

By now the reader will have obtained a view, however incomplete in outline, of the forces that dominated Persia in the period of these reigns, and also of the main political events, fixed as accurately as the data allow: those forces had a cramping effect on the activities of the Catholic missions, and it is convenient to break off here and resume the review of affairs of the diocese of Isfahan.

In May 1730, in despair at his seeming abandonment financially and otherwise Bishop Barnabas Fedeli, O.P., decided to make his way back to Rome. He gave canonical justification:¹

"As the term of the oath taken by me at my consecration, to betake myself *ad limina* "after ten years, has already expired, I am living in some tremors of conscience";² but I "have delayed, flattering myself that possibly the Pontifical Briefs for Fr. Archangelus, O.P." (who had been nominated archbishop of Nakhchiwan) "might arrive, so that I might be "able to consecrate him at once and send him off promptly to his see, already for so many "years without a shepherd. . . ."

His next letter was written from the Carmelite Residence at Shiraz, 6.6.1730,³ and explained

"It was subsequently learnt from Nakhchiwan that the Pontifical Bulls had been lost⁴ "and from Constantinople that Fr. Thaddeus, the Jesuit" (Krusinski) "to whom it was "supposed that an authentic copy of the Bulls had been handed according to custom, had "gone off to Poland on his own business—so that it was, if not impossible, at least very "difficult to hope that I should be able to consecrate him" (Fr. Archangelus), except after "a long time. I decided to comply with my oath and take advantage of the consul for "France leaving for Aleppo. So I accompanied him, taking the road by Shiraz to Basra, "inasmuch as the more direct and more convenient route from Hamadan to Baghdad was "closed by the invasion of the Ottomans. . . . So we arrived here, at Shiraz, 25.5.1730, "after 19 days' travelling no less disastrous than uncomfortable because of the baking rays "of the sun, which greatly sapped our strength. I in truth willingly took this route, because "of the desire I had to visit this mission formerly so renowned, but totally ruined since "the coming of the Afghans, and much more since the return of the Persians, both materially "and spiritually. . . ."

" . . . Although my wish was to continue the journey with Monsieur the consul⁵ as far "as Basra, none the less my sufferings from Isfahan as far as here in the middle of May

¹ Bishop Fedeli, O.P., 6.5.1730, *S.R.*, vol. 668, p. 580.

² It is surprising that he and other bishops of Persian sees were not aware of their being able to obtain exemption from the obligation of making that ten-yearly visit, e.g. in the case of Archbishop Paul Baptist, O.P., of Nakhchiwan, when he mentioned to the Sac. Cong. his intention of making it, the reply was sent 4.5.1699 (*S.N.R.*, III, p. 255):

"As regards your lordship coming *ad limina*, there is no necessity that you should put yourself to the inconvenience "of so lengthy and expensive a journey, seeing that by virtue of the Indult already granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs "to bishops of this Sac. Congregation, who are in infidel countries, you can satisfy this obligation also by means of a "procurator residing in this city (Rome) and appointed by you for that purpose. . . ."

Similarly, when Bishop Fedeli's successor, Bishop Philip Mary wrote of his intention to fulfil the obligation of his oath, he "received a letter from the Sac. Congregation (bidding him) remain in Persia" (15.12.1749, *S.R.*, vol. 747, p. 89). ". . . I am once again in Isfahan" (ready) "to betake myself to the Holy See in Rome, in accordance with my oath "taken at my consecration . . ." (28.4.1746, *S.N.R.*, V, p. 167). ³ *S.N.R.*, p. 529.

⁴ With them was stolen or destroyed also, perhaps, the Brief addressed by Pope Innocent XIII to Shah Sultan Husain, 2.3.1722 (*Arch. Vat. Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 95, p. 130—see text in Latin appendix—recommending Mgr Ferri and the Catholics).

⁵ This was M. de Gardanne (*vide Chron. Basra*, folio 435 of original) who accompanied by his brother, a captain, and by Lay Brother Ferdinand of S. Teresa, reached Basra, 4.8.1730, stayed in the Carmelite Residence, and left for Baghdad, 29.9.1730. Presumably he had remained at Isfahan and in Persia since his arrival in 1718 already related. There were two French consuls in Persia, in 1722 at least, if not later, for Bishop Barnabas' letter, 10.1.1722 (*S.N.R.*, III, p. 518), without naming either stated:

"there (has) come to the capital the French consul at Shiraz. . . . nor are there any relations between the two consuls, "and the one upsets the business of the other. . . ."

In his letter of 17.11.1727 (*S.N.R.*, IV, p. 546) he mentioned:

"last year the French consul was seized with an attack of apoplexy, which completely deprived him of the use of his "speech and his members on the right side. . . ."

If that were M. de Gardanne he must have recovered to make such a journey.