

"I ought also to represent to your Eminence that the episcopal House is situated in Hamadan . . . in the jurisdiction and diocese of Isfahan: that in that town there is not even one single Catholic; that this House is 18 days' distance by road from the diocese of Baghdad: that for 30 years past on various occasions it has been sacked and destroyed: that this town, being on the frontier of Turkish territory, is always exposed to the first attack—for all these reasons the missionaries sent by the bishop remain there unwillingly and consume the greater part of their allowances on their journeys and their maintenance. So, if your Eminences deem it suitable, it would appear to your petitioner to be convenient to abandon that House, in ruins and of small value, to the Carmelite Fathers in Isfahan, in order to compensate them for their claims on it, your petitioner engaging to construct or buy another in his own diocese with the same sum as is required for the restoration of that of Hamadan. This would be very useful for the diocese of Baghdad, in which there would be working the missionaries at present appointed to go to Hamadan purely as custodians of the House. Your petitioner hopes to be the first" (bishop) "to reside in his diocese. . . . The Most Christian king, his sovereign, has given him every facility by nominating him his consul in the diocese and city of Baghdad, where he hopes under the royal protection to establish a new bishop's house. . . ."

Occupation by Carmelites of the premises at Hamadan lapsed, therefore, almost simultaneously about 1738 with that of the Residence at Shiraz: it had been mainly ownership by the Sac. Congregation and thus a special interest in the conservation of the fabric, which had caused it to be a post for Carmelites since 1719.

At *Basra* the Carmelite station remained, in comparison to all the others, tranquil and immune from actual warfare, if at times menaced from outside during the reign of Nadir Shah and by raids of the Muntafiq Arabs in 1741: and there is little exceptional to record. The Vicar Provincial, Fr. Urban of S. Elisaeus,¹ had bidden

"Fr. John Thomas copy the New Testament in Turkish, which I had done at great pains for the good of this mission, as we had only one copy of the book (translated by a heretic) . . . so useful in Persian and Arabic. . . ."

"At Basra, where I remained about one month" (reported Bishop Philip Mary of Isfahan to the Sac. Congregation, 29.9.1736,²) "there are two missionary Fathers of our Order, to whom the opportunity for exercising their ministry is not wanting, while besides some Catholic families settled there and one household of French merchants every year there arrive various ships, whether of that nation or English or Dutch, on board which there are usually Catholic folk and among them sick persons who all have need of spiritual help: from time to time they baptize adults: in addition there are passengers of every kind of Christian from various parts, for which reason, besides the Arabic of the country, Turkish Armenian and also Greek are necessary. The *Armenian schismatics since the revolution in Persia have opened a church of their rite here. . . .*"

"Ten or twelve families of Christians domiciled there, and many French, English, Dutch traders",

was the summary given by Fr. Emmanuel to the Sac. Congregation in his report of 1740³ as Procurator for the Mission. The Religious were, however, troubled in precisely the same way as Bishop Fedeli of Isfahan had been by the French consul in 1730—by the exigencies of a French consul, Monsieur Pierre Martainville, who arrived at Basra from Pondicherry, 26.6.1739, and after demanding and retaining the title deeds and 'farmans' of the Mission claimed for himself a seat in the sanctuary of the church, and insisted that after sung Mass not only an 'Oremus' for the king of France, but also one for himself should be sung—"an innovation never till now met in the Church or admitted even in the colony of Pondicherry for their

¹ Letter of 13.6.1733, O.C.D. 242 h.

² S.N.R., IV, p. 419.

³ *Idem*, p. 577.