

"On Thursday in the octave of Pentecost, when the gates of the city were opened at daybreak, we finally arrived safe and sound in the city of Isfahan. Fr. John (Thaddeus) was in a small house given him by the king's officials after they had taken away from him that in which Fr. Paul (Simon) had left him, and, this house being known to few, it caused us to wander for long through the city before we could find it. Having finally arrived and dismounted we found Fr. John in not too good health: and when he saw us in that dress he was not a little surprised and even more so the others in the house, who could not be persuaded that we were friars of his Order. . . .

"The Father had as his companions a brother, whom Fr. Vincent, still at Hurmuz, had sent from there when he had clothed him as a choir-brother, and besides another Indian youth, who has taken the habit since, on the 4th July, as well as a Syrian servant who used to go out and buy the necessaries. . . . The same day there came to see us the Fr. Prior of the Augustinians and the Mihmandar, whom we both received in the Franciscan habit, having had no time to make up so quickly our own habits from the cloth we had brought with us. . . . Late that same day the Mihmandar sent to tell us that he had already reported everything to the Shah, from whom he had obtained the appointment of an audience for after dinner the next day. When we were all ready to start off for it there came a fresh intimation that it was impossible to see the Shah that day and that, as he was shortly leaving for the" (encampment of the) "army, we should have to follow him there, where we should be able to have every facility for a talk with him. Fr. John (Thaddeus) replied to this that we were poor and had not the wherewithal, neither tent, nor horses for such a journey; but the answer was given that the king had been notified of this, and by his order the Mihmandar would provide for everything. We were therefore leaving it at that decision, but very upset to think of the numerous inconveniences, the expense and discomforts this journey would cause us, when on Sunday there came yet another notice to say that the Shah, regretting to give us such trouble, had said that he wanted in any case to see us before he departed, and accordingly the Mihmandar himself came to tell us the same and give us an appointment for the following day."

To the Mihmandar the new missionaries explained and showed what poor presents they had brought with them, not daring on such a journey to risk valuable articles. The Mihmandar chose three mirrors, two picture-frames, a painting of our Lady, a model of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, a watch, a fine case of knives, and some crystals and spectacles. On the Monday, having refused the horses offered by the Mihmandar, whom they told that on account of their profession of poverty they preferred to walk on foot like poor men, they set off for the place indicated, a villa some three miles outside Isfahan, whence the Shah was due to start that day for the camp of the army: the road was dusty, the sun extremely hot.

"We arrived about 20 o'clock¹ to learn that the monarch was at the baths, awaited by an innumerable number of mounted men. The Mihmandar, who had promised to introduce us, did not arrive till we were already in conversation with the Shah: so, drawing to one side we proceeded to wait an hour until suddenly the king came out, preceded by his master of the horse, but followed by more than 300 lads from his saraglio: walking hastily he was going to mount his horse when, having caught sight of us, he suddenly stopped and signed to us to approach. Calling for a man staying at his Court with the title of² Agent of the Grand Duke" (? of Tuscany) "to serve as interpreter on this occasion, the Shah at once gave us his hand, which we all three kissed, and asked what news we brought. To that we answered that the Pope, greatly rejoicing at the news brought back by Fr. Paul (Simon) our Religious the previous year, in order to assure his Majesty of his desire to afford him ('Abbas I) satisfaction in those matters for which he had sought it in

¹ Probably about 3 p.m. by *dasteh* time of the Persians.

² His assumed name was Michelangelo Coray, originally Fathullah, a Syrian Catholic from Aleppo, on whose advice at this time 'Abbas relied considerably.