

“and this news reached him at the time when he was taking possession of the fine house which he has bought from the owner for 5,500 livres, paid in front of the Qazi, who is the civil lieutenant in this city, in fine golden pieces weighed out. He has preferred to purchase this house, to his own inconvenience (as he has kept for himself only what is necessary for food and to set out on his journey) than to be assigned one of the houses of the Shah, very fine as they may be and at his choice, which had been offered him . . . because such gifts of houses are uncertain and can be revoked at the caprice of any favourite: of this the Capuchin Fathers are an instance in point. . . .”

According to a description of it

“sent from Isfahan by Monsieur de Monterey¹ the main part of the dwelling had a frontage all round of 25 toises: it consisted of a fine hall (or Diwan, which are like the halls in France) with an ante-Diwan or hall open to the air in the Persian style: it was surrounded by four fine rooms and by two others at the two ends: it had a good kitchen, pantry, oven, little stable courtyard, and a winepress. In the upper storey one complete suite, where Monsignor lives, consisting of another fine hall, with one good-sized room, a dressing-room, etc., the rest of the floor space being in two balconies.

“Below, for the whole length of the main building, there is a fine veranda, 3 toises in breadth, decorated in its midst by a large pond, into which flows the running water which passes through this house and which leaves it in a fine cascade to fall into the first garden, which is planted with every kind of fruit-trees and measuring some 30 by 40 toises, and waters also a second garden of like size, planted with excellent vines and surrounded with roses in espaliers and the rarest flowers in the country. . . .”

To contrive his ‘cathedral’ church, Mgr Bernard of S. Teresa removed the partition-wall between two rooms

“and that gave a length of 7 rods by 3 by 3 in height. There was a cupola after the style in Rome, a small choir, the bishop’s throne, 6 seats for canons, organ, the sacristy, and its little nave, on the door of which are *the arms of Mgr le Cardinal*” (i.e. Armand de Richelieu) “as protector of the first cathedral church.”²

The whole cost came to 2,400 scudi.

“The high Altar, above which was spread a handsome baldaquin, had a picture of the Blessed Virgin, copied from that in S. Maria Maggiore in Rome, in a carved and gilded wooden frame. Six candlesticks of silver-gilt, with the accompanying crucifix, decked it: the credence-table for pontifical ceremonies was of similar metal, the censer and other objects of silver: a rich carpet covered the predella. The interior walls of the church were ornamented with stucco in Persian style.

“By hard manual work, in which the Bishop and his attendants joined, the edifice and interior were terminated,³ as planned, by the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 8.12.1641, when the opening ceremony took place, all the Augustinian, Capuchin and Carmelite missionaries being invited, as well as Catholic laymen in Isfahan. Preceded by several youths in cottas, and by the Religious in the habits of their various Orders the Bishop of Baghdad, wearing as also the officiating priests vestments with trimmings and fringes of gold, entered the church from the sacristy and, when he had placed himself in his episcopal seat, the rite of blessing the church began: at the end of which to the accompaniment of the organ and the chant of all the ecclesiastics solemn Mass was

¹ From *Hist. Miss. MSS.*, chap. 12, book 7, part 4: it is also given by M. Leon Mirot in his publication cited.

² One *toise* = 6 feet or 1.949 metres as measure of length. One *perche* (i.e. rod), as measure of length = 20 or 27 feet, according to locality: compare M. Mirot’s details of the church.

³ The site was in the Shaikh Sha’ban quarter of Isfahan—see *S.R.*, vol. 135, p. 292 (a letter from the Augustinian Prior)