

fiercely the schismatics resented the intrusion of Latins, and Latin proselytizers in particular, into their stronghold, how they fought the 'Uniat' community which gradually grew in their midst. Fr. Dionysius of the Crown of Thorns appears to have been the original person to urge this step: how far it was a mistake in tactics for the objective of promoting concord leading to reunion to provoke a lasting bitterness and acerbity, which otherwise might have been avoided, is a moot point. To those representations of his probably it was due that:

“at the end of 1645 the Sacr. Congregation de Propaganda Fide decreed the establishment of a mission at Julfa by the Carmelites: the request of the Carmelite Order was signed 18.12.1645. It was considered necessary that the Pope should write a Brief recommending them to the Shah. This had been done, 16.1.1645-6, and approved by the Pope, but apparently was not dispatched,”

according to the MSS. *Hist. Miss.*<sup>1</sup>

On 15.11.1646 was recorded<sup>2</sup> an event which was to influence greatly the future of church affairs in Julfa: two Augustinian Fathers testified to a certain Khwajeh 'Sahrat' of Julfa having made a profession of the Catholic Faith. This was, no doubt, the 'Sarrat', parent and grand-parent of the numerous 'Sarratis', or Sharimanis, as they were also termed, the rich merchants subsequently on the one hand settled at Leghorn and Venice, and providers of a considerable endowment for the Mechitarist monastery in the latter city, and on the other hand the nucleus and main supporters of the Latin bishops and Uniat communities in Julfa.

Mentioning that he had recently received a letter from Fr. James (of S. Teresa) in Rome regarding the 'mission' to the Armenians of Julfa adumbrated, the Vicar Provincial wrote from Isfahan to the Praepositus General, 12.7.1646,<sup>3</sup> explaining that permission from the Shah to establish themselves in Julfa would be required:

“We are trying to have a permit from the king or, as it were, his order to the Armenians to give us a place. . . . Because, if it be known that the king is willing to give us the permit in question, there will be many and powerful efforts made to oppose it: this would have been the case had the head of the Julfa people been the one of the last few years, and all the more now he is so no longer for some months past, but the former man, his predecessor, son of the head in your Reverence's time. . . .”<sup>4</sup>

The cautious Fr. Dominic of S. Mary proceeded to speak of one characteristic of the Armenian race—even if a licence to found a House were obtained from the Shah, he could not predict the result, because

“each one of them seeks to further his own private interests and all, or almost all, to work for the preservation of their own rite and race: and, if in past years there was something like a beginning of a disposition in the matter of religion, it is altogether or almost entirely dispersed or ended, and what there was appears to have been caused more by other dissensions in matters of their private interests, than from any real disillusionment on points of their creed. . . .”

He added the information that Fr. Paul Piromalli, the Dominican of the diocese of Nakhchivan, was then staying in the Carmelite convent as a guest (on 18.8.1645 he had been in Tabriz, for there is a letter in *S.R.*, vol. 65, from him). This Dominican, possessing an excellent practical knowledge of Armenian and well acquainted with their liturgy and writings and history, considered that much more downright and outspoken methods should be employed to overcome the schism, and consistently he put his opinion into practice, to the embarrassment and perhaps alarm of the other Religious in Isfahan, e.g. the French Capuchin, Fr. Valentin of Angers, in

<sup>1</sup> Chap. 12, book 9.

<sup>2</sup> *S.R.*, vol. 65, p. 330.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Dominic of S. Mary, O.C.D. 237 f.

<sup>4</sup> This Praepositus General was Fr. Eugenius of S. Benedict, elected 16.4.1644, who in 1625 had been at Isfahan.