

SKETCH MAP illustrating the journey of
Blessed Rudoli Acquaviva from SURAT to FATEHPUR SIKRI
as described by Fr Francis de Souza in "Oriente Conquistado."

NOTE: The exact position of the places named in italics has not been determined, and Fr de Souza's spelling has therefore been retained. The other places in the sketch have been identified and are given in modern spelling. The dotted line shows the route followed.



number of traders—probably Portuguese and Armenians—accompanied the caravan, bringing silks of China, and goods of other lands.¹ They left Damaun, which was probably the meeting-place, on December 13th, when they took ship for Surat.² From Surat, one of the most important towns in India, where the industrious and wealthy caste of Banyans excited the interest of the travellers, they went forward on their long inland journey on Friday, the 15th of January, 1580.

After crossing the broad River Tapti, they were met by a captain, with ten or twelve horsemen.³ The Moghul troops received Father Henriquez courteously, but some of them threatened with their swords the other two Fathers. At once Jerome de Lima, a Portuguese, rushed forward, and pointed his naked sword to the breast of one of the Muhammadans. Their leader came up, and ordered the offender to be flogged. With their escort, they journeyed onwards, the three Fathers keeping together, to avoid a similar danger. Their road led through a broad and populated plain, covered with cactus, with palms, and banyan trees, by places whose names it is not always easy to recognize.⁴ At the roadside they noticed

¹ Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Elliot's translation; *History of India by its own Historians*, vol. vii. p. 85.

² Francisco de Souza, S.J. *Oriente Conquistado*, i. d. ii. p. 159.

³ As Surat had only been conquered by Akbar in 1573, this precaution was needed.

⁴ Limodre, Vacari, Nabugan, Tava, Timai, Cucura-Munda *i.e.* Kukarmunda, and Talauda (Taloda). In Timai they noticed

frequent wells, built by the charity of the Banyans, and at almost every step, stone tables on which the passers-by might lay down their burdens for a rest.

The caravan then left the river-banks, and turned northward. A beautiful valley, with corn-fields, and all glorious with the bloom of the mango-trees, led them, on January the 25th, to the large town of Sultanpur. As night closed in, the tombs in the cemeteries, and the surrounding heights, were illuminated, as a mark of respect for the dead. The place was full of prayer and sacrifice, as the people were keeping the feast of the circumcision of Isaac. The Fathers saw some Brahmins, outside the walls, solemnly cremating a corpse. Journeying towards the north-east, through wooded country, they crossed the broad and clear River Narbada, to the ancient city of Mandu, whose walls were sixteen leagues in circuit, but most of it was even then in ruins.

On the 5th of February, they reached Ujjain, then a town "no larger than Damaun." After staying, on the 8th, at Sanmarian (*sic*), a populous village, the caravan entered a mountain range, where they were "in peril of robbers," the natives, who sought the life of their Moghul conquerors. Thence they emerged into vast plains covered

a large pyramid erected in memory of a suttee, with a number of smaller ones around. At the River Tapti, a number of Banyans were performing their ablutions of expiation, and bearing burning lights fixed on helmets made of gourds.

with fields of poppy and flax. The Fathers had the consolation of saying Mass, for the first time on their journey, at Sarangpur, on February 9th. There Father Henriquez was received with great solemnity, as the people regarded him as a *Jogi*, or holy man. Turning eastward to Pimplia (*sic*), the party went on through rich plains, with sugar plantations, where they encountered a caravan of pilgrims on their way to the sacred Ganges.

The party reached Sironj on February 15th, and on the 19th, were met by a strong body of Moghul troops, on horseback, on camels, or on elephants. The captain of the force told the Fathers how anxiously they were expected by Akbar. But at Narwar,¹ Montserrat fell ill, and, as the Emperor was impatient for their arrival, they were forced to leave the invalid behind, on February 22. At last, on the 28th, after a journey of over three months, Father Rudolf and his companions arrived at Fatehpur-Sikri. That place was then rising, like an enchanted city, in all its splendour, with its mosques and palaces, glorious even to-day in their ruin.² A courtier was awaiting their arrival, with orders to lead them at once into the royal presence, as Akbar

¹ "Then a flourishing city, boasting of a circumference of twenty miles." Malleson, *Akbar*, p. 98.

² The promise of Shaikh Selim of Sikri, that he should have a son and heir, made Akbar begin the new city. The prophecy was realized there, and on the conquest of Gujarat, he added the prefix of Fatehpur—*Victory-City*, and, for a time, he made the city his residence. It is near to Agra.

did not wish that they should speak to any of the Portuguese in the city, before they had been presented to him.

The splendour of the Court was unsurpassed in Europe. No less than twenty vassal kings waited on their Suzerain. The Fathers found the great conqueror seated cross-legged on a throne covered with a velvet cushion fringed with gold, upon a raised platform.¹ He was almost as fair as southern Europeans, and was then about thirty-seven.² Upon his head he wore a turban of Hindu form, adorned with a fortune of rare gems. His dress consisted of a robe of cloth of gold, embroidered with leaves and flowers, a great brooch was on his breast. Instead of Moslem trousers, he wore the Hindu *dhoti*, of the finest and most delicate silk, falling to his heels, and there gathered in by bangles covered with pearls. His shoes, of strange fashion, were an invention of his own. At his side was a scimitar. Around him were pages with bows and quivers of arrows, and other arms, ready to offer him if he desired them; while reporters were close at hand to take down whatever he said.

The meeting was as cordial as possible, and the Emperor kept the Fathers in conversation till

¹ A platform used by Akbar is still to be seen in the centre of the Diwani Khas, at Fatehpur-Sikri, of which there is a model in the South Kensington Museum. See Bernier's *Travels*, p. 362. London, 1891.

² He was born in 1542. See Malleeson's *Akbar*, p. 52.

two o'clock on the following morning. When he had dismissed them to their lodgings, he sent after them a large sum of money. Blessed Rudolf explained to the bearer that he and his companions were poor by profession and by choice, and that he could accept nothing but mere support from day to day. By Akbar's orders, they were left in charge of the interpreter, Dominic Perez, from whom they took only just the bare necessities of life.¹

The following day, the Fathers were again admitted to audience in the magnificent audience-chamber, Diwani Khas, which is still standing,² and they brought as a present to Akbar the new Royal Polyglot Bible of Plantyn,³ magnificently bound in seven volumes. On these being presented to him, he took off his turban, and placed each volume on his head, and then kissed it respectfully. He asked, as he received each volume in succession, which were the four

¹ Abul Fazl gives the following record: "1580. At this time, Padre Farmatiun (*sic*) arrived at the Imperial Court from Goa, and was received with great distinction. He was a man of much learning and eloquence. A few intelligent young men were placed under him for instruction, so that provision might be made for procuring translations of Greek authors, and of extending knowledge. With him came a number of Europeans and Armenians, who brought silks of China, and goods of other countries, which were deemed worthy of his Majesty's inspection. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Elliot's translation, *History of India, by its own Historians*, vol. vi. p. 85; cf. Badauni, p. 528.

² *Fatshpur-Sihri. Illustrations of Buildings near Agra*. Lieutenant H. Cole. Cf. Rousset, *Inde des Rajahs*, p. 345.

³ Printed for Philip II. 1569—1572.

Gospels, and as soon as these were put into his hands, he pressed them to his breast with special reverence. The Emperor then ordered the sacred books to be taken to his private rooms, and leading Blessed Rudolf by the hand from the hall of audience, he brought him with him into his own apartments, and there showed him a magnificent casket, which he had caused to be made to contain this much-valued present.

That evening Father Rudolf had to take his place in the solemn discussions which went on every Thursday night in the presence of the Emperor on moral and religious subjects. The building in which they were conducted was near one of the tanks, which form such a striking feature in the Indian cities.¹ The Saiyids,² the Shaikhs,³ the Ulama,⁴ and the grandees, sat around, and the Emperor passed from one side of the hall to another, asking questions. The subject of debate was the authenticity and authority of the Bible.

The Ulama were men of high repute for learning, but their wide differences in matters of doctrine, and still more their lives, which were so out of harmony with their professions, had shaken the faith of Akbar in the pretended infalli-

¹ Called Anúptaláo. It is probably the one facing the Diwani Khas.

² They pretend descent from the Prophet.

³ The followers of a new departure in religion.

⁴ The doctors of Muhammadan law. Ulama is the plural of the Arabic word *alim*, learned.

bility of the Kuran, and of Mahomet himself.¹ The philosophy of the Brahmans, their high ideals of life, which even nowadays fascinate so many English intellects, had great influence over the Emperor. His mind was evidently broad, and open to conviction, and the little he knew of Christianity had no doubt made him anxious to know more of a faith which had produced such a marvellous civilization as that of the Western world. To it he attributed the devotion he had heard of among the Catholic missionaries, whether in older days, when they had met his ancestors in Central Asia and China, or in his own time, when the deeds of St. Francis Xavier and his companions were talked of in many a bazaar, and at many a Court of India.

