

"terms for this, the whole sum of 106 Tumans and to do this pledging all we had in the "House, selling off furniture for the past two years, to meet expenses. . . ."¹

In 1645, however, a lay brother who had been dispatched to Mozambique to collect alms-offerings from the Portuguese returned to Persia with a "useful sum of money . . .", and the position appears to have gradually improved. While in Italy as Procurator from the Missions in 1649 Fr. Felix had tried to collect donations and

"alms from the city of my native province, Naples, but I found the city so exhausted by "the past disturbances, that the noblest and richest receivers of income are now the poorest "and most necessitous. . . ."²

In 1654 the missionary province held "in Goa credits for 1,400 scudi, in Basra 700 scudi, "and another good sum in Isfahan". Fr. Dionysius of the Crown of Thorns, 10.7.1657,³ was even gratified:

". . . The Lord has provided this mission of ours from various quarters, so that I think "that not many times has it been better provided (with funds) than at present. . . ."

Before that, 3.9.1654, the new Vicar Provincial, Fr. Felix, had represented to the Order in Rome that, if the Definitory General would remit to him in a lump sum 3,000–4,000 Roman scudi (instead of about 1,000 scudi every three years), he would invest it; and the interest on that, and on alms and grants previously saved, should prove sufficient to finance the whole mission: at that time he wrote that about 500 scudi annually were required by the whole missionary province, a figure he changed to 1,000 in a letter of 21.6.1655. With the same idea, after a visitation of the convent at Isfahan, he gave instructions for all alms-offerings at the several mission-posts and all subsidies, allotments or grants from Rome to be common to the whole Mission and distributed by the Vicar Provincial, according to his views of necessity.⁴

The Definitory General did not act on the former suggestion, and the other conventual Fathers in Persia disliked the latter, which was put into effect by Fr. Felix, the more so as his placing out of the accumulated funds at interest resulted in disastrous losses through bankruptcies of Hindu⁵ and Muslim money-dealers—as may be read in more detail in the section of this work dealing with the financing of the Mission: and it became impoverished for a number of years.

In another direction the individualist financial control and methods of this Vicar Provincial distressed the conventuals, viz. in regard to the Residence at Shiraz, to which a brief allusion is here needed to illustrate the general conduct of the Mission during this reign, although for a detailed account of the Residence at Shiraz the reader is referred to the special section dealing with it. In 1645:

"for more than a year past the House at Shiraz had not been inhabited and is entrusted "to an Armenian."⁶

The Fathers felt unable to meet the expense of repairs, estimated to require 2,800 piastres = 9,800 'abbasi.⁷ Besides,

"every autumn all the sick are wont to be dumped there:⁸ the expenditure there is large,

¹ Fr. Dominic of S. Mary, 7.3.1646.

² This was after the popular rising against the Spanish viceroy led by Masaniello to demand the privileges granted by Charles V, which led to much bloodshed between 7.7.1647 and 3.4.1648.

³ O.C.D. 237 f.

⁴ 21.6.1655, O.C.D. 241 k.

⁵ It is remarkable that in the Safawi period Hindus were established in business at Isfahan and Shiraz—this was not the case 250 years later.

⁶ Fr. Dominic of S. Mary, 8.5.1645, O.C.D. 237 f.

⁷ O.C.D. 236 b., 11.7.1646.

⁸ Compare *English Factories in India*, 25.1.1661. Agent Buckeridge to the East India Company from Gāmbnun:

"By reason of the sickness and mortalitie of all your factors in Persia. . . . Mr Samways arrived at Shiraz thogh "sick and weake, soe that I was forced to leave him there with the Padrys Carmeleets, by whose care hee was recovered, "but fell again into a relapse by eating of fruit and dyed there the 31st of August."