

'Remaining silent as to the point of the Shaikh of Hurmuz being a Portuguese subject, the Shah replied that, better than to anyone else, the island of Bahrain belonged to him, to whom, as being a co-religionist, it was nearest, he thought. Then, as to the fort at Gāmbrun, which was on the mainland of Persia, he deemed it to appertain to his dominions.

'As to the complaints against the English, open enemies of the Spanish crown, the Shah angrily retorted that it did not please him to refuse access to anyone within his borders, least of all to the English who were useful in trade.

'The Shah said that he was signing a treaty with the Turks, but was ready to break it, whenever the Christian princes first opened the attack on the Turks.'¹

After this verbal exchange of views, unpromising as it was, Don Garcia appears to have made no further attempt to put relations on a better footing or to remedy some, at least, of 'Abbas I's grievances by binding, in his sovereign's name, the Portuguese officials at Hurmuz to courteous and friendly methods,—although to modern ideas the position was by no means desperate, and negotiations could have been profitably continued. He was, however,² by temperament not the individual to deal easily with Orientals: he

'was a nobleman, very punctilious, man of his word in a country where no one was, erudite and antiquarian, well on in years, somewhat acid at times, so that 'Abbas I is said to have mocked at him. . . . More than once when speaking to him the Shah suddenly turned his back on him. The Persians tried Don Garcia's patience with their inconstancies and casual ways.'

Then, to repeat the words of Pietro della Valle's letter of 21.10.1619, already quoted in a different connection:

"Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa left to return to Hurmuz, 25.8.1619. The following day there departed to accompany the ambassador two Religious from among those residing here, i.e. Fr. Dimas of the Cross, O.C.D., my confessor, and . . . a Portuguese Augustinian, who both were going to Hurmuz on business for their Orders. . . . Two days later" (i.e. 16.9.1619) "the Fr. Vicar of the Discalced Carmelites one evening in the Maidan, when I was present in such a way as to see and hear everything, presented to the king some letters from Spain which had come by way of Hurmuz and which the Captain of Hurmuz had sent on to Isfahan by a postman to Don Garcia, who had received these when already on the road south, and had forwarded them to the Fr. Vicar" (Provincial) "of the Discalced Carmelites begging him to do the requisite in his (Don Garcia's) absence. . . ." The Spanish ambassador was in no mind to retrace his steps to Isfahan.

According to the MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, although unwillingly submitting to such a commission and to occupying himself with affairs of temporal politics, Fr. John Thaddeus in due course delivered the letters to Shah 'Abbas and later translated them: the tenour of king Philip's letter was that

- (a) five galleons very shortly would be lying off Hurmuz, to be followed by other ships;
- (b) he proposed regulations for the trade in silk;
- (c) an agreement was proposed over the customs duties of Hurmuz and the safety of disembarking in Portugal;
- (d) on the other hand, the king of Spain still insisted on the restitution to the suzerainty of Hurmuz of the islands of *Bahrain* and *Qishm*, and the fort at Gāmbrun.

¹ The date of this appears confused in MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, which adds that Edward Monox, the new 'Consul' of the English arrived the same day, 3rd March, in Isfahan, and was visited by Fr. John Thaddeus and Pietro della Valle. The latter certainly records (letter of 4.4.1620, vol. II, XVIII, p. 147) that on 4.3.1620 they had visited Monox, the new 'Resident' of the English—an early use of that office in Persia—who had arrived that day in succession to Thomas Barker, who had died in Isfahan some months previously.

² See *En Persia*, vol. II, pp. 105-6.