

premises had been razed to the ground some years before, having for twenty years previous to that been a heap of ruins:

“By order of the Father General in the year 1756 I . . . proceeded to Basra in order to pass on to the mission at Shiraz in Persia. . . . I found the thing completely impossible, for some years to come at any rate, . . . because along with the House of the mission the town of Shiraz also had been demolished and destroyed, altogether depopulated, and empty of Christians. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, when it was recommended by the bishops that Carmelites should be dispatched from Europe direct to Julfa and that Residence reopened to active work, no response was forthcoming—no one at any rate ventured to make the journey inland. Thus Bishop Emmanuel of Baghdad, near to the situation in central Persia, wrote to Rome, 15.7.1763:<sup>2</sup>

“. . . In view of the letter of Fr. Raymond Berselli, O.P.” (i.e. to the effect that the whole of Persia, and Isfahan in particular were quiet) “as also of the ease with which the two new Dominicans reached Isfahan, and lastly of the return of a number of Persians and Armenians, everything seems to indicate that there would be no objection to the Jesuits and Discalced Carmelite Fathers sending Religious to re-establish their missions,”

and again, 5.1.1765:<sup>3</sup>

“I cannot understand why the Jesuit Fathers, the Capuchins and the Discalced Carmelites have made no attempt so far to re-establish their missions. Their Houses exist, and they will have no difficulty in entering them, when they wish . . .”,

while, 30.6.1771,<sup>4</sup> the Bishop of Isfahan expressed himself as follows:

“If your Eminence and the Sac. Congregation judge it fitting to take away the Dominicans from that mission, in my opinion it is necessary to send some other missionary from another Order in their stead, to take up the duty of looking after it and the” (Armenian) “priests. For such a proposition I would venture to suggest to your Eminence to choose from the (Carmelite) Seminary at San Pancrazio (Rome) in consultation with the heads of the Order one or two of the most capable and virtuous Discalced Carmelite Religious . . .”

Up till 1758 there was, it is true, a Carmelite lay brother still left: the Dominican Fr. Raymond Berselli had written<sup>5</sup> that he was

“remaining alone in Julfa with one single Carmelite lay brother: Julfa is depopulated of its own inhabitants, in place of whom dwellers of the countryside have taken refuge there . . .”:

and the Dominican who followed him. Fr. de Bernardis, 20.10.1765,<sup>6</sup> mentioned that:

“. . . the churches of the Jesuits and Carmelites in Julfa, and also that of the Annunciation (belonging to the Messrs. Shariman) for the Armenian rite continue to be in my hands, by God's will: and, please God, there will be people to fill them. . . .”

In his full report handed to the Congregation in Rome in December 1772<sup>7</sup> Bishop Cornelius was definite about the course to follow:

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Clement of the Annunciation, 20.3.1758 and 19.4.1758, *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 382.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 631.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, VI, p. 392.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, VII, p. 319.

<sup>6</sup> *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 178.

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, VIII, p. 6.