

Of the 'privileges' in question the Carmelite archives in Rome¹ possess one copy in the original Persian, of which the following is a translation:

"It has been ordered by the lord of the world that the exalted viceroys (Baiglarbaigis) "and each one of the governors and ministers and factors should know that We have given "leave to the white-mantled² Carmelite Fathers to stay wherever they may please, and settle "down and pursue in their own fashion their practices of piety. When they" (the officials addressed) "have become aware of the purport of Our exalted rescript, they (the Carmelites) are not to be stopped, prevented or troubled in any way whatsoever, and they" (the officials) "are to allow them (the Carmelites) to stay and settle anywhere they wish, so "that the present body may, in the same way as their predecessors, occupy themselves in "pious exercises and prayers for the preservation of the government, and see to it and take "care that they acquit themselves of it. Written in the month of Ramazan the blessed" (i.e. approximately between 12th August and 10th September, 1684).

(It was on the authority of this *raqam* that Prior Elias reopened the house at Julfa, which the Sharimans had given for the occupation of himself and the priest Barsegh, and went back to live and work in Julfa—*vide* the 'Vita P. F. Elia a S. Alberto' by Lay Brother Francis Mary of S. Sirus, O.C.D. 320 c: the value attached to the wording of the document by the Diwan Baigi, the civil judge, himself, when Fr. Elias in 1694 produced it as royal authority for the Carmelites to build a new church in Julfa, and the original was pocketed by the Diwan Baigi, will be read in due course.)

In the following year, 21.3.1685,³ Fr. Elias, Prior of the Carmelites, gave as his opinion of the result of the pressure from Europe:

". . . As to the king of Persia, besides the Resident another fresh envoy has come with "four other letters from the king of Poland (as well as the archbishop of Nakhchiwan), also "a delegate from the king of Sweden, begging the king of Persia to make war on the Turks. "But the Persians hesitate, (busy) with their own politics, and there is no appearance of their "deciding on war, to which they are unaccustomed now for so many years past . . ."

while another Carmelite wrote in May 1685:⁴

"Many ambassadors are coming here from the Christian princes to stir up the king to "make war against the Turks, but in vain; for he rather shows displeasure at the defeats of "the latter, besides which his object and world is nothing else than wine and women. News "has reached here that the Imperial forces have taken the city of Buda(pest); but the Turks "deny it, saying that they have defeated the Emperor's army under the walls of the "town. . . ."

However far it may be true that thirty to forty years of pacific sloth and effeminacy in high places had rusted and ruined the military machine, which had been so competent in the hands of Shah 'Abbas I and even in the reign of his grandson, and so made the Wazirs and governors unready for war (even in self-defence, as was to be shown amply thirty years later during the Afghan invasion), none the less there is little doubt that, once the Shahs ceased to govern in person, side by side with that loss of military worth there had grown up under the aegis of a succession of bigoted Wazirs a dislike for Christians (the effects of which were to be felt till the twentieth century) and an avoidance of close relations with European states, carried even to the extent of goodwill towards the hereditary enemy of the Safawi dynasty—the Turk—because a co-religionist. For who could question what the attitude of 'Abbas the First would have

¹ O.C.D. 320 c.

² 'White-mantled' = *safid-push*, alluding no doubt to the white mantle worn by the Carmelites.

³ *S.R.*, vol. 495.

⁴ Fr. Amadeus, 31.5.1685, O.C.D. 238 i.