

hending that it might turn to his disadvantage to break entirely with the king of Spain and Portugal, 'Abbas I at first replied in the negative. But at that juncture there arrived at Hurmuz a new Captain, Don Luis de Gama. From olden time, i.e. early 1500's, there had been a prohibition by the king of Portugal against any Muslim or Gentile sailing the straits without a written licence from the Captain of Hurmuz, on pain of death; but, because of the damage this measure would do to the Treasury of the possession, and also because of the complications it would have introduced into relations with the Persian mainland (seeing that those infringing the regulation were subjects of the Shah) it had not been observed. Imperfectly acquainted with the reasons for allowing the *status quo* to continue, and punctilious by character, Don Luis de Gama had over 60 men put to the sword early in 1614 on altercations arising over non-possession of the licence by the crews of some barques loaded with grain belonging to traders from the coastal village of Nakhilu, subject to the jurisdiction of the Khan of Shiraz. This tactless, as well as cruel, act produced exasperation in Persia: and there were other incidents that rankled, one concerning a Persian envoy to India who had been maltreated.

So the Khan of Shiraz again pressed 'Abbas I for sanction to attack and received a guarded reply to the effect that he might do so, but would pay for it with his head, should the event turn out unfortunate and unsuccessful. Nothing daunted, Imam Quli Khan then sent a herald to the Captain of Hurmuz, declaring war on account of the above injuries and also extortionate dues levied from Persians, and demanding, too, the surrender of the Syrian Fathullah (Michelangelo Coray): he made preparations for his campaign throughout the month of June (1614), calculating that by the end of it the Persian traders usually resident in Hurmuz would have got away to avoid the summer heat and be safe from reprisals. He collected altogether some 12,000 men on land, 4 ships with 300 *terrada* capable of carrying 30 men each, and at the fall of August (1614) began to move, first occupying the island of Qishm, whence Hurmuz drew its water supply. All the other islands were emptied of their inhabitants: and the Portuguese fort at Gāmbnun besieged. But, notwithstanding its weak fortifications, for four months and after various assaults the Persian forces failed to take it. Hearing of the obstinate defence Shah 'Abbas sent orders to Imam Quli Khan, who had his headquarters at Lar, to retire his troops and treat for peace. Thrice the Captain of Hurmuz had tried to relieve the garrison, on the second occasion a ship taking fire with the munitions it carried, while the other vessels were driven back by the wind (it will be recalled that a large part of the siege took place during the monsoon season, when sailing communications between Hurmuz and Goa were normally suspended). By the time the third flotilla from Hurmuz had set out the fortress had already (23.12.1614) made an honourable capitulation, i.e. the 25 [? *sic*—250] survivors of the garrison. But it is asserted that the Persians had lost 4,000 (?) men in the fruitless assaults and, anticipating that they would be taunted with the small numbers of the defenders, violated the terms of the capitulation by requiring that the Portuguese prisoners should buy their lives by apostatizing. Most of the captives refused and were slain, the rest made 'slaves', as it was usually termed.¹

Elated at the success of his enterprise the Khan of Shiraz, when communicating it to the Saah, whose fickle and dangerous humours on the point of implicit obedience to his instructions he well knew, thought to cover himself by entering on negotiations for peace, but in such a way that they would result in nothing.

He therefore made use of Frs. Leander and Louis Francis, who had been at Shiraz, to carry his terms to the Captain of Hurmuz: these were:

- (a) Half the produce of the Customs of Hurmuz to be ceded to him (Imam Quli Khan).
- (b) Michelangelo Coray (the Syrian Agent of the Grand Duke of Tuscany) with all his effects to be surrendered to him.
- (c) Youths coming from India to Persia via Hurmuz not to be detained there.
- (d) A certain Muslim tribe, which had taken refuge at Hurmuz, to be handed over to him.

¹ Fr. John Thaddeus' letter, 3.1.1619, O.C.D. 237 m., says: "The Persians . . . killed 60 or 70 Portuguese: the others left alive were tied with a piece of wood round their necks and taken on parade through all Persia. . . ."