

"1,200 scudi sent by the Sacr. Congregation for the Carmelites of Persia with some other money had been employed locally at Aleppo to appease the persecution raised by the false Christians of the region against the Carmelites in Aleppo. . . ."¹

In 1668 400 sequins were brought by the Visitor General:² in 1669 the Vicar Provincial wrote that: "333 'abbasi was to be the allowance for one year for two Religious at Shiraz" (i.e. at 50 'abbasi each, some 6½ Tumans in all):³ in 1671 the Syndic of the Order sent out by the Procurator of the Missions 1,020 scudi "to be distributed in Persia and Syria" according to orders of the Definitory General.⁴ Yet by 1678 the Visitor General and Vicar Provincial was writing:⁵

"The three missions in Persia" (i.e. Isfahan, Shiraz, Basra), "despite the small number of Religious, are in debt for 10,000" (? 'abbasi).

A letter from Isfahan of 24.9.1691⁶ lamented that:

"our allowances detained in Aleppo for two years past have not yet arrived. We are greatly in debt. . . ."

Even more than irregularity of receipt of funds from Europe unwise 'banking' and investment of a small capital accumulated as a reserve in past years crippled the missions in Persia: there are several references to this. About 1671 a Hindu 'bunia' at Isfahan had defaulted with 20 Tumans: at Shiraz a Muslim with 7 Tumans;⁷ but far more painful was the realization that a sum of 200 Tumans deposited with the Carmelites in Shiraz in consideration for perpetual Masses for her soul by Ismî Gioerida⁸ had been lost with insolvent traders—one Prior of Isfahan had, contrary to standing instructions, placed the whole amount with a single money-lender, instead of spreading out the risk:

"The reason why we lost the greater part of our little capital, i.e. about 300 Tumans (4,500 écus) about 2 years ago in the hands of the Hindus, and 110 Tumans this year in the hands of a certain Ramchand, also a Hindu, is our lack of knowledge of business. I think we ought not to put out more than 50 Tumans in one place. . . ."⁹

¹ The French consul at Aleppo, 16.3.1667, *S.R.*, vol. 238, p. 31 *et seq.*

² O.C.D. 237 d, letter of 3.4.1668.

³ Fr. Dionysius, 13.4.1669, O.C.D. 238 s. ⁴ 6.6.1671, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 278. ⁵ O.C.D. 238 k, 13.8.1678; 11.9.1678.

⁶ Fr. Elias, O.C.D. 238 u.

⁷ O.C.D. 236 i, 27.4.1671 and 30.4.1671.

⁸ This lady, *alias* Maria Rosa, the youngest of the sisters of Ma'ni Gioerida, P. della Valle's first wife and mentioned by him several times in his letters of 1619 and 1620, when she was 5 or 6 years old, was still alive in Shiraz in 1672, "had remained a Catholic all her life, though she had been the wife of three Dutch 'generals'" (presumably heads of the Dutch East Indies Company in Persia): "she was then a widow with two daughters, had given generous support to the mission at Shiraz and wanted permission to retire to Rome, in view of molestation suffered, for she had some 30,000 piastres capital" (*vide S.R.*, vol. 444, p. 248, Fr. Joseph Antony, Capuchin, 2.11.1672). "In 1675, however, she had been fined 50 Tumans "in the persecution of the Christians in Shiraz" (O.C.D. 238 a, 15.10.1675).

⁹ At the enquiry by the Visitor General in 1678 into these losses one of the replies furnished by a Religious, blamed for carelessness, bears quotation here because of the side-light it throws on the trading of Chardin, afterwards and still well known in England and widely read because of the memoirs of his *Travels*, and on transactions of the kind. Ninety-two Tumans had been given on loan to a Muslim named Mirza, and when the Religious concerned went to Shiraz for the Congress another 8 Tumans (100 Tumans in all), interest being taken in advance, and two great carpets received as a pledge or guarantee from Mirza, who was considered an upright man, with large credit, the security deposited being all in gold and precious stones. Shortly afterwards another Prior was made,

"there being in our House at Isfahan at the time a guest, the Calvinist trader named Monsieur Chardin. He had already had several profitable dealings with Mirza the Muslim, and finally gave him some clocks to sell, but afterwards some days later asked for the clocks back, or their price (the whole thing might be worth about 10 Tumans). Mirza replied that the clocks had been given on trial to certain grandees, and he could not take them away so abruptly; but would either return them or pay the price within a few days. Thereupon Monsieur Chardin pretended to be content, and, as if going on to another matter of business, told Mirza to bring him a necklace of pearls on pawn, worth about 50 Tumans, saying that he would advance him 30 Tumans against this article in pawn. No sooner said than done: the Muslim brought the pearls: Chardin takes them into his hand, and Mirza received from him the promise to pay 30 Tumans, Chardin promising to count out to him next day that sum. But instead of doing so, Chardin refused, and kept the necklace, which belonged to a slave of the King who, when unable to recover a certain sum on his pearls, began to make an outcry. Mirza did all possible to get the money to settle with M. Chardin for the clocks and did so, except for some 2 Tumans. M. Chardin would not restore the pearls. . . ."