

Relations of Shah Abbas the Great, of Persia, with the Mogul Emperors, Akbar and Jahangir.—By CLARA CARY EDWARDS, New York City.

Abbas the Great came to the throne of Persia in 1586. He found his country in that condition of anarchy which in a despotic state is the invariable accompaniment of any weakening of the central power. In the ten years which had passed since the death of his grandfather, Shah Tahmasp, two kings, one a drunkard, the other blind, had seen their great kingdom become an agglomeration of petty principalities which acknowledged no allegiance to the Shah: everywhere khans, tribal chiefs, provincial governors had set themselves up as independent kings and princes.

Not only was Persia riven by internal quarrels; she was attacked by foes from without. A country holding the faith of the Shiah Moslems, she was surrounded by Sunni Moham-medans, who were ever ready to make difference of creed an excuse for aggression. The Uzbek Tartars on the North-East held the province of Khorasan in constant dread of their fierce raids. They were pensionaries and dependents of the Turks, and were bound to them by an agreement which provided that whenever the Turkish army should be engaged in war in Europe, the Tartars were to harass Persia and prevent the country from feeling the relief of peace¹. On the North-West, the one-time Persian provinces of Shirvan and Daghestan had been held by the Turks since the days of Suleiman the Magnificent, and Turkish armies were now waging victorious war in Azer-baijan.

Under these circumstances, it required no great political instinct for the king to see the wisdom of keeping in friendly relations with Akbar, the Sunni emperor of India, especially as that emperor had brought India to a height of power and

¹ Sherley, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, v. 2, bk. 9, p. 1390.

prestige never known before. Fortunately, it was not difficult. Akbar had already shown that he had no desire to add Persian provinces to his territory. Only half a dozen years before the accession of Abbas, he had replied to the ruler of Turan, who sent an envoy with a proposal that they should join forces against the King of Persia: "that the Persian royal family and his own had always been on friendly terms, and he did not consider differences of law and religion as sufficient ground for a war of conquest."¹

Shah Abbas even hoped that the good feeling of his brother emperor would lead him to restore to the Persian king the city and province of Kandahar, in accordance with an old promise.² Kandahar, a small city in itself, was by its position a place of real importance. Lying on the main trade-route between India and Persia, it was a focus of all the direct routes converging from the western frontier of India towards Herat and Persia; and the fortress of Kandahar, which in the hands of the Indian king would form an excellent base for an army of invasion, would, in the possession of Persia, lend security from attacks by way of the South. Abbas was not sufficiently powerful in the early years of his reign to press his claim to this stronghold, once the property of his family. He had patched up a temporary peace with the Turks, leaving in their hands all the territory they had conquered, and he was engaged in bringing order out of the chaos in Persia.³ One by one, the rebellious princelings were being subdued; some to be treated with harsh severity, others with a clemency surprising in a Persian monarch. It must have galled him, when he was thus engaged in civil wars, to hear (1593) that the Persian prince of Kandahar, who had been holding the province as a tributary of Akbar, had definitely made over the place to the Indian emperor, receiving in exchange the Subah of Multan and other dignities.⁴ Of such value was Akbar's promise!

¹ *Akbarnama*, v. 3, p. 297.

² The promise was made by Akbar in 1558. See *Akbarnama*, v. 2, p. 121. He renewed at that time a promise originally given by Humayun, but never carried out.

³ One curious provision of the treaty of peace with the Turks was that the Persians should no longer have the right to curse the first three Caliphs.

⁴ *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 257, note.

There are, unfortunately, very few references in contemporary documents to the relations between Abbas and Akbar. Those which we have show that the relations continued friendly, in spite of the Kandahar incident. Sir Anthony Sherley, writing from Persia in about 1599, mentions that sixteen slaves had been sent as a present by the Great Mogul to Abbas.¹ A little later, he writes:—"The Great Mogul, King of Lahore, sent a great ambassador to desire a marriage between his eldest son's daughter and Cephir Mirza (Safi Mirza), eldest son to the King of Persia, with a mighty present, and as mighty offers, both of ready money, and to pay 30,000 men in any war which the King of Persia should undertake for seven years."² Sherley does not tell us how this embassy was received, but it must have been welcome. Shah Abbas would feel that he was receiving a slight and partial return for the loss of Kandahar.³ The Persian king must have sent return embassies to the Indian court, but all we know of them is that on one occasion he sent Akbar, among other "fitting gifts", a horse so fine that it continued to be the best in the royal stables until Jahangir gave it away as a mark of his special favor, two years after his accession.⁴

Concerning the diplomatic passages between Abbas and Jahangir, who came to the throne of India in 1605, we have more sources of information. The most valuable is Jahangir's diary, kept with his own hand;⁵ and for amplification and comment on this, we have the writings of a number of European travellers to India and Persia. Among these, the most notable are Sir Thomas Roe, English ambassador to the court of the Great Mogul, and the letters of that most careful observer and delightful *raconteur*, the Italian Della Valle, who spent ten years in travel in Turkey, Persia and India. From these sources we may acquire a knowledge which, although fragmentary, is sufficient to give us a clear idea of the dealings between the two courts and of the reception and treatment of ambassadors.

