

although the authorities were not to know that this infection is spread only by the living rat-flea.<sup>1</sup> 'The rest of the days' of this worthy Bishop proved to be long, for he died in the Carmelite convent at Milan in 1797, aged 87 years; but they were not 'quiet' at the end:

"Mgr Cornelius of S. Joseph, the last Bishop of Isfahan, had a pension of 200 scudi "from the Sacr. Congregation, out of which 50 scudi were paid to the Administrator (of "the diocese). He also left a legacy for the Persian mission, which could not be put into "effect, and died in Milan *during the Revolution*."<sup>2</sup>

The course of administration of the diocese after the retirement of the Bishop may be told briefly. In his letter of 1.12.1771<sup>3</sup> Bishop Emmanuel of Baghdad acknowledged having

"received two letters from your Eminence, but the one was only to saddle me with, and "give me the care of the diocese of Isfahan in the absence of Mgr Cornelius. . . ."

A bare seven months later Mgr Emmanuel again wrote:<sup>4</sup>

"I have next to beseech your Eminence to release me from having charge and care of "the diocese of Isfahan, to which it is impossible for me to pay any attention. It appears "to me more fitting to put in charge of it (with the title of Vicar Apostolic) Fr. J. B. de "Bernardis, already a missionary at Julfa for 5 years. . . ."

From 20.11.1772 (*vide Acta* for 1778, fol. 309) Fr. John Baptist de Bernardis, O.P., was appointed by the Congregation administrator of the diocese: and he, 31.5.1774,<sup>5</sup> arrived at Basra 'on business affairs': for a year he taught Armenian to Frs. Aloysius and Fulgentius, and then, 26.7.1775, "passed to the better life".<sup>6</sup>

That young Armenian of Julfa whom Bishop Cornelius had sent to Rome in 1758 to study at the Urban College, named John son of Aratun, and who arrived back as a priest in Julfa, 7.10.1769,<sup>7</sup> by a decree of 8.6.1776 had been appointed administrator,<sup>8</sup> with faculties renewed, 1.12.1773. It is therefore difficult to understand how in their letter of 12.9.1777<sup>9</sup> the Sacr. Congregation addressed Fr. Louis Mary (Aloysius Maria) of the Heart of Jesus at Bushire in the following terms:

"The death of Fr. J. B. de Bernardis, O.P., formerly Vicar and administrator of the "diocese of Isfahan having been learnt, the Sacr. Congregation has deemed it its duty to "depute your Reverence in his place, as you will see from the decree and faculties which "are being sent you herewith: and this is with the object that that mission should not "remain without its head and director. After this present letter has reached you it will "be your business to take charge of the vacant administration. . . ."

Not only in 1777, but on 18.9.1779<sup>10</sup> the Sacr. Congregation again addressed Fr. Louis Mary by the style of 'Administrator of the Bishopric of Isfahan' and, noting that in a report

<sup>1</sup> Over twenty years previously Fr. Ferdinand of Jesus Mary, writing from Naples, 3.2.1750 (*S.N.R.*, V, p. 391), grumbled at the quarantine service. From Civita Vecchia he had arrived at Naples on a Friday at 10 p.m. and the ship had not been given 'free pratique' till Saturday, 4 p.m.,

"the commissioners at that capital being so slow in their work. . . . It is certain that in other ports from that hour "of the day when we arrived up till it got dark free 'pratique' would have been given to more than 40 vessels in that "time, so our French captain said. . . ." He grumbled too that "between freight and duties in Naples and this town " (Messina) for the two boxes of books I spent 10 ducats." But, next month, "here in Malta, all went well, seeing that "there are no customs-houses, and any Religious or secular can carry his effects straight to his dwelling. . . ."

<sup>2</sup> A 'summary' written after 1806 in *S.N.R.*, I, p. 334.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, VIII, p. 36, Mgr Emmanuel, 5.7.1772.

<sup>7</sup> In his letter, 2.8.1764 (*S.N.R.*, VII, p. 266) Mgr Cornelius recommended him to the Card. Prefect, and enclosed his certificate of baptism.

<sup>8</sup> *Vide* report of Cardinal Pamphilj in session of 7.9.1778, *Acta* for 1778, p. 309.

<sup>9</sup> *Lettere dalla Sacr. Cong.*, vol. 230, p. 520.

<sup>10</sup> *Idem*, vol. 234, pp. 600, 608.