

“by orders of the Pope they should have arrested Mgr Varlet, appointed Bishop of Baghdad, giving instructions to do so in all places by which it is thought he might travel so that he cannot continue his journey, and the same special Congregation suspended Bishop Varlet from the exercise of his Order as a bishop and jurisdiction, and wrote to the Bishop of Isfahan to put into execution this order.”¹

In consequence there was received in Rome in due course a letter from Bishop Barnabas Fedeli, dated 25.5.1720:²

“In the matter of the Bishop of Baghdad I have arranged to execute the instructions of the Sacr. Congregation, as I have already written in more detail to your Eminences from here” (Isfahan) “and from Qazwin. Now I am waiting from day to day for his arrival in Qazwin, and some reply from him to the many letters I and the missionaries have written him. . . . After I had written thus far a letter from Fr. Bachouard, the Jesuit missionary at Shamakha has reached me: and he informs me that, when he had notified the censure to the Bishop of Baghdad, the latter had decided to turn back and was only awaiting the opportunity of some ship to cross the Caspian Sea; but he was leaving (there) at Shamakha one of his missionary priests called Abbé Rébusat, who wants to come on to Isfahan, to do I know not what. . . .”

A Capuchin from Moscow reported, 7.1.1721, to the Sacr. Congregation that Mgr Varlet was already in S. Petersburg: the Nuncio at Brussels, 29.5.1722, that he was at Amsterdam.³

Out of this event there arose a small problem which was to occupy the Carmelites for another quarter of a century—the administration of the episcopal buildings and church at Hamadan possessed by the Bishop of Baghdad as representing the Sacr. Congregation. On 13.2.1720 Fr. Faustin, Vicar Provincial of the Carmelites, wrote from Isfahan to the Definitory General of the Order:⁴

“Tomorrow I leave for Hamadan to take possession of the episcopal residence of the Bishop of Baghdad, who has been suspended, and to oppose him in case . . .”—“Our Vicar Provincial, who on the orders of the Sacr. Congregation has left to recover the mission at Hamadan . . .”

as wrote another Carmelite Religious left alone in the convent.⁵

Fr. Faustin himself in another long account of 26.5.1721, after stating that the Bishop of Isfahan had designated him as his representative for the diocese of Baghdad, and that he had been to take possession of the episcopal residence at Hamadan

“as the late Mgr Pidou, Bishop of Baghdad, had recommended to me in his last will”,

went on to describe how after his arrival in Hamadan, 8.3.1720, he had found that:

“the greater part of the Armenians had fled, some here and some there because of the gross ill-treatment constantly inflicted on them by the Khan, only a few and one priest (out of seven there were previously) have remained. . . . The Residence there is partly ruined, partly in a ruinous condition, and it has been necessary to repair it before it collapses entirely with the advent of the rains and snow, which in that region falls in abundance. I have done this with all possible economy, and spent 19 Tumans . . . and three rooms still remain to be repaired. I have spent another 13 Tumans partly in buying

¹ Quoted from *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, by Fr. Lemmens, O.F.M., No. 5.

² *S.R.*, vol. 634, p. 385.

³ *S.N.R.*, III, p. 208, and p. 199. To some extent at least it is from the ‘ordinations’ by Mgr Varlet that the community who call themselves “Old Catholics” claim to derive valid Orders today.

⁴ O.C.D. 238 g.

⁵ Fr. Alexander of S. Sigismund, 28.6.1720. O.C.D. 238 g.