

“not go and reside in Hamadan, a place in his diocese, where he has entire jurisdiction? . . .

“(c) . . . Basra . . . has always been a place for refuge for missionaries persecuted at Baghdad, and that on account of the considerable trade the (French) Royal Company of the Indies carries on there, and because it protects us efficaciously. “If I were to agree to the proposal of Mgr the Bishop, I should no longer have a place of refuge in my diocese. . . .

“(d) Your Eminence is too well acquainted with the position not to perceive that the proposal of Mgr the Bishop of Isfahan is altogether against the interests of France, which would never consent to such a dismemberment to the hurt of her subjects in India, who trade at Basra under her protection,¹ and by whom the mission up till now has always² been supported: and that I could never accept it without incurring the displeasure of the king, my sovereign, who has honoured me with the office of consul in order to sustain my status as bishop, both at Baghdad and at Basra, and to be of use to his subjects, who trade there.

“(e) Since the Bishop of Isfahan has so much zeal in searching for his scattered flock, he has no need to leave his own diocese: he can go all along the coast of the Persian Gulf, and will find a quantity of them at Bandar 'Abbas . . . where Europeans dwell in safety, and carry on their commerce, and where the Discalced Carmelites have a mission on which Fr. Urban of the province of Turin has worked for a long time past. In addition to that there are also Bandar or Bushire, and Bandar Rig, where there are a number of Armenian and even Dutch merchants. There M. the Bishop can retire in safety and retain his residence in his diocese. . . . I who live in the middle of my diocese and rule it by myself have no Latin 'subjects', save the French at Basra, who cannot be protected at Baghdad except by Frenchmen. . . .

“As your Eminence honoured me with your protection in Rome in recommending me to our Holy Father, the Pope, I take the liberty of telling you that I was accorded at the Court” (i.e. Paris) “a distinguished reception by the Ministers. Last Sunday I had the honour to be presented to the king by M. the Privy Seal. His Majesty” (i.e. Louis Quinze) “to whom I had the honour of presenting my compliments gave me a most gracious reception and has already given orders to the Ministers to obtain for me the greatest protection in my diocese. I hope to finish my business next month, and then I shall go and spend some time at Besançon, my birthplace and betake myself to Marseilles before the end of the winter, in order to embark and proceed to my diocese. . . . I have the honour to be, Monseigneur, your Eminence's most humble, most obedient servant, Fr. Emmanuel de S. Albert, Bishop of Baghdad. . . .”

The trouble caused to the Sac. Congregation by the inconsiderate proposal of Bishop Sebastian did not end with that crushing reply, for a Memorial³ sent by the Bishop of Baghdad to the French Ministers was handed by the French ambassador in Rome to the Cardinal Prefect:

“On the pretext of being unable to remain in his diocese because of the disturbances in Persia the Bishop of Isfahan has requested the Sac. Congregation de Propaganda Fide to separate the town of Basra from my diocese in order to retire there, as if it were a place within his own jurisdiction. The Sac. Congregation has written to me about it. I have replied that I should never consent to such a dismemberment, which would be not only

¹ But see *Cont. Basra Chron.* for 1763, already quoted: “. . . The French . . . so long as their trade is inactive, as it is up to today. . . .”

² Readers of this work will have noted that the mission at Basra was financially dependent on the Portuguese up till the 1650's, and only in 1670 was French assistance in Constantinople invoked by Fr. Angelus.

³ *S.R.*, vol. 759.