

"most deceitful man in the world, or else a man whom God had predestined to become
"a Christian."¹

That is the scene described by the anonymous Religious, author of the narrative preserved in the Carmelite archives, acquaintance with which the present compiler owes to Fr. Florencio del Niño Jesus and his *En Persia*.² The *Comentarios* of Don Garcia (vol. II, p. 101), it would appear from *En Persia*, mention this incident arising thus:

"While there was discussion on the subject the Shah sent to call . . . Fr. John Thaddeus
". . . who two or three days after the ambassador's arrival had also come to Qazwin. . . .
"The reason for the coming of this Religious had been to bring him (the Shah) the Psalms
"of David and the New Testament written in the Persian tongue and very well bound
"in two volumes, which up till then he had not given him ('Abbas I), although he had
"endeavoured to do so through the intermediary of Husain Baig and the secretary of State,
"Aqa Mir. . . ."

After the exchange of ceremonial visits³

"the Shah told the ambassador that he was leaving for the war and directed him to go to
"Isfahan and wait for him, saying that he would return within four months to settle his
"business, and instructed Fr. John to accompany him. The king departed for Sultanieh,
"and the ambassador the next day.

"The Shah is taking with him 25,000 arquebusiers and 80,000 men mounted, archers
"and lancers." (This expedition was that to crush the revolt, or conspiracy, in Georgia
already mentioned.)

It was, however, far longer than four months and well into 1619 before 'Abbas I, having made a truce with the Turks on the Azarbaijan front and subsequently visited Mazandaran, returned to Isfahan. Then, in the intervals of staying in his military camps at a distance from the capital, he appears to have ignored and played with the Spanish ambassador, procrastinating in affording him the audience for which the latter asked in order to set out verbally to the Shah the official business, for which he had been dispatched to Persia. Frs. John Thaddeus and Leander in June 1619 had been to see the monarch 15 leagues from Isfahan:⁴ it was plain to them that he no longer cared for the friendship of the king of Spain. Suddenly,

¹ *En Persia* quotes the *Comentarios* of Don Garcia himself in confirmation—a third testimony to this exhibition by 'Abbas I: ". . . till the friar arrived with his book, which he (the Shah) then opened and kissed with as much appearance of "devotion, as if he were the most devout and penitent Capuchin in Europe, even shedding many tears. But this, which "to all those who do not know the inner self of this king, might appear an act to be applauded and praised, the ambassa- "dor judged in him ('Abbas) to be a thing in every way detestable, disclosing by it a character full of deceitfulness and "evil pretence."

² There is, however, a contradiction of date which needs to be put right. *En Persia*, p. 107, in the account as reproduced above, makes the Spanish ambassador reach Qazwin "15th June 1619", and therefore the delivery of the presents take place on the 18th or 19th June 1619, as also the presentation of this book of the Psalms. The year should be 1618, for (a) Fr. John Thaddeus' two letters dated 3.1.1619 (in O.C.D. 237 m.), mentioning how he had been to Qazwin and how the Shah had received the book of the Psalms, show that this took place in June 1618; (b) the anonymous writer and manuscript quoted by *En Persia* refer to the "coming year 1619", *vide* footnote on p. 106; (c) P. della Valle in his letter of 22.4.1619 wrote "on the 19th June the Vicar General of the Carmelites arrived in Qazwin", which must refer to the previous year, 1618. Then, in his letter of 8.5.1619, P. della Valle relates how the Shah "sent to call Fr. John Thaddeus to bring the "book of the Psalms translated into Persian: and he did so and besides brought also a book of the Gospels *printed* "in Arabic. . . . But returning to what I was relating about the Gospels and the Psalms, as being things approved by "his religion, the king received them with the greatest reverence, kissed them, put them on the top of his head, ordered "that they should be kept in his wardrobe . . . and said clearly that whoever did not believe in those books was an "infidel. On that occasion the Shah being a man who knows how to do everything, began to discourse on spiritual "matters, particularly death and the vanities of the world, and here, according to the Fr. Vicar, who related it to me, "he preached, became affected and wept, and in short the audience passed in such a way that the Spanish ambassador "either had no opportunity to speak about his business or, if he had, did not wish to do so in the presence of Fr. "John. . . ."

³ *En Persia*, p. 112, quoting the anonymous manuscript in the archives, O.C.D.

⁴ Letter of Fr. John Thaddeus, 28.6.1619, O.C.D. 237 m.