

# The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, May 23, 1895.

## Evolution.

THERE are various aspects of evolution, which have been set forth during recent years, by their respective admirers, but none have exceeded in interest, in our judgment, or in importance, that form of it called social evolution. Its best and latest exponent is Mr. Alexander Kidd, whose admirable work is now sold, in paper cover, for the low price of thirty-five cents. Every thoughtful man should read and ponder this book, especially in the light of the social and political movements of the present time. This however by way of introduction. We wish to direct attention just now, to a phase of evolution, in which we all have a most vital concern, and that is the evolution of thought and life, in the case of the young men, who leave their homes to prosecute their studies in the great universities of our country. Hundreds, yea thousands, of young men flock to Montreal, Toronto, Kingston, Halifax and Winnipeg, every autumn, to prepare themselves for their life work. The anxious question in the minds and hearts of parents and pastors must surely be: what is the character of the intellectual and moral influences, which are moulding the thinking and shaping the life of our boy, our parishioner? He is evolving into something, but what will be the product of the present formative influences, by which he is surrounded? Will he come forth from the crucible of college life, an intellectual giant, and a moral and spiritual dwarf? Or will there be evolved a moral and spiritual culture, to balance and strengthen the development of the intellectual powers? Will he emerge from college an all round man, with all sides of his nature cultivated and ennobled, or will he be a one-sided individual, his mental powers quickened and trained, but his moral nature blunted, and his attitude to religion one of indifference? It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of this question, in view of certain recent events which have transpired in the University College. We do not affirm that there are men of sceptical minds, among the professional staff, but if we remember the gist of the evidence correctly there seems to be reason to infer that some of the professors are not, at all events men of faith and Christian life, men of strong religious convictions. And it matters not what the complexion of their belief may be, they will reflect it, in some way, more or less distinctly, in the teaching, and in their intercourse with the students of their classes. And what is true of the University College, may be true of other colleges. We do not refer to

teachers, who are in honest doubt, and anxiously struggling for more light: but rather to those who hold lightly by the inspired Word of God, and set little or no value upon the bulwarks of our faith. It cannot be denied that there is more or less peril in the path of young men, who must sit under such teachers. But let us even suppose, that such is not the case, that University teachers are Christian men and that students do not learn to doubt from them, there still remains the very serious question of their surroundings, the character of their companions, and the new and varied phrases of temptation, which meet every student, during his college life, in the City. Are they favorable or unfavorable to his religious growth? Are our Christian students, members in full communion of our churches, helped and blessed by their religious, as well as by their intellectual advantages? Or does their spiritual life decline, and they become cold and careless? And with regard to students who are not members in full communion, how are they affected? Do they attend church regularly? Or are they under any pastoral oversight at all? The questions we have suggested are grave, and we have no doubt, press deeply upon parents and pastors, and we propose, in another issue to indicate what in our humble judgment may be done to help toward the evolution of the moral and spiritual life of our young men, during their college career.

## South American Evangelization.

We are in receipt of a small pamphlet setting forth the interesting character and objects of the South American Evangelical Mission which has been "organized to help in the work of evangelizing South America. The Secretary, Rev. J. McP. Scott states that, there shall be no solicitation of money, and in the administration of the mission due thoughtfulness will be had of the present missionary undertakings of the different churches. It is expected that Mr. Alfred De Barritt, for three years a missionary in the Argentine Republic, will return to South America as a representative of this Society. At present he is free and prepared to give information about the needs of the country. Arrangements can be made, through the Secretary, for public meetings to be addressed by Mr. De Barritt or by another representative of the mission.

## Systematic Benevolence.

An interesting report has been issued by the special Committee on Systematic Benevolence, appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The figures are of such an instructive character that they will repay careful perusal. The Committee, after noting appropriately, the death of Rev. Dr. Charles S. Pomeroy, for seven years chairman of the Committee, makes the following statement; For the first time since its organization in 1879, your Committee is obliged to report a decrease in the gifts of the Church to benevolent objects. We entered upon the present year with gravest anxiety. There seemed to be no lifting of the financial clouds, which had brought disaster to the country, and threatened still direr consequences. Month after month passed, and still the clouds refused to break. Only just at the close of our ecclesiastical year has even a rift in their dark and lowering front been discovered—too late and too