

"to have respect paid to persons dispatched from Persia and in addition to see to it that
 "letters should pass through Aleppo to their proper address in Italy without being inter-
 "cepted: he added that, as during all this expedition all his secretaries were away with the
 "troops, he would have it written by his historiographer, who was a person eminently
 "qualified for composing letters and would do it better than anyone else. Having praised
 "such intentions, Fr. John finally observed, in apology for the Religious who was to go (to
 "Rome) not having come to see his Majesty, that, as there were spies innumerable of the
 "Sultan of Turkey in Isfahan, he was anxious lest, being recognized, this Religious should
 "afterwards come to harm in that country. To that the Shah remarked that precautions
 "were all to the good in (public) affairs, even though in this case there was no risk. He
 "then enquired when the Father (Vincent) would leave and by what road: to which Fr.
 "John answered that he would leave at once and was thinking of going by Aleppo, since
 "that was the shortest route seeing that it was of much moment in his Majesty's service
 "that the Father (Vincent) should arrive in Europe as quickly as possible. Having expressed
 "his entire approval the Shah said that the letter for the Consul would be very apposite
 "and, repeating that he would have it dispatched at once, he went off.

"Things being therefore in this position, on Monday the 20th of July the Fathers had
 "information that the Shah would undoubtedly be leaving on the night of the following
 "day: and so Fr. John, who from his last discussion with the king had got to know that the
 "latter desired to show Fr. Vincent some mark of politeness before the latter left, judged it
 "well to go with him to salute his Majesty and take final leave of him. Therefore on the
 "following morning both mounted and rode off to find the king outside the city in a garden,
 "where, according to the news they had, the Shah was stopping. They met him at the
 "gate, going out for exercise with two servants only: when they caught sight of him they
 "halted and from afar saluted him. He at once sent off to them a servant, who is a very
 "great favourite of his, to inform them that the letters were already written and that he was
 "going for a ride for a short time and would shortly return and therefore would await
 "them at this same place. The Fathers promptly assented, and after they had waited a great
 "while the servant in question came back alone with a message notifying them that the
 "Shah would not come back for many hours, and in the meantime they might well go off
 "to their house and then return at their convenience in the evening. The Fathers went off
 "and in accordance with the appointment they returned later in the day, when they met
 "on the road the Shah, who greeted them and bade them get on their horses and follow,
 "which they did: having gone on a little ahead the Shah dismounted in a drive where there
 "was a large fishpond with a broad water-channel issuing from it. Sitting down on the
 "bank of this, the Shah at once called for the Fathers. When they had approached, he
 "bade them sit down near him and enquired of them what they usually ate, and whether
 "at that time they were eating fish; to this the Fathers replied that at all seasons they could
 "eat the fish in question. Immediately he gave orders for some to be fished out forthwith:
 "when this had been done, and a fair quantity of fish of all sizes caught, he had a fire lighted
 "in the place where they were, and then the fish cooked and supper prepared in the same
 "spot. When this had been done, the Shah in person busied himself in preparing and
 "cooking many of the fish with his own hands and then, causing a number of carpets to be
 "spread in a small space close to the public road, but a little way off, he had supper laid
 "out there. When the Shah had seated himself, he bade the Fathers and others, grandees
 "and among them the two Pashas who were also present, sit down and eat. At the first
 "cup of wine which he drank the Shah, having invited Fr. John to make the sign of
 "the Cross, said in a loud voice that he was drinking to the health of the Sovereign
 "Pontiff.

"After that the king wanted to know where were the other two Fathers recently arrived
 "from Rome and, on Fr. John answering that he had left them at the house, the Shah at
 "once gave instructions for them to be summoned with great urgency: and so two men
 "having been sent off to fetch them in haste and having reached the convent one hour after