

"With regard to the transaction which You wish to be done by merchants with Your subjects We shall be careful to take action with Our dearest son in Christ Philip their king, who, We know, has a very great regard for You: and We trust he will oblige You willingly in all possible details. We beg God Almighty with all the love of Our heart, to grant Your Highness true and utter happiness and to open the way leading to the life that His only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ by His own death gained for the human race by the shedding of His most precious blood.

"Given at Rome at S. Peter's under the Fisherman's ring the day before the Ides of September 1611 (=12.9.1611) in the seventh year of Our Pontificate."

Somewhere about March 1613 the Bishop of Cyrene (Mgr de Gouvea) must have reached Hurmuz: there is this mention of him in letters of Fr. Vincent:<sup>1</sup>

"16.4.1613 to Fr. Benignus, Isfahan. The Bishop of Cyrene, Fra. Antonio, will leave here within a month. Immediately after his arrival in his presence Don Jorge" (governor of Hurmuz) "summoned to a council all the officials of his Majesty" (the king of Spain and Portugal) "and the Religious: and Fr. Leander and I were also there: and he proposed to remove the 'curusi'<sup>2</sup> on the Persians and Catholic Armenians: and it was decided in the affirmative. As to how to recognize the latter the Bishop says that they will be those who carry his certificate to be such, and in his absence or of his death the certificate of the prior of the Augustinians at Isfahan. But Don Jorge said that in that respect he would do as he liked, because the provision made by his Majesty" (i.e. the king of Spain) "applies indiscriminately to the Armenian subjects of the Shah of Persia. The Bishop bears from His Holiness the title of 'Visitor of the Armenians of Persia'. . . . On the first day that I went to visit him, in the presence of the Captain Don Jorge and of the vicar" (i.e. forane of Hurmuz) "he told me that His Holiness had inserted in the Brief regarding him that he had nothing to do with us" (i.e. the Carmelites).<sup>3</sup> "I answered him that His Holiness had done this because he knew very well that, even without his writing so, it was for us to show that we are his" (the Bishop's) "servants by deeds and words. He shows much good will towards us and we respond in like fashion. He is very affable and your Reverence should use many nice words and compliments to him. . . . Should his lordship try to make some innovation as regards the Syrians, who are under our superintendence and order them to place themselves under the Augustinian Fathers, your Reverence should not agree to it . . . because he has not the power to do this, not being their prelate, but only their visitor. . . . Since we are exempt from his visitation, so too will be the Christians in our charge. . . . Finally, everything can be arranged tactfully."

3.6.1613. "The Bishop of Cyrene, that Augustinian Father who used to be in Persia, was awaited here by his Fathers very eagerly, for they hoped that he would bring them some measure from His Holiness directed against us: and, although I believe that he attempted to obtain this in Madrid, they did not listen to him and so their designs are frustrated. . . . He came to our oratory several times and once conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation. . . . He has already left for Persia."

In his 'Report' already cited<sup>4</sup> Fr. Redempt of the Cross mentions:

"From Hurmuz the Bishop of Cyrene wrote that he had been appointed Bishop of Cyrene and Visitor of the Armenian Church. This caused great alarm and fright among

<sup>1</sup> O.C.D. 239 b.

<sup>2</sup> The word used in the Italian original. But evidently some Persian word is intended, perhaps *khuruj* (*kharraj*) in the sense of a tax, exit tax.

<sup>3</sup> For Latin text of the instructions, dated 29.11.1612, see Appendix of Latin Briefs: it is copied from the *Bullarium* of the Carmelites, vol. III, p. 428.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Fr. Florencio del Niño Jesus in *En Persia*, vol. II, p. 93.