

(No wonder, therefore, that with such destruction of human life, by both supernatural and human agency, for 80,000 inhabitants is the estimate of those killed in the great earthquake of 1721 in Tabriz, Fr. Leander asserts that "the Armenian race in Persia was "so diminished from the time of the arrival of the Afghans, i.e. in 1722 up to 1725, that "200,000 may be reckoned as having been killed and taken away as slaves.")

<sup>1</sup>In September 1724 Ahmad, Pasha of Baghdad, took Hamadan by assault. Of this 'some interesting details are given from Fr. Leander's own knowledge from his residence 'in that town some years later, and may be briefly quoted:

"On the west it had a narrow fortification . . . but it was entirely unprovided with "any sort of artillery when the Turks, to the number of 160,000, came to besiege it "under the command of the famous Ahmad Pasha, son of Hasan, Pasha of Baghdad, "who died in Kirmanshah on that same expedition and was replaced by his son in the "year 1724 [*? sic*, for 1725] in the month of October, being then Pasha of Basra. He "came and placed himself before Hamadan in order to besiege it, and left behind 30,000 "Turks dead there, although the city was not provided with cannon, and was surrounded "with walls of recent erection. At that time there was there in our house (which was "built by Monsignor Picquet) Fr. John Joseph of S. Antony, a celebrated missionary, "highly respected by all Persians, who had recourse to him in order that he would be "so good as to cast for them a bronze cannon. He begged to be excused, saying that "he did not know how to assist them, but, as they began to use him roughly and ill-treat "him, he was constrained to do his best to get to work. So he had a great bar of iron "made, wrapped it up well in paper and, having made a mould from beaten clay, "fitted the bar inside it: then, having got the molten metal ready, he had it poured "inside. From the exterior the cannon seemed very well made, but they could never "extract the bar from the inside, although they worked on it for days: and, then, the "paper catching fire, the metal became joined to the iron, so that it could never be "extracted. If this operation had succeeded, perhaps the Turks would not have taken "the town, seeing that, when about that time there was fired against them a single shot "of grape from a wooden cannon, which was well hooped with iron but burst into a "hundred pieces, it caused the whole Turkish army to retire a distance of more than "an hour from the walls besieged. But the work of the friar, who knew nothing of the "trade, being wasted, shortly afterwards the city was taken by assault and for the space "of two days continuously Turks and Persians were occupied in killing each other, the "latter yielding up to the former, yard by yard only, the streets which ran with blood. "Finally the Pasha had the gates opened, giving orders for an end to be put to the "looting, and that whoever wished should be allowed to flee as he listed, and thus "hostilities ceased and the Turks remained masters of the town. Fr. John Joseph, who "during the siege had remained hidden in a cellar of the house, on coming out was made "captive by a Turk, by whom, however, he was released through the work of a Catholic "Christian, who by exchanging a horse for him set him at liberty: and he was given "such assistance at general headquarters that the Pasha gave express command to all "his soldiers to give back to him everything they had had from his house, so that he "was once more put in possession of his house and church. The Turks remained masters "of Hamadan for eight years, and during that period plague reigned in that town, "which neither before nor after the Turkish occupation suffered from such sickness.

"In the month of May of the year 1726 the (Turkish) generalissimo wanted to make "himself master of the capital of Persia, where there reigned Shah Ashraf and, his army "having been increased to the number of 200,000 combatants, well provided with "artillery and munitions of war, he advanced<sup>2</sup> destroying all the villages which he met

<sup>1</sup> From the several letters of Fr. Joseph Mary of Jesus quoted, 1724 is evidently the correct year, though Fr. Leander appears to give 1725 in his narrative for the taking of Hamadan.

<sup>2</sup> As far as 'Hurmabad' [*? sic*, Haramabad or Khurramabad] three days from Isfahan in Bakhtiari country, according to Fr. Krusinski's account, as given in Fr. du Cerceau's book.