How far Akbar was sincere in his search for the truth, how far he had towards it a feeling akin to the agnosticism of our day, or whether he was merely bent, from the very first, on making for his subjects an eclectic religion, which would fuse into one the various races and various creeds under his sceptre, and over which he determined to place himself as the supreme prophet and infallible teacher, it is hard to say. Certain it is that Blessed Rudolf, to whom such universal toleration was a new experience, very naturally

¹ The Fathers, on their road to Gujarat, had met the Imperial couriers, who told their escort that Akbar had forbidden the use of the name of Mahomet in the prayers. De Souza, *Oriente Conquistado*, i. d. ii. p. 160.

made the same mistake about Akbar that many a zealous foreign priest makes about English non-Catholics when first he meets with them, and is captivated by their courteous respect for his views, and their kind interest in his work. The Sovereign was quite willing to pay homage to the Holy Scriptures, and pleased to see the Ulama beaten on their own ground. But from this, to submission in heart and deed to the authority of the Church, was a long step, and one of which he very probably never dreamt. However, that evening, at the end of the discussion, he asked for an explanation of the Catholic belief in the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation.

The controversies must have been conducted at first through the clumsy medium of an interpreter. It hardly needed the advice of Akbar to induce Blessed Rudolf to set himself to the task of perfecting his knowledge of Persian, the language of the Court. In three weeks he was able to speak the language so far as to dispense with the aid of Father Henriquez. He even translated into Persian a portion of the Gospels, which were read with great delight by Abul Fazl.

The second discussion followed three or four days later, on the character of the Paradise promised to Moslem believers.

On the 4th of March, Father Montserrat rejoined his companions. He hastened, on Thursday, the 10th of that month, to take part in the third discussion. The Fathers were sum-

moned into the royal presence. The debate was on the life and teaching of Mahomet, compared with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Six of the most learned Mullahs were present. In the course of the discussion Akbar invited Blessed Rudolf to read a passage out of the New Testament. One of the Mullahs raised the old question whether the Christians had not, as the Kuran declared, erased the name of Mahomet from both Genesis and the Gospel. Rudolf proved the absurdity of the statement, and he was supported by Abul Fazl. Montserrat seized the opportunity to declare that it was not the Christians, but Mahomet, who had tried to corrupt the Sacred Scriptures, and that his Kuran teemed with moral enormities and with blunders, plain for all to see.

Akbar was angry, and sent a message after the debate was over to the two other Fathers, begging them to restrain the ardour of the newcomer. They replied that, as the Emperor wished to know the truth, it was their duty to declare it; nor could they, for fear of anything whatever, leave him under a false impression. They added that it was not fair that, while the Mullahs could denounce the Son of God and the Scriptures, they should not be permitted to say what they knew about the Kuran.

Notwithstanding this, the exceeding kindness of the Emperor towards them prejudiced the Fathers in his favour. Father Montserrat had a serious relapse. Akbar not only bade his

physicians to prescribe for him, but even came himself now and again and sat by his bedside. He sent him during his convalescence to Agra, hoping that its climate might prove helpful to him.

Some short time later, as they had not seen Akbar for several days, the Fathers asked for an audience. They were anxious to learn what practical effect all that had passed was having on his mind. He was exceedingly affable, and after some general topics, they begged to be allowed to speak to him on their special errand. With his permission, Rudolf at once began to urge the Emperor to appoint for them some fixed time in which they might explain at full to him the grounds of faith, in the hope that, if he were convinced of its truth, he might grant freedom to teach it in every part of his dominions. Akbar's cautious reply was that this was in God's keeping. He endeavoured, however, to show that for many reasons it was impossible for him at that time to become a Christian.

On Holy Saturday, April 2nd, Rudolf called to wish the Emperor a happy Easter, and stayed up very late talking with him. He asked a number of questions about the Resurrection, and begged to see the Christian prayers. He bade the Fathers to leave the public inn and take up their abode within the vast enclosure of his palace.

The Fathers fitted up a chapel in their new quarters as handsomely as they could, and placed

over the altar a copy of the Madonna of St. Luke, at St. Mary Major's, which had been brought from Europe by Father Martin de Sylva, and which St. Pius V. had allowed St. Francis Borgia to have made. The Christians resident in the city used to come there to daily Mass.¹ Akbar, after three or four days, paid a visit to it. On entering, he was struck by the venerable picture. He first, in Muhammadan fashion, made a profound reverence before it; then, like a Christian, he removed his turban, and, with clasped hands, bent his knee; and lastly, paid his homage as a Hindu by prostrating himself on the ground. He said that God deserved the homage of all peoples, and therefore he paid this triple tribute. He then sat down on cushions upon the floor and talked to the Fathers. He said that the Christian religion was without

¹ Colonel Cole marks in his plan of Fatehpur-Sikri, the house of Miriam, which tradition assigns to a Portuguese wife of Akbar. No such person is mentioned by contemporary historians. The mother of the Emperor and another lady of his family bore the name of Miriam. A faded painting of the Annunciation still adorns the walls. May not the building have been the house assigned to Blessed Rudolf, and may not the room which the picture decorates have been his chapel? Guzman says that Akbar ordered paintings to be made of our Lord and His Blessed Mother, as well as of other saints. He also bade his goldsmith to make a gold reliquary for the relics which the Fathers had brought with them, of the same shape as their poor reliquary of copper, with an image of our Lady on either side. Cf. "Akbar's folly," the *Month*, May, 1897, where there is a brilliant description of Fatehpur-Sikri as it is. The writer follows the ordinary legend of the Emperor's Christian wife.

doubt the best of all, and the life and miracles of Christ perfectly supernatural. But how God could have a Son passed his comprehension. He added that, of all religions, Muhammadanism was the worst.

A week later, the Emperor came again to visit the chapel, with his three sons, Salim, Murad, and Danyal. Salim, the eldest, was then a boy of ten,¹ and succeeded to his father's throne as the Emperor Jahangir. With them came a splendid staff, Mirza Abul Kasim, Akbar's cousin and one of the administrators of the Empire, two Commanders-in-chief of his armies, and the leading Mullahs. Akbar bade his sons take off their shoes at the door, and he set them the example of paying due reverence to the holy picture. All expressed their admiration of it. When the Emperor turned to go, Blessed Rudolf offered him another Madonna, a work of art which Akbar had especially admired and evidently wished to possess. He received it as a very precious gift, and had it hung in a place of honour in his rooms.

Akbar confided his second son, Murad, to Father Montserrat, that he might teach him Portuguese and the Catholic faith. The boy, then only about nine years old, was known by his nickname of Pahari²—a *mountaineer*, because born at Fatehpur-Sikri.

¹ He was born in 1570.

² *Aini-Akbari*, pp. 182—309. Alegambe calls him Barhius, p. 27, § 29, the Portuguese Fatepur.

The Emperor volunteered to build as many churches in his kingdom, to the glory of Christ and His Blessed Mother, as the Fathers should desire, and he declared that they should be as splendid as possible. He gave as his reason that, while there were so many mosques for Mahomet, and so many pagodas for the Hindu gods, the God of the Christians ought at least to have the same honour. Akbar promised also to erect a hospital for the sick and poor, a thing hitherto unknown in Pagan and Muhammadan India. The Emperor engaged to build and to endow the hospital at the cost of the State.¹ He fulfilled his promise in 1583, in so far that he erected two places outside the city wherein to feed the poor, and he entrusted them to the followers of Abul Fazl, his philosopher and friend. Several at the hospitals asked for Baptism.

Abul begged the Fathers to explain to him their doctrines, so that he might be able to answer the questions and the difficulties put to him by his master and by the learned of the Court. The royal physician also sought for instructions. Akbar sent word by Abul Fazl to Blessed Rudolf that he and his companions were quite at liberty to convert and baptize as many of his subjects as they chose, and that he would punish any one who would dare to hinder them. The Fathers were soon full of work in preparing

¹ Guzman says that a hospital was set up at the cost of the Portuguese.

catechumens. The Emperor, moreover, disapproved of any Christian abandoning his faith, and when some prisoners, to regain their liberty, had become Muhammadans, and had repented of their crime, he ordered that they should be allowed to return to Christian countries, where they could practise their faith without let or hindrance. To one of these who wished to remain, he not only permitted the use of European dress and liberty of religion, but admitted him into his household. And when a Portuguese who was in his service died, he allowed the Fathers to bury him with the full Catholic rite, and to bear him with cross and lighted candles through the streets of the city. But though Akbar in theory granted complete toleration, nothing would induce him to make an open proclamation of this to his subjects, nor did Muhammadans dare to face the terrible sternness of Moslem law against a convert from the Kuran.

