

“took him into the arbour, which had in the midst of it a fountain which spurted out the water very high. In this arbour there were some cushions of silk and gold worked on the one side, and there the king sat down and bade the ambassador, who still wore his hat, sit on his right close to him.

“The Shah said to him: ‘How is my brother, the king of Spain?’ Each time he spoke or replied the ambassador took off his hat, replacing it as he finished. He gave him (the Shah) the letter of credence from our lord the king, and the Shah took it and put off his turban: he received the letter with great satisfaction, touching his breast with it as a token of affection and goodwill. Then he placed it in the bosom of his *qaba*, or garment. Next the Shah began to ask many questions of the ambassador, to which the latter replied sagaciously and discreetly, as befitted a man so judicious and well trained: he asked him (the ambassador) about Spanish affairs, especially military matters, in which he ('Abbas I) takes such interest—for all his talk is about nothing else. Then the Shah asked him to give from memory an account of those victories which our lord the king has won against the Turk: and this the ambassador gave him in great detail and accurately, at which the Shah was much pleased. He” ('Abbas I) “remarked that he had felt it acutely that the Emperor should have made peace with the Turks and the king of France, Venice, etc.: and he asked why they did not join with him” (the king of Spain) “and wage war on the Turks, each on his front, saying that for his part he would not fail—that he was not afraid of the Turks as the Christians were: and that all his father had lost and that had been taken from him by the Turks during twenty years he had won back in 6 months, and captured from them more than 100 towns.¹

“The ambassador returned him sensible answers, and his conversation and deportment pleased the Shah greatly. His Majesty gave him lunch and paid him many compliments. At the beginning of the meal the Shah gave the ambassador the toast of the health of our lord the king” (of Spain) “lifting up his turban,² while the ambassador took off his hat and remained standing until the Shah had finished.

“Large as it was, all around the portico were golden carafes full of wine; some with water were very large, such as in our country of Spain are used for putting in the snow, to ice water: they are very heavy; and the glasses from which one drinks are as it were oval, boat-shaped vessels, very heavy and shallow: silverware is not used in the table service.

“After the meal the ambassador asked permission to retire and took his leave. Granting it, the Shah accompanied him until he had set him in the avenue already mentioned and, being very pleased with the prudence and discretion of the ambassador, gave instructions for the gifts to be brought on the following day.

“So in the morning the Shah sent the Mihmandar to enquire how many men would be necessary to carry the gifts, which were to be borne by the servants of the Shah, as he desired to pay this compliment to the king of Spain: for among the Persians this is a novelty highly appreciated, and it is the custom for each person to carry one thing in his hand: and so in procession, one behind the other, they bear the gifts. The Mihmandar saw that 400 men would be needed, and so he took them from the Shah's household, taking pages, and favourite minions, and all the rest of the palace staff up to the number named to the ambassador's house, where he drew them up in order and handed to each person one article. The one who marched in front of all carried the sword, wearing which our lord king Philip was married.

“Next there were 22 chains of gold, very richly worked, and with jewels, mostly emeralds, in each, every man carrying two in his hands, one behind the other. . . . Then another person with golden salvers, hooped with precious stones of inestimable worth, the number of which I do not know. After that a silver brazier, very large, which eight men bore

¹ At this time there was a truce, it may be noted, between 'Abbas I and the Turks.

² *Toca* is presumably a 'turban' here. In modern Persia, up to 1920 that is to say, it would have been the reverse of a compliment to lift off your turban or any headdress.