

VI.—EDITORIAL NOTES ON CURRENT EVENTS.

Our Indian Mission Schools.

The late General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church appointed a committee to confer with the President with reference to the order of the government virtually prohibiting teaching in English in our mission schools. The committee have promptly discharged the duty assigned them. The President desired to "have submitted in writing such changes as would be acceptable to the Assembly." This was done on a personal visit to Washington, and the result is given by Dr. Thompson, Moderator of the Assembly, in a letter to Dr. Field of the *Evangelist*. He writes:

" . . . He [the President] gave us full hearing and promised an early consideration. I have to-day received the order in its new form, and it will be gratifying to our church not only, but to all the churches interested in this work, to know that the views of the committee have been fully met by the government.

"The President expresses 'the hope that the conclusion reached, as embodied in the paper herewith sent, will settle the troublesome question.' We believe it will. It conserves the policy of the government to give the Indians a knowledge of the English language as rapidly as possible, and it restores to our missionaries their just right to teach and preach to the Indians in 'the tongue in which they were born.'"

ORDER REGULATING THE INSTRUCTION OF INDIANS.

1. In government schools no text-books and no oral instruction in the vernacular will be allowed, but all text-books and instruction must be in the English language. No departure from this rule will be allowed, except when absolutely necessary to rudimentary instruction in English. But it is permitted to read from the Bible in the vernacular at the daily opening of school when English is not understood by the pupils.

2. In schools where Indian children are placed under contract, or to which the government contributes in any manner, the same rule shall be observed in all secular instruction. Religious instruction in the vernacular may be allowed in such schools, both by the text-book and orally, provided not more than one-fourth of the time is devoted to such instruction.

3. In purely mission schools—that is, in schools toward whose support the government contributes nothing—religious and other instruction may be conducted in the manner approved by those who maintain the schools, provided that one-half of the school hours shall be employed in instruction in English.

4. Only native Indian teachers will be permitted to teach others in any Indian vernacular, and these native teachers will only be allowed so to teach in schools not supported in whole or in part by the government, and where there are no government or contract schools where English is taught. These native teachers are allowed to

teach in the vernacular only with a view of reaching those Indians who cannot have the advantage of instruction in English.

5. A theological class of Indian young men, supported wholly by mission funds, may be trained in the vernacular at any missionary school supported in whole or in part by missionary societies, the object being to prepare them for the ministry, whose subsequent work shall be confined to preaching unless they are employed as teachers in remote settlements where English schools are inaccessible.

6. These rules are not intended to prevent the possession or use by any Indian of the Bible, published in the vernacular, but such possession or use shall not interfere with the teaching of the English language to the extent and in the manner hereinbefore directed.

Practically this settles the matter—for the present. The President "fully met the views of the committee." He could not have been expected to do more. But we do marvel that the committee wholly ignored the PRINCIPLE involved in this whole bungling and extraordinary matter. That is the chief offense; the application of it is of secondary importance. The government assumes the RIGHT to regulate mission schools, and exercises that right in this very "Order." (Read 3d, 4th and 5th items.) "*May* be conducted," etc. "A theological class of Indian young men . . . *may* be trained," etc. Do we live under the Czar or under the stars and stripes?

The committee should have struck at the root of the outrage, and insisted on a repudiation of the principle on which the government has issued every one of its "Orders." The battle may have to be fought over again. Mr. Atkins' place is vacant in the Indian Bureau. It is understood that Mr. Upshaw seeks the place, and if he gets it trouble will break out afresh. Herbert Welsh, Esq., Secretary of the Indian Rights Association, says:

"The real control of the Indian Bureau since the incoming of the present administration has not been so much in the hands of Secretary Lamar, its distinguished nominal head, or Commissioner Atkins, as in those of Assistant-Commissioner Upshaw, a politician of the narrowest type, whose devotion to the spoils system of appointment has brought the gravest scandal upon the Indian service."

Sorry we are that when this im-