Yet the Emperor went so far as to declare to Father Acquaviva, that if God called him to the Catholic faith, neither his sceptre, nor his sons, nor his immense harem,¹ would prevent him from leaving all and fleeing to Goa, under the pretext of going on pilgrimage to the Ganges. Nor, so he pretended, was he as far as it might seem

¹ Bartoli speaks of his hundred wives. Abul Fazl, in *Ain-i-Akbari*, xv p 44, tells of five thousand women in the Emperor's harem. But this probably includes the female servants and slaves.

from doing this. But a step so grave, he urged, was not to be taken precipitately and without much reflection. He begged to be allowed to be present at Mass, and it was felt by the Fathers impossible to refuse his request. Father Acquaviva celebrated in his presence, with his usual deep devotion and with many tears. But the only result would seem to have been that Akbar complained: "You ate and drank, and you never invited me."¹

The first subject of argument at the public debates, as has been said, was as to whether the Bible or the Kuran² was divinely inspired. Then the discussion turned on the respective merits of our Blessed Lord and of Mahomet. The holiness of Christ, born of a Virgin, and spotless in life, was contrasted with the acknowledged idolatry and vices of the Prophet in his early days. The nature of Heaven as taught by the Church, and of that fleshly and degraded ideal believed in by the Muhammadan were contrasted. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which Akbar himself disbelieved, and even the question of sufficiency and efficacy of grace, the subject of such debate in Europe, were also argued out in this assembly.

The disagreement of the Moslem doctors among themselves gave great force to Blessed

¹ Father de Souza, *Oriente Conquistado*, i. d. ii. p. 271.

² The Fathers came prepared with a Portuguese translation of the Kuran, which enabled them from the beginning to make objections to its teaching. Jarric, p. 507.

Rudolf's arguments. Two facts, which he especially pressed home, were that no prophecy of Mahomet's coming, of his doctrine, or of his redemption, could be found; while even the Kuran, in the presence of the clear promises of the Old Law and the evidences of the New, had been forced to speak of our Lord as a Saint and a Prophet. Again, that the New Testament is perfectly in accord with the Old; while the Kuran, though it admits the Book of Moses and the Psalms of David, is in open discord with these portions of Scripture. But whether it was the murmurs of the Mullahs, the outspoken complaints of the Queen Mother, Hamida Begam, and of the ladies of the harem, or the mutterings of rebellion in the West, which were the echoes of Moslem discontent, the Emperor began to weary of the Fathers' teachings. Though sometimes he was all attention and approved of everything that they said, at other times he would yawn or doze, not heeding, not even hearing what they said. As part of the audience, there were ever at hand skilled wrestlers and gladiators, tumblers and jugglers, and sweet singers ready at his beck to amuse His Majesty.¹ These, and a ceaseless round of pleasures of the table, of the harem, of the field, of the ring, cock-fighting, and combats between wild beasts and trained elephants, so occupied Akbar's mind that, if any

¹ *Aini-Akbari*, p. 157. *Belochian* v ol 2

impression had ever been made, it was as quickly forgotten.

The Emperor, in fact, made the impossible demand that the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity and of the Incarnation should be so clearly explained to him that he should be able to understand them. Blessed Rudolf was as lucid as could be, so that both Akbar and the Mullahs were obliged to own that there was nothing to which they could object, but the monarch came no nearer to submission to the faith.

No wonder that such a bold teacher as Rudolf, among a people so attached to their religious ideas, felt that his life was in peril. In a letter to Father General Mercurian, in which he records what has just been told, he concludes with these words :

"At the end of this letter I must tell your Paternity the greatest joy which I have here. It is that I am near martyrdom. For 'we have confessed and have not denied, we have confessed' that Mahomet is not the Prophet of God, and we have not denied that Christ is the Son of God.

"*Fattepur (sic)*, July 18, 1580.

"Your Paternity's unworthy servant
and least of sons,

"RUDOLF ACQUAVIVA."¹

¹ Fac-simile in *Les BB. Martyrs de Salsette*, Pierre Suau, S.J. p. 109.

To this Alegambe adds, apparently from the same letter: "We have declared before the King and his whole Court that Mahomet is Antichrist. So nothing stands between us and death, save the life of the King. The heathens hate us too, because we have publicly condemned the long established practice of widows throwing themselves into the funeral pyre of their husbands."

In a letter of the 10th of December of the same year, addressed to Father Nuñez Rodriguez, the Rector of Goa, Blessed Rudolf writes:

"Fattipur (sic).

"My letter to Father Provincial will have told you what has been going on in our house and abroad with regard to the King. In this I shall only speak of myself to you as to my Spiritual Father.¹ You know well how I longed for this mission, and how delighted I was when it was granted me. 'As we have heard, so we have seen.'² That which I wished for I have been able to do, to bear witness before the kings and rulers of this world to the name of Jesus Christ, with the hope of winning thus the prize of such a death as Holy Scripture calls *precious in the sight of the Lord*. You may be sure that many desire for us this death; but it is just as far off as is that of the King. Meantime, while it is deferred, there is no lack of thousands of oppor-

¹ The spiritual director of a community.

² Psalm xlvii. 9.

tunities of suffering from within and from without, so that sometimes I grow weary of life. It has pleased God, the planner of this expedition, to give me, not that chalice which is called *inebriating*, but another which is a cup of strong wine full of mixture.¹ But we have not yet resisted unto blood.²

"Still, I am so full of consolation that, if to my present joy were added that of being relieved from the burden of any superiority, which Holy Obedience has laid on me quite beyond my strength, then would my joy be full. If indeed one could rejoice in the midst of a wicked people, where our eyes behold nothing but sin, where our ears hear nothing but that hideous and heinous name of Mahomet. Nothing, Father, and I say it with tears, nothing strikes the air here but that diabolical name. Scarcely ever do we hear the most sweet name of Jesus. For the Moors only call Him Jesus—the Prophet, and say that He is not the Son of God; and I know no such Jesus, nor can I say else than Jesus—Son of God. And when I say this openly, and console myself by repeating, 'Christ Jesus, Son of God,' then all the suffering and sorrow of my soul is renewed, because one of the Muhammadans cries out, *Sta furla*³—'God forbid!' another closes his ears, a

¹ Psalm lxxiv. 9.

² Hebrews xii. 4.

³ *Vere, Astagh firu-llah*, an Arabic phrase meaning, "I beg forgiveness of God." These Arabic religious sentences are constantly employed by Persian and Indian Muhammadans.

third mocks, while another blasphemes. So, when I get home, I, with the handful of Christians who are with us, as in the ark of Noe, nay, the very walls can repeat nothing but, 'Son of God, Son of God!' They seemed to reply, *How shall we sing the canticle of the Lord in a strange land?*¹

"When we go to instruct the King, we find people engaged in that sad prayer, which the Muhammadans go through with such care, gravity, and reverence. It is all hypocrisy, but yet is wonderful, and we are forced to behold the abomination of these whitened sepulchres.

"In a word, Mahomet is everything here. Antichrist reigns. In honour of this infernal monster they bend the knee, prostrate, lift up their hands, give alms, and do all they do. And we cannot speak out the truth lest, if we go too far, we endanger the life of the King. So we neither die, because they do not kill us, and yet we do not live, for our zeal wears us out; or we live only by hope, though that is very uncertain whether it may not turn out rather evil than good. If our hope were like that of the souls in Purgatory, our joy would be like theirs, a certain expectation of the Blessing which in time they will behold. Ours is a thoroughly uncertain outlook, as far as the King's conversion goes.

¹ Psalm cxxxvi. 4.

"Still, on the other hand, the Lord makes us realize that our labours are just as pleasing and acceptable to His Divine Majesty as if we were to obtain that for which we are striving, *for God is a searcher of the reins and heart.*¹ The thought of this makes it seem to me, now and again, as it did to the Patriarch Jacob, *but a few days, because of the greatness of love;*² for day and night we are toiling at a work of great service to God, the planting of His Faith in a barbarous nation, at such peril of our lives. And this is another source of consolation, having every day to offer ourselves to death; and it really seems to me that every true son of the Society should envy us: for, in short, *greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends;*³ although as yet we cannot behold such love in ourselves, for we have not shed our blood. Still, we are in a place where God may grant us this. So I beg your Reverence, who has always loved me, to aid me to thank God for the great favour which I owe to Him.

"And as I have spoken of love, than which there is nothing so sweet, I will not distract you from the sweet enjoyment of it, and so I stop, recommending myself heartily to your Holy Sacrifices and prayers."

¹ Wisdom i. 6.

² Genesis xxix. 20

³ St. John xv. 13.

A few lines from a letter of Rudolf to Lawrence Petri express in like terms the high thoughts of the future martyr. "I cannot tell your Reverence the joy and consolation I feel in this mission. For in it are to be found all that a Religious of the Society can desire. There are work and woes, dangers and success, and, in fine, the hope of still better carrying out of our apostolate."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LONE WATCH

1581—1583.

IN the early part of 1581, the Jesuit Provincial of Goa, who was on his way to make a visitation at Damaun, in the northernmost part of his Province, wrote to Blessed Rudolf bidding Acquaviva to meet him with the two other Fathers at that port, in order to give him fuller details of his work and of his hopes. Akbar at first consented to let them go, but afterwards withdrew his permission, except as regards Father Henriquez. Acquaviva was now so advanced in Persian that he no longer required an interpreter. Besides which, as Henriquez was an Asiatic and a convert from Muhammadanism, that Father was an object of special aversion to the Mullahs. In fact, when he left the Court on his long journey to Damaun, he was obliged to disguise himself to save his life.

