

“presiding far and wide over so many people and holy bishops, signified clearly your exceptional reverence for Us and this see. The Roman Church, over which We though unworthy “preside, you call ‘Mother’ . . .

“ . . . For, though We are far removed by long distances over sea and land from your “countries, still from the watchful care of fatherly affection with which We follow your “celebrated nation We do not omit to attend to your affairs. So, as often as it happens “that Armenian bishops both for the sake of devotion and of humbly paying the due tribute “of obedience to the Prince of the Apostles and to Us come to this dear City, We see to it “that they are very kindly received here and suitably entertained: nay, indeed, We do “not allow any proofs of the Apostolic kindness to be wanting to any other men of the same “race, as We not only forbid expressly any annoyance whatsoever being caused them in Our “temporal dominions, but We wish them therein, but particularly in the aforesaid City, “wherein the Roman Pontiffs Our predecessors, taking thought for the comfort of your “people and from motives of compassion, set apart a hospice and at the same time a church “in which your sacred rites could be freely and fitly celebrated in the Catholic way, to be “kindly received and entreated with due politeness. Clear and manifest assuredly are these “evidences of the affection of the Pontiff for the Armenian race, from which equally in “turn it remains for Us to expect that it will strive to adhere with constancy to this holy “Apostolic Chair. . . .

“ . . . So, venerable brother, diligently and with all your heart work hard at this so “salutary care for perfect unity: cease not to exhort, admonish and strengthen your brethren “and all your sons in Christ. . . .

“ . . . Meanwhile We would have you know that We heartily rejoiced on hearing that “the fierce storm stirred up against you has now sunk to rest (the Lord commanded the “winds), and that you happily and to the great gain of your reputation escaped from the “machinations of your foes: so We do not doubt that, if the pious mind and inclination you “showed abide with you steadfast and firm, God the Father of mercies who alone does great “wonders, will grant Us still fresh boons and more fruitful joys by the improvement of your “affairs both spiritual and temporal.

“ . . . For the rest, to give you more evident proofs of Our fatherly affection for you, “We send you a man of outstanding deserts no less in holiness than in learning, our dear “son Khachatur Arakhiel an Armenian priest, who will more fully explain to you our “sentiments or rather those of the Roman Church, in whose bosom he was educated. Mean- “while We have had conveyed to you certain little gifts as a sort of earnest of Our aforesaid “affection. And We further beg Almighty God to be propitious and favourable to your “Fraternity and to your whole Armenian people: and with all the warmth of Our heart “We lovingly bestow the Apostolic blessing.

“Rome, the 3rd May 1698.”

Shah Sultan Husain had written a reply to the Brief of Pope Innocent XII, which asked for the restoration of the Carmelites to Julfa (possibly also this acknowledged<sup>1</sup> receipt of another Brief regarding the Turks, which will be given in due course in this chapter): and, barely six months after his return from his 2½ years' absence, the Austrian Fr. Conrad was once more dispatched Rome-wards by his bishop, even though he held the responsible office of Vicar Provincial:

“I hope that Fr. Conrad . . . who left here in July last will arrive in Rome as soon as “possible with the replies from the king of Persia to the letters of His Holiness and various “Christian princes,<sup>2</sup> and by him too were sent the papers certifying to the consecration.”

“Hitherto,” explained Bishop Elias, 6.9.1697,<sup>3</sup> “I have found no suitable bearer, by “whom I might send these documents. . . .”

<sup>1</sup> Neither reply is preserved in the Vatican archives.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Elias, 15.9.1697, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, *S.N.R.*, II.