

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XVIII.—AUG., 1889.—No. 2.

## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—SOCIAL SCIENCE AS A STUDY FOR MINISTERS.

BY PROF. J. O. MURRAY, D.D., DEAN OF PRINCETON COLLEGE.

THE "ologies" are certainly becoming numerous. Once theology seemed to comprehend whatever should be so classed. Now each year seems to add a new one. What does it mean? Is it a good or bad sign? It means simply this, that as the field of human knowledge is surveyed, specialization becomes necessary in order to thoroughness. And this is a good thing. For superficiality and half knowledge have been the fruitful parents of error in the past. Hence we have cause for joy that there is a *sociology* as well as a geology or biology. It is not my purpose in this paper to defend its claims as a science nor to discuss the problems with which it deals. It is enough that it exists, that social science has won for itself the hearty respect of all thinking and reading men who are concerned about human advancement. The aim proposed is a different and humbler one. It is to show how and why the Christian ministry should make the study of social science a part of their work. I cannot help thinking that such study should be begun in our theological seminaries. It would be quite as valuable considered as mental discipline to know something of what social science has done and proposes to do in remedying great social evils as to know something of old heresies dead and buried; to know what prison reform means, as to know all about Entychianism. The furnishing for the Christian ministry would be better beyond a doubt. Indeed, some of our theological institutions have entered upon this work. Reference to the catalogue of one\* shows that provision has been made for a course of lectures on "the relations of Christianity to civilization and *social science*."

Leaving out of view all that has been done on the continent of Europe, especially in Germany and France, toward the scientific study of social problems, the growth of interest in such study here and in England is one of the signs of the times which the Christian ministry cannot afford to ignore. In England the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science was formed in the autumn of 1857. It grew out of a suggestion to "Lord Brougham that he should take the

\*Princeton.