

"a passage he crossed to London, where he had heard a ship was being freighted for those parts. Fr. Howard¹ has helped him discreetly in view of the letters and certificates he brought from Rome and elsewhere: he speaks of him (Archbishop Arachiel) as a very good man, who had given no occasion for scandal in that capital, and he even gave him 100 scudi of his own, to help him on his journey. The king" (i.e. Charles II) "sent him off with a letter commendatory to the Shah of Persia (according to the copy attached),² and the Duke of York strongly recommended him to the master of the ship, which has already left. . . ."

Nor were the Popes deaf to the entreaties of this impoverished, humble little flock for protection against oppression, nor silent in protesting against the injustice of the edict in regard to apostates. This is a rendering of the Brief of 25.10.1672, addressed by Clement X to Shah Sulaiman:³

"Illustrious and most puissant king, greeting and the light of Divine grace. We have taken as an outstanding theme for gladness the letter sent by Your Highness to the late Clement the Ninth of happy memory, Our predecessor, and have learnt from it how admirable a regard You have for the Sovereign Pontiffs, whom our Lord Jesus Christ appointed His vicars on earth; and at the same time We have been informed of the notable favours and benefit, which You have conferred at the request of Our said predecessor on the Catholics residing in Your dominions—that is to say, in putting them immediately under Your royal control and government.

"We, therefore, who cherish from Our heart sentiments no different from those of Our said predecessor and, together with the high office left by him through death, have taken over the task of spreading the Catholic religion, repay from the Apostolic throne special thanks to Your Highness for the protection of the Catholics assumed by You, and We honour with tears shed Your benevolence in their favour.

"But We value so highly the declaration by which You have removed them from the control of others that We greatly desire such a privilege to be confirmed by You with an inviolable decree; still, because it is borne in on Us that Your royal beneficence is restrained by no limitations, We further earnestly beg of it that, favourably inclined by the indigence and poverty of the Catholics, You will of Your liberality remit the taxation lately imposed by Mirza Ibrahim and that You will be satisfied with the payment of that only which, equal to their strength, they were contented to pay to Your royal predecessors. In this, if You gratify Our wishes, You will not only have rendered more and more propitious to You Our goodwill, but Him Who has prepared in Heaven inestimable treasures for those

¹ The future Cardinal de Norfolk?

² Should it not be on record among the State papers in London, it may be of some interest to give here the tenor of this early instance of direct correspondence between the sovereigns of England and Persia (a copy of the original Latin text—Arch. Secr. Vat. Misc. Arm. I, 17, p. 343—is included in the appendix to this work with the Latin Briefs of the Popes): to be noted that at the Court of St. James they were not up to date with their information, for the demise of Shah 'Abbas had occurred four years before his 'brother' monarch indited the letters:

"Charles, by the grace of God king of Great Britain, France and Ireland, to the high and mighty prince, lord, sultan, Shah 'Abbas Khan, king of the Persians and Medes and of Armenia, Our brother and very loving friend, greeting and an increase of all prosperity.

"Most high and mighty prince, brother and beloved friend,

"As several monarchs of Europe have observed in the bearer of these letters, the most reverend Arachiel, archbishop of Armenia, a very great discretion and a singular zeal for Our Christian religion and have been to the trouble of moving Your Serene Highness in letters . . . in favour of his pious exertions on behalf of the church of his rite to be dedicated in the town of Erivan, We, unwilling to be behindhand in such a laudable business nor to fail the public weal, and trusting too that Our intercession with Your Serene Highness will have no small weight . . . gratefully acknowledging the favour of Your Serene Highness. . . .

(After reference to the "trade carried on by our subjects in the dominions of Your Serene Highness . . ."):

". . . and We shall eagerly seize on the opportunities offered to deserve well of Your Serene Highness. For the rest, from Our heart we commend to the care of God Almighty Your Ser. Highness.

"Given in the Palace of Whitehall, the 8th day of August 1670.

"The good brother and friend of Your Ser. Highness. Charles R."

³ Arch. Secr. Vat. *Epist. ad Princ.*, 71, p. 63 (50), Clement X, ann. 4.