The year seemed to promise to be one of peace and of prosperity to the Emperor, and he began at once to carry out his schemes of unification and of toleration. He remitted all the inland

tolls, as well as a capitation tax levied by the Afghan rulers on all non-Musalmans.¹ A number, however, of Amirs of Bihar and Bengal, who had been pressed to refund some illegal wealth, rebelled against the Governor of the province, and put him to death. Akbar had to send a large army under Mirza Aziz, his trusted general, to suppress the insurrection.

One of the frequent quarrels with the free lances of Goa, gentlemen who, like our Drake and Frobisher, had small respect for the rights of nations, gravely imperilled the position of the two Fathers at the Court of Akbar. A landing had been made near Surat, by a body of Portuguese adventurers, to revenge the loss of one of their companions, who had met his death there when on a filibustering expedition. They were badly beaten by a detachment of the Mogul's troops; and the following year, 1582, he sent an army with elephants and a siege-train to attack Damaun. A number of brave Portuguese volunteers at once came to its rescue, and the siege was raised.²

Meantime a formidable insurrection had broken out in Kabul, and Muhammad Hakim Mirza, the governor, a brother of Akbar, marched into India to wrest his crown from him. This doubtless made the Emperor all the more willing to come to terms with the Portuguese. The revolt in Bengal

¹ Malleson, *Akbar*, p. 126.

² Faria y Souza, *Asia Portuguesa*, t. iii. p. 5.

at once blazed out afresh, and Akbar had to take instant measures to meet his various foes. Hakim Mirza was already at Lahore, half-way to the capital, before Akbar had reached Panipat, some two hundred miles north of Fatehpur-Sikri. Akbar's army was, however, three times as strong as that of the enemy. His rebel brother saw that all hope was gone, and began his retreat. A division of the Imperial army under Prince Murad pushed forward rapidly in pursuit, and won a complete victory.¹ Akbar followed his son with an army as far as Kabul, and there pardoned and reinstated his brother. On his return he stayed for some months in the Panjab and then marched to Lahore.²

Blessed Rudolf had been anxious to accompany the Emperor. But Akbar thought it well not to irritate the Muhammadans in a moment of danger, and would only allow Father Montserrat to accompany him, as the tutor of his son, Murad. Acquaviva remained alone at Fatehpur.

On February 19th, 1581, Father Claud Acquaviva was elected General of the Society of Jesus as successor to Father Mercurian. The news reached his nephew in far-off Fatehpur-Sikri towards the close of that year. If the intelligence roused, as naturally it would, any feelings in the well-schooled heart of Blessed Rudolf, no sign of them transpired. When the time came round

¹ Malleon, *Akbar*, p. 127.

² Angelini, p. 86; and Malleon, as above.

to send his official letters to the General, he wrote just as he had done to his uncle's predecessor. He prefixed no preface, he did not even pay the compliments at its close, customary when writing either to friend or to stranger, not a word expressing pleasure, regret, or complaint. There was no allusion to Father Claud's election, nor any mention of the weariness and apparent fruitlessness of his own stay. And this was all the more noteworthy because, in giving a full account of affairs, he lays very clearly before the General the reasons why he should continue at his post. He had so often spoken of his wish for martyrdom that he perhaps thought it useless to repeat his desire.¹ Father Claud, in reply to this and to former letters of Blessed Rudolf to Father Mercurian, wrote to congratulate his nephew on his hopes and on the careful preparation he was making for death, assuring him that he would gladly change places with him. The General insisted very strongly again and again that his nephew must not leave until forced by the Emperor. But before this letter reached our Saint, he had been recalled to Goa.

The departure of Akbar for the seat of war caused Blessed Rudolf to lead a hermit's life in the almost deserted Court of Fatehpur-Sikri. He

¹ In a previous letter he had said: "I am very well and happy, living by obedience in a wicked nation, where there is a chance of martyrdom, because of the hatred all bear to us, if my sins were not a hindrance. We have not as yet left this country."

redoubled his fasts and watchings, and often spent the whole night in meditation on the roof of his house. His short rest was taken in a hammock. His frequent scourgings, which he did his best to conceal, were noted by his ever observant neighbours. Prince Salim, hearing the noise of constant blows, feared lest some one was being assaulted, and following the sound came to the bed-room of the Father. As soon as Rudolf had admitted the Prince, he saw the fresh blood on the floor. Acquaviva tried to ward off an answer to his inquiries with a graceful smile. When, some years after, Father Jerome Xavier arrived at Lahore, he tells us how Salim, then Emperor, loved to relate the story to his courtiers, and how he used to exclaim: "What a man! what a man he was!"¹

Father Acquaviva's only recreation was to walk about the house humming to himself some passage of Holy Scripture or some verse of the Psalms. His chief employment was the careful study of Persian and of the Kuran, both of which he mastered so well that he could quote the book with a wonderful readiness. If he had followed his own impulse, he would have gone out into the squares and openly preached the faith of Christ, but every reason was against this. However, when perchance he did go out into the city, all, high and low, even the very street-boys, would follow him and shout after him. "We are hated

¹ Alegambe, pp. 30, 41. Letter of July 26, 1598.

and despised by every one," wrote Rudolf to his uncle. "They threaten us with their swords. We are the reproach and the scorn of the mob. They gather round about us and look at us as if we were monsters. They call us black devils and Kafirs, that is, men without God or religion. Then they pelt us with filth. But all this seems as nothing, for *we have not as yet resisted unto blood.*"¹

In another letter to the General, in the April of 1582, Blessed Rudolf gives fresh reasons why he should stay on :

"First, because the King gives us greater hopes than ever for the future, is anxious to learn the law of God, and treats us more kindly than before, and, though there are difficulties, still he proves his affection to us. It is impossible to express how great are his love and familiarity towards us.

"Secondly, we hope that the King's second son, called Pahari,² who is learning Portuguese and our holy faith, and who shows great affection towards us, will really profit by it, because he is naturally of a good disposition, and has great talent.

"Thirdly, because we have found a new race of Pagans, called Bottan, who live beyond Lahore,

¹ Bartoli, x. p. 52. Alegambe says that they were called black devils because of the colour of their dress, and "*tamara*." But this last meant merely *Anglicé*, "What a sight!" *Summ.* p. 34. § 48.

² *Supra*, p. 70.

across the Indus, and they are very well inclined and devoted to good works. They are white men, and there are no Muhammadans amongst them. We hope, then, that if two fervent and apostolic Fathers were sent there, a great harvest would be gathered in among the other Gentiles.¹

"Fourthly, because there is here an old man, the father of the King's secretary, in whom he confides in matters of the law. He has left the world, and gives signs of great virtue. He is very devoted to the contemplation of Divine things, and so seems disposed to receive the light of faith. He is extremely friendly to us, and anxious to hear of our religion, and we have been already several times at his house for this reason.

"Fifthly, because where we are is the true and real India. And this kingdom is like the stair whence you can go to every other portion of it, and to many parts of Asia, and now that the Society has got a footing here, and is regarded with such kindness by so great a King, and by his sons, it does not seem right to leave it without trying every means in our power to begin the conversion of the mainland of India, for hitherto we have done nothing except on the coast."²

In the beginning of August, 1582,³ the victorious Emperor reached the Indus on his return home-

¹ Father Jerome Xavier met with great success in the Punjab.

² Bartoli, *Missione al Gran Mogor*, p. 42.

³ *Tabakati Akbari*, Elliot, vol. v., quoting Badauni, vol. ii. p. 295.

wards. He had sent message after message to Blessed Rudolf, begging him not to think it too great a burthen to give him the pleasure of his society, and the benefit of his conversation. The Father started on the long and tedious journey. He wrote, however, before setting out, a letter to his old friend, Father Michael di Loreto :

"I am pretty well. Yet my heart is cold in its love for God. But He favours me with good desires, and pours out such favours on me in this place, that if my whole life were spent in thanking Him, I should not have paid the hundredth part. There are plenty of chances of advancing in virtue, because here we are hated by every one, they all load me with contumely, and make a mock of me. They threaten me with their swords, and, in a word, 'we are made . . . as the off-scouring of all even until now.'¹ Beg our Lord that I may make good use of this for my progress in virtue. The King is engaged in a war with his brother on the banks of the Indus. He has just summoned me to him, and very likely I shall leave on the day after to-morrow.'²

It is easy to understand how glad the two Fathers, Acquaviva and Montserrat, would have been to meet each other again, and to have facility for confession, of which they had been so long deprived. Blessed Rudolf, however, broke down before the journey was half over, and fell dangerously ill. He was without a friend, without

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 13.

² Angelini, p. 94.

a doctor, without medicine, and surrounded by many who would have rejoiced at his death. He loved to sing to himself those touching words, "To Thee is the poor man left, Thou wilt be a helper to the orphan."¹ The fever brought him to death's door, but he rallied, and was able to continue his journey. He reached Lahore a few days before the arrival of Akbar, who entered that city on the last day of Ramazan, October the 29th, and who received Blessed Rudolf with all possible esteem and affection.

