

“they had. I think it well to say something special about the town, because, as I have said, “it is the capital of the whole realm.” (This is Qazwin, of which he speaks in 1574, not “Isfahan, which became capital only with Shah ‘Abbas I.)

“It is situated in a great plain, not very far distant from some low mountains, and near “it is a hill, on which it can be seen that in ancient times there was a castle: although there “are no walls, the circuit (of the town) is some 15 miles or more . . . there is almost a “short day’s journey from a place named Casan [*sic*] to Qazwin, but an infinite number of “gardens and empty spaces on the way. There are 45 outlying hamlets, and in each “hamlet a bazar, so that it can be said that each of these hamlets is a little vill in itself “abounding in everything, but particularly in things to eat. The climate is most pleasant, “both in winter and summer, the fruit superior in quality to that of any other country.

“This is a trading town, merchandise and caravans concentrating here from all parts “of the kingdom; but at present mercantile business is suffering greatly on account of the “state of war, in which Your Highness is with the Turks; two bales of silk (in which the “country is very rich) previously worth 400 sequins are now selling for less than 200. “Spices come by way of Hurmuz, but there is nobody that looks at them; because their “usual market was Aleppo; and now that there is no one with whom to make contracts “of sale, they are lying abandoned. For a short time past small amounts have been taken “to Constantinople by land, and thence to — (unrecognizable) being distributed “through Poland and going on through — and thence to Denmark, Sweden and “other places; but the expenses are so heavy that the profits are very small, even if there “be no loss, some Armenians having made the experiment: and I have found them (the “spices) in Tabriz and in Leopoli” (i.e. Poland). “Such business will be seen the more “likely to cool off, as an English gentleman, named Mr. Thomas from London, who had “come to Qazwin with large quantities of woollen goods by way of Muscovy under the “style of ‘ambassador from the Queen’, having happened to die, the governor of Shirwan “detained his goods, so that the companions (of Mr. Thomas) had to spend a large sum of “money in order to regain possession of them. Thus for this reason too it should not be “hoped that business will be likely to continue.

“In the province of Khurasan there are silk stuffs, especially velvets which can rival “those of the Genoese and from other places. They also manufacture satins and damasks, “but not with that finish and beauty which they are wont to have in Italy: and they are “cheap. In the whole land of Persia there are no mines of gold or silver, nor even of “copper, but only of iron: those who bring silver from Turkey into Persia gain 20 per cent, “and on gold pieces 14 to 15 per cent: on copper sometimes 15 and sometimes 20 per cent. “It is true that the expenses are heavy.

“Now, coming to the finances of this king, it appears to me necessary to consider chiefly “the revenues he has as the main thing. Though usually in all countries these are ob- “tained from imports as their principal basis, since there are no import duties in this “country, as I have told Your Highness, I will say that on produce of the soil, such as “wheat and other grain, the king gets one-seventh: from vineyards and pastures, on 1,000 “*orchi* [*? sic*] of land he gets 60 shahi yearly, which in our money make 4 gold sequins each “and a little over. These *orchi* are measures of theirs, there may be upwards of 100 to a “field (so that 1,000 would equal 9 fields; and thus they pay little less than half a ducat for “a field): on houses 5 per cent (as tribute from the Christians in some districts 5 ducats per “household, in some other 7 or 8, according to the value and productivity of the districts “they inhabit): on animals, for every 40 sheep yearly they pay 15 bisti, which in our money “make 3 lire, 15 soldi, while on male animals they pay 10 bisti annually, which in our “money make 2 lire 10 soldi.

“From these sources are obtained the revenues of the king, which are said at present to “exceed the sum of three millions gold.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare narrative B:

“The revenues of the kingdom of Persia, though I have been unable to obtain details of each province separately