¹ Sherley, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, v. 2, bk. 9, p. 1402. These slaves were stopped and held by the Governor of Hormuz.

² *Ibid.* v. 2, bk. 1, p. 1406.

³ In sending this embassy, Akbar followed his usual policy of conciliating a ruler from whom he had taken territory.

⁴ *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 1, p. 142.

⁵ I have used throughout the translation by A. Rogers, edited by H. Beveridge. 2 volumes, London, 1909 and 1914.

At this time, there was constant intercourse between the inhabitants of the two countries. The trade-route from Lahore to Ispahan by way of Kandahar was a well travelled highway, in spite of its difficulties and dangers.¹ Five months were required for the journey, but time counts for little in the East. According to one contemporary estimate, the long track over mountain and desert was paced yearly by from twelve to fourteen hundred camels, carrying loads of indigo, sugar, spices, cotton cloth, and the like.² The trade in turbans alone was considerable, for all the turbans used in Persia were imported from India.³ Della Valle notes that there was a very large number of Hindoo merchants living in Ispahan, many of whom were in business there as permanent residents.⁴ In India the Persian language was the speech of the Mogul's court and largely of his army;⁵ two of his intimates were the Persian scholars Faizi and Abu-l Fazl; and many of his best soldiers and officers were Persian by birth.⁶

The rulers of two countries so closely bound by ties of language and commerce could not ignore each other. To Jahangir there were only two monarchs who could even pretend to an equality with himself—the Persian Shah and the more

¹ An ambassador of the Shah to India experienced its dangers in 1620. He was robbed by the Afghans and all his suite were taken prisoners. He alone escaped and arrived empty-handed at the Indian court. Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 208—209.

² See letter from Richard Steele to the East India Company, in *Register of Letters of the East India Company*, 1600—1619, p. 459. De Laet says of Kandahar: "Hic continuo commercia exercentur e Persia, India, Mesopotamia, e reliquis partibus orientis; nam septem aut octo millia camelorum in ambitu aluntur ad merces ulro citroque devehendendas." —De Laet: *Persia, seu regni Persici status*, p. 286.

³ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 1, p. 833.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 485.

⁵ *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, Hak. Soc., p. 97; Herbert, *A Relation of Some Yeares Travaile*, p. 36. It is interesting to note in this connection that the Shah's soldiers were many of them Turks, and Turkish was the language of his court and army. Cf. Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 1, p. 507.

⁶ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 41; Herbert, p. 36; Terry, *A Voyage to East India*, p. 121. The Persian soldiers had gained by their bravery such a reputation for their king that it became a custom in India, if a man did a very valiant thing, to call out "Shah Abbas!", as much as to say that it was done as well as the Persian king himself could have done it. Terry, p. 152.

distant ruler of Constantinople.¹ The Persian, who lived the nearer his own territory, was in his eyes the more important. Indeed, by the time of Jahangir's accession, Shah Abbas had won for himself boundless fear and respect in his own country and fame throughout the civilized world.² He had effectually put down rebellion in Persia and had brought that country to a state of order and safety which astonished European travellers.³ He had renewed the wars with Turkey and had already won back much of the lost territory. He was a personality not to be disregarded by the Indian Emperor. Nevertheless, the kingdom of Persia, strong and united as he had made it, was far inferior in wealth, splendor, and population to that of the Great Mogul. If Jahangir must consider with respect the military preparedness of Persia, Abbas, in his poorer country, could not afford to endanger the immense economic advantages which he derived from Indian trade. In character the two monarchs were so different as to make any sympathy or understanding out of the question. Abbas, the warrior, scorned the effeminate and luxury-loving Indian; while Jahangir, naturalist and patron of the arts, despised the roughness and ignorance of the Persian king. Outwardly they displayed great respect and affection for each other; but with all their protestations of friendship, Jahangir always tried to place the Persian at a disadvantage, and Abbas never forgot the sting of the loss of Kandahar. To more than one European observer the secret enmity between the monarchs was apparent.⁵

Diplomatic representation of each ruler at the court of the other was necessary. And besides the exchange of formal embassies, it was the custom, when a prominent merchant started off with a large caravan, to send by him a letter and

¹ *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, Introd. p. XXIX. Jahangir's journal makes frequent mention of Persian ambassadors, but makes absolutely no direct allusion to the English ambassador.

² Della Valle and Cartwright both note that the most binding form of an oath for a Persian was to swear by the head of Shah Abbas. And if one man wished well to another, he would say: "May Shah Abbas give you your desires." Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 1, p. 445; Cartwright, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, v. 2, bk. 9, p. 1433.

³ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 1, p. 447-448; Cartwright, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, v. 2, bk. 9, p. 1431.

⁴ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 405.

⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 11.

a present to the sovereign of the country he was visiting.¹ Sometimes the merchants would be commissioned to buy some particular object for their masters. Again, the king would send out an agent to buy him curios and rarities, much as museums do now. Jahangir gives an amusing account, recorded below, of the return of one such messenger, who had been sent to Persia and Constantinople to bring back jewels and curiosities.

