

“so that he” (the Englishman) “was compelled to return with the Father to Bushire without having obtained anything. From that your Eminence and their Eminences your colleagues can judge whether it be the time for the bishop to proceed to Isfahan. . . .”

“. . . Yesterday there appeared here a small English squadron coming from Bombay consisting of three warships and three or four other armed vessels with troops on board: this squadron is proceeding against Sulaiman K’ab, to make him do amends for his capture of the three English vessels mentioned. I shall not fail to inform you also of the result of this expedition. . . .”

Still from Bushire, almost in the centre of the ‘hurricane zone’ of those years of complications and changes, Bishop Cornelius wrote again to the Secretary of the Sac. Congregation 15.10.1767,¹ and began by enunciating a truth which many of his predecessors and vicars provincial had overlooked:

“As knowledge of the spiritual state of this Mission, about which I make it my duty to inform you, depends mainly on that of its temporal state, I judge it opportune to give you some news about this. From last May” (i.e. 1767) “onwards until now this town” (Bushire) “has been in the greatest affliction and affright owing to a pure caprice of Karim Khan, who, being given over to wine and women, at the instigation of some buffoons or counsellors of his has had this town blockaded under its walls by some tribes, preventing the entry of provisions and cutting off any communication with the interior of the country, so that without help” (we have had) “from the sea we should have all died of starvation. Not knowing the real motive for an order so harsh and so unforeseen, and fearing lest there should occur here what one month ago happened at Kangun, another Persian port two days’ distance from here, which on orders from the same usurper without any rhyme or reason was suddenly surrounded by his troops, who sacked it and after massacring the oldest and the infirm inhabitants took away the rest as prisoners to Shiraz: fearing such a development, I say, the English gentlemen here” (i.e. of the East India Company) “for the safety of their own persons and effects caused two of the men-o’-war to come here, and I on my part took the precaution of sending to Basra the sacred vessels and ornaments of the church, together with the books and other things most necessary for the Mission, so that there might not happen what had recently twice happened to me on Kharg in the loss of our two houses there.

“Now we await the result of the going to the Court” (i.e. at Shiraz) “of the only son of the Shaikh” (of Bushire) “. . . he is the Arab chief, feudatory of the country, who secretly and by paths unknown to others found means to get through” (the blockade) “to Shiraz, with gifts in order to try and bring about an accommodation.

“A little before the straits mentioned supervened, i.e. towards the end of April” (1767), “there had left for Shiraz an English gentleman, accompanied by an imposing and numerous retinue, with the status of ambassador from the” (East India) “Company to the above-named Karim Khan, the object being to bring about through his intermediary and his influence peace with the K’ab Arabs, Persian subjects, and also to obtain” (permission for) “the establishment in Bushire of their trading-house, with all the same ancient privileges they enjoyed in Bandar ’Abbas, which they had abandoned and which now lies in ruins.

“Reckoning on a successful result from this solemn and extraordinary embassy I did not fail to address myself to the envoy in question, my friend, and to beg him to interest himself with the Ruler” (Karim Khan) “there also for the welfare and re-establishment of the Missions in Persia: and he promised me to do so. But to my very great regret and contrary to general expectation after a useless stay of five whole months at Shiraz he was obliged to return to Basra without having been able to obtain anything from Karim Khan, who in the end declined to accept the gifts from the Company brought by him,

¹ *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 466.