On the 3rd of November, the Emperor reached Delhi, where he was welcomed by his mother, and by his third son, Prince Danyal. Nine days later, the triumphant Sovereign arrived at Fatehpur-Sikri. The defeat of his rivals enabled Akbar at length to put into execution his scheme of the new religion, of which he was to be the Supreme Head, Infallible Teacher, and, to the common herd at least, Supreme God.² It was as short-lived as the State religion of Henry VIII., and died out with the death of its founder.³

But other events occupied the active mind of the great Emperor. In 1580, on the death of Henry, the Cardinal Sovereign of Portugal,

¹ Psalm x 14

² The formula of the Divine faith, the new eclectic creed, was "Alahu Akbar" This was intentionally ambiguous, as it may mean, "God is great," or "Akbar is God." See *Asiri-Akbari*, p. 166, n. 2.

³ *Ibid.* p. 212.

Philip II., by the sword of Alva, took possession of that kingdom, and in 1581 was recognized as its ruler by the assembled estates of the Crown. Akbar determined to send a solemn embassy to the great monarch. His representative was also to wait on the Sovereign Pontiff, and on the General of the Society of Jesus, the uncle of the Emperor's friend. The project seemed, like so many others, a mere dream of the conqueror. But very soon it was evident that his hopes were to be realized. Akbar would not part with Blessed Rudolf, but sent Father Montserrat, with secret instructions, to accompany the embassy to Europe. These instructions were to furnish the Holy Father with such information as would further the introduction of Christianity into the states of the Mogul.¹ The embassy took its departure in the beginning of August, 1581, and reached Goa in the spring of 1582.² However, it got no further than Goa. The Viceroy did not wish that it should sail that year, and the rumour of the death of the King made the Mogul's Ambassador return in haste to Fatehpur, leaving Montserrat behind. Father Acquaviva was thus again without the solace of a companion. The young prince, Murad, was transferred to his care.

¹ Bartoli, *Missions*, p. 43. But Alegambe says the Ambassador's instructions were merely to pay Akbar's respects to the Pope, to King Philip, and the Father General.

² Angelini, p. 93.

Historia etc., pp. 44.

Intoxicated with success, and full of his new scheme of a composite religion, Akbar showed now little sign of becoming a Christian. Through Abul Fazl, Blessed Rudolf asked the Emperor whether or no he wished to hear any more instructions in the faith, as otherwise it was mere loss of time for the Father to remain in his dominions?

In answer to this, Acquaviva was summoned to the royal presence; but again the conversation turned merely on general topics. However, Father Rudolf urged the question which was uppermost in his mind. To turn off the unwelcome inquiry, Akbar urged the Father to put his belief to the test, and to accept the challenge of one of his bitterest opponents.¹

As the Sovereign carefully but steadily advanced his scheme of religious reform, the rage of the Moslems was all the more centred on Blessed Rudolf. Driven into a corner by the force of his arguments, one of the most famous of the Muhammadans, Shaikh Kutbuddin, had dared to propose that a great fire should be kindled in the presence of Akbar, and that he and Father Rudolf should enter together, Rudolf with the Bible, and the Muhammadan with his Kuran, "and if one of us gets through it safely," he argued, "this will prove the truth of his creed."

The fire was lit, and the Shaikh pulled Acquaviva by his cassock, saying, "Come, in the name

¹ Guzman.

of God!"¹ Rudolf's first idea was to accept the challenge; but on second thoughts, he saw that he had no right to tempt God, and that the truth had no need of such a proof, as it had been already demonstrated to the full. But for fear lest his refusal should seem a victory for the adversaries of the faith, not however until he had sought counsel in prayer, he determined to show clearly that fear had no part in his declining the ordeal. In the midst of an audience with Akbar, in presence of his whole Court and of the learned litigants, he explained the motives of his refusal. It was death to speak against Mahomet, and even though the Emperor might wish to protect him, Rudolf knew that every true Musalman would glory in taking the life of a blasphemer. Accordingly, he openly declared that the Prophet was an impostor and a liar, while Jesus Christ was the true Son of God, nor *was there any other name given under Heaven* in which hope could be placed. This protest fully satisfied the Sovereign as to the courage of Acquaviva.

It was then that Akbar sent, a few days after, to beg Blessed Rudolf to accept the challenge. He added that he would take care that the Mullah, whom he hated for his wicked life, should enter the fire first, as he had been the one to make the proposal; but that on his death he would prevent

¹ Badauni, ii. p. 299, v *Aini-Akbari*, p. 191. He states that it took place about the end of 1581.

Acquaviva from following him.¹ The Father very plainly told Akbar he could have no hand in such a plot.² The Emperor, however, banished the Shaikh with a number of other fakirs.

Akbar would seem to have had enough of disputation on religious topics. However, he consented to summon an assembly for the coming Saturday. But when the day arrived he made an excuse for not appearing, but allowed the discussion to go on without him. For all that, he regretted having in any way broken his word, and he appointed a fresh debate for the following Monday. The hall was full, as the Emperor brought a very large number of Mullahs and the great dignitaries of his Court. Rudolf argued with such success as to silence his adversaries, and Akbar himself had to interfere, and every now and then, in a half-joking way, make some defence of the badly beaten Moslems.

Nor did Father Rudolf confine his refutation to the errors of Mahomet, but spoke just as plainly of the doctrines and practices of the

¹ Badauni, as above.

² *Aini-Akbari*, and Alegambe, cited in the *Summ.*, p. 25. Bernier, *Lettre à M. de la Moite*. English edit. London, 1891, p. 288, however, tells a second-hand story that he had from a Muhammadan, how Akbar's son and heir, Jahangir, in a drunken fit, proposed to a Florentine (?) Jesuit Father to finish the controversy between the Jesuits and the Mullahs by the ordeal of fire, and how the Father accepted, but the adversaries were so alarmed that the Emperor did not insist. Catrou, *Histoire de la Dynastie Mogoul*, Paris, 1715, says it was Father Joseph D'Acosta who proposed this test to Jahangir.

Hindus. The Emperor, on his return to Fatehpur, had invited Blessed Rudolf to be present at a *suttee*, the burning of a widow on the death-pyre of her deceased husband. Acquaviva again boldly condemned this self-slaughter, and told Akbar that he himself was guilty of the crime in allowing it. His courage in speaking thus gained him credit among many, but the Hindus were furious at his endeavour to interfere with a practice so bound up with their social life. In the beginning of 1586, the Emperor forbade polygamy and allowed widows to re-marry. He did not, however, absolutely forbid *suttee*, though he wished it not to be practised in the case of a child-widow.

Akbar evidently began to fear that in their desperation the Moslems would try to kill the Father, and he offered him an escort. Acquaviva, however, while thanking him, firmly declined the offer. He reminded his Majesty that he had already refused to allow the Viceroy of Goa to demand hostages for his safety and for that of his companions, as he deemed it a glory to lay down his life for Christ. To accept a guard would have seemed to rob him of that glory and to show distrust in God. Akbar insisted, for he had given his word for the Father's safety, and he did not wish to lose his teacher. However, Blessed Rudolf maintained his opinion, and the Emperor told his Court of his heroic words and courage.

One thought ever filled the Martyr's heart—the conversion of Akbar. For this he poured out his prayers and tears, for this he constantly offered the Holy Mass. He urged the Emperor to prepare his heart for this grace, by abstaining from crime and by kindness to the poor. It was this year, 1583, that the two homes for the poor were built and entrusted to the followers of Abul Fazl.¹ Rudolf even induced Akbar to fast, a practice familiar enough to a follower of Mahomet. But the Emperor consoled himself with immoderate drink, a vice to which two of his sons afterwards fell victims.²

The account of Blessed Rudolf's inner life at this time is fortunately preserved for us, as on his return to Goa he unveiled his past to one whom he trusted as his spiritual guide, probably Father Nuñez Rodriguez. This "manifestation of conscience" his director, after his martyrdom, consigned to writing. "Father Rudolf," says Nuñez, "for the three years he spent at the Court of the Mogul, and especially for the last, when he was alone, led the life of a hermit. His food was very scanty and badly cooked, and he fasted some days every week. The hair-shirt, disciplines, and every sort of unusual method of penance and self-inflicted suffering were ever

¹ See p. 71. One was for the Hindus, the other for the Muhammadans. A third was built for the Jogis, or Hindu ascetics. Badauni, p. 324, *Aini-Akbari*.

² *Aini-Akbari*, p. 309; cf. Alegambe, pp. 34, 64.

employed by him. His study was chiefly the Holy Scriptures. The rest of his time, for he never left his house save when summoned to Court, he devoted partly to perfecting himself in Persian, and partly to prayer. He used always to spend the greater portion of the day united with God; but when he was living alone, this union was almost uninterrupted. On most nights he devoted the hours from sunset to sunrise in prayer, so that when he returned to Goa, he did not seem to have come back from a Court or from a heathen and Muhammadan land, but from the noviceship or from a retreat. The weariness, the illnesses, the perils of death, the sufferings he bore were excessive, and served as a preparation for martyrdom. Still, if his trials were great, so too were the consolations which God gave to his soul, and in fact far greater, especially in this last year of his solitude, in which he used to say he lived in accordance with his own tastes; nor could he speak of it without breaking down into tears."

