

CONTEMPORARY OPINION ON EDUCATIONAL TOPICS.

CONVOCATION ADDRESSES AT
CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES.

The closing proceedings at Convocation in three of our Canadian Universities furnish excellent material this month to fill the department of "Contemporary Opinion." Whatever the activities of thought in the motherland, some of the results of which have been presented in this department in previous numbers, it is gratifying to know that we have in Canada, in connection with our highest Educational Institutions, writers and thinkers, whose words are weighty enough to entitle them to preservation in our pages, and the reproduction of which may be of important service to the youth of the Dominion. From the reports of the recent Convocation addresses at Queen's, McGill, and Victoria Universities, we extract the following, which we doubt not will be read with interest and profit, and bear testimony to the mental calibre of the men engaged in university teaching in Canada, and be an evidence of the aims and character of their work.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON.

Principal Grant, addressing the graduates, congratulated them on the dignity of membership of Queen's University. Having referred to the fact that their education was not completed; that their university training had simply given them the spirit of students and habits of study; he proceeded as follows:—

"Each of you has probably learned already to some extent that to know himself he must know God, and that according to this knowledge of God is his theory of the universe. To be assured that you stand on firm ground here is your first necessity. All roads lead to Rome. All subjects lead to theology. Very few of you intend to study the special science of theology, but every thinking man must be

a theologian. He must have a theory with regard to the great questions that lie at the root of all thought and all interests. And his scheme of the universe must be true to all the facts of the universe so far as he knows them. This at his peril. Having got your *credo* you will find that it has got you. It will dominate your whole life. Let this be the test of whether you believe or whether you are only highly educated parrots. According to your moral earnestness you will necessarily commend to others that which is the highest truth to you. Agnostics beseech us to abandon the Christian hope for their dogged "don't know," with assured confidence that a blank is more precious than a prize. One of them has declared that Christianity must eventually be stamped out like the cattle plague; religion is pernicious and religion is infectious. Therefore the good of society demands that it be crushed out. I do not wonder at this intensity. No one will wonder at it who has read history and understands human nature. Even pessimists press their message of despair on men as if it were a veritable gospel. Give us truth is the cry of the soul. And what men believe to be truth they will urge upon others—some wisely, others unwisely. No matter what your profession, you will preach to your fellows by voice, or pen, or life. Not from the pulpit chiefly have the most far-reaching voices sounded forth to this generation bidding men walk in the paths of hope and faith, or bidding them abandon the old gospel for the gospel of dirt. Statesmen from Bunsen to Gladstone, poets from Wordsworth to Tennyson, men of science from Faraday to Tait, literary men from Carlyle to George McDonald, philosophers like Jas. Martineau and Max Muller—these and a thousand others have been preaching sermons all the more influential that they are based on life rather than on texts. In searching for sure ground on which to stand, have regard to the spirit of the ages rather than to the spirit of the age. We are the children of this age and must be in sympathy with it, not in bondage to it, for we are the heirs of all the ages. The fashion of the day is tyrannous, but you prove your strength by resisting the tyrant. Correct the one-sidedness of the past. Respect facts rather than the glittering generalizations of any writer. Respect the verdict of