

## MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

## BOMBAY.

This is a large city on the Western coast of India, and contains about 600,000 inhabitants. It is built upon an Island bearing the same name, which forms a safe and commodious harbour. Close to Bombay Island are several others, one of them bearing the curious name of Old Woman's Island, and by linking them together a continuous break-water is formed, stretching for several miles from North to South.

Bombay is the most important naval station in India, and possesses large and commodious docks. At one time the West coast of India was infested by pirates who were noted for their courage, ferocity, and skill. In order to protect the shipping from these dreaded enemies, the East India Company found it necessary to establish a large naval force at Bombay. The famous Malabar teak of India, said to be superior to any other wood for this purpose, is here used in ship-building, and skilful mechanics and carpenters are found among the Parsees, one of the races or castes into which the population is divided.

Bombay is also a place of great strength, and very strongly fortified, the harbor being commanded by ranges of batteries placed one above another. Bombay Castle is the name of the principal fortification, and within it is St. Andrew's Church, attended by the inmates of our orphanage.

More than one half of the inhabitants of Bombay are Hindoos, who are divided into several castes or classes as, has been already explained to our young readers. About one fifth of the population are Mahometans or followers of the false prophet Mahomet. The Parsees exceed 100,000 in number, and are a very interesting class. These are the descendants of the ancient fire worshippers of Persia, who were driven out of that country when it was conquered by the Mahometans. The Parsees are the most active, industrious, and intelligent of the native races of India. As has been already noticed they form excellent mechanics, while many, as traders, merchants and bankers, attain to great wealth and distinction. A Parsee was not long since knighted by our Queen and received at Windsor Castle.

Bombay has long been an important Mission station, and as such was occupied so far back as 1812 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Messrs. Hall