

## CURRENT EVENTS.

THE Madras Educational Conference manages, thanks mainly to the indefatigable exertions of its Honorary Secretaries, to maintain a healthy and interesting existence. The opening session was graced by a pithy and sensible speech by the new Director of Public Instruction. We refer this month to only one sentence, but it presents in a happily concise way the doctrine that this journal has never failed to preach in season and out of season. Mr. Stuart said:—

“I think some attention may profitably be given to the improvement of the position, pecuniary and other, of the teacher. For without satisfied teachers, it is impossible to get good teachers; without good teachers there can be no good teaching; and unless we have good teaching—much better teaching than a great deal of what is given now—the education of the country will make no progress either extensively or intensively.”

“Satisfied teachers,”—how many satisfied teachers are there in the Presidency? What percentage can we expect to be satisfied with their present prospects of pay and promotion? We know it is the fashion in some quarters to preach the doctrine that teaching is a holy and sacred work, that the teacher should be above all such mundane considerations as filthy lucre and public approbation, finding his reward in a good conscience and a glow of satisfaction in his labor alone. This is a consoling doctrine to the preachers, mostly managers and especially teacher-managers, who desire to excuse the way in which they sweat their subordinates; but every one knows that it is all nonsense. The teacher is, or ought to be, like any other professional

man. Choosing a profession, he is animated by the natural desire to do well in it, together with the hope that proved ability will bring the ordinary rewards of success. The lawyer tries to be a good lawyer, and if he is a good lawyer, he meets with an ample reward. The physician tries to be a good physician, and, if he is a good physician, he too fails not of his substantial recompense. The teacher tries to be a good teacher, and, if he is a good teacher, ought to—and in some countries does—receive the guerdon of his labors. But here what does he receive, or what can he expect to receive? Apart from the favored few, he gets more kicks than halfpence; the greatest ability, the most conscientious earnestness, the highest technical training are all thrown away. What follows? The best men are warded off from ever entering the profession, or take it up as a mere temporary stop-gap while preparing for some other calling. Those who enter too often think it useless to devote their best energies and abilities to their work. What they please to give is value enough for the return paid, and so they pass through their service inefficient and careless, doing their routine work and drawing their routine pay with equal regularity. Some, indeed, commence with high ideals and lofty aspirations; they throw themselves with enthusiasm into their work, they devote all their energy and ability to qualifying themselves for the efficient exercise of their profession. But the enthusiasm of youth goes, the cares and expenses of life increase, the teacher sees his classmates, no whit his superiors in energy or ability, earning comfortable competences at the bar, or rising steadily in office, while he is con-