

this the Fathers had been aided by that agent or envoy of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Syrian Fathullah, *alias* Michelangelo Coray, already mentioned, above whose signature, dated 14.5.1611, a written declaration is recorded in the report of Fr. Redempt quoted.

To this individual, a good Catholic, 'Abbas I had given his confidence and favour so freely in appreciation of the Syrian's counsel and knowledge of affairs of the world that, when in 1612 that reckless agent for the sale of the silk in Spain, Jangiz Baig, returned without its proper value to Persia, the angry Shah not only had him killed at once but gave a formal order for all the property, real and personal, lands, slaves, children and even wife of the said 'Jangiz Baig' to be handed over to Michelangelo Coray. Such largesse at the expense of a Muslim and Persian in favour of a Christian foreigner caused surprise among the courtiers; but Coray himself soon realized that he was expected to make a return for it by embracing Islam. To his honour he preferred to safeguard his soul and, having been commissioned by the Shah to inspect the mines all over Persia and see how they were being exploited,¹ after having been to confession and Communion in the chapel of the Carmelites, one day he departed south with a large number of attendants, giving out that he would begin his survey in that region. When, however, he turned away from the district of the mineral deposits (possibly lead and silver on the borders of Kirman province, or sulphur in maritime Fars) and approached the sea, his followers became suspicious and plotted to kill him: it was with difficulty that with a few Christian servants he escaped inside the Portuguese fortified area at Gāmburun, shot at by Persian guards on the frontier: and thence in due course he was enabled to sail for Goa. Although this untoward result was largely, if not altogether, due to his own misplaced zeal for Islam, Shah 'Abbas was hurt in his pride by this flight and escape of his confidential adviser: and there will be noted hereafter the importance the Persians gave it, and it assumed in the story of the Portuguese settlements.

In regard to the Armenians, and in particular those known as the 'Frank' Armenians from the district of Nakhchiwan near Erivan, a number of whom had been among those transplanted to the new Julfa and for whom 'Abbas I had had a church built and mooted the appointment from Rome of a bishop or 'khalifeh' already mentioned, there were even in 1611 significant references to the ominous loans made them by the Shah, to which Fr. John Thaddeus had called attention in his notes on the character of 'Abbas I.

In a letter² the Praepositus General in Rome remarked:

" . . . I am sorry about that debt of the poor Armenians, so harassed by the king, and, "should the Lord not send us some money to come to their aid, I shall arrange for a letter "to be dispatched to the Shah 'ne gravet Christianos debitores'" (that he do not burden the Christian debtors).

It seems likely that to this last intention having been implemented is to be attributed the motive for that intervention on behalf of some Chaldaeans by Pope Paul V in his Brief of 3.11.1612 (Arch. Vat. Arm. XLV, vol. 8, p. 60, No. 165), which began:

"Illustrious and most puissant Shah Abbahas, king of the Persians, greeting and the "light of Divine grace. The fatherly charity, by which We are moved over the freedom "from harm of Our beloved sons the Christian faithful dwelling in the very extensive "dominions subject to Your Highness, whom We have frequently already recommended "to You, urges Us to commend them again, as effectively as possible, to Your royal bene- "volence, inasmuch as it was reported to Us that they were so oppressed with heavy penalties "that, because of their extreme indigence, those in particular who are called Assyrians or "Jacobites and inhabit Isfahan will be compelled, unless You take pity on their misfortune, "to sell their very children in order to pay the impositions levied. This matter grieves

¹ Another trait of intelligent activity on the part of 'Abbas I. Actually the mineral deposits of Persia worth exploitation in the modern sense, particularly for sale abroad, are negligible—excluding oil, of course.

² See *En Persia*, vol. III, p. 90.