

“and does not fail to come to church at the proper times. The ambassador, his late uncle, who came to Persia last year and died in this country only a few months after having begun negotiations with the king, used to come, not only to our house, but often to the church with much pleasure, being a Catholic in secret, and moreover our brother by the scapular of the Virgin of Carmel, our Mother and Lady, which he had received in England¹ from our Fr. Simon Stock,² of which he furnished me excellent evidence. The ambassador had a small silver tube, almost round, which he tied to his right arm and in it was our scapular, very small, in silk. When I got to know all this from him I treated him with the loving kindness suited to such a person. . . .”

This is another instance how the old Faith continued to exist in secret among the English in the penal days of James I in men of good position, unsuspected perhaps by their colleagues.

The quotation just given from Fr. John Thaddeus' letters recalls the obligation for anyone writing on the annals of the Carmelites at this period to throw light upon the personality and mentality of the most notable man in the whole history of this Mission from such of his letters as have been preserved: and with that incentive the following extracts are given.

Here he is writing³ to the Praepositus General in Rome about the Nauruz, the vernal equinox—that sun-lit festival with the early blossom gladdening even for Europeans—of 1615: the mobility of this Vicar Provincial will be noted:

“When I came back from Astrakhan I went to the Shah, who was with an army of more than 100,000 men: and all the heads of this army on the 21st March, when they celebrate their New Year, were sitting in the king's tents. He sent for me and bade me sit by his side. There I asked permission of the Shah to speak of the Gospel and, when he gave me permission . . . , I made them an exhortation explaining to them the Ten Commandments in Persian verse, which I had composed. This much pleased the Shah, and he gave orders that the verses should be taken down in writing. . . . For, however learned a Persian may be, and the more I have spoken to and disputed with him in matters of faith, there is none in whom I have not seen a noble change of regard and goodwill toward us: and, although it is true that this race naturally are flatterers and excessively given to adulation, those who have knowledge and are learned in their Quran, when they come to disputations, cease to flatter and talk very freely of what they know. So, in these disputations they give us the opportunity to preach to them, and in this way I am daily preaching to them, and it has even happened to me to deliver three homilies in one day during the largest and most formal receptions at the Court. That few are converted is not so much because they do not know where the truth lies, but because of the sensuality and worldly life which holds them fast bound, just as we see many bad Christians, I mean sinners, who are Catholics by creed, but live in the gravest sins and, notwithstanding they know and admit that, should they die in that state, they would go to hell, still for all that sensuality, interest and worldly life keep fast hold of them. If, therefore, we see this in the Catholic faithful, why should we be surprised at it in Muslim infidels? In fine, not because they do not have themselves baptized have we to abandon the ministry of the preaching of the Gospel. ‘Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach’: and for this office there are needed workers—Religious who will work at learning the language. *Let him who has no inclination to learn the language not come: for God has no call for him in this country.* We have the example that God did not send the Apostles to preach and that, although Christ had told them: ‘Go to all the world’ . . . , they did not go

¹ The Carmelite historian of the eighteenth century, Fr. Eusebius, in his *MSS. Hist. Miss.*, chap. XIV, part 2, book 3, gives as one reason why the Order was not disposed to see the convent at Isfahan abandoned in 1613 the fact that they had recently launched out on a missionary enterprise elsewhere, viz. in England.

² This was Fr. Simon Stock of S. Mary, whose family name was Thomas Doughty, *alias* Dawson, born 1574 at Plumbley, Lincoln, and who was at the English College, Rome, 1606–10, ordained priest 1610, professed Fland-Belgian province 6.10.1613, sent as first missionary to open Carmelite mission in England, 1615: from 1633–52 lived near Canterbury, where he died, 15.8.1652.

³ Letter of 12.2.1616, O.C.D. 237 m.