

'released of that menace, the Daghistani Lesghians, on the pretext of the disgrace of their fellow-tribesman, the blinded 'Itimad-ud-Dauleh, took advantage of the chaotic conditions then prevailing in Persian administration to pour down, in the spring of 1721, from their fastnesses to the fertile region of Shirwan, and plunder Shamakha.'

The foregoing is a précis of the details given in Fr. du Cerceau's edition of Fr. Krusinski's memoirs: in the few letters from 1720 of Bishop Barnabas Fedeli, O.P., extant, there are some isolated references to the rapidly increasing disorder in the country.

On 16.12.1721,¹ from Julfa to the Cardinal Prefect, he alluded to:

"the evil plight of this country part of which has been seized by the rebels, and part sacked by enemies. . . . The" (new) "'Itimad-ud-Dauleh is an intimate friend of the Armenian bishop of Julfa. . . ."

"10.1.1722.² . . . Affairs in this country are always going from bad to worse, because "it is troubled in many directions by enemies, rebels and traitors. Here too some surprise "is feared. The Lord God help us!"

"14.1.1722. Julfa.³ . . . Truly it can be said that the Shah is being impoverished, for "he incurred very great damage by the loss of Shamakha with all that fertile province last "year: and in this direction other enemies are devastating the country . . . and there is "no hope for it to be able to recover, except after a long time."

Nothing at all of the gathering storm appears to have been foretold by any Carmelite, Dominican, Augustinian, Capuchin or Jesuit pen in 1721-2 or, at any rate, to have reached Rome.

From the Afghan invasion till the rise of the Zand tribal rulers in the south is a little known part of modern Persian history: European writers on it are few. It is cursorily treated by Sir John Malcolm, who had to compile his material nearly a century after the events he records, and few dates are furnished by him. The Polish Fr. Krusinski (in Fr. du Cerceau's version of his memoirs) was an eye-witness till the year 1725 only, when he left the country: that account has been commended by recent specialists and authorities on Persian literature and studies. But for clearness of chronological treatment and graphic narrative the chapters devoted to the years of turmoil as far as the death of Nadir Shah in his *Secondo Viaggio* by the Carmelite Fr. Leander of S. Cecilia may be claimed to be some of the best, if not the very best. Fr. Leander was in Isfahan some ten years after the invasion and acquainted with leading inhabitants and commanders of troops (some of whom he cites) and undoubtedly checked his data from, and closely followed the story in Fr. Krusinski's memoirs, for he quotes from them: he also had the advantage of hearing from Fr. Philip Mary and other missionaries first-hand accounts, and reading all they had recorded by way of diary in the years of Afghan and Nadir's rule. He was stationed at Hamadan in 1735 and thus facts about the siege of that town were well known to him: during the time of Nadir Shah he was not far away in Mesopotamia. Interested in medicine, and practising it during part of his residence in the East, Fr. Leander was one of the outstanding writers on the East among those Fathers sent by the Discalced Carmelite Order to their missions: it is no more than a tribute to his memory and gifts that a summary of his description of the manner of the Afghan invasion and its results till the reign of Nadir Shah should here be given. The extent of, and ever-increasing, turmoil resulting from the invasion needs to be followed year by year in order to comprehend why the possibility of work of the missions became more and more limited. But, where necessary, omissions and details will be supplied to his narrative from the work of Fr. du Cerceau and from the remarks in the diaries of the Factory at Gāmbrun of the East India Company, and letters from the Carmelites and others:

'At Kandahar, on hearing of the folly of the Shah and his entourage in ridding themselves of their best general and experienced minister of state, Mir Mahmud became emboldened

¹ *S.N.R.*, III, p. 525.

² *Idem*, p. 518.

³ *Idem*, p. 520.