His letters to Goa breathed his saintly spirit and roused all to emulate his devotion. But this life, "so much to his taste," did not shut his eyes to the fact, which was becoming every day more clear, that the Emperor had, in spite of all his fair promises, no intention of becoming a Christian.

Rudolf inquired one day of Abul Fazl why Akbar, who evidently was not prepared to become

a Christian, wished him to stay any longer at Court. The Emperor told his counsellor frankly that he loved to see around him the learned of every race, and especially one whose teaching he so much admired. This Abul Fazl reported to Father Acquaviva, and assured him that he had seen his Sovereign, the very day before, place the Bible with all reverence on his head, an honour which he had never paid to a copy of the Kuran that he had just received, although it was far more richly and elegantly bound. However, this did not blind our Saint to the real state of the Emperor's views.

A letter of the Saint to the Provincial of Goa, hitherto unpublished, throws interesting light on his thoughts and surroundings at this time.



“Very Reverend Father in Christ,—From my other letters your Reverence will have learnt how an educated man called M. X., whom Father Montseratt calls by another name, Doctor Imperbicado,¹ had told me that he wished to become a Christian, how the affair became known, and how when the King knew of it, he gave him permission to do so. But from what I understand from him, he never intended to become a Christian here, but if he ever does become one, he intends to do so in Christian territory. And it happened that the King, during those intrigues

Evidently a nickname.

about Dominic Pires, most imprudently told every one that he (M. X.?) wished to become a Christian, for, by nature, Dominic can keep nothing to himself, although, when excusing himself to me, he said he did it for the edification there would be when it was known that a man so hono[ured in the¹] sect—*casta*—of Mahomet wished to be a Christian. I think that he (M. X.?) was very much annoyed at the publication, although he dissembled, and has not ceased to be friendly with me as before. I did not write more about this man to your Reverence, because I doubt very much if he has a true call or not, and there are some things about him which do not please me. Time will show us what hope we may entertain in his regard.

“A few days after we had had those troubles with the King on account of Dominic Pires, there arrived a captain of eminence from Bengal, a man very learned in the sect of the Sufis (*Sofis*), who knows also something about philosophy. The King called me and told me privately to converse with that learned man, for perhaps it might happen that he would become a Christian. And he afterwards summoned him, and said to him: ‘This is [?] the *padre* of whom I spoke. Converse with him.’ And he did converse with me very frequently, and showed himself very ready to agree on points of doctrine, as all the Sufis do, but as for the rest—*non credo Christum illis*

¹ MS. damaged in this place

—I do not trust Christ to them, for most of them are deceivers. May our Lord convert them!

“The King keeps this Court in a great state of embarrassment with the novelties he introduces every day in it. For, among other things, he seems to pay much reverence to God’s creatures, such as the sun and the moon. And from Saturday evening to the end of Sunday he does not eat flesh-meat, and I am credibly informed that many heathens here do this, on account of a superstition that it is a day of . . .¹ Not only does he not eat flesh-meat, but on most occasions he does not allow [beasts] to be slaughtered in the bazaar, so that consequently we are generally not able to get meat on Sunday. Besides this, three days after having begun his Lent, he instituted a new Easter, which they call Merjan: and he ordered that on that day all the captains should dress in festal attire, and there was native music (*tangeres*) and dancing (*bailares*). I asked the King’s astrologers, and they told me that it was a feast which the ancient Kings of Persia, who worshipped fire, used to celebrate. The Muhammadans were much scandalized, although no one dared not to imitate him, because they do not yet understand, whether he does these and similar things because he likes them, or merely to try how far he can go with his [subjects]. I really cannot quite understand him, for he treats us with great familiarity, and does

¹ MS. damaged here.

not (cease) inquiring about things regarding the faith, as he has done all this winter, most minutely, &c. And, on the other hand, it seems that he is embarrassed by other things, although he confessed to me one day that he was so bewildered as not to know how to determine what is the truth.

"Another heathen festival took place the day before yesterday, at which the King assisted with more solemnity than in other years. And I can see in this Court that (cursed ?)¹ Allah is well obeyed. Kings make laws as they choose. If he should desire to take God's Law . . . it seems to me that his wisdom would be his salvation (?).

"On Tuesday, the 24th of September, the King came towards evening to be present at the marriage of Dominic Pires in our chapel. He invited himself. We adorned the chapel very nicely for him, and I had three devices (*enigmas*) of his honours painted for him, and Dominic Pires ordered a banquet to be prepared for him in the Portuguese style here in our house. The King was pleased with everything, and showed me great affection for having given him the best reception possible. In the discourse at the wedding to the married couple, as the woman did not understand Persian, the King was pleased to be interpreter, and explained to her in the vernacular what I said in Persian. The King

¹ MS. damaged.

stayed at our house till nearly eight o'clock at night. He was delighted to bring with him his principal captains, both Muhammadans and heathens; and one of the heathens, who is Governor of these realms, was much astonished, and made a profound reverence in the chapel. The three sons of the King were also present, and dined in the house, as well as some of the chief Muhammadan captains, whom the King ordered [to come].

"I have no more news to write at present, except to propose to your Reverence and to ask you the following things: first, that if it seems good to your Reverence that I should not be here at all, your Reverence would seek some way out of the difficulty, for the King takes no notice of my asking leave of him [to depart], and it only serves to exasperate him the more. Your Reverence well knows about me that I am indifferent; and my indifference only grows more complete, as I am in suspense, and do not know what God wishes for [?] my mission.

"The second thing is to ask your Reverence to write to me your opinion about erecting a church, which the King said he wished built here, if you have not as yet signified to me your wishes by another letter.

"The third is that your Reverence will have the charity to write to me how I ought to deal with the King, for I fear that he and some of his people would like to make use of me to approve

the Law of Muhammad, and (at the same time) take such things as please them from the Sacred Scriptures for some end which is in no way in favour of our faith; for persons are not wanting who believe that one day (or other) the King will come out with some novelty.

“The fourth is to beg your Reverence to give me a general permission, whenever convenient and when I may have opportunity and permission from the King, to go to see your Reverence at Damaun, or at any other place you order; for I have many things to communicate to you about this mission, which I have discovered since I learnt the language, and I am discovering more every day. Much prudence, counsel, and consideration therefore are needed if we are to treat the affairs of this mission as they should be treated. And it may be that I shall not want for something to put my hand to, if after having laid all before your Reverence and taken your counsel and orders, we begin this mission with new strength in the Lord (*spiritu*), even though this wicked sect should not cease to raise as great difficulties as ever.

“And now I will propose a plan which occurs to me, namely, to have at Goa a Seminary of the Persian language for the Muhammadans, and of Hindustani for the heathens, for boys, both sons of heathens and of Muhammadans, who are there, and also for those who could be sent to it from here. This seems to me the only plan, as the

King publicly states that he wishes that in his territories every person may follow the religion which each prefers. And so I will conclude, begging your Reverence's blessing and the Holy Sacrifices and prayers of yourself and of all.

"At Futepur (*sic*) to-day, the 27th of September, 1582.

"Since the King in his firman wrote to your Reverence that you would learn from me the reason why he did not remove from their posts the neighbouring captains who are hostile, I write to you what the King himself said to me, namely, lest they should think they have been deprived of their positions¹ on religious grounds, but that he will discover some other fault for which he will remove them, and he is already preparing the way to remove Calich, as I myself have seen. As yet I do not know what he will do.

"The day before yesterday news arrived of the capture of the men of war of the . . .² up to now spoken of it, but at this very hour, while I write, the Queen, the mother of the King, sends to call me.

"Your Reverence's servant in Christ,

"RODOLFO."³

¹ MS. damaged here.

² MS. damaged here.

³ The letter, which is in the British Museum, Add. MSS. 9854, pp. 1-4, is endorsed: "To the Very Reverend Father in Christ . . . [MS. damaged here], Father Ruj Vicente, Provincial of the Society of Jesus in this part . . . [MS. damaged here] India." See Appendix A.

The Provincial was becoming anxious to recall Blessed Rudolf, partly on account of his failing health, broken down by constant illness, and partly because he himself felt that his stay was of no avail. As an excuse, Vicente urged that it was absolutely necessary that Acquaviva should accompany the proposed embassy to Europe. Akbar declared at once that he would rather give up the idea of an embassy than lose one he so much loved, and from whom he had learned so much. However, as he declared that he would not prevent Rudolf from leaving, that Father came the following day to urge his request. He assured the Emperor that other Fathers would be sent in his place, and that he would leave behind him the books and pictures which the Sovereign so much valued. The Emperor replied that the new-comers must arrive before he left, so that he might judge for himself if they would meet with his approval. If they did so, he would not retain Rudolf; but he declared again, before all his Court, that he never would give him up willingly. So much had our *Beato* won all hearts, that he was looked upon, except by a few of the Muhammadans, as a prophet and a saint, and Akbar was strongly urged to retain him. When the Father tried to induce one of his bitterest foes to use his influence to get him expelled the Court, the Mullah positively refused. Acquaviva wrote accordingly to the Provincial: "As you do not wish me to leave at the King's displeasure, and as I cannot do this

without grievously offending him, I feel there is no good trying. However, Father, I do not think I am of any use here, nor am I necessary for the embassy to Europe. But I do not wish to be here more than anywhere else. My resolution is to do God's will, and I know for certain I can learn what is His will from you alone. As I have pitched my tent here at your orders, so will I shift it whithersoever you desire."

