

“give orders that they be not subjected to any inconvenience, nor prevented from repairing their houses and fanes, and lastly that in future they must not be burdened with any tribute, which is wont to be collected as a poll-tax.

“Hope that You will willingly grant them this is given Us by the very humane disposition, for which You are noted, and which, planted by nature in Your highly cultured race, You yourself possess above others and admirably foster, rivalling the most glorious kings Your forerunners, whose custom it was to entreat Our Catholics with kindness and signal favours, and to lend ready ears to the requests of the Sovereign Pontiff of the Christians and to comply with what he said. And certainly the members (of the Order) have something by which to make an approach to Your clemency in their regard. For they have been seen to have suffered so many tribulations because of the fidelity they have observed, taking Your side with marked zealously, nor ever have they ceased to pronounce vows to immortal God for Your happiness. Only let them be restored by Your generosity to their former liberty and dignity and they will apply their prayers for You the more ardently. . . . Given at Rome, the 18th day of July 1737.”

This Brief, followed two months later, 23.9.1737, by another<sup>1</sup> (*Epist. ad Princ.* vol. 106, p. 456—see appendix) also strongly urging the compassion of Nadir Shah for their hard lot, at first buoyed up with sanguine hope the miserable Nakhchiwanis, and Archbishop Salvini reported from Kùshakan to the Cardinal Prefect, 17.9.1739,<sup>2</sup> in a letter full of interesting detail:

“I beg to inform your Eminence of the favours which the reigning Persian monarch has granted to this, my poor province of Nakhchiwan, because of the letter of recommendation from our lord Clement XII, whom God preserve for many years, issued on 23rd September, 1737.

“While the great Thomas Khan, who now bears the name of Wali Na’amat, leaving his conquests in Persia to be guarded by governors, was busy in beating the Indians in the territory of the Mogul, from which he has extracted incredible treasures, Monsignor Philip, Bishop of Isfahan, notified me that there had been forwarded to him the above-mentioned letter from His Holiness in favour of my province specially (my name in particular being cited in it) for presentation to this king: and that, as the latter was in far distant countries, and also because of the expenses customary in such events, he was not in a position to undertake them, but did not know what resolution to take, unless to leave it to my charge; and he added that the letter was so worded that it might be presented by anyone.

“Having received this information I communicated what Monsignor had written to me to those few Religious here, who as subjects of the country had been suffering from the impositions. They were no little gladdened by the protection and, in the hope of obtaining from it some alleviation, took counsel together as to the manner in which the letter should be promptly dispatched. They agreed to contribute 90 Tumans, i.e. about 1,000 scudi of Roman money, if anyone could be found to engage to make the journey to the territory of the Great Mogul, or wherever Wali Na’amat might be, and present him the letter. I proposed to them a man whom I knew for many years past, of a constitution strong enough to make so far and arduous a journey, prudent, courageous and with a good turn of speech. He agreed to it unwillingly, but undertook the engagement and, having made provision for it at his own expense (for the Religious would not bind themselves to give him even a penny except after his return) he left here on the 13th October last year”

<sup>1</sup> In it the Pope had used these words:

“Besides this We in particular fashion beg and ask Your Highness to consider especially recommended to You our venerable Brother Dominic Salvini from Laude Pompeia of the Order of Preachers of S. Dominic, Archbishop of Nakhchiwan, who, now tranquillity is restored, considering that he will be admirably served and entreated, is proceeding thither to look after his pastoral function that he may bring spiritual support to the Catholics living in Greater Armenia committed to his charge and provide for their needs, which for long past on account of the din of arms he has been unable to accomplish. . . .”

<sup>2</sup> *S.R.*, vol. 703, p. 433.