

addition to preoccupation of the Orders with affairs in Europe—why, when at the end of some 150 years the Catholic missions in Persia had now an established, recognized position, was all that abandoned from Rome? For, paradoxically, while there was this apparent indifference in Rome and Europe, by 1745 Catholicism at Julfa had reached numbers not known since the early Church, not attained to-day—several thousands, whether 5,000 as Bishop Emmanuel asserted, or more—even though the remarkable spectacle, almost unbelievable for the European resident in modern Iran, of two Catholic archbishops and two Catholic bishops, three of them Europeans, being simultaneously in 1699 in the country, was not again seen. With all the political upheaval round them, the missionaries indeed reached the peak of their work.

As a preliminary to discussion of the period under review the changing sovereignties and the campaigns will be illustrated by extracts from letters and reports in these archives, supplemented by references in the hitherto unpublished diaries of the (English) East India Company's agent at Gāmbnun in order to make the position for the Christians clearer to the student. Those letters and reports from the sources cited are often contradictory, or bear no resemblance to one another.

According to the narrative in Fr. Leander of S. Cecilia's *Secondo Viaggio*, after the entry of the hereditary prince Tahmasp and his energetic generalissimo into Isfahan in December and November 1729 respectively and the immediate pursuit of the Afghans to Shiraz and the southern littoral by the latter, Shah Tahmasp in April 1730¹ with a large force of Persians set out to lay siege to Tabriz. The Turks evacuated it and retired on Erivan, the commander at which place turned on the Persians and so beat them in a six-hour battle that the Persians are said to have had 11,000 killed, apart from those wounded and many men drowned in the river Araxes.

Fr. du Cerceau's *History of the late Revolutions* (1740), after mentioning that the memoirs of Fr. J. T. Krusinski, S.J., go no farther than the end of 1725, added an appendix of events till 1739, but gave the warning:

'as to what has passed from the end of 1725 to the present time . . . I could have no information but from the publick "News-Papers, wherein things are represented in a very "imperfect and uncertain light . . ." and he cited various examples of the "little dependence that is to be placed upon those originals with regard to the certainty of facts . . ."

After that frank disclaimer Fr. du Cerceau's work under the year 1730 notes:

"After this the Sophy Tahmasp besieged Tabriz and, receiving intelligence that a great "body of Turks were on their march to relieve it, he posted himself in an advantageous "place, and attacked them with so much bravery that *he obtained a complete victory . . .*",

and is therefore at variance with Fr. Leander's account quoted above.

¹ These accounts may be compared and checked with the East India Company's Factors at Gāmbnun in their diaries:

"30.4.1730. . . . (We) received a letter from the Resident, Mr. Geikie in Spahaun . . . that the king is greatly "displeased at Thomas Cooly Caun's demand for him to go to Qazwin with all his family. . . . This demand of the "Caun with his marrying the king's sister without his Majesty's consent, and his keeping to his own use all the money "he has forced from the inhabitants. . . .

"5.7.1730. This day by a French shotter (*shatir*) received a letter from our gentlemen in Spahaun acquainting us of "the tyrannical proceedings of the Persian generall, who not only suffer'd his soldiers to plunder and ravish wherever "they went, but to sell whole families of the poorer sort as slaves, that the soldiers were so insolent as even to act their "villainys before the king's gate, that the generall had gone to such lengths that 'twas thought he could not retreat, tho' " 'twas said, if he sett up for himself, the military would not obey him. . . .

"3.8.1731. Isfahan also advise us that a peace is concluded with the Muscovites, who have surrendered all Gilan back "to the Persians, reserving only Darband and Baku, which Shaw Thomas has given them . . . that Thomas Caun "straightly besieges Hyerat" (Herat). . . .

"Sunday, 12.9.1731. Isfahan advise us, the king was marching towards Hamadoun, in order to meet Achmat Bashaw, "who advanced towards their frontier with a numerous army. . . .

"Thursday, 8.12.1731. Basra . . . also advise us of the defeat of Shah Tahmasp by Ahmad Pasha. . . .

"23.3.1732. Peace made with the Turks. . . .

"Wednesday, 19.4.1732. Thomas Caun" (i.e. the future Nadir Shah) "having taken Harat, was returned to Mash- "had. . . ."