

'of S. Peter's and put his hand to his sword, while the Pope was giving Benediction—a capital offence. However, the act was pardoned, and he died at Rome, 20.4.1652.'

Like many others, no doubt, the compiler has explored the 'Ara Coeli' church for a memorial. Though in his book Pietro called it "chapel of S. Paul", it is now the chapel of the Ascension, fourth on the left, which is indicated to visitors. Outside the metal grille there are several tablets on the wall to members of the family of the Marchesi Bufalo della Valle of the 19th century: inside on the gospel side in the wall is an effigy recumbent, with an inscription below to Philip de Valle, 1463, and on the epistle side others to a Pietro of the 16th century, ecclesiastics and others. In the sacristy is a copy of the book of 1736<sup>1</sup> by Fr. Casimir O.F.M. entitled, *Memoria Storica della Chiesa e Convento di S. Maria in Ara Caeli*, which under the account of the inscriptions, etc., then existing in the chapel of the Ascension states in Italian:

"Lastly it should be known that in this chapel there was buried without any record the famous Pietro della Valle, who died the 20th day of April 1652, whence in vain people from across the mountains and other foreigners resort here daily in order to look at his tomb and read his epitaph. . . ."

Pietro della Valle reached Isfahan from Baghdad, 22.2.1617; having waited in Isfahan for the Shah's return from Georgia nearly all 1617, in January 1618 he set off to find the monarch at Farrahabad in Mazandaran.<sup>2</sup> Among the literary and antiquarian treasures possessed by the Carmelite Order is a short attestation and signature in the writing of Pietro della Valle, which, strangely enough, concern a Scotsman in Persia: a photographic reproduction of this document is given in this work. It is preceded by a declaration, dated 26.9.1621, by Fr. Vincent of S. Francis, Visitor General in Persia and East India and Prior of the convent of S. Paul for the missions in Rome, to the effect that he had received from

'Mr. George Strachan, a Scottish gentleman, a coffer, in which were books in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, some 61 in number, listed according to a catalogue, together with all the books which he (Fr. Vincent) was to recover in the city of Aleppo there lying in the name of Mr. George Strachan, and promised to take them with him to Rome, expenses being paid by the Carmelite Order, and that he will guard and keep them safe and sound in the convent of S. Paul of the Discalced Carmelites until the arrival of the said Mr. George Strachan and then, as soon as Mr. George Strachan reached the City, would return them to him, when the expenses incurred in their transport had been repaid to the Carmelite Order: all this without any responsibility and, if anything should happen to the books (which God forbid) he, Fr. Vincent, was not bound to pay any compensation.'

Separately, Mr. George Strachan made a last will and testament, bequeathing these books to the said convent of the Carmelites in Rome in the case of his death on his journey back to Europe, asking in return Masses and prayers for his soul:

"Ego, Georgius Strachanus Merniensis Scotus, declaro hanc meam esse voluntatem ut cum simus omnes mortales, si Deus in hoc meo itinere de me aliquid disposuerit nimirum eo modo quo possum sponte et libera voluntate dono et in elemosinam pie trado praedictos libros omnes conventui missionis S. Pauli Carmelitanorum Discalceatorum de Urbe ut patres et Religiosi illius conventus orent in suis sacrificiis orationibus et penitentiis pro anima mea a peccatis meis expianda, et haec est mea ultima voluntas, facta Spahani 26 mensis septembris ano Dni 1621. Ego Georgius Strachanus affirmo quae supra."

Pietro della Valle attested:

<sup>1</sup> i.e. Barely 80 years after Pietro's death.

<sup>2</sup> Vide MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, chap. XXI, book 3, part 2.