

“alleging as a reason that he had no need of European trade, because that had been the reason for money leaving the country. On the return of a frigate¹ dispatched in haste to Bombay to take the news of this to the Supreme Council there, it will be seen what decision the English” (East India) “Company will take: general opinion is that, in order to retain the trade in the Persian Gulf, it will be obliged in the end to try and retake the island of Kharg from the pirate, Mir Muhanna, seeing that the Dutch Company has no further intention of recovering it.

“From what I have just informed you, and from the small satisfaction displayed by the people, in particular the nobles and merchants, with the rule of Karim Khan (from which one may foresee an early rebellion) your Illust. lordship and the Sac. Congregation can easily judge whether it be a favourable time to hope for the re-establishment of the Faith and missions in Persia. . . .”

The course the English Company took in the face of this attitude of Karim Khan towards them was altogether different:

“14.2.1769. As the English had removed their trading-house from Bushire to Basra, Fr. Antony Marian from our mission also betook himself hither . . .”,

records *Cont. Basra Chron.*: and included in the report of the session of the Sac. Congregation of 2.4.1770² there is a ‘Note’ or Minute:

“The English Company having fallen on evil times in Persia, that nation withdrew to Basra: and for that reason it behoved Mgr the Bishop of Isfahan to retire to Basra with the rest of his dismayed flock. . . .”

In other words Bishop Cornelius and the Carmelite mission had withdrawn from Bushire by or before the beginning of 1769—and this was substantially the last Carmelite organization working in Persia during that century. The Bishop of Isfahan’s explanations and any letters that he may have written in connection with this removal to Basra during 1768–9 have not been traced in the present search, and may have been lost ‘in the post’, as also that of 12.1.1770 which he quotes in another letter of 20.5.1770,³ written from Basra, from which the following observation is taken:

“For the present there is nothing that occurs to me to communicate to you about affairs in Persia and the missions: Karim Khan persists in not permitting Europeans to re-establish themselves in the country, and recover their former trade there. . . .”

From Julfa itself, some months earlier, 20.12.1769,⁴ the Dominican Fr. de Bernardis as Vicar General of the diocese had informed the Cardinal Prefect:

“Here the folk are poor and wretched both in numbers and in worldly goods, but we have quiet in matters of religion. As to the country Karim Khan is in Shiraz, busy with

¹ This was presumably not the man-o’-war of which *Cont. Basra Chron.* records the disastrous end in that same year, 1767:

“15.12.(1667). Very regrettable news arrived that not far from Bandar ‘Abbas an English warship had been totally burnt out on 15.11.1767, with the loss of 265 men. It had been detached from the tiny fleet which for a long time past had been in these waters on account of the disputes with the Arabs, Shaikh Sulaiman” (i.e. K’ab) “and Mir Muhanna, at the instigation of Karim Khan, the ruler of Persia, in order that they should capture and make a prize of an exceedingly ancient vessel formerly belonging to Nadir Shah loaded, as it was thought, with great riches and seized there by the Arab-Persian rebels, which was lying at anchor near Bandar ‘Abbas. The choicest naval units of the English were put on board, among them both the leading military and civilian officials of the Company, as well as the Resident at Bushire, Mr. Boyer [? sic, for Bowyer] and the second in charge at Basra, Mr. Syster [? sic, Chichester]: aided by favourable winds it had cast anchor in front of the Arab ship, and everything was got ready for the attack, and they had hardly risen from breakfast, when suddenly their (nitre) powder was ignited by fire, and it (the ship) blew up. . . .”

² *Acta*, 1770, p. 70.

³ *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 530.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 563.