"of their wonted perfidy—constrained to renounce the name of 'Christians' which alone "appeared to remain to them, since by the arbitrariness of the now reigning Shah Sultan "Husain, whom the flattery of certain of his officials in giving him the surname 'Din- " 'Parwar',[1] i.e. 'zealous promoter of the religious law', has instigated, all races, subjects of "his dominions, are obliged to profess the Muhammadan religion: after having begun this "by the forced circumcision of the Gabrs of the ancient Persian belief, still remaining wor- "shippers of the perpetual fire, who lived in a very populous suburb above Julfa: passing "on to wanting to do the same to all the Christians of Julfa some four or five years back, "the decree for which would have already been issued, had it not been for its execution "being prevented by the king's grandmother who is owner and overlord of Julfa: yielding "therefore to such powerful patronage for the time being, they attacked the somewhat more "remote villages, little short of a hundred, by exactions of an intolerable grievousness, in "order to compel them to find escape from these by having recourse to the immunity of "Islam. . . . After my departure from the capital, according to the news which reached "me while I was in Poland, they tried to do the same in all the province of Kapanistan in "Greater Armenia, but those valiant peasants obliged the satellites sent to effect this to "withdraw. Now I have received letters informing me that the pernicious design has been "at last carried out in Qazwin, formerly the royal city of Persia, one thousand and some "hundred Armenians having been made Muhammadans by force. . . ."

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With the foregoing contemporary lights on the character and habits of the new monarch for the reader to penetrate the background to the stage in the struggle of the missionaries to maintain their footing and protect the ground won, the story of the schismatic Armenian reaction to the work of Mgr Elias of S. Albert and their vindictiveness may now be resumed from the point at which it was left at the end of the preceding reign. After the expulsion from Julfa the first step of the Carmelite Provincial was to hurry off to Rome early in August two Religious, Frs. Conrad and Joseph Ignatius, in the guise of Procurator and Substitute to attend the Chapter General of the Order, with his report on the untoward events and his urgent appeal for support. Perhaps ten Religious was more than the convent in Isfahan could comfortably hold and finances would permit, for several Fathers were sent away, one to Basra, another to Kung, a third was returned to his province owing to ill health; while Fr. Elias busied himself with the compilation of a Latin-Armenian dictionary and the composition of several controversial works—the author of his 'Life' states that he left at his death a box half full of writings in Armenian. In addition to Armenians and Catholics who came to visit him there were Shiah Persians, who then as nowadays enjoyed religious disputation—as the manuscript[2] puts it:

"because in Persia there is not that prohibition against discussion of religious problems "which exists in Turkey, where it is punishable with death: in Persia one can give his views "freely without the least danger. . . ."

Several letters of Fr. Elias during 1695[3] mention and repeat the steps taken by him in Isfahan to obtain reparation:

"With the newly installed Shah Sultan Husain I have done everything possible to repre- "sent the injustice done to us contrary to the privileges accorded us out of regard for His "Holiness, the Emperor, and other Christian princes, we being here, as it were, hostages "and intermediaries for the good relations and friendship between them, as in many

[1] Persian for "fosterer of religion". [2] O.C.D. 320 e.
[3] 18.3.1695, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 120 appr.; 23.5.1695, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 131; 24.5.1695, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 133.