

“make to cause him to surrender: after having with the like success entirely defeated the Dutch who, taking the place of the English, attempted jointly with the Persians from Bushire to effect a landing on the islet in question, where nearly all were massacred, only a few having saved themselves with difficulty by swimming; after all this, the bold, fierce rebel took on the enterprise of driving the Dutch themselves out of Kharg and succeeded in it to our profound disgrace. For, after having captured at sea some of their armed ships, he landed his men on that island” (Kharg) “without opposition and, after a siege of nine days (although without any cannon) he succeeded in making himself master of the township and compelling the fort to surrender at discretion,<sup>1</sup> sparing their lives, but not permitting the Dutch to carry away more than the clothes they had on their backs. Such a conquest renders this savage rebel extremely powerful, because besides 200 pieces of cannon, the arsenal, and a considerable store of war material, which the Dutch Company possessed there, he has now in his hands all the merchandise and money there was there, which is said to amount to about 4,000,000 (four million) without counting the plunder taken from the inhabitants. This capture of Kharg took place on the night of the first day of this year” (1766). . .

Bishop Cornelius then went on to throw light on the relations of Karim Khan with the English East India Company at that time:

“These sinister occurrences, just as they have interrupted all communication with Basra, also prevented me from replying before now to your last two letters, received by me from the Sac. Congregation some months ago—on 20.2.1765 and 15.3.1765. Before their receipt I had already planned to go to Julfa and—in order not to make a false step—I profited by an English gentleman going to Shiraz to see Karim Khan to send the Father, my companion,<sup>2</sup> there, in order to obtain from Karim Khan the assurance that I should not be molested by the Armenians. The business, however, fell out altogether to the contrary of my desires and hopes, because the Regent, being disgusted with the English—perhaps for not having succeeded in taming Mir Muhanna, not only declined to give audience to the English delegate, but in addition refused to receive his” (written) “petition,

<sup>1</sup> As quoted *in extenso* in the section of this work dealing with the Carmelite Residence on Kharg, *Cont. Basra Chron.* (i.e. Fr. Angelus Felix writing) gave this version of the surrender:

“However, after he” (i.e. Baron von Kniphausen) “had left the island Mir Muhanna did not cease to harass the Dutch, and again and again reduced them to extremities. While a very dangerous crisis was impending the fourth and last governor there, Mynheer Hontingh, a youth of proved talents but insufficiently experienced or wideawake for the straits of that time, had arrived. Then this craftiest of Arabs” (i.e. Mir Muhanna) “. . . invaded the island, broke through the fortifications with the assistance of treachery, and instantly setting up his tents at the gate of the fort summoned the Dutch governor, as if to make a compact and truce with him, and fix terms of peace. Too credulously Mynheer Hontingh went out of the fort to him, and there Mir Muhanna announced that the position of affairs was now changed, and the wheel of fortune had at length turned to his side, wherefore he (Mynheer Hontingh) should write to his officers and men that they were obliged to leave behind there all their possessions, and evacuate the citadel at once, without their arms. The Dutch garrison had to subscribe to the sentence, hard as it was, in order to escape from the claws of the Arabs. Having received and read the letters of Mynheer Hontingh the Dutch soldiers with downcast eyes . . . two by two issued from the fort . . . and the Arab-Persians joyously entered the foreign ‘plantation’, to reap the victory without any bloodshed. . . . The booty, which Mir Muhanna carried off, is computed at 30 lakhs” (1 lakh = 100,000 rupees) “of rupees, since, besides the property of the Company, there was much merchandise belonging to other persons put ashore there out of fear of Shaikh Sulaiman” (i.e. the chief of the K’ab Arabs). . . . “The Dutch, despoiled of everything, just covered with the clothes they wore, were sent in light boats to Bushire, whence after several months they proceeded by one of their ships to Batavia. . . . So ignominious an overthrow of the Dutch . . . for there were stationed there more than 100 Europeans to guard the fort, besides two large ships on the seashore with their sails spread . . . which, hardly had the Muhammadan flag been unfurled on the fort, hauled up their anchors and sailed away to Batavia, without waiting for news of their comrades. . . .”

<sup>2</sup> This is the remark on this international incident, which from another part of Persia Fr. J. B. de Bernardis, O.P., wrote from Julfa, 20.10.1765, to the Cardinal Prefect (*S.N.R.*, VII, p. 319):

“. . . Mgr the Bishop of Isfahan wrote from Bushire in August” (i.e. 1765) “that he was about to come to Isfahan, knowing that I had remained alone . . . he had sent a Carmelite Father for Julfa. The latter reached Shiraz in company of an interpreter of the English, a Catholic, but they were obliged by Karim Khan, who was in residence at Shiraz with his forces, to return to Bushire without being able to reach Isfahan. I am not informed as to the motive Karim Khan had had in inflicting this affront on the ‘Franks’, whom hitherto he had regarded with a good eye. Should he continue to show himself disgusted with the ‘Franks’ it will afford a motive for the heretical archbishop here to give vent to his ill-will against the Catholics, now that he has entire authority over Julfa. . . .”