

their lives should be spared. Of the English in the operations only 20 lost their lives, the Persian casualties were put at 1,000. One observer reported that the English sailors were longing for an opportunity for paying the score by attacking their quondam allies: and

“when the general of Shah 'Abbas applied to the English commander to complete their work and necessary assistance by attacking Masqat, the refusal was as emphatic as politeness would allow.”<sup>1</sup>

The brief notes regarding the siege, which the MSS. *Hist. Miss.* had copied from whatever accounts were recorded at the time by the Carmelites of Hurmuz (unfortunately nothing appears to have survived in the archives of the Order), include the statements that part of the booty which fell to the English was loaded in a ship for London, which however off Masqat took fire and sank, the crew being saved with some difficulty, and that many prisoners of tender age remained in the hands of the Persians, who constrained them to abandon their faith. On the Carmelites the blow fell heavily: all Christian life on the island ceased thereafter: their house had to be left a ruin, with all its furnishings:

“. . . Now they have told me that there are two Fathers in Hurmuz who have remained behind in the hospital to look after the sick when the town was taken. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

“. . . We lost everything at Hurmuz: our three Religious there came here. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Unaided by artillery and ships for fighting the Persians would probably not have obtained possession of Hurmuz—at any rate the fortress: it was in no sense a Persian feat of arms of which they can be proud. The Carmelites make clear what was the general impression created at the time:

“*The English took Hurmuz*; although it is not for them that the king is fortifying the fortress so well. It is said that he has in the town and fortress 4,000 arquebuse men. It has been a great punishment from God for our sins. . . .”<sup>4</sup>

Though their position as representatives of the Sovereign Pontiff had been thus undermined, yet the Carmelites were not downcast, but resilient.

“Although Hurmuz has been taken by the Muhammadans as a chastisement and punishment of the Christians, and we are close pressed on all sides and deprived of all spiritual and financial assistance, courage does not fail us on that account. We now begin to be disciples of Christ.”<sup>5</sup>

“We have three catechumens under instruction and cannot take more, though they come from afar off, for it is necessary to house and feed them while under instruction, and we have no funds for that. From four provinces of this kingdom they are asking for us” (to go to them). “On the Feast of the Purification (February 2nd) the procession outside the church was poor, but there was great cheerfulness: all the Catholic Christians present, so that there was not room for all in the church. We rang the bells.<sup>6</sup> Two Persians from the king's treasury come for instruction. . . .”<sup>7</sup>

Indeed Fr. John Thaddeus rebutted vigorously the insinuation that their business in Persia was solely as representatives of the Pope:

<sup>1</sup> The authorities for the siege of Hurmuz are: the *Comentarios do grande Capitan Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, compiled by Paul Cruesbeck, Lisbon, 1647; and Purchas' 2nd volume (pp. 1787-1815). Quotations have here been made from Sir W. Foster's work on the English Factory records.

<sup>2</sup> and <sup>7</sup> Fr. Prosper, O.C.D. 238 d., undated, but after February 1623.

<sup>6</sup> Fr. John Thaddeus, O.C.D. 237 c., June 1622.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, 14.6.1622.

<sup>6</sup> As late as 1907 in some Persian towns bells of Christian churches might not be rung, so strong was local religious objection.