

of Peter the Great, an autograph of the martyred Oliver Plunket, a scroll beautifully engrossed in Georgian script from a patriarch of that country, the signature of King Jan Sobieski to a letter.

This production has therefore developed gradually from its original scope, and now in the latter part of the main history covers practically the whole Catholic position in Persia and Mesopotamia, borrowing extensively from correspondence of Religious of other Orders in order to maintain the thread of the narrative, particularly when the Carmelites themselves were no longer dwelling at Julfa. Beginning as the record of a Papal Mission it also covers nearly all the relations and correspondence of the Holy See with the Persian rulers: and it provides a fairly complete account of the succession of Bishops of Isfahan and of those of Baghdad, with coadjutors of the latter, till 1773.

No student of the origin of the Carmelite missions in Iran and the East can begin his investigations from the year 1604; for it is only by a thorough review of the preceding relations of Persian rulers with Christendom and Turkey that the position in 1604 (and for another thirty years—one might say until the next century) can rightly be understood. Not only to the reader of today is it obvious that the early Carmelite mission was as diplomatic as it was evangelistic: frequently individual Carmelites will be found restive and protesting at the status or guise of envoys plenipotentiary thrust on them by circumstances, their energies and time taken away from their calling by negotiations on behalf of foreign princes or the Shah. The length of the introductory chapter, prior to the entry of the Carmelites on the scene, is to some extent unavoidable, and it does fulfil a salutary purpose.

Many figures and entities and communities and policies of interest pass in live fashion across the two-hundred-year long stage of these annals: Popes S. Pius V and Paul V endeavouring to rid Christendom of the nightmare of the Turk, Robert Sherley with his ear-ring and his amazon-hearted Caucasian wife, Imam Quli Khan the noted viceroy trying to bring the waters of the Karun to feed those of the stream of Isfahan: one by one the Portuguese in Hurmuz, the Dutch and English and French "East India" Companies disputing for mastery and influence, port after port coming into vogue and in course of time being eclipsed by another: the vicissitudes almost to extinction of that strange survival, the Mandaeans or pseudo-Sabaeans, forcible conversion of Hebrews *en masse* to the Shiah religion, a rigour and intolerance of dealing with the Armenian race, which surely can hardly have been realized for the truly dreadful toll it took of them as a Christian unit and is only surpassed in evil by the disgraceful violence of their own persecution of their Latinizing or Uniat brethren. It deals with that sudden and strange outbreak against the Latins witnessed in most oriental communities (not only of the Armenian) in the seventeenth century, which deserves a wide study and whole book to itself for anyone interested in the relations between the Churches of the East and West today: and it gives some account of the foundation of the Uniat groups in the Chaldaean and Armenian patriarchates, the origin of the present Christian communities in Baghdad, Basra, Julfa and Iran. Here are to be found clues to some problems of ethnology dating from the sixteenth century—transplantation of whole communities from one province of the far-flung empire to another: the 'diaspora' of the Armenians has hardly been less tragic in numbers, but far more so in murder and violence, than that of the Hebrews: one archaeologist at least may note with interest the hitherto unsuspected colonies of Georgians and Circassians planted in Fars.

The dark side of 'Abbas I—his callous cruelty (even in that age) and viciousness—stands starkly revealed; but elsewhere glimpses of that remarkable man in his wayward, whimsical moods, caught from day to day in personal interviews and artlessly recorded—of 'Abbas flicking small pebbles into the wine-cup brought for the Turkish Pashas, of his playing master of the ceremonies to Armenian ecclesiastics in their Epiphany blessing of the waters, of his grilling fish with his own hands in an alfresco evening party, and of his egging on Catholics and Lutherans to a dispute whether there were three or four nails used in the Crucifixion, and many others—will surely prove fascinating, and quite new matter, to Irani and non-Irani students of history alike. However, not until all the material available in Persian