

“consenting to surrender and, in order to avoid having to grant it mercy, he would not enter it, but went off directly he had taken it. It is situated in a strong position. Among the many others he had killed there the first were five hundred Darwish-es, the name by which they call their holy men.

“Four or five days after our arrival the Khan invited us to dinner. The building, in which he resided, was ancient and rather good. Before we entered the room where he was we passed through three rooms, two of them very large and full of Persians who were sitting on rich carpets and bowed to us as we passed. In the third room he was sitting with 25 or 30 *grandees* of the district and his officials, all sitting on the ground on carpets of considerably greater value than those in the other room. He made us sit at his side, first myself, then the Fathers, after them our interpreters. After some complimentary enquiries and replies the cloths were brought: that of the Khan, with whom two or three of the leading men and I sat, was of brocade, the others were of silk occupying the whole room. The other two rooms first traversed were also full of guests. The dinner was of various kinds of rice, meat, poultry; for us, who did not eat meat, eggs: it could not be compared, however, to the banquets in these countries” (of Europe). “At the meal he had wine given us, but excused himself for not partaking of it: because of his poor health he was not drinking any at that time. At the end of the dinner, which soon finished, we took our leave, begging him to allow us to depart. He promised to do so, but kept us for two weeks in Shamakhi, either to entertain us or because he awaited some reply from the Shah. All those days he always sent us food, his (table) cloths, water and some tit-bit from his own food, which there they consider a favour. He sent some of his men to visit us, and before our departure we went once more to visit him, though not to dine. He sent us as a present five horses—very good from what they told us—and 100 sequins. We thanked him but would not accept them, sending the apology that our Rule did not permit us to receive anything when we had what was necessary, as at present when His Holiness had furnished us with it. His men said that he would take it ill, should we not accept them, as in those countries it was considered an affront to spurn gifts, particularly those of the great. Many times they begged us to accept, and with this object two of his chief men came to persuade us. We told them that there was no cause to resent” (our refusal), “seeing that this was not to spurn his favours, but to carry out our Rule and what we had promised God. I think that he was so insistent about it, because he suspected that we would not accept his gifts from being dissatisfied with what he had done for us, and out of fear lest the Shah should take it ill that he had not been obsequious and made us gifts. So, seeing that they were unable to make us yield, he sent his secretary for us to give him a paper in my handwriting to the effect that he had sent us that present and we had declined to accept it: and I complied. Perceiving that he did not give us leave to set off, I sent out to find carriage-horses, but we found none, on account of the ruined state of the town, as I have said. Then I sent to beg the Khan to have horses found at our own expense, as we could no longer wait without disobedience to the instructions of His Holiness, our master. At once he sent horses for ourselves and camels for our effects.

“With our declining to accept gifts, and our not asking them for anything and fending for ourselves, they commenced to have respect for us, as in the beginning on seeing us so poor” (ly garbed) “and barefooted they had thought it was from penury: and so the peasants used to say to us that, when we got to his Majesty, he would give us good and rich clothing.

“On the 19th October we quitted Shamakhi: the Khan sent one of his men to accompany us and provide us with food for the journey. We travelled for 9 days, *almost always through deserted country*, without ever coming across any towns, save for some small hamlet. On the second day (from Shamakhi) we crossed a rather large river called the Shirwan, which rises in Greater Armenia. All the rest of the countryside is flat and fertile, but uninhabited, as I have said, on account of it being hitherto in the frontier zone between