

Poland and, seeing the Shah's favour to Poles, moved the Praepositus General of the Carmelites to dispatch four Polish Fathers of the Order back with him to Persia: he fell ill while in Poland.

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Sir R. Sherley had hardly returned to Persia in 1615 when a new factor came into play which was rapidly to make a vast difference to the virtual monopoly hitherto held by the Religious communities at Isfahan in interpreting Europe to Persia, and Persia to Europe: in November 1614 the East India Company's Council in India decided to dispatch to Persia for the collection of information useful commercially, and to solicit the Shah's licence for ships of the Company to visit ports in his dominions, Messrs. Richard Steel and John Crowther.<sup>1</sup> These two gentlemen reached Isfahan, 14.9.1615, and stayed there 25 days only<sup>2</sup>—"half of which time was spent in following of Sir Robert Sherley for the Firmanes text . . ."—getting a Farman: the former carried a letter to Sir R. Sherley requesting his assistance to Mr. Steel in his mission. As to this 'farman' copies of it were brought to India by John Crowther. From Isfahan, 9.10.1615, Richard Steel wrote a description of the monies, weights and measures of Persia and native commodities to the Factories of the Company at Agra and Surat before returning to India.

By December 1616 the first "Factors" of the East India Company had "just" landed in Persia: at first they made Jashk on the coast of Makran the base for their ships "whence they "were going to visit a superior governor eight days' journey away."<sup>3</sup>

Their relations with, or attitude towards, the Portuguese were already hostile, 17.12.1616:

" . . . two days short of Mukhistan Edward Connock, chief of the intended Factory in "Persia, and his council"

were directing the master of their ship to proceed to Gāmbnun, if 'annoyed by the hostility of 'the Portuguese, reported to be preparing to attack the ship':<sup>4</sup> and a week later the same "Chief in Persia" instructed the master to bring his ship to Kuhistak, ten leagues from Hurmuz. In this letter Mr. Connock expressed his

"hope in another year to settle even in the Portewgal's bosom, in the glorious Port of "Gāmbnun":<sup>5</sup>

and by 15.1.1617 the Factors of the Company were writing from Jashk of the "new settled Factory in Persia".

It would appear<sup>6</sup> that Sir R. Sherley had retained as an agent of his own in Isfahan a Mr. Robbins, an Englishman: on 17.1.1617 the noted Sir Thos. Roe was writing from India on behalf of the Company to this Mr. Robbins, soliciting his good offices with the Shah to establish the recently commenced trade between England, India and Persia, and giving a sketch of the privileges desired by the Company.

By March 1617 Mr. Connock, who in 1616 had been instructed to proceed from Jashk to Isfahan in company of Mr. Barker, was already residing in Isfahan:<sup>7</sup> and, 2.4.1617, he wrote

<sup>1</sup> India Office, London: *Factory Records*. Their commission was dated 2.1.1615.

<sup>2</sup> John Crowther's letter (*vide* No. 453) of 1.3.1616 from Surat states that they left Isfahan to return to India, 17.10.1615, and arrived at Ajmir, 13.3.1616.

<sup>3</sup> *Catalogue of Factory Correspondence*, E.I.C., No. 413.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, No. 420.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, No. 459. Edward Connock arrived in Isfahan, 31.3.1617, and "after some days' hospitality in Isfahan went off

to greet the king in his camp". The Augustinian Fathers got into negotiation with Shah 'Abbas, begging that he would not allow the English into Persia, *vide* P. della Valle's chap. XXVI, p. 164. A 'third' English Factor was at Lar writing to Connock, 2.4.1617, about his departure for Shiraz, where after arrival, 2.4.1617, the Daruga of that town supplied them with lodging and provisions.

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*, No. 415.

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, No. 434.