This agent had paid his respects to the Shah, to whom he had presented a letter from Jahangir. At the Shah's request, he had shown him a list of the things he was to buy for his sovereign. The Shah, seeing that on the list were entered good turquoise, and *mumiya* (bitumen) from the mines in Ispahan, said that these two things were not to be bought. He would send them as presents. He therefore sent six bags of turquoise earth and a little *mumiya*, as well as four horses, and he wrote a letter containing "many, many expressions of friendship," in which he made many apologies for the inferior quality of the turquoise and the small quantity of *mumiya*. The turquoise earth proved indeed to be poor, since not a single stone could be had from it worthy of setting in a ring.² The *mumiya*, which was in those days considered a wonderful remedy, proved equally disappointing. Jahangir writes:—

"With regard to the effect of the *mumiya* I had heard much from scientists, but when I tried it no result was apparent. I do not know whether physicians have exaggerated its effect or whether its efficacy had been lessened by its being stale. At any rate, I gave it to a fowl with a broken leg to drink, in larger quantity than they said and in the manner laid down by the physicians, and rubbed it on the place where it was broken, and kept it there for three days, though it was said to be sufficient to keep it from morning to evening. But after I had examined it, no effect was produced and the broken place remained as it was."³

¹ Jahangir mentions receiving and sending several such messages. See *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 1, p. 310; v. 2, pp. 2 and 24.

² When Jahangir's letter was presented to Abbas, the Persian king was at Meshed, near which are situated the famous turquoise mines of Nishapur. I believe that it would have been easy for the king to send good turquoise from these mines, had he wished to do so. The sending of a very polite letter and of inferior stones was quite consistent with the rest of Abbas's policy towards Jahangir.

³ *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 1, p. 238.

The first mention of the King of Persia in Jahangir's journal has to do with Kandahar. A Persian force under the chief of Seistan had attacked the city, with the aid of the Governor of Herat. Jahangir, when he heard of the attempt, sent out an army to defend the place. The attack, he naively relates, was made entirely without the knowledge of the King of Persia, who, when it came to his ears, despatched an envoy to the Persian leader commanding him to withdraw.

"What seeker of occasion and raiser of strife," stormed Abbas, "has come against Kandahar without my order! If they by chance should have taken the country into their own possession, they should hand it to the friends and servants of my brother Jahangir Pādshah and return to their own abodes."¹

The Persians obediently retreated, and the envoy went on to Jahangir's court to offer apologies from his master. "He explained that the ill-fated army which had attacked Kandahar had acted without the order of Shah Abbas. God forbid (he said) that any unpleasantness should remain in my (i. e. Jahangir's) mind."

It is a little difficult to explain this incident satisfactorily. The suggestion that Shah Abbas did not know of the expedition against Kandahar may be dismissed at once as most improbable. Perhaps he believed that the Governor of the city would be overawed by the sight of an army and would surrender without delay; in which case he may have thought that Jahangir would not consider the position worth fighting for, once it had passed out of his hands. Or, possibly, he had no intention at that time of taking the city, but merely wished to make a demonstration, in order to call the matter to Jahangir's notice. This would be a typically Persian manner of dealing with the affair. For a Persian, the indirect method is always the best method.³ Jahangir would understand this, and he can have had no illusions about the love borne him

¹ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 112.

² *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 85.

³ If, for instance, a Persian wishes to sell you a piece of land, he does not approach the transaction in the crude, unimaginative way common in Western countries. He sends you word that your horse has trampled down his crops, or he removes the land-marks between his property and yours, or in some other such subtle way brings the matter to your attention.

by Shah Abbas. But he chose to accept the explanation as it was given, and if Abbas had expected him to present him with Kandahar, he was disappointed.

He showed his displeasure at Jahangir's neglect in this matter by refraining for some years from sending an ambassador to his court. Perhaps he thought that the Indian might after all give up Kandahar if he saw that Abbas's mind was really set on having it. At all events, it was not until 1611, six years after Akbar's death and Jahangir's accession, that an ambassador arrived with the Shah's condolences for the one and congratulations for the other. He brought "good horses, cloth stuffs, and every kind of fitting present," together with a letter in which the Shah apologized for not having offered his congratulations earlier, saying that because of his war with the Turks some delay had taken place in the "accomplishment of this important duty." The war with the Turks may have seemed to Jahangir an insufficient excuse for failing to despatch an envoy; but he accepted the letter with much apparent satisfaction and gave its bearer "a superb robe of honour and thirty thousand rupees."¹ He took his revenge for the tardiness of the ambassador's arrival by keeping him a long while at court. Two years later he mentions him as the recipient of a gold mohur on New Year's day.² That the ambassador did not willingly make this long stay, in spite of occasional gifts, may be inferred from a letter written by an agent of the East India Company, in September 1613, who says: "Jahangir keepeth here two of the Emperor of Persia's ambassadors³ and will neither dispeed them nor license their departure, whereupon is likely to be wars between them. The Emperor of Persia demands Sinde (sic) to be given him, which the king will not grant."⁴

The Mogul finally gave the necessary permission, however, and friendly relations were continued between the two countries by means of frequent missions.⁵

¹ *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 1, p. 193—196.

² *Ibid.* v. 1, p. 237.

