

“and that his body lies there. . . . But, if it be queried whence and when did they migrate from those parts to these districts, where they now dwell, I should say that the very great persecutions which they suffered in the time of Muhammad were the reason for this migration, and that they were compelled to flee to the regions where they now dwell. . . .

“ . . . They are dispersed in:	Hawaizeh	Ramhurmuz
	“Durakh	Minab
	“Shushtar	Khalafabad
	“Dizful	and other places under the rule of the king of Persia

“Others reside in the town of Basra

“Jazair

“Zakieh

“Gabou and other places subject to the Pasha of Basra.

“Others dwell in some places in the jurisdiction of Babylon under the Sultan of the Turks.

“But also in places belonging to the Catholics no small number of these Christians of S. John are living, e.g. in the East Indies in Goa, Masqat, Ceylon, under Portuguese rule, among them those whom I sent over to the viceroy of Goa, two years back. . . . Now there are about 50 of these ‘Christians’ in Goa, where I sent them this year to Senhor Juliano de Noronha, governor of Masqat. . . .”

After seeking a comparison in the ‘matter, form, mode’ of the baptismal ceremony, Fr. Ignatius’ book gives instances of curious ritual customs of these people which may, or may not be still observed (chap. VI, p. 28):

“Of such importance is this killing of a fowl among them that it appertains to the priests alone to kill it: nor can he perform this office, unless he have been born of a mother, virgin when she married: far less are women permitted to exercise this function.

“The priest, who is to kill the fowl, takes off his secular clothing and puts on other garments intended for this ceremony. He covers his head with a cloth, and girds himself with another: a third is put over his shoulders, hanging down like a stole. He proceeds to kill the fowl, cutting its throat with the knife, when turned toward the East. So long as blood flows he does not let it out of his hand, but with his eyes fixed on the sky repeats certain words in his tongue. . . .”

(Chap. IX): “. . . These ‘Christians of S. John’ venerate highly the Cross, but with such precautions and wariness they adore it, that they never bring it out for fear of the Muhammadans unless they first put out sentinels, lest they should be caught in the act by the Muhammadans. Therefore they never put it” (the cross) “together, except at the time when they want it to be adored, and they put it together in such a manner that it can the more easily be separated in two parts. . . . To this cross of theirs they attach such great reverence and respect that in praise of it they relate ridiculous fables in their books about it. The priests of these people wear under their shirts a tiny cross painted with a needle: this is the sign of their priesthood: some of them have at various times shown me the cross, kissing it so that they might display to me the devotion and reverence they have for the cross.”

(Chap. XIII): “. . . The hatred, with which these ‘Christians of S. John’ regard the Muhammadans, is recognizable in many things, and particularly in that no one of the ‘Christians of S. John’ can eat any food which is cooked or prepared by Muhammadans: far less can they eat of any animal, which has been killed by the Muhammadans. Nor can they drink water in a vessel out of which some Muhammadan has drunk: indeed, if a Muhammadan ask them for a glass of water, they give him to drink, but after he has drunk they break the vessel, lest any ‘Christian of S. John’ unwarily drink out of that vessel and become defiled.”