10.1634, *S.R.*, vol. 106, p. 280: "I had been learning Armenian for a year."

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Dimas of the Cross.