

“a letter in which he expresses to me the desire that I should go to Erivan, where the patriarchal church is, one month’s journey distant from here, for the gratification of his people there. But we had discussed together such a visit, when the Patriarch was here in Isfahan: and it is with the object of discussing certain points in regard to our holy Faith, in accordance with what his Eminence Cardinal Ludovisi had written to me by instructions of His Holiness and the Sac. Congregation, that I should propose to the patriarch, as I did; but he answered that of himself alone he could change nothing, nor give any ruling without taking counsel of his bishops. However in this respect I shall do nothing more until there arrive from Rome the bishop, who, as the lord Cardinal recently wrote to me, is due to come out to Persia. . . .”

The opportunity for discussion passed unutilized: as has been related, by the will of God the bishop eventually chosen, Fr. John Thaddeus, did not arrive, but died on the road: and before 20.5.1634 Fr. Dimas had written to Rome to say:

“I have already informed you of the death of Moses,¹ Patriarch of the Armenians, who has been succeeded by the Vartapet Philip, who had been demanded and desired by the people. He is not personally known to me, but is said to be young and very virtuous. I have written to congratulate him. . . .”

On 13.8.1636 he reported to the Cardinals of Propaganda that the seven Religious at Isfahan were busy studying languages and

“having intercourse on spiritual matters with the archbishop of the Armenians here, and with the Vartapet Khatchatur, who at present shows himself more friendlily disposed towards us than in the past . . .”,

and also in teaching the ‘Christian Doctrine’ (of Card. Bellarmine) to the Armenians. (“Many Persians come every day, some to receive instruction in our holy Faith with the desire of embracing it. . . .”) Next year,² 16.4.1637, he was able to add:

“Some days ago there arrived in this city the Patriarch of the Armenians, who is called Philip, a person of good parts and greatly esteemed by his race. I have visited him, and in due course shall not omit to discuss with him what befits him for his salvation. May it please His Divine majesty to open his mind to grasp the truth. . . .”

With regard to this Katholikos, Philip, MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, chap. 17, part 3, calls him “a native of the Pontic Amanus: simple and reasonable . . . with a kindly heart for the Latins. But after the incident in Poland . . . he became alienated from them, and its consequences proved to be untoward and calamitous. . . .”

Possibly it is from that event in Poland,³ and that year, that should be dated a definite change and turn in the attitude of the schismatic Armenians in the East towards the Latins—from charitable concord and fraternal relations to hostility and combativeness which, as this work should show, in subsequent reigns gradually grew to astounding violence, tragically un-Christian. There were doubtless subsidiary factors, and not all the fault need be blamed to the schismatics. In 1639 Fr. Dimas,

¹ This patriarch or Katholikos was distinguished “by his great Christian charity, with which he came to the aid of those in need, giving away with open hands, and very parsimonious as to what he spent on himself. Two hundred of his compatriots may be reckoned as redeemed from Turkish chains and the peril of apostasy through his mediation, and with this object he even pawned the numerous silver crosses of the patriarchal church”—*vide* MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, chap. 17, part 3. He died early in 1633.

² *S.R.*, vol. 106, p. 286.

³ There is a reference in *S.R.*, vol. 413, to an “Armenian tragedy” in a letter from Fr. L. M. Pidou from Leopoli.