

a stinence from everything that has life—that is to say, flesh, fish, and eggs, the Suniassis must bathe every morning in a public tank in all weathers, and do the same before every meal.”* The Father did not think it expedient to add that Suniassis, among others things, must wear an orange-colored dress; rub cow’s dung on their foreheads and breasts; have a tiger’s skin across the shoulders; have a club or staff on which are seven natural knots, and go daily through numerous ceremonies, *and that all these have a close association with heathenism.* Thus armed and equipped did these “Brahmans from the north,” these “Roman Suniassis” (“*Lettres Edifiantes*,” tome x., pp. 15, 46), go forth to teach idolaters how to worship and serve the true God!

All the missionaries did not resort to these methods. They were adopted by a class, certainly with the assent of some others, for the purpose of winning over, if possible, to the Catholic faith the social and intellectual leaders of the Hindus. It was seen that the Brahmans were excessively hard to win, and that between them and the lower castes and out-castes marked distinctions existed, but that if the former were gained over the conversion of the latter would be comparatively easy, if not inevitable. But this method involved the recognition of caste and of much beside utterly subversive of Christian doctrine, and even truth and honesty. “The catechist of a low caste,” writes Father Maduit, “can never be employed to teach Hindus of a caste more elevated. The Brahmans and the Sudras have great contempt for the Pariahs. . . . We must, therefore, have Pariah catechists and Brahmanical catechists for the Brahmans, which causes us a great deal of difficulty.” And then he illustrates the difficulty thus: A catechist came to beg him to baptize some Pariah catechumens and to confess certain neophytes. But “the fear that the Brahmans and Sudras might come to learn the steps I had taken, and hence look upon me as infamous and unworthy ever after of holding any intercourse with them, hindered me from going.” Subsequently he went, and writes: “I made these poor people go to a retired place about three leagues from hence, where I myself joined them in the night, and with the most careful precautions, and there I baptized them” † Not only had the Pariahs separate catechists, but separate churches; nor would a Christian Suniassi enter one of their dwellings to administer the last rites of the Church, though he would do this if the dying were removed out of their own dwelling—contaminated by low caste or no caste—into the open air, or a proper caste church. The results of such a policy were such as might have been anticipated. As the Roman Brahmans had their poitas, cow

* See “*Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*,” tome x., p. 324. Paris, 1780.

Also “*Systema Brahmanicum* Fra Paolicio Bartolomeo,” pp. 47, 56, 57. Romæ, 1791.

The leading features of Nobilibus’s or Nobills’s course are stated by the Jesuit Jouvincy in his history of the order, and in vindication of the policy pursued when it was subsequently called in question, the Secretary to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide wrote in 1676 to Pope Innocent that Nobillis, although he called himself a Brahman, was not guilty of falsehood!

† “*Lettres Edifiantes*,” tome x., pp. 243-45.