

makes it reasonable to assume that the expedition and design of Iman Quli Khan failed again, as they had failed in the winter of 1628.

“This Khan”—to quote a letter of 24.6.1631<sup>1</sup> from Isfahan—“is . . . a prince greatly esteemed and of great authority in the whole kingdom, and by commission of the late king is to govern with the new king for some years, and does so to the satisfaction of all. The new king treats him as if he were his father, and calls him by that name. . . . The Khan, or prince, in question has always shown, and still shows himself very kindly and benevolent towards us. He has granted us privileges and honours in his jurisdiction, and we expect more from him, as they are needed. . . .”

Evidently Imam Quli Khan, with the East India Company's agents instigating, aiding and abetting, or at least sympathizing, had planned yet another expedition for the beginning of 1633, this time against his *bêtes noires*, the Portuguese, in their fortresses at Masqat on the Arabian coast at the entrance of the Gulf: for, 15.3.1633, from “aboard the *Mary*” at Gāmburun William Gibson, John Sharland and Richard Cooper wrote to the president and council of the Company at Surat:

“The project for Muscatt is quite desolved, as also the cheefe instrument, our auntient freind, the ‘Duke’ of Xiraz, and his three sonnes, whoe were by the king's comaund in Cosbeene<sup>2</sup> most miserably executed. . . .”

Of this swift plunge from power into extinction and disappearance from the scene, so closely paralleled in the cases of chief ministers of other Persian sovereigns, e.g. Haji Ibrahim of Shiraz, and later instances, Captain Weddell, writing from Gāmburun to the Company, 14.3.1633, gave details:

“The Cawne of Serash with three of his sonnes are beheaded by the King of Persia and his cuntry disposed of to others. Some of his sonnes are escaped to the Arabs. His brother (whose revolte to the Georgian was the cause of this tragedie) is now up in armes with that people against him. . . . Though it be impertinent to your affaires, yet I cannot overslipp some mencion the innocent suffering of the Duke of Serash and the barbarous cruelty of the King. The Duke of Serash brother, on a tyme merrily feasting with the King, lett fall some overliberall speeches and by the King's comaund was instantly had forth and drub'd, as the manner of the cuntry is”—(presumably the *bastinado* is meant)—“with some extremity. Whether mindfull of this injury hee sought revenge or fearing the King's further displeasure, he fledd to the Georgian. The Duke his brother labour'd his returne and submission and, not effecting it, in his fidelity to the King grew his brother's enemy. The King, seemingly satisfied, sent for the Duke and his sonnes to Court. The good old man<sup>3</sup> in obedience came with his two sonnes foreseeing and prepared for death. The King entertaynes him lovingly but after a little tyme, sitting drinking with the youngest sonne of the Duke, that lived and was brought up with him at Court, he caused the Duke's head with his two sonnes' to be struck off and brought in before him and demands of the young gentleman, if hee knew those heads. Hee (deprived of his witts and memory by wyne) made answer ‘No’, and wisht by the King to peruse them more advisedly could make no other answer but ‘no’. The King then calls for a bowl of wyne and casting it on their heads uttered these words ‘they dranke wyne while they lived: lett them drinke now they are dead,’ and so sent forth the sonne to know who they were in the next world, or never. . . .”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O.C.D. 236 k., Fr. Balthazar of S. Mary.

<sup>2</sup> Qazwin.

<sup>3</sup> The English Company's agents were prejudiced in favour of Imam Quli Khan because of Hurmuz and other favours done them.

<sup>4</sup> See *Factory Records* of East India Company, India Office.