

“until the Holy Spirit came and gave them the gift of tongues. . . . Whoever would say that two or three Religious are sufficient for here deceives himself greatly, because Religious are needed who can keep up a life in community with the regular Observance: and, in order that these Religious may live undisturbed, others are needed to deal with things outside, looking after souls and the temporal affairs of the house. Because someone is needed to afford satisfaction and give answers to the king and his officials, to listen and reply to their enquiries and talk—and to give ear to the Muslims, the Armenians, the Georgians, to the Gentile and the Jew, apart from the Christians who come from various parts of Europe. . . . How can they” (? in Rome) “be convinced that a number of Religious insufficient for any place of 300 households is enough for so many states and provinces as there are in Persia, and here in Isfahan? . . .”

In a letter of 26.3.1616<sup>1</sup> to Fr. Benignus, sub-Prior of Isfahan then in Rome, Fr. John Thaddeus is on the same theme of the means of approach to the religious soul of the Persian, while giving a glimpse of the position of influence the Carmelites already had won at Court in Isfahan, how they had become a social centre:

“Your Reverence, as one who has himself been here, knows by experience what we have to bear; and moreover I am alone, and with so many obligations, relations and correspondence which I cannot escape: because, as the Shah esteems us, they all resort to us: the day is short for receiving their visits, and replying ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to them. There is no grandee at this Court, no official of the king with whom we are not on friendly terms. In fine, all esteem us and pay us the greatest respect. This proceeds largely from this that in the conversations and discussions I constantly have with the Shah and his grantees and ministers I make use of any opportunity offered me to explain the mysteries of our Faith. Though it is true that Ricardo in his *Refuting of the Quran* says and well remarks that with these infidels the first thing, with which we have to begin, is the Purgative Way, explaining to them first the reality of their errors and gross ignorance, still by experience I find that, in order to illuminate these blind men, it is necessary to show them the Illuminative Way and the use of Christian perfection, because, just as those who run in the stadium for the prize abstain from worldly things owing to the high value they attach to the prize which there is, in spiritual matters by illuminating them in this, showing them Christian perfection, they come thence to conceive an esteem for the purity of our religion and its ministers. Illuminated by that they see as clearly as the noonday the ugliness and contemptibleness of their errors, and become the more disposed to abstain from, and divest themselves of these. . . . To this end I am composing various works in the Persian language, translating into it the Christian Doctrine, the Gospel, the Psalms of David, in which in particular I have taken especial pains, because over this translation I have had three Persian Mullas and one Jewish Rabbi, a native of Persia employed: the last-mentioned interprets from the Hebrew text, which I correct by the Latin, the two Persians go on writing it down: the preface to these psalms I have taken from S. Augustine. . . .”

He breaks off to mention some instructive details regarding the convent premises:

“Besides this occupation I have had to put the house of Jesus Mary into shape as a convent, with its cloister. . . . The site is situated in a very spacious plain . . . inside it passes a water-channel four spans wide, with a constant supply of water flowing to the gardens of Allah Viridi Khan and the Chahar Bagh, which lies to the east of it: to the west there is Rustam’s Castle: on the north Julfa and all Isfahan: to the south the mountains. It is 800 rods round the boundaries. I have planted a vineyard, which has 25,000 vines. As fast as can be the walls are being made. All these races of Gentiles and Muslims

<sup>1</sup> O.C.D. 237 m.