

which in the 1720's was specially trusted, and appointed in an amazing document, by the Government of Bombay under the East India Company to have charge of the thousands of Roman Catholics living on that island): all to the good, too, that the Carmelite of today, interested in the creative spirit, the devotional output and lives of his brethren of olden time, should in his search through these pages be brought face to face with the grossly materialistic and cruel oriental surroundings, in which the missionaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries worked, and in which they contributed at times in a small way to make history. They, at any rate, did not spare their Carmelite contemporaries in Europe and the authorities in the Vatican these details of wars and killing and licence, and the ways of government of the country here related.

The 'man of the world', hesitating, perhaps, to open a book on 'missions' lest it be merely unworldly outpourings of presumed 'ignorant friars', may be surprised and reassured to learn that, apart from the ten or so of those to find a place in the narrative and in the biographical notices who were thought worthy to be promoted bishops, three at least became subsequently Generals in Rome of the whole Order—and election from a body of several thousands of divers nationalities should indicate merit or attainments of some outstanding nature—one had been the holder of a hereditary dukedom and great estates, a nephew of a reigning Pope, military officers, aristocrats and courtiers, a lawless young noble—lives renounced to become poor men after the fashion of S. Francis but among infidels in distant lands: several physicians, a botanist of some note, and, among many of those sent out from the seminary in Rome, where Arabic was taught in preparation, and a number of fluent translators in various oriental tongues one who produced a lexicon of much learning and ponderous dimensions. As chaplain one died on a field of battle in distant Afghanistan, another was slain as chaplain to an envoy returning to Europe via Russia, two were drowned in gales, two perished of infection when ministering to sick on voyages, several in epidemics when they had held to their posts: two, at least, returning to their posts from Europe fell into the hands of the dreaded Barbary corsairs and passed years in captivity until exchanged or redeemed, just as others of them were forcibly detained for long periods in Muscovite territory: they spent their hard, abstemious lives generously.

It may not be without interest to missionary organizations of the present day, when hygiene, preventive medicine, the attendance of doctors, surgical skill, serum against epidemics, protection against the sun by sun-helmets and far more comforts are usually within reach of the missionary in the Middle East and Western India, to compare the following data afforded by these biographical notices with figures of today. The average life lived, for 138 of these Carmelites, who served longer or shorter periods in the East, was 54.3 years: the average length of service in the missions for 150 of these Carmelites was 14.5 years. Five of them remained over 40 years in the mission posts, fifteen 30 years or over. Twenty lived to be septuagenarians, six to be octogenarians despite the climate, fevers without quinine, the primitive knowledge of medicine and lack of surgery they had experienced.

The narrative could have been far briefer, more compact and easily readable, had it not been told within inverted commas for the most part; but, for the sake of permanent reference and that the personal character and style of writing of individual Religious may be brought out and live for future times, as far as possible the wording of the Carmelites and other Religious, their own descriptions have been kept—in translation, that is to say (far too diffusely, it may be admitted). Apology is also made for the stilted English used in many translations in an attempt to give as literally as possible the writers' vocabulary and mannerisms, to convey the quality of the spirituality and fervour of each. The question of translation in such a compilation of material in several European languages is truly difficult and unsatisfactory: English is not the best medium for reaching the generality of Carmelite and kindred potential readers, and that is regrettable: Latin would restrict it to Religious and the learned, putting the work outside the pale for the ordinary layman, and is, besides, an indifferent medium for technicalities of oriental linguistics and names: in Italian, where the bulk of the quotations