³ Only one is mentioned in Jahangir's journal.

⁴ *Letters received by the East India Company from its servants in the East*, v. 1, p. 278. The writer would seem to refer to the question of Kandahar, not to Sind.

⁵ Neither monarch maintained permanent diplomatic representatives at foreign courts.

One of the Shah's ambassadors to India was the Englishman, Robert Sherley, who strangely spent thirty years of his life in the service of the Persian king. He came to Jahangir's court in 1614, on his return from a round of diplomatic visits to the Christian princes of Europe, and was well received and sent on his way with two elephants and eight antelopes as presents to the Shah.¹ Another ambassador came in 1615 bringing horses, camels, stuffs from Aleppo, and nine large European hunting dogs.² In the autumn of 1618 an important embassy came from Shah Abbas which was observed and described by Sir Thomas Roe. As it is interesting to compare this with an Indian embassy which arrived in Persia at about the same time and was described by Della Valle, I will examine both in detail.

On the day of the Persian's arrival, Sir Thomas wrote:—

“The Persian ambassador, Mahomett Reza Beag about noone came into the Towne with a great troupe which were partly sent out by the king to meete him with 100 Eliphantes and musique, but no man of greater qualetye then the ordinary receiver of strangers. His owne trayne were about fifty horse, well fitted in Coates of Gould, their bowes, quivers, and Targetes richly garnished, forty shott, and some two hundred ordinary Peons and attenders on bagage.” On presentation at court, the Persian made many salaams and even prostrated himself before Jahangir, earning Roe's scorn for his servility. He “presented the Shabas his lettre; which the kinge took with a little motion of his body, asking only: How doth my brother? without title of Maiestie; and after some few woordes hee was Placed in the seuenth rannck, . . . which in my Iudgment was a most inferiour place for his master's Embassador, but that hee well deserved it for dooing that reuerence which his Predecessores refused, to the dishonor of his Prince and the Murmer of many of his Nation. It is said hee had order from the Sophy to give content, and thereby it is gathered his message is for some ayde in mony agaynst the Turke, in which kind hee often findes liberall succour, though it bee pretended hee comes only to treat a peace for the Deccans, whose protection the Shabas taketh to hart, envying the

¹ *Letters received by the East India Company etc.*, v. 2, p. 99, and Coryat, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, v. 1, bk. 4, p. 593.

² *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 1, p. 282—283.

increase of this Empire. The King, according to Custome, gaue him a handsome turbant, a vest of gould, and a Girdle, for which agayne hee made three Teselims and one Sizeda or ground curtesye. Hee brought for Presentes three tymes nine horses of Persia and Arabia,¹ this beeing a Ceremonious number among them, nine mules very fayre and lardg, seven camells laden with veluett, two sutes of Europe Arras (which I suppose was Venetian hanginges of veluett with Gould, and not Arras), two chestes of Persian hanginges, on cabinett rich, 40 Muskettes, 5 Clockes, one Camell laden with Persian Cloth of Gould, 8 Carpettes of silke, 2 Rubyes ballast, 21 Cammelles of wyne of the Grape, 14 Cammelles of distilled sweet waters, 7 of rose waters, 7 daggers sett with stones, 5 swoordes sett with stones, 7 Venetian looking glasses, but these soe faire, soe rich that I was ashamed of the relation His owne furniture was rich, leading nine spare horses trapped in Gould and silver; about his Turbant was wreathed a chayne of Pearles, rubies and Turquesses, and three Pipes of gould answerable for three spriges of feathers."² In presenting his gifts, "hee appeared rather a Iester or Iugler then a person of any Grauetie, running up and downe, and acting all his woordes like a mimick Player Hee deliuered the Presentes with his owne handes, which the king with smiles and Cheerfull Countenance and many woordes of Contentment receiued. His toong was a great aduantage to deliuer his owne business, which hee did with so much flattery and obsequiousness that it Pleased as much as his Guift: euer calling his Maiestie King and Commander of the world, forgetting his owne master had a share in yt; and on euery little occasion of good acceptation hee made his Tezelims. When all was deliuered for that day hee prostrated himselfe on the ground, and knocked with his head as if he would enter in."³

Mohammed Reza Beg continued at Jahangir's court for some six months, during which time he was favored with many

¹ Roe notes elsewhere: "The horses eyther had lost their flesh or bewty, for except one or two, I Iudged them vnfit for to be sent or taken by Princes. Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, p. 301.

² Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, p. 295—297.

³ Ibid. p. 300—301.

presents—20,000 rupees on one occasion,¹ an elephant on another²—and entertained most honorably and “in every way valued as befits his place.”³ In return for all this favor, he displayed a subservience and humility which continued to fill the English Ambassador with scorn. “I would sooner dye,” he writes, “then be subject to the slaverye the Persian is content with.”⁴

Apparently, however, his business did not progress so well as the gifts showered upon him would lead one to expect; for, at last, believing it impossible to get satisfaction in his affairs, “hee suddenly tooke leave; and hauing given thirty faire horses at his departure, the King gave in recompence three thousand *Rupias*, which hee tooke in great scorn; whereupon the King prized all that the Ambassadour had given him at mean rates, and likewise all that the King had returned since his arriuell, even to slaues, Drinke, Mellons, Pines, Plantanes, Hawkes, Plumes, the Eliphant and whatsoever at extremely high rates, and sending both Bills made it up in mony.”⁵ The balance, of course, appeared very much in favour of the King. The ambassador was so much upset by the slight put upon him that he made no farewell calls, but gave out that he was ill with fever, and so departed secretly.

