

'one or two simple missionaries gifted with patience and prudence can manage better, by 'shutting their eyes and mouths at many things (which I should not be able, nor know 'how to do) without causing annoyance to the heretical Armenians. . . .'

To return to the general position of Catholics in Julfa and the country. Instead of more Dominicans to aid the Vicar General the Sacr. Congregation sent out Fr. John son of Aratun, an Armenian of Julfa by race who in 1758 had been sent by Fr. Cornelius (as he then was) to Leghorn and Rome and entered as a theological student in the Urban College. Now a priest of the Armenian rite he reached Julfa, 7.10.1769,<sup>1</sup> and went to reside at the church of the Annunciation, the 'Shariman' church—Fr. de Bernardis, O.P., added to this news the ironic remark:

"to the satisfaction of the Catholics and without opposition from the heretics, who will be "the more inexcusable now, if they do not become converted, seeing that the sole objection "always made against me is that they (the schismatics) do not hear their own tongue "spoken in church,<sup>2</sup> and in particular that we refuse to give them Holy Communion in "giving it in one species alone. . . ."

Somewhat inexplicably, however, another Dominican, a certain Fr. Norbert Secker (who had been still in Ravenna ready to start on 13.7.1768)<sup>3</sup> arrived in Julfa, 28.11.1769,

"sent from Mausil by way of Hamadan by Fr. Dominic Lanza, because the latter knew "that for five years and more I had been waiting anxiously for a companion (while Fr. John "from Propaganda had said that he could not leave Baghdad because of the rising of the "Arabs): we are all three now here (ready) to go wherever Mgr the Bishop of Isfahan "may direct . . .",

when, on the other hand, a minute was made in the Sacr. Congregation at the session of 7.7.1770:

"reply to him (Fr. de Bernardis) and repeat the order that he should proceed to Mausil "together with Fr. Secker, the more so as soon there will be two (ex)pupils . . ." (i.e. Armenians from the Urban College of Propaganda Fide).

In fact, the other Armenian youth taken with him to Rome for theological education by Mgr Cornelius in 1760 and by now ordained priest, Fr. John son of Isaac, who had got to Basra, 14.1.1771,<sup>4</sup> also reached Julfa, 13.7.1771. When it might have been expected that to remedy past deficiencies and negligences the four priests would work in unison, on the contrary discord arose between the two Dominicans and the two Uniat priests, and the archives for 1771 contain a number of complaints made to Rome by one against the other, on which it is undesirable to dwell fully here—Bishop Cornelius ascribed<sup>5</sup> the fault to Fr. Norbert Secker "who a few months after his arrival incited Fr. de Bernardis, the Vicar" (General) "to go to war with Fr. John son of Aratun." Writing<sup>6</sup> to the Cardinals of the Congregation the Dominican Vicar General charged Fr. John son of Aratun with a number of 'schismatic' practices, and with upsetting the norm for the Catholics by going solemnly to bless houses of heretics, with 'sending 'them consecrated hosts as the Armenians are wont to send to those who have a part in Masses,

<sup>1</sup> *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 563.

<sup>2</sup> Compare what the Armenian ex-pupil of the Urban College, Fr. John son of Isaac, wrote, 18.2.1771 (*S.N.R.*, VII, p. 604), to the Cardinal Prefect from Basra:

" . . . Not only the Catholics but the heretics too in these parts are so attached to the use of the literal" (i.e. colloquial) "tongue and to it being employed when officiating that, if an Armenian priest does not know it, he becomes discredited "with everybody as an ignoramus."

<sup>3</sup> *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 496.

<sup>5</sup> *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 631, 30.6.1771.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* his own letter, 18.2.1771, *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 604.

<sup>6</sup> *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 572.