

"continually coming from the Indies and Persia by way of Aleppo.¹ I opened the packet which was going for the Englishman, having left instructions with the Fathers to open all letters that might come for him. One of the agents had died, and the other had gone, so I posted two other good ones, and wrote to the Father how they should negotiate with the king of Persia as to certain business which the viceroy" (of Naples) "was writing to the Englishman to discuss. Dominic Fernandes had been looted. I had him lent 100 scudi by a merchant so that he might continue his journey.

"I made a bargain with a captain of a ship from Marseilles, which was due to sail from Alexandretta at once, and gave him 17 piastres for the passage with food.² On 26.5.1608, after dinner I left Aleppo with some Portuguese and Venetians . . . in Alexandretta I dwelt in the house of the English vice-consul, Laurence Boche³ . . . in Alexandretta there were 20 houses for the ships that came there from Marseilles, Venice and England. On the 2nd June in the evening we embarked, and in that same ship there embarked two Portuguese and that Englishman who was coming back from the Mogul's dominions, and had obtained" (the concession for) "the ports from that monarch.⁴ On the 3rd we left, and it appeared to us like being in Heaven when we saw ourselves at sea out of the land of the Turks, where every moment I was fearing to be recognized. . . . Twice we got ready to fight galliots, another time the wind took us 10 miles off Tunis, and we thought then we might be made slaves. . . . The captain landed me on the 20th July in Corsica on the beach 12 miles from Bastia, where we arrived next day . . . the following day the galleys from Genoa arrived, and they disembarked me at Naples on 25.7.1608. . . ."

This graphic narrative is valuable in that, among other matters of interest for the student of oriental history, it shows that in the middle of 'Abbas I's reign from the capital to the western or Turkish frontier was a desolate, abandoned tract, and the road far from secure on account of highway robbery and footpads; (ii) it shows that Baghdad had cut itself off from allegiance to Constantinople, the province of Aleppo in Syria also in a state of revolt, confirming at first hand the news reports from Constantinople quoted in previous pages of this work; (iii) it is arresting and impressive in its testimony to the utter lawlessness and devastation of a wide border zone between the two Muslim states resulting from the raiding policy over years of guerrilla warfare.

Fr. Paul Simon was still on board ship when, 20.7.1608,⁵ he wrote to the colleagues he had left behind in Persia in order to give them such news as he had:

"The day before yesterday, off Cagliari in Sardinia, we had news from a barque that was coming from there that there were 18 galleys from Naples and Sicily and that they were there awaiting those of Carlo D'Oria, the Florentine galleys, those of the Pope, and eight from Marseilles, which had gone to take to Malta the brother of the Duc de Guise; but it is not known for what place" (they are to sail), "perhaps for Tunis and Algiers, as all those parts of Barbary have revolted against the Sultan of Turkey and driven out the Governors he had sent to govern them. It is certain that the Emperor has not made peace with the Turks, nor will he make it: the Signory of Venice has armed and fitted out 100 galleys, they say, in order to conduct an expedition against the Turks, and it is said that the Signory has entered the league of the Christian Princes which His Holiness has made against the Turk, which is easy to credit, seeing that it is the king of France on whom the Signory of Venice relies: and, in order that the peace and goodwill between Spain and France may be firm, they say that a great marriage is being discussed between

¹ This is of interest as an attempt in 1604 to set up a quicker and more regular postal service between India and Spain: under the chapter 'Basra' in this work will be found more on that subject regarding the middle 1650's.

² Note cost of a sailing passage, Alexandretta-Marseilles, in 1608.

³ Alexandretta an English consular post in 1608, and the term or rank "vice-consul" in use: can the name be Butcher or Bookey?

⁴ Who can this enterprising Englishman have been?

⁵ O.C.D. 238 c.