

“the minds of our sovereigns; yours and mine.’ Itimid-ud-Dauleh remained at the place for 24 hours, during which he had two secret conversations with Ahmad Pasha. On his return from the mosque at Mashhad-i-'Ali” (i.e. Najaf) “Thomas Kuli K(h)an passed, 13.12.1743, at some distance from Baghdad on his way back to Persia. According to the previous information he was at Tepe Dagh: according to the latest he is at Erivan “[? sic]: in his retirement he has relinquished the places and hamlets which he had won from the Turks: and on 19.12.1743 they wrote from Baghdad that the officers who were to go and take possession in the name of the Grand Signor (the Sultan) were already nominated, and had left. On 23.1.1744 this unexpected development and event was learnt at Constantinople, and at first much joy was manifested, because of the uneasiness in which people were over the city of Baghdad; the Kiaya of Ahmad Pasha, who had been halted at Nicomedia, whence he sent the dispatches, only on 10.2.1744 received permission to go on to Constantinople. On 14.2.1744 the Kiplas Agha, who had been much troubled by gout, reappeared in public and accompanied the Grand Signor to the mosque: afterwards he had several talks with the Kiaya of Ahmad Pasha. Various councils were held and finally in the Diwan, or general assembly, assembled 25.2.1744, it was decided to *reject the proposed peace as being contrary to the Law*” (i.e. Quran) *“especially with regard to the claim of Thomas Kuli K(h)an to be allowed to send the Persian pilgrims direct to Makkeh under the leadership of a separate and independent Amir-ul-Haj:”*¹ so that preparations for war are being continued and they have even already sent off considerable sums of money for the Shah Safi² by three different caravans independently of a quantity of woven tissues, jewels and diamonds, which were sent to him apparently to please those Persian lords who go over to his” (the Safawi’s) “party. Ahmad Pasha, formerly Grand Vizir, has been appointed Sar-askar (commander-in-chief) of the Ottoman troops. He has orders to try to penetrate into Persia along with Shah Safi. The 6,000 Turks whom the Kapiji Bashi Sar-aslan has gone to raise in the Crimea will be transported by sea to Trebizond. It has also been decided to arm a fleet of eight vessels, some galleys and several brigantines to go and convoy the troops and munitions of war, and land them at Trebizond. . . .”

It was undoubtedly to that invasion and the insurrection planned to accompany it that Bishop Emmanuel Ballyet referred in his letter from Aleppo of 25.4.1744:³

“Tahmasp Quli Khan has withdrawn in order to proceed in the direction of Erivan, a town of Greater Armenia, in order to oppose the new pretender to his throne⁴ who threatens to invade the country, as you will see better in a sheet of news which has been freshly received from Constantinople. . . .”

It must have been following that expedition that the Catholics and other Christians of Nakhchiwan province suffered that drastic treatment so poignantly described by Archbishop Salvini in his letter of 11.12.1746 already quoted:

“exasperated beyond measure on account of the continual rebellions, the Despot intends to lay waste those regions bordering Turkish territory⁵ amongst others that of Nakhchiwan . . .”:

and that the transplantation of Christians to Khurasan took place. Next year, 29.5.1745,⁶ the Carmelite Fr. Sebastian from Julfa, after mentioning that the Shah of Persia, had had himself called the ‘Just King’, added:

¹ The official marshal of the pilgrim caravan.

² Which Safawi prince was this in 1744? Safi, eldest son of Shah Sultan Husain?

³ *S.N.R.*, V, p. 129.

⁴ No doubt the ‘Shah Safi’ mentioned.

⁵ A letter of Bishop Philip Mary, 28.4.1746, explained to Rome: “In the region of Tabriz there are 4 viceroys, who are called Baiglarbaigis, i.e. one for Tabriz, who has various towns in his district, one for Erivan, one for Shirwan, the last for Ganjeh, under whom is the province of Nakhchiwan. . . .”

⁶ *S.R.*, vol. 729.