

monial the decree characterizes as "the festival of immodesty and wantonness."

A great outcry was raised against the decree. Father Tachard sent to all the missionaries under his charge a set of inquiries in detail asking if the ceremonies thus condemned were necessary, or could be dispensed with. The answers declared it was necessary to continue the methods in use. And this was affirmed in the following solemn document: "I, John Venant Bouchet, priest of the Society of Jesus, and Superior of the Carnatic Mission, do testify and *swear on my faith as a priest* that the observance of the rites, as set forth in the preceding answers, is of the greatest necessity to these missions, as well for their preservation as for the conversion of the heathens. Further, it appears to me that the introduction of any other usage contrary to these would be attended with evident danger to the salvation of the souls of the neophytes. Thus I answer the Reverend Father Superior General, who orders me to send him my opinion as to these rites, and to confirm it by my oath, for assurance and faith of which I here sign my name." Signed, November 3d, 1704, in the Mission of the Carnatic, Jean Venant Bouchet.

"Fathers Peter Manduit, Philip de la Fontaine, Peter de la Lane, and Gilbert le Petit took the same oath, and attested it by their signatures; and after like fashion, swore all the Portuguese Jesuits in Madura and Mysore" ("Memoires Historiques," Luques, 1745, tome iii., pp. 8-10).

Thus the reverend fathers publicly, solemnly, and deliberately make oath that, in these missions, the religion of Christ must necessarily be joined to the idolatry of the heathen, and that the introduction of Christianity alone, and in its purity, would be fatal to the salvation of souls!

This document was carried to the Pope at Rome by Bouchet and Lainez, who did their utmost to have the report of Cardinal de Tournon set aside. In this they were unsuccessful, but with wonderful audacity, on their return to India they affirmed the opposite! Norbert states that on a day when a large congregation of French and native Christians were assembled at Pondicherry, Bouchet "came forward in his sacramental robes, and calling to witness the body and blood of Jesus Christ, protested before God that of a truth he had obtained from the lips of the Pope himself that the decree of Cardinal de Tournon was in nowise binding, and that the missionaries might permit the practice of ceremonies which the Legate had condemned, because so doing they might the more easily convert the heathen to the faith."*

Lainez, now Bishop of St. Thomas, made to the Superior of the Capuchins a similar declaration. These statements were denied by the Pope in a brief addressed to Lainez himself, dated September 17, 1712; in a letter addressed to the Bishop of Claudiopolis, Cardinal Sacristanti, Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, encloses a copy of

* "Lettres Edifiantes," tome iii., p. 320.