As the pretext of the journey to Europe had failed, the Provincial saw only one means of bringing Blessed Rudolf away from the Court of the Mogul. He ordered him to avail himself of the Emperor's promise that he would not detain him by force.

At a fresh audience, the Father laid his Superior's commands before Akbar. As Acquaviva was determined to leave, he gave his consent on the condition that he would return as soon as his Superiors allowed him to do so, or, if unable, would despatch other Fathers in his place. The Emperor sent to his lodgings a magnificent present of gold and jewels, to the value of several thousands of pounds. Acquaviva accepted what was barely enough to pay his travelling expenses, and sent back the remainder, with the message that he wished to return to Goa as poor as he came. One favour, however, he ventured to ask. The Begam, Hamidah Banu, the mother of Akbar, had in her household, among her other slaves, a Russian from Moscow, with his Polish

wife and their two children, whose faith and morals alike were in the gravest peril. These four he begged to be allowed to take with him to Goa. The Begam, who was no friend of the *Farangi* and infidel *Padres*, was most unwilling to give up these slaves, specially prized, no doubt, because brought from afar. But Akbar would refuse nothing to Blessed Rudolf. And so, upon his departure, the Father carried them off in triumph. The hatred of the Muhammadans, and the perils of robbers, made the journey one of great danger. The party arrived at Goa in the May of 1583.

The Fathers in that city had well-nigh given up all hopes of ever seeing Father Acquaviva again. A fresh attack of fever, or a whim of the Emperor, or the fury of the mob, might so easily have taken away his life in the far-off Fatehpur-Sikri. Besides Akbar, whose will was law, had absolutely refused to allow him to leave. The delight of the Jesuits at having him once more amongst them was great in proportion to their past fears. He came to them as one who had risen from the dead. They listened with the deepest interest to his account of the Mogul Court, and of the vast harvest of souls awaiting the sickle in the immense Empire of Northern India.

At Goa, as elsewhere, the sweet and absorbed look of Blessed Rudolf, his innocence and gentleness, won him the name of the Angel. His

example and his words were a great help to the large community of St. Paul's. On the feast of the two Apostles, June 29th, there was a solemn renewal of vows, and Father Acquaviva was requested to deliver the usual sermon, and this he did to the great profit and delight of all. He had prepared himself for the renewal by opening out, as has been said, all the deepest secrets of his heart to his Provincial, telling him all that had passed in his soul during those three years far away from community life, and in the midst of the brilliant and luxurious Court of Akbar.

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SKETCH MAP of Salsette (d 602)



they were driven back, the nearness of the enemy gave little promise of stable peace to the Portuguese.

Salsette runs south-east for about five leagues, from the promontory of Mornugao, including the commune of Cuncolim. Its greatest breadth is only two leagues. The whole contains some hundred and two square miles.¹ A small river, called the *Rio de Sal*—Salt River—runs southward, and flows into the Indian Ocean at the extreme limit of Salsette. It divides the country into two parts. The territory is separated from Goa and from what was then part of the Kingdom of Bijapur, on the north, by an estuary; but it has no natural protection on the eastern and southern frontiers. Save some uplands in the north, the district consists of plains, rich with rice-fields and palm-groves. Each village has its own government, as is the case in most parts of India.

It was only in 1560 that the Jesuit Fathers were able to preach in Salsette, where there seem to have been already some thousand Christians among the native population. The first Mass was said in a little hut at Cortalim, by Father Peter Mascarenhas, on the first day of May² in

¹ Fonseca, *Historical Sketch of Goa*, p. 1. Bombay, 1878. See map.

² Francis de Souza, *Oriente Conquistado*, t. i. c. i. d. ii. § 61. It was the Viceroy, Constantine de Bragança, who committed Salsette to the care of the Society. Father Peter Mascarenhas, after years of labour and peril, died of poison at the hands of the pagans of Molucca. Patrignani, Jan. 7.

that year. The Hindus, of whom a large proportion were Brahmans, deeply resented both the erection of Catholic churches in their midst and any attempt at conversion. Again and again they attacked the missionaries and their followers. Six years later, 1566, Father Francis Rodriguez persuaded the Viceroy to forbid the repairing or building of any heathen pagodas, and a number of abandoned temples were turned into churches, as in our own land in the days of St. Augustine. In 1567, Antony de Noronha, the then Viceroy, ordered the complete destruction of all the temples and idols throughout Salsette. Father Lewis Gões himself tore down the statue of Mammay, the Salsette Venus, in Cuncolim, the centre of a voluptuous and degrading worship.

Meanwhile the Fathers devoted themselves to the work of conversion. A hospital, a charity then unknown to the Hindu, was opened in 1568, at Margaõ. It served not only for the sick, but as a refuge for converts, who had sacrificed all for the faith. And there, in 1574, six years later, a college or seminary was established. At that date, in accordance with the request of the Archbishop of Goa, Gaspar de Leão Pereira, and with the approval of Rome, the whole district of Salsette was entirely handed over to the care of the Jesuit Fathers, who were to work as missionaries under a Vicar of the Archbishop, and to serve the various parish churches as *quasi*-parish priests. They were constituted into a

College, under a Rector, just as have been the missionary priests of the Society of Jesus in England.

With this new organization, Christianity flourished until 1577, when an envoy sent by Ali Adil Shah I., the son and successor of Ibrahim Adil Shah I., returned from Portugal and announced that the Sovereign, Don Sebastian, had promised liberty of religion to his subjects; though, as the story ran, the royal favour had been suppressed by the Portuguese authorities. The pagans of Salsette at once flew to arms, and robbed and killed the Christians. The city of Goa seemed unwilling to aid their brethren in Salsette, probably because they objected on commercial grounds to the repressive measures of the Government. The municipality pleaded want of means, nor was it until the Society of Jesus offered the loan of three thousand ducats that two hundred soldiers were raised to protect their neophytes. By these troops the revolt was put down, and peace was restored. But the College of Margaõ had lost all its income, and most of the Fathers were forced to return to Goa, leaving two only in Salsette.

Next year the troops of the King of Bijapur again invaded Salsette. They laid waste the churches, and killed a number of Christians, and the two Fathers were obliged to take refuge at Goa. Thither they were followed by numbers of converts, to whom the Society gave support and shelter.

Peace was concluded with the King of Bijapur in 1580; but it was by no means thorough. In the extreme south of Salsette, the people of the villages of Cuncolim and Assolna, not only adhered firmly to their Hindu creed, kept up the worship in their temples, and continued their human sacrifices, but they paid their taxes only when and where they chose, or as their *jogis*, or priests, bade them, and often fell upon and beat the collectors. In 1582, a messenger bearing despatches to the Viceroy from Cochin, when passing through Cuncolim, was attacked, the letters taken from him, and he himself severely handled. Orders were given at once from Goa for reprisals, and a flotilla of boats, commanded by the Viceroy's cousin, Giles Anna de Mascarenhas, entered the Rio de Sal at night, and destroyed the pagoda of Assolna. Father Antony Francisco, then priest at Orlim, served as chaplain to the troops, and set fire with his own hand to the temple. At the same time the Governor of Rachol marched from the north with a body of Portuguese and native soldiers to the support of Mascarenhas. With him was Father Peter Berno, who put the torch to the large pagoda of Cuncolim. The inhabitants of the place had fled across the frontier; but when the troops withdrew, they returned and rebuilt their temples.

The Governor of Rachol marched once more to Cuncolim. He cut down the palm-trees, the fruit-trees, and the crops, and threw up earth-

works, as if he were going permanently to occupy the ground. Three Fathers accompanied the force as chaplains, Emanuel Teixeira, Peter Berno, and Alphonsus Pacheco.¹ A boy, a native of the village, then a student of the seminary at Rachol, called Dominic, showed the Fathers the way to a number of little pagan sanctuaries in the neighbourhood. These Berno destroyed, as well as a great ant-hill, an object of worship. He killed a sacred cow on the spot, with the double object of defiling the holy place and of destroying an object of superstition, and he profaned a sacred tank by casting into it the intestines of the slaughtered animal.²

The inhabitants at length submitted, and sent representatives, with a safe conduct, to the Viceroy at Goa. They were, at the prayer of Father Pacheco,³ who had then come back to India, graciously received, and returned with presents of robes of silk brocade.

The procedure of the Fathers seems almost inexplicable in days when universal toleration is at all events professed. But in this, as in so many other matters, it is necessary to judge things by the standard of the period. To a Catholic of the sixteenth century, with his deep

¹ Valignano said that, but for the zeal of Father Pacheco, idolatry would have been re-established in Goa. Bartoli, *Missioni*, p. 122

² See *Oriente Conquistado*, t. ii. p. 204; Bartoli, *Missioni*, p. 62; Alegambe, p. 61, § 19.

