

“come to Your Highness with yet greater fame and bliss, as well as a perfect recognition of Divine truth. So may God the Father of lights in His immeasurable goodness vouchsafe to grant this of His mercy.

“Given as above at S. Mary Major, Rome, under the Fisherman’s ring, 21st September 1658, in the fourth year of Our Pontificate.”

The survival of the communities, in large numbers as regards the Julfa folk, in very small groups as to the Jews whose association with Persia must date back to the Achaemenian period, is evidence that the harsh measures were far from being completely successful or executed; but, if all the scores of thousands of Armenians, Georgians, Circassians, Assyrians (Chaldaeans), Jews, Mandaean and Zoroastrians, who, deprived of their own priests and places of worship, or forced by circumcision or in other ways, or married to Muslims, became absorbed unwillingly in the Shiah population, be totalled and considered, it is demonstrable that here was another strain of racial blood which has gone to make up no small portion of the Irani of today.

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In such a general environment and background during the reign of 'Abbas II the limitations of the work and the actual accomplishments of the Carmelites can be better gauged. In the first few years of it they were in the throes of a domestic discord, partly due to internal and partly to political causes, over their convent at Goa, trouble which indeed had begun to make itself manifest about 1636 and hampered the unity and stunted the development of the Mission, marring the harmony of its working as a whole province and keeping several fine Religious from whole-hearted zeal for souls. The origins of the dispute have been treated at some length in the section of this work dealing separately with the foundation at Goa and elsewhere, to which the reader may turn for information: here the points at issue and incidents will not be repeated. Suffice it to note that the revolt of Portugal against Spanish domination and the eighty-year-old union with the Spanish crown, which ended in 1640 with the accession of king John IV of Portugal and the independence of his kingdom but at the cost of exhausting hostilities with Spain lasting 28 years, had its counterpart in a strong nationalist spirit permeating the Portuguese Indies. Pressure by Spain led to the Sovereign Pontiffs declining to recognize the new monarch with, as one result, ecclesiastical discipline becoming relaxed as see after see fell vacant and remained so. The original and none too willing assent of the Order to the founding of a Carmelite convent in the capital of the Portuguese Indies had been based on the hope that this centre of Catholic generosity would provide both a supply of novices suitable for service in various posts of the Persian mission, and also funds to keep up the Houses in Persia itself: from the first days there had been considerable numbers of aspirants of Portuguese race admitted to the convent, and a second house bequeathed to the Mission was turned into a seminary for a time. Infected by the nationalist spirit certain Carmelites at Goa, men of ability, of Portuguese birth trained in the Order in Rome began an agitation for the exclusion from the convent of foreign Religious, particularly Italians (perhaps in resentment of the attitude taken up by the Holy See towards king John IV from 1640 onwards). Such an attitude found favour with and was exploited by several of the viceroys, their councils, and influential men in Goa: there had been for more than thirty years a general suspicion of foreign Religious by the Portuguese authorities in India owing to other grounds: and (it must be added) certain non-Portuguese Carmelites of standing sympathized with and supported the demand for separation of the Houses in Portuguese India from control by the Congregation of Italy and the Vicar Provincial in Isfahan. So, when Portuguese Fathers from the convent of Goa in 1640 returned to Portugal, had an audience of king John IV and represented to