Something more than a year later, Shah Abbas was staying in Kazvin when he received word that Khan Alam, ambassador of the Great Mogul had arrived in Teheran and hoped shortly to wait upon him. This embassy had been long and eagerly expected, for it had been several years making the journey from Lahore.⁶ The Shah, annoyed that the Indian had not shown greater zeal in hastening to come to him, refused to receive him at once, and ordered him to wait in Kum, while

¹ Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, p. 300—301. Jahangir gave the ambassador this present at a feast, and the next day made good his liberality by imposing heavy fines on all the nobles who had been present because they had drunk wine. Roe says that Jahangir had given them permission to drink, but had himself got so drunk that he quite forgot this fact.

² *Ibid.* p. 394.

³ *Letters received by the East India Company*, v. 4, p. 310.

⁴ Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, p. 350—351.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 400.

⁶ In 1613 Jahangir wrote in his journal that he had summoned Khan Alam to his court with the attention of sending him to Persia. *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 1, p. 248.

he himself went to spend the hot months in the hills near Kazvin.¹

Kum is a warm place in which to spend the summer, and its holy shrine would not give to a Sunni the compensation of merit to be acquired by living in its shadow; but we can picture Khan Alam, with oriental acceptance of the inevitable, making himself very comfortable and spending long days seated on a rug in his garden, smoking, and drinking innumerable cups of coffee. He had at least the satisfaction of smoking at a time when that pleasant vice was forbidden to all others. Both Jahangir and Shah Abbas, "in consequence of the disturbance that tobacco brings about in most temperaments and constitutions" and "aware of the mischief arising from it," had forbidden smoking in their kingdoms.² To Khan Alam, arriving in Persia, the publication of the Shah's edict against tobacco was a blow. But a friend at court³ represented to the Shah that "Khan Alam could never be a moment without tobacco," and the Shah graciously wrote this couplet in answer:

"The friend's envoy wishes to exhibit tobacco.

With fidelity's lamp I light up the tobacco market."

Whereupon Khan Alam wrote and sent the following:

"I, poor wretch, was miserable at the tobacco notice.

By the just Shah's favour the tobacco market became brisk."⁴

In November the Shah returned to Kazvin and allowed the ambassador to come to him there. This he did, with all his following of from one thousand to fifteen hundred persons.⁵ The Shah received him very graciously, and sat all the first night drinking with him,—they two alone in the balcony of a house in the public square, while the courtiers waited wearily below, some eating and drinking to pass the time, others stretching themselves out to sleep on the bare ground. "Not caring for this discomfort, I left promptly," says Della Valle.⁶

¹ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 1, p. 736—737.

² Herbert, writing in 1628 says that 30 camel loads of tobacco which arrived from India were publicly burned, and the unfortunate muleteers who had brought it had their ears and noses cut off. He says that the Shah's regulations about tobacco were constantly changing, p. 119.

³ Yadgar Ali Khan, who had been ambassador to India.

⁴ *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 1, p. 370—371.

⁵ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 1, p. 835.

⁶ *Ibid.* v. 1, p. 830.

The ceremony of the presentation of gifts was impressive. An ambassador from Russia had just arrived with gifts from the Czar, and the Shah saw an excellent opportunity to display to the ambassador of each country his importance in the eyes of the other. The chief square of the town was prepared for the spectacle. Soon after noon, on one of those brilliant autumn days which go far in Persia to redeem the discomforts of the rest of the year, the gifts were brought in: first those from the Indian Emperor, which were placed in line along one side of the *meidan*; then those from the Russian king, placed opposite. The Russian ambassadors (two, in accordance with the custom of their country) followed, and dismounted to await the king. When all was in orderly array, the Shah and Khan Alam rode in side by side,¹ followed by a troop of the great men of the court, clothed in silk and brocade, wearing jewels in their turbans; (but the king was clothed simply, as usual, in cloth). They too dismounted, and the Muscovites came forward to present their letter. When the King had received it, with the accustomed words of welcome, he and the ambassadors went to a balcony overlooking the square to review the procession of gifts. First passing the King, the procession filed all around the square and then passed out. When we read the list of gifts brought from India, we cease to wonder that the journey from Lahore took several years to accomplish. With the menagerie which Khan Alam had to conduct, with the thousand followers whom he had to take care of, it is wonderful that he was able to make the journey and present all in order before the King. Della Valle, stationed at one end of the *meidan*, watched the parade and gives a very detailed description of the gifts, which I have abbreviated in the following account:—

“Twenty-nine camels, with loads of I know not what, but I imagine of fine cloths of Indian workmanship; a large and beautiful tent, with gilt poles, carried in many sections by many men; I know not how many jewelled swords and other arms; more than twenty cases (bacili) full of turbans, five or six turbans in each case; a great tooth of an animal, which must be the tooth of either an elephant or of a fish. Other

