

have to present the 'letters of recall of their predecessor and their own letters of credence', according to the phrase so frequently to be read in Court news.

"This Resident," related Bishop Elias¹ in his letter of 12.6.1699, "when introduced" (i.e. into the presence of the Shah) "at his first audience now more than a year ago, was "unwilling to give his letters" (of credence) "into the hands of any minister, claiming that "the king (Shah) himself ought to take them with his own hands. When the Persians "answered to this that it was contrary to their customs, which could not be altered, after "some disputing, somewhat noisy and threatening on the part of the Resident, he was sent "outside rather contemptuously, and kept confined to his dwelling by a considerable "number of guards. Notwithstanding this, he continued to persist in this claim and he "would never allow his letters to be presented in any other way: so that the Persians, who "on their side would not yield to a claim which appeared to them very prejudicial on "account of the consequence which would result from it of their being obliged likewise to "change their customary ceremonial in respect of all other potentates, gave him his "cong  to depart—which might well bring on some war between these (two) contiguous empires. . . ."

"So," Bishop Elias explains, "in order not to become involved in this incident through "supporting the proceedings of that Resident by making a similar claim (when he had no "such orders to do so) nor through disagreeing with him by handing over the letters in "public audience, Monseigneur" (i.e. the Archbishop of Ancyra) "would not style himself "ambassador from the Emperor, nor from the Czar of Muscovy, both because he had no "such instructions from the Emperor, nor the expenses for the pomp and dignity correspond- "ing, as also because of that very delicate incident which kept the Resident of Muscovy "here litigating in no small perplexity. . . . The decision was that not Monseigneur himself "but I on his behalf should carry the letters to the house of the chief minister, which I did, "delivering them into his own hands, he remaining standing. . . ."

"This so pleased the Court here that for the other three letters, i.e. from His Holiness, "from the Republic of Venice and from the Grand Duke, the king wished immediately "to hold an extraordinary reception, to which Monseigneur was invited. But the latter, "being somewhat indisposed from fatigues of his journey, and besides the presents which "he had to offer not being yet arrived and ready, sent his excuses. So, on the festival "which followed shortly afterwards, 'Aid-i-Qurban . . . on the 9th of this month of June, "he was summoned to the solemn banquet of the festival where, the king alone seated and "on his throne, with all the Court standing, he gave the three letters into the hands of the "Prime Minister, who received them one or two paces away from the king and, taking from "the king's lips the compliments on his arrival, repeated them to Monseigneur, who through "the interpreter delivered his replies, this being done over again some seven or eight times.² "As to the enquiry which the king then made regarding the motives of his embassy, he "made answer by a petition for a private interview either with his Majesty or with some "minister from his privy council. Then he made Monseigneur sit down opposite him, "separately from all the nobles who were drawn up on one side and I was given a similar "seat two steps lower down, opposite, however, to the king, and two other companions were "made to sit down in the style of the whole Court upon carpets, and upon tablecloths of "cloth of gold we were then all served in golden plates a dinner as magnificent as it can be "made in this country. When that was finished the king, contrary to his usual custom, "remained seated till we had all left the hall, and the receiver of the royal guests reconducted "us home with the like pomp to that in which he had brought us, two captains of the guard "also accompanying us. We were led across the great royal square, where at once all the "drums and pipes began to play until we had passed. Now, for tomorrow or the day after

¹ *S.N.R.*, II, p. 264.

² How far this ceremoniousness and aloofness had been pushed from the personal intimate method of Shah 'Abbas I in giving audience to foreign envoys the reader may judge from the accounts already given in this work!