

Unfortunately, that news was incorrect as regards the recovery of Kandahar. The account given by the Carmelite Fr. Leander of S. Cecilia in his *Second Journey*, as well as that in Fr. du Cerceau's recension of Krusinski's memoirs, indicate that, no sooner arrived before Kandahar with the country around devastated, discord arose between the Georgian and Persian troops, the latter complaining that the former were favoured by the general in the distribution of victuals. Unable to stand the heat and in want of forage the Persians demanded to be allowed to retreat. Khusru Khan covered it, remaining himself with a rearguard of Georgian troops; but the traitor steward of his household had decamped and disclosed the position to Mir Wais, so that the latter issuing from Kandahar with a large body of Afghans and (or Baluchis) was able suddenly to fall on this rearguard and cut to pieces the Georgian commander-in-chief, Khusru Khan, and all his men, before routing and making a slaughter of the Persian troops and looting their luggage. (Sir J. Malcolm in his *History of Persia* wrote: "This action "was very bloody: out of 25,000 Persians 700 only are said to have returned home.") Finally Mir Wais decided to attack the separate main body of the Georgians which had been falling back in another direction; but he and his men were checked and repulsed by a troop of some 500 Georgians, who cut their way through the Afghans and caused the latter to break off the pursuit, and return to Kandahar, laden with booty, however.

Fr. Joseph Mary of Jesus, then Vicar Provincial of the Carmelites, confirmed the news, 28.2.1712,¹ to the Cardinal Prefect:

"I already have written of the death of the Judge" (i.e. Diwan Baigi) "of Isfahan who, "having become general of the army, was killed at the siege of the town of Kandahar, "and with him was killed Fr. Basil of our Order, who had been sent for by him for the "sake of religion. . . ."

Thus it came about that one of the Carmelites of the Persian Mission found death on the battlefield and a grave in the remote country of Afghanistan. Fr. du Cerceau's edition of Fr. Krusinski's memoirs refer to Khusru Khan as

"so unhappy as to renounce the Christian religion for the Muhammadan in order to "secure his right to the principality of Georgia, which he enjoyed with the title of governor "in the name of the king of Persia. But he afterwards repented of it and he was resolved "to abjure Muhammadanism, happen what might, and to return to the Church, as soon "as his expedition to Kandahar was at an end, with full purpose, if it must be so, to sacrifice "his principality to his religion. He had actually begun to make a declaration of it, by "causing a cross to be placed in his main standard. The missionaries had not a more "declared protector in the kingdom of Persia. He carried with him in his expedition to "Kandahar . . . a Carmelite named Fr. Basil. . . ."

". . . After the death of Khusru Khan, prince of Georgia . . . Vaqtan (or Vakhtanga) "eldest of the surviving princes ought to have succeeded him; but, because he could not "do so without changing his religion, he chose rather to renounce his right and title. That "brother, who followed him, being already 'patriarch' of Georgia, offered to turn Mussul- "man and take a wife, quitting the patriarchate for the principality. But their father, "who was Diwan Baigi at Isfahan [? sic, vide the letters of the missionaries above] did not "approve of the 'patriarch's' proposal and found means to cure him of it by a good number "of lashes on the soles of his feet, by which he confirmed him in his patriarchate. Meantime "a third brother, who was not under the same obligation, turned Muhammadan and was "made prince of Georgia. The Court was so disgusted with the repudiation by Vaqtan "that they banished him to Kirman. After a few years of such exile he became more "pliable, and great promises were made to induce him to take the turban: as soon as that

¹ S.R., vol. 587, p. 134.