³ *Summ.* p. 65, n. xxxiv. v. vi.

and unquestioning faith, the very permission of idolatry in a state, subject to a Christian ruler, was deemed unlawful because an offence against the natural law. A forced conversion was known to be no conversion at all, and a change of heart and of mind could only be the work of patient instruction, and still more of good example and of prayer. But the Portuguese authorities considered that the sensuous rites which surrounded, as they still surround, popular Hindu worship ought to be suppressed by the arm of the law, just as are the *suttee* and the domestic institution of Salt Lake in our days.

Baron Hubner, in his work on the British Empire,¹ points out that the Catholic system has resulted in the conversion of whole populations, both in the Old World and in the New; while the Protestant powers have systematically left the peoples under their sway in the heathenism or Muhammadanism in which they found them. Or they have robbed them of whatever belief they possessed, and given them in exchange agnosticism and unbelief. True, within this century, private efforts are being made on an immense scale to convert the Jew, the heathen, the Muhammadan, and even the Catholic to the uncertain thing called Protestantism, though the failures of these efforts are proverbial. The work of St. Francis Xavier and his successors is still living in the native Christians of Goa and Ceylon.

¹ *A travers l'Empire Britannique*, t. ii. Hachette, 1886.

The Viceroy, Telles de Menezes, insisted that the Provincial, Father Vicente, should see that more churches were built in Salsette, to give the converts the opportunity of practising their religion.¹ In 1578, Father Alphonsus Pacheco had been sent to Europe. On the 4th of August, Don Sebastian had perished in his fatal attack on Morocco. Thus Father Alphonsus, on his arrival at Lisbon, found Portugal without a King, and, as he was a Spaniard, he went off at once to Spain and to his dearly loved province of Toledo. Thence he proceeded to Rome, to carry on some negotiations of grave importance with the Congregation of the Indies and with the Father General which had been confided to him by his Superiors.² He was received with great kindness by Pope Gregory XIII., and was most successful in his interviews with Father Everard Mercurian. On his return to Lisbon, in the spring of 1580,³ the plague was raging in that port, and he was forced to defer his voyage. He had an interview with the new Sovereign of Portugal, Philip II. of Spain, who was then in that country. The monarch was never a staunch friend of the Society of Jesus, and had evidently been prejudiced against the action of the Fathers in India by the native envoy sent to Europe by the people of Salsette. This ambassador was

¹ *Summ.* p. 66, xxxviii.

² *Alcazar*, t. ii p. 571; and *Summ.* n. 9, p. 49.

³ *Alegambe*, *Summ.* n. 9, p. 52.

also supported by Portuguese who, if we are to believe the chronicles of the Order, had been seduced by Indian gold. Philip had been assured that unless religious toleration was granted, the whole population would emigrate from Salsette, with great loss to the Spanish Treasury, and that Goa would be constantly exposed to attacks from the Sovereign of Bijapur. Father Pacheco, from his thorough knowledge of the country, which he had visited as Socius of the Jesuit Provincial of India, could assure the monarch that there was no fear of the whole population leaving the teeming soil of Salsette, or of putting themselves under the cruel yoke of Ali Adil Shah, and that, even if they did, there would be plenty of people willing to take their place. He showed, too, that no stronger bulwark could be raised for Goa against its powerful neighbour than the conversion of Salsette. Finally, he urged that it would be a disgrace to Philip to inaugurate his rule in India by allowing the heathen to rebuild their pagodas and idols in face of his royal city. The King was convinced, and not only rejected the prayer of the Hindus, but published a decree forbidding that any such toleration should be allowed by his Indian Viceroy.

It was only on the 8th of April, 1581, that Blessed Alphonsus was able to leave Europe. He sailed in the flagship of the Spanish fleet, *St. Lawrence*, named out of compliment to Philip II., who was then completing the Escu-

rial, which is dedicated to that Saint. It carried the new Viceroy, Don Francis Mascarenhas, who had distinguished himself in the heroic defence of Chaul against the Nizam. On board the same vessel was Father Jerome Xavier, S.J., the grandson of a sister of St. Francis.¹ He was to be the future successor of Blessed Rudolf at the Court of the Mogul, and founder of the Mission of Agra, which still exists.² A third Father, by name Martin, died of the plague on the voyage. The ship *Salvador* carried four other Jesuits, of whom one, Antony Francisco, requires further mention. The third vessel, *Los Reis Magos*—"The Three Kings"—bore other two Fathers and two lay-brothers.

Blessed Antony Francisco was a poor student at Coimbra, when the news of the martyrdom of Blessed Ignatius Azevedo and his forty companions gave him an ardent desire to join the Society of Jesus, so as to gain the chance of sharing in their crown. He was received into the Novitiate, and, at the close of his probation, went to continue his studies in Evora.³ His voyage to India must have come as the fulfilment of his old wish. Three years after his arrival in the East, he was ordained priest, and sent to the Moluccas. The post was one of such danger

¹ *Questions historiques*, July 1, 1880, p. 234.

² In or about 1617, Philip II. of Spain named Jerome to the archbishopric of Angamale-Cranganore. But the Father died at Goa on January 17, 1617, before being consecrated.

³ *Summ.* Evidence of Father Sebastian Gonsalves, p. 51, § 1.

that none but the bravest were ever detailed for it. As he bade good-bye at Goa to a Father Alphonsus Rodriguez, who afterwards witnessed to his words, he told him that for many years, at the Elevation during Holy Mass, he had begged for the chance of dying for the faith, and he thought he was going to win his crown at the hands of the Malays, a hope which filled him with joy.¹

But the ship was driven back to Angediva,² an island south of Salsette. There Antony awaited his Superior's orders, which were to return, and to pass through Cuncolim, to take charge of the parish of Orlim. He was very much honoured for his holiness, and went by the name of the Saint.

Father Pacheco had won the heart of the new Viceroy during the voyage from Europe, so that he chose him for his confessor.³ On landing, Pacheco had laid before Father Vicente, the Provincial of India, the result of his negotiations at Rome and Lisbon, and had been entrusted by him with the delicate and perilous post of Rector or Superior of Salsette de Goa.

Father Vicente, however, very naturally thought he could put the task of restoring religion in Salsette into no better hands than those of

¹ *Summ.* p. 56, n. vi.

² Angediva is a Portuguese possession not far off the mainland, but some forty miles south of Salsette.

³ Alegambe, *Summ.* n. ix. § 21, p. 53.

Blessed Rudolf. He accordingly recalled Father Pacheco, who had just gained fresh claims of affection on the hearts of the natives, by interceding with the new Viceroy on their behalf. At the Provincial's request, Alphonsus Pacheco put all his experience at the disposal of his successor.

Father Vicente had intended to have inducted Blessed Rudolf in person into his new office, and in fact they went together by boat, but the Provincial got no further than the island of Chorao, when a sudden malady of his eyes obliged him to return to Goa, and he sent Father Pacheco in his place. Blessed Alphonsus had well deserved the name of *Father of the Christians*, the title of a Father appointed to the office of safeguarding the interests of the converts, by his untiring devotion to them, by the zeal with which he shielded them from the hostility of the heathens, and from the cupidity and bad treatment of some of the Portuguese. Not only had he taught the catechumens their religion, but he had looked after their temporal interests when they were baptized, provided food, clothing, and work for the destitute, defended them when unjustly accused before the magistrates, and cared for them tenderly when ill.

Father Acquaviva, in imitation of St. Francis Xavier, set out with no other luggage than his breviary, a Bible, and a manuscript Life of his model, the Apostle of the Indies. Even from a southerner the sun of the tropics demands in our

days some additional precautions against its power.

The new Superior was anxiously awaited by his subjects, who had deferred the solemnity of the renewal of their vows till his arrival. They had come in from the various villages and parish churches to Cortalim, the first place reached from Goa on landing in Salsette. There, at the residence adjoining the church, the six Fathers and one Brother met, and there those who were to renew their vows made the half-yearly general confession of Rule, the manifestation of conscience, and the penitential exercises prescribed. On Thursday, the 11th of July, after a fervent exhortation of Blessed Rudolf, they offered up afresh the sacrifice of themselves to God.

Brother Aranha, who was to share in the triumph of Blessed Rudolf, was a young man, born apparently at Braga.¹ He was nephew of the holy prelate, the first Archbishop of Goa, Don Gaspar de Leão Pereira, with whom, in 1560, he had come out to India, as a boy of nine or ten. He was skilled as a draughtsman and as an architect; and when twenty years old, he begged to be received as a lay-brother. His request was granted, and he entered the Society on All Saints' Day, 1571. He was a man who was ever occupied, never giving way to weariness,

¹ So says Alegambe, *Summ.* p. 63, § 1. But the Fathers and a native of Salsette speak of him as born at Lisbon. See *Summ.* p. 62, vi. and p. 63, ii. and xx.