

“him annually: and, in order to have it unencumbered, as the Persians have it, he had himself enrolled as a ‘slave’ of the king: for these latter—the slaves—receive the payment integrally of what is assigned them, while for those who do not have themselves inscribed as ‘slaves’ ten per cent is deducted from their pay. Notwithstanding this employment, Don Robert desired to get back to his home and caused a letter to be written from England by his parents, who informed him that Don Anthony, his brother, was being employed by the king of Spain with the post of general of a force: he (Robert) spread this news about the Court, and showed it to the Shah and this letter was certified as genuine by the Carmelite and Augustinian Fathers. He took advantage of the occasion to say to the king that, in view of the high position to which his brother had risen, and in view of the friendship which his Majesty had contracted with the Christian princes, it was now the time to negotiate a league against the Sultan of Turkey and that, were he given letters for the Christian princes, he (Robert Sherley) would assuredly get this done. Impelled by this motive the Shah sent him as ambassador to all the Christian Princes, and in particular to His Holiness, giving them an account of all his undertakings against the Turks up to this day, and begging His Holiness to unite them against the Turks. . . .”

As regards the Circassian lady, the story as taken by the author of *En Persia* (vol. III) from the MSS. *History of the Discalced Carmelites* differs considerably from that quoted above, which made her a bought slave, and is to the effect that Sampsonia, daughter of a Circassian chieftain named Sampsoff Iscaon, and born about 1589, schismatic Greek or Georgian by religion, at the age of four was brought to the Persian Court by her paternal aunt, who had become a favourite wife of Shah 'Abbas, and grew up at Isfahan. By all accounts she was of handsome presence, a fine horsewoman, took pleasure in the feminine arts such as embroidery and painting. In his attendance at Court Robert Sherley had got to know and fall in love with her. The Shah's estrangement and Sherley's period of reclusion at Qazwin had separated them, until his sudden dispatch on this mission to Europe and readmission to the Shah's presence, if not his favour, brought matters to a head and determined him on immediate marriage and departure with his bride, a course which fortunately had the all-important approval of Sampsonia's aunt, and must have therefore had the connivance of 'Abbas himself.

In contradiction to the statement by the writer quoted above that Robert Sherley had “lived as a Catholic, been to confession and Communion once a year”, the MSS. *Hist. Miss.* of Fr. Eusebius and other Carmelite authors (from original manuscripts no longer available or, at any rate, noticed by the present compiler) assert that as the result of intercourse with the Carmelites, i.e. between the dates of the meeting at Qazwin, 14th November, 1607, and the end of January 1608, he came to discuss matters of religion with them, and to abjure his errors, and be received into the Catholic Church by Fr. John Thaddeus, and that at the same time Sampsonia also became a convert after due preparation by the same Father: that, having been received into the Church, they were there married the same day, 2nd February, 1608, Feast of the Purification: that the same day the newly married couple set off for Europe.

“to Persia, such as an English clergyman who stayed for some months in his house, and John Meldinal (? sic Londinel) “also an English heretic, sent previously by the Queen to the king of the Moguls” (i.e. the Mogul Emperor at Delhi) “to obtain from him certain seaports in the East Indies, where the English and Dutch ships would be able to withdraw with the booty they took from the Portuguese. He (Sherley) presented him to the king of Persia both on his going out and on his return. There are indications that while Don Robert was in Persia he caused the esteem which the king of Persia had for His Holiness and the king of Spain to diminish, and that of the king of England and the Dutch to rise. Through the Augustinian Fathers the king of Spain wrote to the Shah of Persia to drive him out of his country “because he was his (the king of Spain's) enemy. He ('Abbas I) would not do so. Finally he” (the king of Spain) “ordered Luis Pereira de la Cerda, his ambassador, whom three years ago he sent to the Shah, to arrange to get him out of Persia dead or alive, regardless of expense. Don Robert agreed to leave, because the ambassador of Spain “promised him 4,000 scudi a year, and other rewards, showing him the instructions of his king that he might do this—“although it did not take effect. Pope Clement also tried to get him away through the intermediary of the Emperor “and Mgr Ferero, Apostolic Nuncio at Prague, presented a memorial to the Emperor for this object. . . . At the time “when the Discalced (Carmelite) Fathers reached Persia the Shah no longer treated him as he had previously done. “His pay came in slowly. . . . I believe it is inexpedient for the service of God and Holy Church that this Englishman “should return to Persia.”