

it is merely one example of Gallican attitude towards the disciplinary jurisdiction of the Holy See at that period—for him to pay no heed to the injunctions of the Congregation in Rome: because at least two more attempts were made to move him and failed: i.e. a minute of 14.12.1671<sup>1</sup> records:

“In September last there was delivered to Mgr the Bishop of Baghdad a ‘precept’, by which he was instructed to betake himself to his residence within six months, and he was threatened, should he not do so, with the punishment of being deprived not only of his see, but also of the income from it; but till now apparently he has not bethought himself of performing his duties . . .”, and orders were issued by their Eminences: “Let Placid du Chemin be notified that, once the time-limit allotted him by this ‘precept’ be elapsed, he is not to hope for any further delay, or payment of money. . . .”

Then in 1673 another minute stated that the Pope was ‘ready to fulminate the penalties, when the ambassador of France asked for the rigours to be suspended. . . .’ Again, when news had reached Rome that a number of leading Armenian traders of Julfa had been forced by Shah Sulaiman to apostatize, and in the Session of the Sacr. Congregation, 26.6.1674, it was suggested by Cardinal Nino that the absence of the Bishop of Baghdad from Isfahan might contribute to that state of affairs, the Cardinals issued the rescript:

“So long as the Bishop of Babylon continues contumacious, let a Vicar Apostolic be deputed to administer the diocese in his stead. . . . In the meantime let proceedings be taken against the aforesaid Bishop. . . .”

There seems to be ground, indeed, for assuming that it was the continued failure of first Bishop Bernard and then Bishop du Chemin of Baghdad, both of them Regulars, to reside in their districts, which led to the promulgation by Alexander VII of the decree “Super residentia episcopum regularium” (“Quia ecclesia (Haspanen) inter schismatos constituta”), dated 26.7.1662. Whatever transpired after the issue of that rescript, Bishop Placid du Chemin was at the time, by his own account, then already aged 73—obviously unfitted to undertake such a journey and to go out for the first time to an Eastern climate, under the severe conditions of that century: he lived another eight years, the minutes of the Sacr. Cong. at the session of 26.1.1683 recording notification of his death.

Briefly, therefore, by 1683 the position was that, whereas the two bishoprics of Isfahan and Baghdad had been (in 1632) created together, in those 51 years no Bishop of Isfahan had resided in Persia, and for less than the two years, 1640–2, one Bishop of Baghdad had been in the East. Meanwhile, as early as 1.2.1669, the Nuncio in Paris had been requested to find someone who would prove a good coadjutor for Bishop du Chemin. A

“former tutor of the king of France had proposed François Picquet, known to your Eminences, at present Commendatory Prior of Grimault in Provence”<sup>2</sup>

but it was not till in the General Session of the Congregation in Rome, 18.12.1674, Cardinal Nino reported:

“The approval of our lord Pope having been obtained on June 27th, a letter was written to the Nuncio, who . . . proposed for the above-mentioned vicariate, firstly, Picquet. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

(François Picquet, born at Lyons, 17.4.1626, had been consul of France and a missionary in lay clothing at Aleppo from 1652 to 1660.)<sup>4</sup>

The *Acta* of the Session go on:

<sup>1</sup> *S.R.*, vol. 431, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, vol. 419, p. 345: he received 1,000 scudi yearly for his office.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, quoting *Acta* for 1674, p. 387.

<sup>4</sup> His life was published, *Vie de Messire François Picquet, consul de France et de Hollande à Alep, ensuite évêque de Césarople*, by d'Anthelmy, Paris, 1732.