

'decrees of 22.11.1750 and 19.4.1751 456 scudi were to be paid by the Procurator of the 'Monti di Pietà to the Vicar Provincial of the Mission for the new bishop, being 200 scudi 'as advance of one year's allowance from the date of his consecration, 96 scudi for him to 'provide himself with episcopal robes and pontificals, and 60 scudi for his journey to be 'consecrated, as well as 100 scudi to pay off debts of his predecessor: while on 29.2.1752 'and 1.10.1752 and 6.9.1753 orders were issued for advance payments of 150, 200 and '100 scudi on Bishop Sebastian's allowance.'

But on 1.11.1752 he was writing from Basra¹ to Rome

'greatly afflicted, as he understood the Sacr. Congregation had deprived him of the annual 'allowance allotted him, in order to pay with it the debts contracted by his predecessor, 'Bishop Philip Mary; so that, in order to live, necessity would oblige him at once to begin 'incurring debts and to remain in the house of Religious or of some Christian willing to 'deprive himself in order to do him the charity of keeping him, until fresh funds arrive: '. . . to go to Isfahan when the road opens without any allowance would make it impossible 'for me to stay there. . . .'

After bewailing his hard lot in such a situation, and throwing himself on the pity of the Sacr. Congregation for more liberal financial support of Persian missionary enterprise he pointed out that the late Bishop Philip Mary had not been to blame for expenditure he had to meet: he had been obliged to draw bills in order to fulfil his pastoral office by a visitation of all his vast diocese over a period of two years and two months: then the Sacr. Congregation had commissioned him to have made, regardless of expense, two copies of the version of the Gospels done into Persian by orders of Nadir Shah. He ended this 'money' letter by suggesting that the Sacr. Congregation should allot to two Armenian Uniat priests for the Shariman church in Julfa, who had taken refuge in Basra, the stipends that it had been wont to allocate to the Carmelite missionaries.

By the end of 1752 the civil war and anarchy had already proved severe—on the inhabitants of Julfa especially; but from the first Bishop Sebastian seems—from the correspondence left—to have used every argument against returning there. On 25.4.1752² from Baghdad he wrote to the Cardinal Prefect admitting his own delinquency in sending news, but coupling it with a reproach for lack of interest in the hard-pressed Religious in Persia:

"Fr. Rinaldo Maria, at present the General of my Order, tells me to give news of the "affairs of the mission to the Sacr. Congregation. I shall do it very willingly and I should "do it much more willingly and frequently, were some reply given to mine. In this con- "nection I intend to comply by telling them what I and the other missionaries in Isfahan "suffered during these last years.

"I suppose the Sacr. Congregation will have learned only too well how, in addition to "the great famine" (endured) "all the churches were forcibly despoiled of those few orna- "ments and silverware that they had: how they³ compelled us to pay 400 scudi in cash and, "as we had not that money, I as the best known and accredited was taken and taken again "to the Tribunals, and put in prison, until I obtained a loan and paid the unjust imposition "on account of all concerned. . . ."

In July 1752⁴ Bishop Sebastian wrote to the Secretary of the Sacr. Congregation:

"The turmoils and revolutions and extortions in Persia do not cease. In consequence "I continue to remain in Baghdad having been unable, in spite of many attempts made to

¹ *S.R.*, vol. 756.

² and ⁴ *Idem*, vol. 753.

³ This was towards the end of 1751, when the Lurs and Bakhtiariis took Isfahan by assault.