

a letter of 4.9.1647<sup>1</sup> complained to the Sac. Congregation of the "violence of Fr. Paul Piromalli, O.P., with the Armenians of Julfa": and the Carmelite Provincial, Fr. Dominic of S. Mary, 7.3.1646,<sup>2</sup> wrote that:

"Fr. Paul Piromalli, O.P., is preaching in the streets and 'maidans' of Julfa on the errors "of the Armenians—this style, unsuitable at present, is resented by them, and uncalled "for. . . ."

In 1649

"continual conferences, which the missionaries had, produced a good effect: one Armenian " 'bishop' and one curate being followed into the church by several of the people. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, outside Isfahan, in the district of Ganduman,<sup>4</sup> an attempt by Fr. Dionysius of the Crown of Thorns to convert certain Armenians deserted by their own pastors proved vain: they were in a deplorable state of neglect.<sup>5</sup> All the Orders then at Isfahan seem to have vied with each other in trying to penetrate the seclusion of the Armenian town—the Augustinian Prior was at that time 'episcopal vicar' on behalf of Bishop Bernard: and so in 1650 it is noted:<sup>6</sup>

"The Armenian ecclesiastics have prohibited the Augustinian Fathers from going any "more to officiate in the church of some poor Syrians, to which for two years past they had "been wont to go on Sundays to say Mass. It does not seem that the Armenian ecclesiastics "are too well disposed towards 'Frank' Fathers; but they are ill pleased that a Fr. Paul, a "Dominican" (i.e. Piromalli), "jousts with them on controversial matters in writing<sup>7</sup> and "in disputations before the populace. . . ."<sup>8</sup>

By 1651 matters must have been arranged for:

"10.7.1651. The Fathers at Isfahan write that they want to buy a house in Julfa . . ."<sup>9</sup>

and on 5.10.1651 from Isfahan Fr. Felix remarked:

"we are waiting for our Fr. Vicar Provincial" (he was still at Goa) "to inaugurate the new "foundation at Julfa. . . ."<sup>10</sup>

The Order in Rome had authorized it (at least tentatively):

"4.12.1651. Two foundations have been accepted—at Julfa and Kung—the former is "working, but will be very difficult, and with small hope of results. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S.R., vol. 65, pp. 332-3.

<sup>2</sup> O.C.D. 237 f.

<sup>3</sup> MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, chap. 25, book 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ganduman is still (1935) a district with Armenian villages, according to a statement by the Superior of the Mission.

<sup>5</sup> MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, chap. 36, book 8.

<sup>6</sup> Fr. Dominic of S. Mary, 21.3.1650, O.C.D. 237 f.

<sup>7</sup> Not only against the Armenian errors, but also Persian Shiah tenets did this militant missionary not fear to issue his challenge:

"Fr. Paul Piromalli, the Dominican, has composed in the Persian tongue a book: *On the Trinity* and another *On the Incarnation*, which caused much commotion among their learned men, the 'Ulama', who have admitted that the " 'Incarnation of the Word' was not impossible, and that there might be such a thing as the 'Trinity'—a thing the " 'Muhammadans had never been willing to grant. . . ." (*vide* Fr. Barnabas, Basra, 12.10.1652, O.C.D. 241 f).

<sup>8</sup> But early in 1653 Fr. Piromalli must have left Persia, for he was made captive by the corsairs of Tunis, 8.4.1653, when returning to Rome, and for 10 months languished in the *bagne*, and while in slavery was nominated for succession to the Archbishop of Nakhchiwan (*vide* S.R., vol. 292, p. 334). In this connection may be quoted from *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, No. 5, of Fr. L. Lemmens the 'proceedings' of the session of the Sac. Cong., 2.6.1654:

" . . . letters . . . that the Archbishop of Nakhchiwan had departed this life, and so the diocese should be provided "with another shepherd . . . their Eminences . . . voted that there should be proposed to His Holiness for the said "diocese Fr. Paul Piromalli . . . a missionary of long standing in Persia, who knows very well the Armenian, Turkish, "Persian and Arabic languages, and recently underwent captivity in the hands of the 'Turks' on a voyage, while returning "from Persia to Rome to inform the Sac. Cong. about the state and progress of his Order and mission. . . ."

<sup>9</sup> Fr. Barnabas, O.C.D. 241 f.

<sup>10</sup> O.C.D. 237 i.

<sup>11</sup> Fr. Stephen, O.C.D. 238 c.