

MISSIONS ABOARD.

TENT PREACHING IN SOUTH INDIA.

THE following is an abstract from a letter lately received from the Rev. J. E. Sharkey, Masulipatam:

"I am now writing this in my tent, which is pitched by the side of a large village. I am in a delightful grove of trees. There are a great many weavers in this village, and no small proportion of Brahmins. The former I find simple enough, and I can get them to sit and listen to the truth with much attention; but the latter are not so docile, and, instead of giving a fair and impartial hearing to our message, they proceed to attack us with much severity of language and bitterness of spirit. I had a Brahmin priest in my tent this morning, and he was endeavouring to show, by very subtle arguments, that the living principle in man is an emanation from God, and that after its release from the body, which he supposes to be a composition of five elements, it returned to its oneness with the All-pervading Spirit! He held that God does not trouble Himself with the affairs of our world, and that the distinction between virtue and vice is altogether arbitrary and conventional. He represents a large class of the educated Brahmins, who show their cleverness, not so much by arguments as in their illustrations, which go for arguments in their estimation, and are used with much dexterity and readiness. The next visitor I received was a Brahmin schoolmaster. I asked him to define *sin*: 'To kill an ant is a sin,' he replied. To kill a cat is a greater crime in Hindoo theology than to murder a Pariah or Shoo-drath! Then I gave my visitor St. John's definition of *sin*, and our blessed Lord's summary of the law, and explained how every sinful act was a violation of the *law of love*, he was much surprised. I followed it up by presenting Christ to him, and gave him a Gospel of St. Matthew to read. The Hindoos are easily discouraged. They open the Gospel of St. Matthew, they find the opening verses full of hard names, and, supposing the rest of the book to be just as difficult, they give up reading entirely, and cast the book aside. We are obliged now to point out where the history begins. The Gospel sounds in the streets of our villages and towns, and the men have so far got over their prejudices as to venture to visit us in our tents. It is a defilement for a Brahmin to come in our tent made of cloth. So far we can speak of success; but what is this where the *heart* is kept back? The women of the higher classes are still inaccessible. Degradation and ignorance are still their lot. They are perfect slaves, though willing and apparently cheerful slaves. They count their drud-