¹ Note that the Indian ambassador was not required to follow behind the Shah, as were the courtiers.

trifles (*bagatelle*) there were which I did not see well. After them, six Indian chariots, each of them with only two wheels, between which the chariot stands, small without seats, with a flat floor, for sitting as on the ground. And these chariots they sit in, leaning back on certain big round cushions which there are at the head, and at the foot too when necessary. All the chariots were covered with silk and gold, and to the pole of each were yoked two white, glistening (*pulitissimi*) bullocks, decked with cloths. After the chariots came a quantity of strange animals, namely:—two *chierghieden*, which I believe to be rhinoceroses, for I was told that they fight with elephants, and on the end of their noses were the marks where the horns will grow (which these, being young, have not yet got); an animal like a buffalo, with horns very large and strange; deer and strange stags of many sorts; wild asses of a fair color; a wild goat with three legs, two of which were in front in their place, and one behind. There were, finally, eight or ten elephants, two or three of the finest of them bearing turrets or palanquins, with men inside, which turrets were covered with silk and gold.”¹

By way of contrast, the Russians had brought sable pelts, a quantity of small pieces of ivory, lanterns, and, especially, a very large quantity of Russian brandy.² Della Valle thought the presentation of so much brandy a very tactless proceeding, for the Russians in giving this, treated the Shah as a very hard drinker. And “it is natural,” says he, “that everyone dislikes to be reprovèd for his real faults.”³ The Shah seems to have taken the same view of the matter for he kept only a very little of the brandy and returned the rest to the Russians, saying that he knew they were accustomed to drink it constantly. And when he left Kazvin for Ferhabad, shortly after, he took with him the Indian ambassador, but commanded the others to remain behind.⁴

The following June (1619) the King returned to his capital Ispahan, and arranged for a state entry of the ambassadors

¹ For this description of the gifts, see Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 1, p. 833—835.

² “Non so quanti camelli carichi di barili pieni pur di aqua vita”—Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 1, p. 836.

³ *Ibid.* v. 1, p. 837.

⁴ *Ibid.* v. 1, p. 835.

of India, Russia, and Turkey (the last named having arrived in the meantime). On the day before the ceremony, they all halted with their retinues at Dowlatabad, a village twelve miles outside the city. The next morning they found the road from that place to the capital lined on both sides with sixty thousand men armed with arquebuses, all in strange and brilliant garb. Some played on fifes and castanets, others danced to the music. The Indian ambassador had heard that the Shah would come to Dowlatabad to meet him, and for a long time he refused to start toward the city. He sent messenger after messenger out on the road to see if the king was coming, but at last he was forced to mount and follow the other ambassadors, who, less exacting, had already gone on. While the Russian and Turk rode very simply in the procession, Khan Alam displayed great magnificence and pomp. Following him were ox-chariots like those he had brought for the king, camel litters, great trumpets, huge cymbals, drums so immense that an elephant was required to carry each pair. His retinue stretched out so long that evening had fallen before its last member reached the city gates.

The scene must have been both picturesque and gay. The foreigners in their native dress, riding through the ever-moving lines of armed men, saw and heard nothing but the dancing and music. As they neared the city and the crowds grew larger, the noise of continual applause increased and they heard the shouts of the populace: "Dowlet-i-Shah Abbas ziadé bashad!"—"May the prosperity of Shah Abbas increase!"

The ambassadors were met outside the city by representatives of the different races living in Ispahan. First the Jews, chanting orisons, who carried a volume of the Law, and lighted candles;¹ then the Zoroastrians, also on foot, with many of their women, who danced as they went. The Christians of Julfa were given an honorable place among the arquebusiers. And lastly, as the customary mark of honor to a great ambassador, came a troop of about twenty of the most famous courtesans of the city, their faces uncovered, all in rank on horseback.

The King himself, allowing the other ambassadors to enter

¹ Della Valle says that they carried "something wrapped up" which he believed to be the Law. *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 17.

the city first, came out by a side gate to meet Khan Alam just before the town. They had a collation together near the gate, and then rode on to the palace, where the others had been awaiting them for an hour and a half. The King felt proud of his sixty thousand arquebusiers, who were not soldiers of the regular army, but artisans and peasants armed for the occasion. But the Indian showed himself so little impressed with their number that he begged to be allowed to give each one a *toman*, to recompense them for the loss of their time.¹ Somewhat offended by this ostentation of liberality, the Shah refused.

That evening there were illuminations in the great square and a grand feast, at which Khan Alam had the place of honor at the King's right. Della Valle, watching him and the King together, felt that the Indian could not have been entirely pleased with the attentions shown him. The King treated him very familiarly, he says, "giving him an infinity of hard slaps on the back, which, since he was fat and wore in the manner of his country only a simple and very thin white robe, doubtless hurt him very much. Again, drawing him close to speak in his ear, the Shah took hold of both his ears and pulled them violently; at other times, laughing, he called him '*Pir ghidi!*—'old cuckold'—(for his hair was already becoming gray). In fine, he continually gave him such caresses, with the outward appearance of great familiarity, but really, inwardly, out of contempt and to make fun of him. Which perhaps the King did to repay him for his haughtiness and the scorn which he always displays for everything belonging to His Majesty."²

The next evening, when the Indian ambassador was summoned to see again the illuminations in the great square, at which the sixty thousand arquebusiers were to appear once more, he sent back a message that to have seen them once was enough, and that it was a pity to keep these poor men longer from their ordinary labors. This he did, says Della Valle, "to show that his eyes were satiated by the greater splendors of his own monarch. And above all, he gave the King to understand, in every way possible, that he thought nothing of the sixty

¹ A *toman* was worth at this time something over three pounds sterling.

² Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 26—27.

thousand arquebusiers, since they were not soldiers, but all artisans of the city and peasants from the villages. The Shah, on the other hand, brought before him so great a number of armed men, not one of them a soldier of the regular army, the better to display his power, and to demonstrate that such was his country and his strength that even if some disaster were to occur, or his army to be entirely discomfited, in any case the city of Ispahan alone with its villages would be able to furnish sixty thousand men skilled in arms The Indian always pretended to esteem lightly everything of the King's, and the King, in exchange, always jokingly, lost no occasion to wound him; and although the favors he showed him were apparently great, there was really no good feeling between them either on one side or the other."¹

Della Valle did not learn what the purpose of the Indian embassy was. Shah Abbas's purpose, however, was known to all. One day, speaking to the Spanish ambassador, he pointed to Khan Alam and said:—

“Do you see the Indian ambassador who stands there? If his King, Shah Selim, does not give me back Kandahar, he will see what I shall do!” And he added that since God had taken him under his protection and had given might to his sword, he (Shah Abbas) did not intend to give up a single hair of his head, much less cities and territories, to any prince in the world!²

In August, 1619, Khan Alam took his leave of the Persian court. The Shah, because he knew that the Indian had been making secret arrangements to carry back many recruits for the armies of the Mogul, issued a public *firman*, prohibiting all Persians from going with him.³ It is not known what private instructions he gave to the ambassador, but Della Valle believed that the King, who had made frequent mention of the question of Kandahar, must have renewed his urgent

¹ For Della Valle's account of the entry and reception of the ambassadors, and of Khan Alam's treatment by the King, see his *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 14—30.

² Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 34—35.

³ It seems likely that the hiring of recruits was one of the chief objects of the Indian mission. If so, the great magnificence of the ambassador's retinue and his splendid gifts would have the double purpose of conciliating the Shah, and of showing possible recruits how rich and mighty a monarch they were asked to serve.

demands for the return of that fortress to Persian dominion. At any rate, the Indian ambassador departed little satisfied with the result of his mission, and there did not lack those who prophesied a war in the near future between India and Persia.¹

War there was not, however, nor any appearance of it for two years. Khan Alam returned to his royal master bearing rich gifts from Persia, and told him of the remarkable affection and favor which had been shown him by the Persian King. So great an impression did his report make on Jahangir that the latter wrote in his journal: "Of the favours and kindnesses conferred by my brother (Abbas) on Khan Alam, if I were to write of them in detail I would be accused of exaggeration."² The painter of renown whom Jahangir had sent with the embassy to Persia had brought back portraits of the Shah and of the chief men of Persia which were pronounced excellent likenesses by all the Persians at court. With Khan Alam had returned Zambil Beg as ambassador of the Shah, whose letter and gifts were graciously received.³

The journal does not mention that either the Persian or the Indian ambassador made any reference to Kandahar. Zambil Beg continued at court in apparent favor, receiving gifts on the feast days.⁴ Missions were evidently sent to Persia, for Jahangir mentions at different times the despatch of a zebra as a rarity for his "brother," and some "golden birds," which the Shah had desired.⁵

Shah Abbas, in the meanwhile, finding that no move was made by Jahangir towards the surrender—or the "return," as he preferred to call it—of Kandahar, grew tired of waiting. He started from Ispahan with a large force and marched towards the Afghan frontier.⁶ On the way his troops were increased by reinforcements from Khorassan,⁷ so that it was a formidable army which stood before the gates of Kandahar in the early Spring of 1622.⁸

¹ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 41—42.

² *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 2, p. 115.

³ *Ibid.* v. 2, p. 115—117.

⁴ *Ibid.* v. 2, p. 198, 201, 211.

⁵ *Ibid.* v. 2, p. 211, 221.

⁶ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 380.

⁷ *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 2, p. 233.

⁸ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 404.

