

began the effective administration of Basra and its province by the Turks, which lasted till the European War of 1914 save for two brief intervals of Persian occupation.

A description of the refreshments offered them on the occasion of a visit to the Turkish Pasha by two Religious in 1675 deserves notice here, because it shows how little the entertainment varied by 1910, say, in Arab centres round the Persian Gulf:¹

“We were given coffee, which is the Turkish drink, then a certain other drink called “Sharbat” (lime- or orange-juice, probably): “next rose-water to put in our beards: “finally incense in a fine vessel of silver-gilt, also to scent and ‘fumigate’ our beards. Each “time we had put on our knees different pieces of gold brocade.”

In a Muslim land, with procedure often ruthless, this mission post continued to do great service to all Christians of whatever nation, heterodox or Catholic, as will be appreciated on a perusal of the separate chapter on the Residence at Basra, and from this single quotation from the *Chronicle* of Basra:²

“In the same month of August 1676 we freed from prison and the risk of apostasy three “Englishmen, who had seriously wounded a Muhammadan, when defending themselves “in a row. Daily Christians have recourse to us in their needs great and small, and we “always try to aid and comfort them. . . .”

On the practice of the customs-houses in the region during this period Carmelites have left two observations of interest, showing how definite customs-houses and duties had become in the East: in 1668 from Persia³ it was pointed out that

“any little curiosity brought from Europe, if it goes to Basra risks having to pay Customs “four times over—twice each at Bandar Rig and at Basra, on entering and on leaving— “whereas at Kung” (under Portuguese control) “there are no such risks . . .”,

while in 1678, at Baghdad,⁴

“when we arrived . . . we passed the Customs free to the house of the Capuchin Fathers, “whence we went to take the boxes in the Customs, paying about 2 piastres. . . . I find “the impossibility (of which people talk) of passing things through the Customs much less “than in Europe where they are a hundred times more strict and harsh than the Turks “are. The dealings of the latter are not so dreadful as they are depicted and, apart from “matters of religion, they are perhaps more polite than we are. It is only necessary to “use a little care and pains over consigning goods to some friendly merchant, even if he is “a Turk, for the latter to perform the service with an incredible punctiliousness. . . .”

Here, too, is record in 1672⁵ of the Yazidis by a Carmelite traveller—that strange, small religious denomination:

“Five days before, near a place called Nisibin” (Mausil) “we met the ‘king’ or ‘prince’ “of the Yazidis or Kurds; who from the desert was going to pass the summer in the coolness “of the mountains, with an innumerable number of people, all very poor and miserable, “who were driving numberless sheep and cows, on which they support themselves for a “living. In front of this ‘prince’—if so he can be called—was borne a standard, red

¹ Fr. Agathangelus, 1.10.1675, O.C.D. 241 c.

² See *The Settlement of Carmelites at Basra*, published by late Sir H. Gollancz.

³ O.C.D. 237 d, Fr. Dionysius, 31.5.1668.

⁴ Fr. Peter Paul of S. Francis, O.C.D. 241 o, 27.1.1679.

⁵ O.C.D. 242 a, Fr. John Mary of Jesus, 27.7.1672.