

“universal Church, and (b) that they would not name the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, but “on the other hand they did their heresiarchs . . . for that reason, moved by pity, the “Supreme Shepherd and vicar of Jesus Christ was dispatching missionaries to call them “back, being sheep which had strayed from his flock, and that in this he had no other “interest but zeal for their eternal salvation.

“Informed of my firmness the schismatic bishop resolved to gain by means of gold the “favour of the royal officials and, in order to have me expelled from Julfa, offered 3,000 “Tumans, which are equal to 45,000 Roman scudi—so large was the sum of money he “had accumulated by his simony and extortions. This at the time was a most powerful “medium, seeing that the government of the country was entirely in the hands of the “officials in question, the king being unable to give any attention to it owing to his long “illness, which had already reduced him to extremities, as will be told later.” (In his Latin letter to the Pope, 7.8.1694, Fr. Elias stated: “The larger part of this money having “been distributed among the grandees at the Court, and expended in gifts to be presented “to the Queen Mother”).

“In order the better to attain his end he (Stephen) employed every artifice to obtain “some motive for accusing me to the Court and therefore sent secretly to put to me some “questions, in particular regarding the prohibition I had issued to Catholics against going “to heretic priests for confession and Communion: and by the intermediary of the persons “sent he begged me to reply in writing. But I would only answer that, though I had “preached that prohibition in the Maidan of Julfa, it was not my duty to reply in writing “to questions put to me. He further challenged me to a disputation in public, astutely “designing, on such an occasion when there would be a concourse of people, to stir up a “disturbance of some kind and then make an accusation against me. But I replied that “our case was not to be decided by arguments on matters concerning the Faith, but by “the findings of the Law, which they had broken with such open violence.

“When all these and other insidious stratagems had been overcome, another was laid “for me by the schismatic bishop.

“There was living close to the house mentioned as purchased one of their chief priests, “of whom he had made use in laying snares for me. So he cleverly induced the latter to “open in his wall contiguous to the house in question a door through which entry could “be made into ours, and to take possession of it by spreading the false statement that he “had bought it. To this end he was going to hand the priest 15 Tumans, and would “constrain Khwajeh Gurgis to accept them in payment of his house. But, before this was “put into execution, Khwajeh Markar, the second of the five Shariman brothers, who in “Julfa are our great defenders, got to know of it. So, taking counsel with his other brothers, “they at once pulled down the house in dispute, in order to deprive those rascals of the “possibility of seizing possession of it. That done, we came to the conclusion that the site “was large enough for a commodious little church, and forthwith opened up the foundations “for it. For the solemn blessing of the site we fixed Sunday in the octave of Corpus Christi, “which this last year fell on the 13th day of June: Mgr Louis Marie Pidou, recently con- “secrated bishop of Baghdad, sang Mass and a sermon was preached in Armenian. At “the end of the Mass the Holy Sacrament was carried in procession, and it caused the “citizens of Julfa great and reverent wonder, for they had never before seen so stately a “function.

(The *Vita P. F. Elia* has here: “. . . in the presence of the Archbishop of Nakhchiwan “of Fr. Zapolski, S.J., and all the missionaries and all the Catholics of Julfa: 12 stones “were laid in position in the names of the 12 Apostles. Mass was sung solemnly on the site “of the High Altar to be. . . . Many Armenians declared that, as soon as the new church “was built, they would no longer attend the schismatic churches. . . . As a counter-move “the new Kalantar and the arch-vartapet Stephen forbade Armenians to work on the new “church and Muhammadan labourers had to be employed. . . .”)

“But equal to our satisfaction was the annoyance caused to our opponents, and so they