

gave one evident reason for that:

“because a month ago the Pasha, named Isma’il, whom I was serving as physician and who therefore is very well disposed, has been made Grand Vizir, the highest dignity in the Empire; and before leaving for Constantinople he granted me a decree under his seal that no one should molest us in our House, and that we can perform our Office in all freedom, a very singular mark of favour since, despite their power, our ambassadors have very great difficulty in obtaining it, even for a large bribe of money. . . .”

When the new Bishop of Isfahan passed through Baghdad on the return journey from his consecration, Fr. Emmanuel explained to Rome, 2.10.1736:¹

“I begged repeatedly this worthy prelate to be so good as to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation so necessary to these poor Catholics, and to ordain a deacon to serve this church, but Monseigneur showed me the form of oath which he took . . . by which he cannot in any way exercise such a function, even with the permission of the Ordinary of the place. . . .”

In 1737 there was strife between the Pashas of Baghdad and Basra, and the former was avaricious: neither the decrees of his predecessor nor the protection of the French ambassador nor recommendations by Mr. French of Basra saved the pro-Vicar Apostolic: and after a period of quiet once again schismatic Armenian malice is seen at work:

“A heretic Armenian of Baghdad instigated the Pasha of Baghdad, who . . . sent an armed party with officials, 25.8.1737, into the church, where Mass was proceeding. . . .”

Fr. Emmanuel went on to describe how he was able to hide under the vestments the sacred vessels and, taken off with all the Catholics to the prison, there to consume the Blessed Sacrament. Through the “English merchant” (i.e. the Agent or Factor of the East India Company at Basra) he was liberated, but again in twenty-four hours arrested and then kept in a worse prison for three days, during which he suffered much harsh treatment. To secure their liberty the Christians had to disburse some 25,000 piastres, and Fr. Emmanuel, to obtain in addition permission to exercise his functions, had to pay 685 piastres (= 274 scudi), advanced to him also by the English merchant as a loan.² In his printed report of 1753-4 to the Pope, his own words were:

“I myself and the principal Catholics were put in fetters; but, when the sum of 30,000 piastres had been paid by the Catholics, 700 by myself, our fetters were unfastened, the church restored, and the Catholics allowed to go free as before. I informed the Most Christian king” (i.e. of France) “and his envoy at the Ottoman Porte of this insult. The king judging that a commission as consul would be greatly to my protection was pleased to honour me with it, appointing me consul of the French nation, and at the same time instructed his envoy to protect our mission as much as he could both by gifts and by commendatory letters to the governor, by which steps for some while we enjoyed peace and tranquillity. The heretic Armenians, giving up hope of doing us injury, ceased from raging against us. . . .”

The Armenian, who instigated this wickedness and mischief, soon obtained due reward: although he was some sort of official of the Pasha, for some words spoken when drunk against the Quran he was deprived of all his money, bastinadoed and dismissed. Immediately after the

¹ *S.N.R.*, IV, p. 421.

² *S.R.*, vol. 703, p. 487, minute in Sac. Cong. on report of Fr. Emmanuel submitted in Rome, 21.9.1740.