A report of the expedition which was brought to Jahangir at Rawalpindi he professed to find incredible. He wrote that "it appeared very unlikely and beyond all calculations that such a great king should entertain such light and crude ideas," but at the same time he set about to prepare "a victorious host" with "elephants of mountainous hugeness," so that the King of Persia might "discover the result of breaking faith and of wrong-doing."¹

The mobilization of an army to serve in Afghanistan would be difficult at any time. On this occasion it was not nearly completed when definite information arrived of the siege and capture of Kandahar.² The capture seems not to have been a difficult matter. The fortress was defended by only a small force, which soon saw the inadvisability of holding out against the Persian troops. The city was evacuated and the army of the Shah marched in. Thereupon, the Shah advertised his capture of Kandahar as a signal victory. He sent a circular letter throughout Persia, to be read aloud in all the chief cities, to the accompaniment of music, in which the prowess of the army was lauded, and it was claimed that they had taken not only Kandahar but many other fortresses as well. "They counted," says Della Valle, "each turret and bastion of the walls as a separate fortress." Popular rumor had it that *Dellala Chizi*, a favorite dancing girl of the Shah, had taken the city in person at the head of a band of camp women; and this, Della Valle thought, was probably true. Since the city was empty, force was not needed for its occupation, and the Shah doubtless sent the women in ahead of the troops so that he might boast that even the women who rode with his army were stronger than the soldiers of the Great Mogul.³

It is hardly necessary to say that no reference to the women appears in Jahangir's journal. The King speaks of the immense number of the attacking force and of the few defenders of the place, and tells in detail of the preparations being made to send out an army which would be so furnished with

¹ *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 2, p. 230—231.

² Jahangir mentions the siege, but does not actually admit in so many words that the city had been captured. *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 2, p. 233.

³ Della Valle, *Viaggi*, v. 2, p. 403—405.

numbers and arms that there would be "no delay or hesitation until it reached Ispahan!"¹

But the Shah did not wish to have an Indian army invade his provinces. Having finally got Kandahar into his possession, he had no reason to fight with the Indian King; and he set his astute oriental mind to prepare an explanation of the incident which should prove that there was no cause whatever for unfriendly feeling between him and Jahangir. The resulting letter and its reply form a curious and interesting episode in diplomatic history.²

The Shah, in his letter, after many compliments and good wishes for "his brother dear as life," refers to the fact that Kandahar had formerly been the property of his family. He had expected that Jahangir would voluntarily turn over the city to him, and, when he failed to do so, had thought that perhaps "that petty country" was regarded as unworthy of the Indian emperor's notice; and had therefore repeatedly brought the matter to Jahangir's attention. Finally he decided to make a visit to the place and hunt there, so that the agents of his distinguished brother might entertain him. He therefore set off, without apparatus for taking forts, and sent word of his coming to the Governor of Kandahar. Unfortunately, the Governor showed "obstinacy and a rebellious spirit," so that the Shah was compelled to invest and take the fort. Because, however, of the "ties of love" between himself and Jahangir, he spared the garrison. At this point in the letter, Abbas's feelings of affection could find no outlet but poetry, and he wrote:—

"Between you and me there cannot be trouble,
There can be nought but love and trust."

Begging Jahangir to consider all his (Abbas's) dominions as his own, and to extend his friendship to everyone in Persia, he closed with a request that he should proclaim that Kandahar had been given to the ruler of Persia with no objection whatever, and that it was all a matter of no importance.

Jahangir, in his reply to the "loving letter," regretted that the "glorious Shah, the star of heaven's army, the fruitful

¹ *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 2, p. 234.

² For a translation of the two letters, see *Memoirs of Jahangir* v. 2, p. 240—245.

tree of the gardens of sovereignty, the splendid nursling of the parterres of prophecy and saintship" should have disturbed the "rose-garden of love and friendship." He said that there should be no need of physical contact between princes, still less of visiting one another's countries for hunting and sight-seeing. He lamented (in verse):—

"Alas a hundred times for the love passing thought."

He said that until the arrival of Zambil Beg (who had returned with Khan Alam), no mention had ever been made by the Shah of any wish for Kandahar. Zambil mentioned it only verbally, and Jahangir had replied that he made no difficulty about anything his brother wished. Zambil had not yet returned to his own country when news came that Shah Abbas had taken Kandahar. Jahangir was astonished. What could there be in a petty village that the Shah should care to possess it? The relation of brotherhood between them still stood firm, and Jahangir did not value the world in comparison therewith. But when Shah Abbas took such steps, to whom would mankind ascribe the merit of keeping contracts and preserving the capital of humanity and liberality?

Jahangir sent off this affectionate, if somewhat reproachful, letter, and immediately devoted all his energies to urging on a force to attack his "brother" Shah Abbas, in Kandahar. Unfortunately for his warlike intentions, just at this time news was brought of the first insurrection of his son Khurram, on whom he had counted to lead the expedition into Afghanistan. A pathetic entry in his journal contains his last reference to his difficulties with the Shah:—

"That which weighs heavily on my heart, and places my eager temperament in sorrow is this, that at such a time, when my prosperous sons and loyal officers should be vying with each other in the service against Kandahar and Khorassan, which would be to the renown of the sultanate, this inauspicious one (Khurram) has struck with an axe the foot of his own dominion and become a stumbling-block in the path of the enterprise. The momentous affair of Kandahar must now be postponed."¹

The affair of Kandahar was indeed postponed. The Shah could safely return to his capital to celebrate his victories

¹ *Memoirs of Jahangir*, v. 2, p. 248.

Jahangir spent the remainder of his reign struggling against his rebellious sons. Abbas continued correspondence with the Deccan kings, supporting them in their opposition to the Mogul;¹ but we hear no more of intercourse between Shah Abbas and Jahangir.

¹ *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, Hak. Soc. 1892, p. 152.