

know that the two sites are far from identical), and Bishop Perez was always known by the matter-of-fact title of the existing city, for some obscure reason Bishop Bernard (and his French successors) preferred the style 'Evêque de Babylonne': and readers familiar with Paris, who may have mused over possible causes for the naming of the well-known street in the French capital, 'rue de Babylonne', will perhaps be surprised to learn from M. Leon Mirot's work that the gardens and residence of the Carmelite bishop "of Babylon" during the last 25 years of his life were so much in the public eye for the street formed in due course to be called after him.

Once again the selection of bishops for Persia and Baghdad had not prospered—the making of the second post a coadjutorship of the first had indeed complicated matters: and, following another inoperative appointment to the coadjutorship of Baghdad (to be noticed in due course) the see of Isfahan was not to have in residence another bishop for over 50 years, while a century was to pass before a bishop of Baghdad would officiate in his diocesan capital.

Bishop Bernard's 'cathedral' and episcopal residence at Isfahan were kept up, and Masses celebrated by the Augustinians till the year 1653:<sup>1</sup> then lack of funds for repairs became a reason for the gradual collapse through rain and snow which is the fate of all mud-brick buildings in Persia: the ultimate disposal of the premises and silverware formed the subject of litigation, far from edifying. Logically, it cannot fail to be perplexing and to appear irrational for a bishop to build a 'cathedral' in the diocesan capital of another bishop, on whose eventual appointment sooner or later tenure would have to be vacated.

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A letter of October 1641 written by Bishop Bernard mentions that, Kandahar having been betrayed and delivered into the possession of the Mogul emperor by the Circassian governor whom 'Abbas I had appointed, Shah Safi was about to proceed in person to recapture this frontier position. Medicine as practised by local *hakims* in Persia till this present century has been based on the ancient systems of Hippocrates and Galen, which among other summary classifications divided ailments into 'hot' or 'cold'. At the beginning of his reign Shah Safi had been advised by the medical practitioners of the Court to drink alcohol ("wine") in order to counteract the 'cold' in his system, which had been set up by indulgence in opium (a habit extremely common among Persians of distinction and authority down to the present day): whether the wine of the country, or (more probably) the potent spirit 'arak' (distilled from the fermented grapes too) was the medium, through excessive use the remedy, added to other disorders, did more harm still and so debilitated<sup>2</sup> the Shah that in May 1642 he died at Qazwin when setting out for Kandahar. The Factory records of the East India Company's agents at Gāmbnun record under date, 17.1.1643:

"We are advised that Shah Suffe, late king of Persia, being in May last"<sup>3</sup> (i.e. 1642) "advanced as far as Cashone in prosecution of his intendments for reducing Candahar to "his obedience dyed there unworthily whilest overmuch drinking and other ryots hastened "his end. . . ."

He was buried at the shrine of Fatimeh in Qum.

Shah Safi was only 32 years old when he died so prematurely, after a reign of little over thirteen years. Nothing in the mass of original letters and other records left by the Carmelites confirms the way in which his reputation has been besmirched by non-contemporary writers of histories: on the contrary, with the exception of the extirpation root and branch of Imam

<sup>1</sup> *Vide S.R.*, vol. 135, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> *MSS. Hist. Miss.*, chap. 19, vol. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The date of his successor's accession is given as Friday, 26th Safar, 1052 A.H. 'Cashone' = Kashan.