

"Migebal [? sic]		Sharafabad	
"Khushnamieh [? sic]		Ma'inabad [? sic]	
"Dizful	Ramhurmuz		
"Shushtar	Durakh	Ch'aab (or Shiub?)	
"Jizair	Aqa Zakieh	Khalafabad	Hindijan"

and, strangely enough, "Bihbihan" and "Dihdasht"—so far inland in tribal Persia.

"There should be some others,¹ but all save Basra are places of small importance.

"One of their chief priests got out the number of households for me, and says that they are round about 1,200; but I doubt whether they be so many. Among them they have no other police, or government, than that of the Muslims, to whose laws they are subject. . . .

"As to the spiritual side, the ceremonies of their creed, they have some chief priests whom they call 'Ganzeur', and there are at present three—Shaikh Begtier [? sic, for 'Bakhtiar'] : Shaikh Bahram: Shaikh Hija, all in Hawaizeh: these are, as it were, with us, 'bishops' because it falls to them to do all the important acts . . . they have other, simple priests, whom they call Talamidi. . . .

". . . Among their most common customs . . . I may mention here what they observe with the greatest strictness, and in which they show themselves most tenacious, is not to eat the flesh of animals killed by Muslims, nor even by us (though not with such rigour): nor even will they eat other foodstuffs of the Muslims unless simple ones, such as produce of the soil, e.g. fruit and such things. If any one of them were to eat such meat, killed by the hand of a Muslim, *ipso facto* he is considered a pervert. . . . They do not wear anything of a blue colour, even it be as much as a straw. Their priests never cut a single hair, whether of their heads or their beards: the common people shave their heads, as do the Muslims, but, like the priests, they may not cut a single hair of their beards. Usually and generally they are married to a single wife, but they hold among themselves that more than one can be (espoused): and the reason they adduce for this is that there are many women, but few men: and in that respect it is preferable that a man should take two wives rather than be the cause for a Mandaean woman to take a Muslim husband and become herself a Muslim. They consider it a bad thing to pray turned towards the West. With them prayer in Arabic is excommunicated, and not even with goodwill are they willing to expound a book of theirs in the Arabic tongue, as has happened to me. . . . They have a book called *Sidra*, by which they govern themselves, and they say that it is very ancient. . . . They deem it unlawful to turn Christian, Muslim or Jew: this is the popular idea, but one of their chief priests (two of them have been to Basra) said that, as they could not do this out of fear of the Muslims, out of that cause sprang this erroneous opinion. Big and small, all Mandaean hold that the negroes are not the offspring of Adam and Eve, but of Noah and a sprite or hobgoblin, and for that reason ought not to be baptized, nor should anything be eaten from their hands. . . . All those residing in Basra follow one of three crafts—goldsmiths, carpenters, or smiths: they do not practise any other except it be agriculture, where there is the opening: for the most part they are very poor and held in little esteem, not only by Muslims but by all the (other) Christians, among whom the name of 'Subba' is a subject for ridicule. With all this they deem themselves of greater purity, probity and rectitude than any other, and naturally maintain a great pride of race, and for this reason they never mix with any other kind of people. . . . few of them become Muslims. . . . From what has been said the Sacra Congregation will easily be able to infer what the state of this race is, and that really on our side we ought to do something for their welfare, since the Lord has led us to these parts, where we see them and have dealings with them: and, although for the present to human eyes a remedy appears so difficult, to the Lord who governs all it may be very easy. . . ."

¹ Fr. Basil's list is limited almost entirely to Persian territory and does not go up the Tigris to 'Amara, or the Euphrates.