

keep pace with his zeal. After several years' experience he wrote : " We have in this country a class of men called Brahmins. They are in charge of the worship of the Gods, and the superstitions of their religion. Were it not for the opposition of these Brahmins, we should see all the Indians embrace the religion of Jesus Christ." These lines were written over three hundred years ago, and strange as it may seem, they describe the religious situation exactly as it stands to-day. The social conditions that called forth this cry of distress from the Apostle of the Indies remains unchanged, even to the present time. Brahminism is the chief obstacle to the christianizing of India.

The Brahmins are the sacred caste. They claim divine origin, and for centuries have had nothing in common with either the Soudras or the Pariahs. It would be difficult to exaggerate the contempt in which they hold inferior castes, especially the Pariahs. In a Brahmin's eyes a Pariah is hopelessly unclean, morally and physically. He is an inferior being, and this conviction has an influence on their relations in life. There is absolutely no social intercourse between the Pariah and the higher castes. To illustrate to what length this isolation is carried, it will suffice to say that for many years the admission of a Pariah into a missionary school had the effect of driving the other pupils away. The more respectable caste obstinately refuses to sit on the same bench or dwell under the same roof as the degraded caste. The spirit of caste has its chief manifestation in this refusal of social intercourse. In our own customs we have nothing of this mutual isolation. The disinclination to associate on equal terms, such as we find existing between different ranks of society among ourselves, is nothing when compared with the ideas of pollution and personal defilement which are associated in the mind of a Hindoo with such intercourse.