

"It is said that he will return to attack Baghdad. He has had the eyes of one of his ministers of state put out, and fined him 6,000 Tumans. . . ."

That attack presumably did not materialize: at any rate the Bishop of Baghdad on 21.11.1746¹ informed the Cardinal Prefect:

"As to news from Persia, everything is quiet, peace having been made with the Turks. The king of Persia, Shah Nadir, has left for Kandahar to suppress a fresh rebellion; but many believe it to be a feint to get near India in order to undertake a second invasion; though it is doubtful whether it would succeed like the first one. . . ."

It was not in Kandahar, but in Sistan that Nadir Shah had to face further rebellion: and two months later than the Bishop of Baghdad wrote that he actually set out from Isfahan. Before that, however, the cause and force of those frequent revolts and outbreaks is to be read in a 'Narrative', evidently compiled in Venice or Leghorn from letters or verbal statements emanating from residents of Julfa. It is obvious that only in a limited part of the empire was he given allegiance as Shah by men's hearts and lips: over a vast part they thought and spoke of him to the end of his career as 'Quli Khan'. The 'melancholy, the black humours' treated by his Capuchin physician in 1742 had developed into homicidal mania in its most extreme form—a lust for killing: alongside of it extortion was used cruelly, recklessly. This circumstantial, dated account² is headed:

"Narrative of the deplorable condition in which at present are the Armenians of Julfa owing to the recent arrival in Isfahan of Tahmasp Quli Khan, the Tyrant of Persia, according to information received thence."

"It was . . . two years ago, i.e. 28.12.1745, the first time³ that the tyrant entered Isfahan after he had usurped the crown of Persia: it was the day of the (Holy) Innocents, and indeed that second Herod, more cruel than the first, without putting it off for a moment, on the very day of his entry at once opened the courts of his injustice, in which he alone sat as accuser, witness and judge, avarice serving as his counsel, tyranny as his authorities, his own arbitrary will as the law. He at once began the horrible butchery by having slaughtered under various pretexts a quantity of the chief persons of the country, among the principal of whom were the governor of Isfahan and the mayor of Julfa, commonly called the 'Kalantar'. It was a sight to see in all parts of the city, and especially in the great Maidan (square) numbers of people of every grade tortured by the royal officials in order to extract money from them in accordance with the orders of the tyrant. To cut off noses, ears, put out eyes, mutilate members, to make all the toe-nails drop off under blows of the bastinado—these were ordinary affairs, from which the more prominent personages of the Court and even the chief officers of the royal army were not exempt. . . ."

"So it began and so it continued until his departure from Isfahan for Mashhad, which was at the beginning of the following year (1746), while he left in addition various fines for large sums of money to be paid both by the city and by Julfa within the space of some months.

"But the Armenian gentlemen at Julfa having learnt that the Tyrant was due to return to Isfahan at the end of that year, taught by what they had seen and experienced on the occasion of his first visit, many of them as a precaution got away their children out of the country, sending them by various caravans to Basra, Baghdad or other parts. This good fortune, allowed to the sons of the rich, was not granted either to the parents obliged to remain there to answer for any contingency, nor to the women, especially those married

¹ S.R., vol. 733, p. 430, and S.N.R., V, p. 180.

² S.N.R., V, p. 260.

³ Hardly correct, judging by the diary of the East India Company, quoted previously in this chapter.