

“letter addressed by 'Itimad-ud-Dauleh to the Archbishop ratifying in writing some points which they had settled between them in the private interviews—though still in general terms, the more detailed explanation of these being left to me, as I was to follow with the letters from the Shah . . . that is to say, they protested themselves to be friends with the friends and enemies to the enemies” (of the European confederate princes) “and that as a preliminary effecting of this alliance they (the Persians) desired that the said potentates should send them some engineers, artillerymen and artificers¹ expert in the methods of making mines, fortifications, cannons, bombs and other implements of war. But the first of these letters having fallen into the hands of Prince Boris Galitzin, the chief minister of the Czar of Muscovy, during the absence of the Czar from Moscow, all the other letters were destroyed by the same prince, who was greatly incensed at the detention in Persia of their ambassador at Isfahan for having threatened the king and Court of Persia with unusual demands and some kind of insult in shouting during a public audience.² So the commission, with which I was charged in regard to the explanation and execution of these terms was nothing else than to signify their (the Persian) inclination at the then juncture to enter into an offensive and defensive league and that, when I was returning” (to Persia) “or anyone else in my stead, we should have been pleased to take with us such officers, in order to assist such a resolution.

“(3). The Archbishop of Ancyra proposed both to the Shah as also to 'Itimad-ud-Dauleh various other ways and means for the intended alliance, which were very important, i.e.” (enquiring) “whether they would come to an understanding over helping one another reciprocally with men and money, and whether they would not desire in the Persian Gulf some assistance in ships, with which they could make powerful diversions and advantageous conquests of territory too, in the direction of Mecca [*? sic, Mokha*], Basra and other ports of Arabia. At first they appeared very set on these proposals; but, when it came later to considering a contribution to the cost of the armament and maintenance of that fleet, nothing was settled in this respect, as too nothing was paid in advance for the journey expenses of the engineer officers desired: all they did was to promise that on their arrival they would be placed on a regular salary, and compensated for all their expenses incurred on their journeys. . . .

“. . . (6). . . . As to the intention to make an alliance, which I was to communicate here and which had been similarly notified in the letters sent in advance and stopped in Moscow, seeing that peace has been concluded with the Turks (even before that intention was determined in Isfahan) it does not appear to me necessary at present to ask for a reply to it, until perhaps some other motive arise. . . .”

[For a detailed explanation of the reference, as a motive of self-interest for Persia in making an alliance with the European states, here used by Bishop Elias to the Persians making difficulties about restoring Basra to the Turks, the reader should turn to the section of this work dealing with the Residence at Basra and its vicissitudes, where passages from the *Chronicle* kept by the Carmelites at that mission are quoted. Here it may be stated that

‘between March and September 1694 the Arab chieftain Mān'a, seeing the weakness of the Turks besieged and took Basra from them: he ruled it for two years peacefully to general satisfaction: then after March 1697 Mulla Farajullah, chief of the Persian district of Hawa'izeh, with a larger following surrounded Basra and expelled Shaikh Mān'a, handing over the town towards the end of that year to 'Ali Mardan Khan sent from Isfahan to govern it by the Shah. Till September 1700 'Ali Mardan Khan and his successor, Ibrahim Khan, governed Basra well, but a certain Daud Khan then sent proved a craven, the Arab tribes from the surrounding districts gathered for an attack and, although he had a force of

¹ History repeating itself: 100 years previously Shah 'Abbas I had pressed for these, and did not receive them.

² This apparently trifling dispute over diplomatic procedure, which has been already related, might thus have had consequences for the allies in Europe in preventing them from knowing the willingness of Persia to make common cause, had it not been that the treaty of Karlowitz was concluded that same year.