

but lived on what was offered them as alms. They slept on straw in the village churches or outside. In the mornings Fr. Dimas celebrated Mass in the open, and then they taught the children Christian doctrine. They spent the rest of the day in persuasion and confession of those remaining in the villages. In the evenings, when the men returned from field work, a sermon was preached. As one village after another was by such means brought back to the Christian Faith the church was blessed, a priest of sound tenets appointed, and then the Carmelites passed on to another village. It took them seven months to gain twelve of the villages: but others of their own accord sent their headman to the convent.¹

It would appear from remarks in various letters that the Carmelites had their movements restricted, were under detention in the convent from February to October 1622: yet they were not dismayed:

"11.4.1622. Although we are indoors, unable to go out, with a guard on the gate, "they give us no trouble over reciting the Divine Office. We ring our bells (we have very "good ones), as if we were in Rome. . . . The Fathers of S. Augustine are under another "guard, but are making converts of their guards." . . .

"14.6.1622. . . . until the king come back we think we shall stay as we are now—in "prison. . . . Three more were baptized on S. John's day, two being given the name of "Ilyas, one of Yusuf. . . ."

"22.10.1622. On the 8th of this month the guards were taken off the gate, the Daruga "having received orders that no one should molest us. . . ."²

Those five converts were, as far as the lay mind can appreciate, true martyrs of the Church, killed 'in odio fidei', as much as any of the sixteen thousand commemorated as martyrs under Shapur II, or those Christians put to death in the reign of Yazdigird, some thirteen centuries previously. An account of the "Martyrdom of the Five Persians recently baptized by the Discalced Carmelite Fathers at Isfahan"³ was published in Rome by the printing-press of Zannetti in 1622, and translated into French according to a copy printed at Liège.

It does cause surprise that on the materials sent to Rome by the Prior, with this end obviously in his mind, a preliminary enquiry was not held with the object of ultimately recognizing these martyrs as canonized saints in the official martyrology, the more so because in that same year, 1622, the Sac. Congregation de Propaganda Fide had been formed, and, as has been elicited by the author of *En Persia*, in one of its earliest meetings there was presented to the cardinals and members by the Carmelite Fr. Dominic of Jesus Mary,

"a printed leaflet, in which was narrated the moving martyrdom of five Persians, neophytes "of the Carmelite mission at Isfahan, where they had been martyred the same year, "in hatred of the Faith', on the evidence of the Acta Congreg. de Propaganda Fide, vol. III."

Some documents may have been lost in the troubled nineteenth century; but some day, it may be, the authorities may trace sufficient evidence in the archives of the Order to put forward the cause of these five humble, but courageous confessors of the Faith. The question arises: 'what became of those relics of the bodies: did they continue to lie in the convent at Isfahan, or were they forwarded to Rome?' It is only answered in part by the letter of Fr. Prosper from Aleppo, 27.2.1625, in which he states that he is taking with him to Rome the book composed by a Mulla against the Catholic Faith (already cited), and

¹ See footnote ¹ on page 264.

² *Vide*, in Arch. Vat., Fondo Borghese, Ser. III, 19, i, p. 170, the 'Compendio della cose e successi della nostra missione di Persia dall'anno 1621 fino a questo 1625 narrato al nostro Padre Fra Paolo di Giesu Maria, Preposito Generale dei Carmelitani Scalzi dal Padre Fra Prospero', which adds that the official "in charge of the guard to prevent the Fathers leaving the convent was a greedy, bad man, and our Fathers poor, so that for 8 months he gave them much trouble".

³ 'Martirio dei Cinque Persiani nuovamente battezzati delli Padri Carmelitani Scalzi di Haspahan.'