

“bidden him (the Mutasallim) dim the eyes of the shameless Dutch Resident, but by no means had he bidden him extract the man’s eyes: wherefore he (the Mutasallim) should make amends, and return as soon as possible the money to him” (Baron Knipphausen). “So, gold having been extracted from the merchants and magnates of Basra, within a few days where the river joins the sea” (i.e. the ‘bar’ of the Shatt-ul-’Arab) “they brought it to the Dutch ship: and, when it had been weighed and measured, the Dutch ship sailed off victoriously to the island of Kharg. . . . The Pasha left no stone unturned to get the Dutch to transfer themselves to Basra, proposing so many opportunities, so many favours: and, when it proved of no avail, became so obsequious as to send an Aga from his Court at Baghdad with a robe of honour to Kharg.

“Baron Knipphausen received him benevolently, and replied that it was by instructions of the Supreme Council at Batavia that the Dutch flag had been unfurled there at Kharg, and he was unable to transfer it to Basra without receiving authority from Batavia to do so. After profuse protestations of friendship the envoy was given leave to depart, while the Dutch ship sailed away to Batavia, carrying there the joyous news of the recovery of the money, of honour rehabilitated, of the erection of the new House of the Company and of the fort on Kharg island; while at Basra, by the mercy of God Who had turned loss into gain, the prestige of the name of European was increased. . . .”

As soon after the Dutch occupation as 9.3.1754 Fr. Angel Felix went from Basra to Kharg and “spent Easter with the Christians there”: while early in 1755 the Carmelite Vicar Provincial (Fr. Cornelius of S. Joseph himself) went to Kharg, whither on his instructions Fr. Urban transferred his post from Bandar ‘Abbas: Fr. Cornelius explained in a letter written from Aleppo, 20.12.1755,<sup>1</sup> to the Cardinal Prefect:

“. . . When he saw that it was difficult for him to penetrate into the interior of Persia . . . Bishop Sebastian . . . had determined to go and reside on Kharg, an island . . . of which the Dutch Company had taken possession two years ago and there constructed a fort, which was to defend the new town, which is now<sup>2</sup> being built there. With that object I betook myself there, and obtained by the courtesy of the commandant, Baron Knipphausen, not only permission to build there a Residence for two of our Religious, with a church open to the public, . . . but he also granted me permission to add to it quarters for the Bishop of Isfahan, realizing that residence of that prelate on the island would attract many Christians from Persia to establish themselves there, to the advantage of the Company. In pursuance of that permission Monsignor (Sebastian) commenced to send there from Basra material<sup>3</sup> to make a beginning with the rooms allowed him, and which were to have been finished in September, leaving for the coming year the construction of the church and convent. . . . Owing to his death and my departure the new foundation remains suspended. . . .”

The Carmelite Vicar Provincial urged it as necessary, in his opinion, because a missionary was required there to hear confessions of the German Catholic soldiers, who furnished the garrison (not Dutchmen, apparently), to instruct a number of slaves desiring baptism, and because numbers of Armenians from Julfa, both Catholics and schismatics, had gone to live there: and the protection of the Company, the privilege of travelling in their ships would be valuable.

Under the year 1756 Fr. Angel Felix, who resided in Kharg at intervals for several years, recorded in *Cont. Basra Chron.*:

<sup>1</sup> *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> This is the explanation why, contrary to what is seen in other townships on the Persian littoral, the streets in the village of Kharg, even today, are straight and wide and houses separated from each other in walled enclosures—the ground plan survives from that drawn by the Dutch in 1754.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Fr. Hyacinth’s letter, 23.6.1755 (O.C.D. 242 b): “. . . Baron Knipphausen has written to Mgr Sebastian, “inviting him to proceed to Kharg. . . . Mgr Sebastian has accepted his courtesy, and sent 200 pieces of timber. . . .”