

(i.e. 1738). "When he reached Isfahan, Monsignor (Philip) delivered to him the letter "from His Holiness but, because at that time a rumour arose that Wali Na'amat had "resigned the government to his eldest son, he considered it well to stop there until sure "news of this renunciation were obtained, and in fact after a little time it was published and "everyone expected the arrival" (of the Shah's son) "in Isfahan. For four months and I "know not how many days the messenger was halted, waiting for this, in that city. Finally "when it was known for sure that the new 'king' had fixed his residence in Mashhad, "capital of the state of Khurasan, he . . . set off. On the road he met a Khan named "Quli, to whom he made easy advances, offering as a gift some cubits of fine cloth and silk "ribbons embroidered in gold and silver; and as a favour he begged for a letter of recom- "mendation for Mashhad, which he obtained. . . . After his arrival in that new royal "capital by means of other presents he succeeded in making friends of some gentlemen, who "gave him much information and advice as to the way in which to proceed: and then he "presented himself at the royal palace with a fine, mettled horse, which, he said, he was "bringing as a gift for the 'king' (viceroy). There he found Allah Viridi Khan, to whom "the recommendation from Quli Khan was addressed: and he, as soon as he had recognized "the seal of Quli Khan, gave the messenger a cordial reception and ordered two grooms to "lead the horse where the 'king' would notice it. The latter saw and liked the animal. "When after that he was granted audience, according to the advice given him he presented "to the 'king' the letter from His Holiness in a piece of brocade enclosed in a silver box with "the seal covered with gilt.

"The 'king' at once had the letter opened but, because there was no interpreter for Latin "there, no one could read it. Then the 'king' asked the messenger what the letter said: "and he replied that he did not know, but forthwith drew out from his breast the translation "made in Persian, saying that it had been handed to him on the supposition that there "might be no interpreter. The letter was read by the 'chancellor'. The 'king' listened to "the interpretation attentively, and then demanded of the messenger who was Pope "Clement, and where did he live.<sup>1</sup> At so unexpected a question the poor man became "frightened, having seen during the precious few days with what ease men were strangled: "he did not lack courage, notwithstanding, and quickly replied that the Pope is the vicar "of Jesus, whom the Muhammadans hold as a great prophet, and that he resides in the "great city of Rome situated in Italy, that he has both a spiritual and a temporal govern- "ment. In spirituals he rules over all Christians, even though such and such are rebellious, "while such and such kings and princes obey him and accept his orders. . . . As to "temporals he has armed troops, possesses cities, fortresses and castles. That is what he" (the messenger) "relates that he replied to the 'king', who, when he had learnt this, dis- "missed him from the audience. Later the grand Wazir questioned him more closely, and "was satisfied with what he heard. Then it was committed to certain Mullas, who are "skilled in the laws, to write down the petitions for whatever he was asking from the 'king' "in the name of the Pope. There were seven, of which five only were cited in the rescript from "the 'king', viz.: (a) that the Catholics of Nakhchiwan might build and rebuild churches "according to their needs; (b) that no one should dare to molest the priests or hinder them "in the practice of their religion without any obstruction; (c) that whosoever it might be "should respect his, the messenger's, person as being the Pope's man; (d) that the villages "of the Catholics of Nakhchiwan which had paid the king's taxes should be liable to no "other exactions; (e) that the Catholics of Nakhchiwan should not pay interest on the "money taken by others with the object of paying the debts of the community. . . . "Farmans, i.e. decrees, were afterwards issued in conformity with the petitions. Finally "it only remained for him to ask for the reply, and this was done with such elegance and "so many handsome titles in honour of His Holiness that, if it were translated

<sup>1</sup> Then perhaps 25-30 years old, Riza Quli Mirza, who sixteen years previously had been merely the boy of a petty Afshar tribal chief, and since then had mainly continued to reside in Khurasan, distant from European missionaries, may well have lacked the education to know who was the Sovereign Pontiff of the Catholic world.