

'Mirza with their men had got already into the city, and turned round his own troops 'towards the south, only to be once more attacked and broken by the pursuit of Hasan Quli.'

Neither Fr. Leander, nor Fr. du Cerceau's book follows the second and last of the Afghan Shahs to his end: for that the East India Company's diary from Gāmbrun, and other British sources afford some assistance, without being precise as to the date and place, e.g.:

"24.12.1729. This morning early arrived Shotters from Spahaun with letters dated 4th and 9th November, from the Resident and Mr. Geikie advising us that Shaw Hoshroff, after having been beat in two sett battles by Shaw Thomas, returned to Spahaun and on 4.11.1729, on receiving advice of the near approach of the prince's troops, left the city and made his escape with his treasure, wives and children towards Shyrash" (Shiraz): "that Shaw Thomas' generall entered the city the next day and at once sent his troops in "pursuit of Shaw Hoshroff. . . ."

"3.12.1729. . . . Shaw Hoshroff was arriv'd in Shyrash. . . ."

"30.12.1729 (Tuesday). . . . The Afghans . . . marched off last night towards Lhor" (Lar). "6.12.1729. A man who came 17 days ago from Kirman says that Shaw Thomas' deputy was arrived here, and had got possession of that city and that the Dargizzanies" (? Daghistanis) "had revolted from the Afghans, but that Abdullah Khan with about 500 men was retired into the castle" (so that the route for any ordered retreat by Shah Ashraf and his men via Kirman was blocked). Notwithstanding—after an interval of two months—came the report from Bandar 'Abbas, "10.2.1730. The linguist" (i.e. munshi or interpreter) "received a letter . . . that Hoshroff with all his troops which it is said amount "to 2,000 men under arms marched out of Lhor castle . . . generally believed that he is "gone towards Carmania (Kirman). . . . By a letter received from Kung this morning "advised that Hoshroff is still surrounded by the Arabs."<sup>1</sup>

It is Sir J. Malcolm's *History of Persia* which states that Shah Ashraf was ultimately killed in the desert of Baluchistan by a Baluchi, who carried his head to Shah Tahmasp Safawi: it happened presumably, therefore, in February or March 1730.

The prince entered Isfahan, 7.12.1729,<sup>2</sup> to learn of the death of his father and brothers: having thus succeeded by inheritance and made good his claim he showed his gratitude to his Afshar general by bestowing on him his own name, relates Fr. Leander, so that for some years Hasan Quli was to be known as 'Tahmasp Quli Khan'.

With the year that saw the deaths of both the deposed Shah Sultan Husain and of the usurping Afghan Shah Ashraf it is perhaps well to bring this protracted chapter to a close (though it might be more logical to carry it on to the end of the brief reign of Tahmasp II and of the Safawi dynasty): this long historical digression taken from the narrative in Fr. Leander of S. Cecilia's *Secondo Viaggio* in the main and, checked by such facts and dates as are given in the diaries of the East India Company and references to Fr. du Cerceau's *History of the Revolution*, is intended to give those interested in the Carmelites and other missions a thorough appreciation of the terrible prostration and suffering which must have been brought on the inhabitants of the country, and on those of towns like Isfahan, Tabriz, Shiraz, Hamadan in particular from the attacks of rival forces, sieges and famines deliberately created by those forces, and from the slaughter and rapine during the twenty years following the arrival of the Afghans in 1722. Only thus will the causes for the abrupt disappearance not long afterwards of so much Catholic effort in Persia cease to remain inexplicable. It now remains to take note of such information regarding these years of upheaval, 1722–30, as is to be found in the few letters of the Carmelites and other missionaries preserved in the archives inspected.

Central Persia appears to have been strictly blockaded from early in 1722 and not only

<sup>1</sup> By 'Arabs' that tribe of the Khamseh of Fars is meant.

<sup>2</sup> Gāmbrun diary of Friday, 16.1.1730, states that he entered 28.11.1729, but this, 7.12.1729, is the date in Bishop Barnabas' letter.