

“into Latin with the same force and expressiveness as it stands in Persian, it would be “worth printing. . . .”¹

The Archbishop of Nakhchiwan had received this answer by the hands of this messenger back in Nakhchiwan by 22.8.1739, and proceeded to have the farmans brought to the notice of the Khan of Nakhchiwan; but as seen from Mgr Salvini's subsequent letter of 1744 the orders obtained in favour of the Catholic Armenians were of small avail, and were either followed by others in the contrary sense, or else ignored in the persecution and oppressive taxation which had overwhelmed the community by the latter date.

From Tabriz, then, on 14.4.1744 Archbishop Salvini of Nakhchiwan addressed the Cardinal Prefect:²

“The hope of seeing these few half-villages that form the body of my diocese of Nakhchiwan become re-established to some extent and inhabitable, and also the presence of “the troops of divers nations in their borders for the past two years has delayed me, and then “deprived me altogether of freedom for writing to your Eminences before now, as was my “duty. Now that I see the case is desperate, I am compelled, though to my great sorrow, “to acquaint you with it as far as I am able.

“The greater part of my people no longer possess strength to resist the shocks of twenty “years of savage warfare, and have migrated from these borders and gone to Smyrna and “its environs. Part of them have taken refuge here” (i.e. in Tabriz city), “part of them have “been killed, another part perished from starvation; and the remainder have not the means “to follow the others, but are mostly fugitives or stay hidden, as neither are they able to “support and take the place of those absent (whose names had been already registered in “the king's books in a visitation thrice repeated and could not be expunged therefore), “nor could they otherwise avoid the next carrying-off into slavery, or the sword-thrust of “some envious man. In order to escape the peril I myself too have retired to Tabriz, “which is separated from Nakhchiwan by no more than the river Araxes, although from “one place to the other there are 24 hours of travelling at an ordinary pace. In this town “(Tabriz) there are two Catholic households—there were formerly twenty-five. The “Catholic parishioners really consisted of travellers who come and go for trade: in good “times there would usually be about thirty persons.

“There is a chapel, 18 palms in width, and 36 in length,³ attached to a small House of “the Capuchin Fathers, to which is posted a certain Père Damian from Lyons (who for “the most part and at present for the past five months has been away with 'Ali Quli Khan⁴ “in the capacity of doctor), with no little assistance from the missionary Fathers in Georgia. “For this chapel I have sent for two priests of my Order from Nakhchiwan, so that they “may have the convenience of confessing to each other, and aiding, as far as possible, “these poor scattered and hidden folk . . . if I be not mistaken, there are eighteen, of “whom six refugees from Nakhchiwan . . .”

There had, before this, evidently been some conflict of limits of jurisdiction with the diocese of Isfahan:

“. . . A number of times the archbishops have appealed,⁵ lodging complaint against “the Bishop of Isfahan . . . extending his jurisdiction too far . . . when this was referred “to the Sacr. Congregation in 1692 it did not deem it well to alter the state of affairs by “making any change. However, 16.3.1739, perhaps as it appeared to the Sacr. Congrega- “tion that the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Isfahan was too vast, orders were passed ‘Referred “for a report’ . . ., but from that time no discussion has taken place . . .”,

¹ No trace of the receipt of that reply from the son of Nadir Shah in Rome, or its existence in the archives there has been noted. ² *S.R.*, vol. 722, p. 204. ³ i.e. approximately 15 by 30 feet, one Roman ‘palm’ being 25 cm.

⁴ The nephew of Nadir Shah.

⁵ *S.R.*, vol. 708, p. 207.