

“was sold, and in the more distant streets were to be seen people dying of starvation cutting off the buttocks of persons not long expired, in order to cook and eat them.

“My great benefactor has been Monsieur Jacques Rosseau” (the Swiss watchmaker already mentioned) “who lent me much money then, for which I gave him a note of hand for 115 louis d’or. Last year he lent me more money, for which I gave him another note of hand for 85 louis d’or, to a total of 200. Recently, for other money I have had to give him a note for another 10 louis. Therefore I beg you to have this debt paid at once without any deduction to Monsieur Georges Rosseau, his brother in Geneva, handing him herewith enclosed a receipt for 750 Roman scudi addressed his Eminence the Prefect of Congregation of Propaganda. Meanwhile, as I am unable to have my allowance, I must live, not as a poor Religious, but as a miserable bishop, contenting myself with having one pupil who cooks my pottage for me and does for me the other necessary services. . . .”

Then there is this confirmation of the strange failure on the one hand to give news of their plight, and on the other of Rome to get succour through to Julfa at all costs, from Fr. Denis (Dionysius) a Capuchin of Isfahan who writing in Latin, 14.11.1728,¹ stated that he was aged 63, had been 47 years professed and 28 years on the mission, and explained that it was the seriousness of the position which compelled him to write, in the hope of preserving the ancient Capuchin mission at Isfahan:

“which many hardships—famine, wars and other misfortunes—are crushing, so that all these storms and commotions may be weathered, if the mission be aided and provision made for it. . . . Our superiors” (these Capuchins were from the province of Tours) “have not given a single reply to my letters for eight years past, so that I am weighed down by these calamities. Though saddened and worn out at length with vexation at their indifference, yet inspired with the spirit of my predecessors, who for more than one hundred years kept up this mission with dignity and respect, I have determined to apply all my zeal, endeavour, labours and diligence to preserving it. . . .”

This complaint was passed on by the Sac. Congregation to the Procurator of the Capuchin Order, who on 10.5.1730 wrote in his reply his astonishment at it for, he said:

“it is in fact the first which reached here: neither have I, in the four years of my procuratorship, had any news at all of the most wretched state of the mission there, to restore which today the Fr. Provincial of the province of Tours will be warned to dispatch by the occasion of the first ship offering four missionaries endowed with zeal. . . .”²

On 14.2.1729 the General of the Jesuits informed their Eminences of the Sac. Congregation that³

“on account of the warfare among the Persians for many years past the passes remain closed to such a degree that one part of the provinces cannot communicate with the others. For that reason the prefect of the missions of the Society of Jesus, who resides in the city of Isfahan, has no means of communicating to his companions in Armenia the faculties which the Sac. Congregation has granted. . . .”

Of the Carmelites, Fr. Philip Mary from Julfa, 21.9.1724,⁴ wrote to Fr. Cyril of the Visitation, Vicar at Shiraz, after conveying his greetings to Fr. Antony Francis, the other Carmelite at Shiraz:

¹ S.R., vol. 667.

³ S.R., vol. 663, p. 326.

² There is no indication that more Capuchins joined their mission in Isfahan.

⁴ O.C.D. 238 u.