

HOW TWO MISSIONARIES PRAYED AND WORKED.

The following is part of a speech in Exeter Hall, by the Rev. L. O. Skrefsrud, from Sonthalistan :—

"We resolved to devote the rest of our lives to bringing these poor benighted Sonthals to Christ if possible. Now this was no easy task, because we did not belong to any missionary society, and we saw that in order to effect any good with these Sonthals, it would be necessary for us to go into the forest and live amongst them. And so we did. My colleague, Mr. Boerresen, and I, have lived together now for eleven years, and we have never had a quarrel, so that you can understand that he is a good man. We have lived in one house, eaten from the same table, and had the same purse, and we have never quarrelled over it.

"Going into Sonthalistan, the first thing we did was to learn the language, and it was no easy task, as it is one of the most difficult languages under the sun. When I tell you it has twenty-seven tenses I suppose you will understand what it is like. The sounds are so outlandish that it is very difficult to pronounce them. The first thing we did was to take a looking-glass. I put a Sonthal and myself before the looking-glass, and I looked into his mouth, and saw how its muscles and sinews formed themselves, and on what part the tongue would strike. I tried again and again. I looked into his mouth, then into my own mouth, and tried to get it out, and then having got out the sounds we classified them. We had small books and pencils, and whenever a Sonthal said anything we would write it down. In the evening when they were chatting in their small huts, we were outside in the darkness, and we would write in our books what they were talking about inside.

"We threw ourselves entirely among the people. We went to their hunting excursions, their funerals, their marriage festivities, wherever they had services to their gods ; and when they went to the field or to the forest to cut fuel, we went with them, and thus we made friends with them. We studied their mythology, their institutions, their habits, traditions, and character, because we thought it necessary, before we could do any thing with the people at all, to know them thoroughly. We used to sit on the floor like a tailor, and eat with our hands with these people, and we slept in their cow-houses.

"Sometimes at their hunting excursions we had ten thousand Sonthals to speak to. We would go into the midst of them and begin to sing a hymn which we had been able to translate into the Sonthal language, to their own tunes. They thus took a fancy to us. They did not know there was a poison in these hymns—blessed poison ! They carried them to their sweethearts in the village, who taught them to other girls, and so the Word of God ran round all the villages.