

“come; but then the enjoyment is all for the other people, the more so as we do these on
“a very meagre fare—a few eggs and a little wine . . .”

and he also emphasized the need of being able to give an account of one's religion, when summoned to do so:

“When I first came to Persia, along with the senior of those now remaining in the Mission
“I was obliged to appear in a gathering held by the governor of Shiraz. Attacked by the
“governor himself regarding our belief in the Incarnation he excused himself for not
“replying, saying that he only understood the speech of the bazars; so that the governor
“drove him away at once, calling him: ‘Khar-i-gada!’ (i.e. ‘you beggarly ass!’), and saying:
“‘What have you been doing in Persia for so many years?’: and so we were forced to leave
“quicker than at a walk, to the scandal of others and contempt for our mysteries. . . .
“To confound Persian temerity accomplished persons are needed, for these people are very
“studious—they have infinite esteem for a Religious who can stand up to them (in
“argument). . . .”

In yet another letter of 22.12.1675¹ he had criticism on dress:

“I have submitted to your Reverence that bare feet and sandals are points which are
“no slight obstacle in missionary work, especially among the Muslims:

“(a) it is not only difficult, but even impossible, to go into a room belonging to Persians
“with bare, ugly, damp, muddy feet, without exciting inevitably indignation and oppro-
“brium and rebuffs from all present, the more so as the floors of houses are covered
“with carpets. . . .

“(b) . . . for beards we have adapted ourselves to the habit of the country . . . why
“then should we not adapt ourselves in a matter where there is need? the postures one
“must needs adopt in bending down to tie or untie our sandals at every door is far from
“respectable: and yet Religious habits were adopted for edification! Why not then
“follow the habit of the country? that was the practice with all those predecessors of
“ours, such as Fr. Dionysius the late Vicar Provincial, and Fr. Severin . . . none of
“them ever went to houses of *grandees*, or Persians of the middle-class, where one had
“missionary or other business, without having their feet decently covered with stockings
“of our colours, and black slippers . . . for that there could be little inconvenience, as
“our churches and reception-rooms are covered with carpets, and we are constantly
“obliged to bend down to tie on or untie our sandals at the doors. . . .”

A report by the Vicar Provincial to the Praepositus General on 31.8.1675² individually mentions several Religious as unable to learn, or not knowing, the local language: and it provides evidence that of the twelve Fathers named not more than one or two were of the calibre and standard of the Carmelites in the previous half-century, either in talents, missionary spirit, or religious practice—all the more surprising because a number were products of the Seminary in Rome, where both in languages and other qualities they should have been trained. The visitation reports of 1684³ also make clear the deterioration of spirit and customs among the missionaries of that time: poor grounding and formation, laxity, disobedience—“the worst evil in these countries is that nobody does (or says) anything, except for his own convenience”.⁴ Not only the standard was lower, but there was at one time neglect by headquarters in Rome to provide for the leadership and government of the forlorn and scattered Religious: witness the following quotations from letters⁵ of 1682 and later:

¹ O.C.D. 236 b.

⁴ Fr. Angelus, 26.10.1684.

² *Idem*, 238 q.

⁵ Fortunatus of Jesus Mary, O.C.D. 237 k.

³ *Idem*, 241 a, 29.6.1684, 8.7.1684.