

'Mgr Pidou should go and preach and officiate for a time in the church which Fr. Elias had helped to found some 12 years before, and where the Armenian rite was used under his direction, and the Vicar Provincial of the Carmelites was in the habit of singing Mass in the Latin rite'.

On the other hand Mgr Pidou, the bishop-elect of Baghdad, was frequently addressing the Sac. Congregation with regard to the limits of his jurisdiction and his residence, e.g. on 8.3.1694:<sup>1</sup>

"Mgr the Archbishop of Nakhchiwan has at last reached here" (this was Fr. Paul Baptist Hovannes, O.P.) "and says he has a special order from our Holy Father to consecrate me<sup>2</sup> . . . as soon as Monseigneur has got through his embassy to the Court and obtains permission to go out of doors<sup>3</sup>. . . although it is almost morally impossible for me to return here in order to go to Basra, in case that place be declared to belong to the diocese of Baghdad and peaceful conditions reign there. I think that I can without scruples return to Hamadan, which I consider to be within my jurisdiction. . . . I beg you again to have assigned to the diocese of Baghdad all the country in the rule of Turkey and Persia . . . up to Hamadan and Qazwin inclusive, to be detached from this province of Isfahan. . . ."

Further, according to a minute on record in the archives of the Sac. Congregation, under date 4.5.1694, the Jesuit Fathers at Julfa had also made, or had a move made for independence:

"They ask that the privileges granted to missionaries in India may be allowed to them too, as they are" (in Isfahan) "at the gates of the Indies, and that . . . by a special indulgence these (privileges) may be considered definite and fixed and maintained against all attacks by 'French missionaries and clerics or anyone else'. . . ."

All these manœuvres by interested parties to appropriate special positions, while there was no one to defend and uphold the rights and due interest of the bishopric of Isfahan, appear to have combined to impress the Sac. Congregation unfavourably, and to decide it to revive the bishopric, now in abeyance for 60 years: so that, when in the General Session of the Sac. Congregation of 4.5.1693

'Cardinal d'Estrées reported: "The Catholics of Isfahan repeat their request for an *archbishop* to be appointed in that capital city . . .":<sup>4</sup>

and in the audience which the Secretary had with the Pope provision was made, and a Bull was issued nominating Fr. Elias of S. Albert himself to be Bishop of Isfahan, 26.10.1693, whilst on the complaints quoted above it was minuted that:

"Monsignor the Secretary states that, as to the 'palace' for the bishop it will suffice to send orders for possession to be taken in favour of Fr. Elias, appointed Bishop of Isfahan, for whom the Bulls have been dispatched. As to the so-called 'marriage', no bishop has the faculty to give a dispensation first of all, besides which the necessary consent appears to have been lacking and perhaps the presence of the parish priest, such not being proved

<sup>1</sup> S.N.R., II, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> He was consecrated, 9.5.1694, in the church of the Jesuits at Julfa, *vide* his letters of 29.6.1694, S.N.R., II, p. 97 and p. 104. After his consecration Bishop Pidou left Isfahan, 12th July, in a *kajawa* on the back of a mule, reaching Hamadan, 27.7.1694, where the Armenian schismatic clergy received him "with pleasure", *vide* his letter, 4.8.1694, S.N.R., II, p. 106, from Hamadan.

<sup>3</sup> Strict etiquette in regard to ambassadors provided that until after the official first audience they were not permitted to leave their lodgings.

<sup>4</sup> See *Acta* for 1693, p. 75. Cf. *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, No. 5, by late Fr. L. Lemmens, O.F.M.