

It is not enough to answer loftily that a divine discontent is a necessary accompaniment of progress, that every man with a high ideal is dissatisfied with his present attainment. There are two kinds of dissatisfaction; one, healthy and optimistic, that of the man who confesses "not that I have already attained, but I press forward," and who is calmly confident that in spite of failures and shortcomings, he is on the right track; and there is another dissatisfaction that is rather hopeless than confident, exasperated rather than calm; a sure sign that something is wrong; and it is this latter kind of dissatisfaction that I shall assume exists among High School and College men, a dissatisfaction which does not believe that things are going quite in the right direction, and that on the whole the Department and its offspring, the schools, are doing as well as might be expected; which declines to put away all doubts and forebodings, and repose serenely confident in the thought, "Our Educational Father is at the helm."

This assumption, I have said, I do not intend to spend any time in proving or supporting. If any one feels disposed to challenge the justice of this assumption, I simply appeal to you yourselves—the College and High School teachers—you who are from the very necessity and nature of the case the sole and final judges whether or not it is a fact that there does exist among you this undesirable unrest and lack of confidence, this dissatisfaction with certain important features in the working of our school system. I do not think the result of such an appeal would be to show that I have but discovered a mare's nest.

Without spending any time then in trying to prove to you that your shoe is pinching, let me at once proceed to state that in my opinion at least a very considerable portion of the pinching has been caused by the excessive

emphasis upon uniformity in our system.

It was at the very beginning of the present régime that the principle of uniformity first made its appearance. When the present Minister came to office some fifteen years ago or so, there were certain problems pressing for solution; three that I remember: the great variety in the requirements for various university and professional matriculation examinations, the school reader muddle, and the university problem. In all these the Minister's solution was in the direction of consolidation and unification. Whether university confederation was the ideal solution of the last-named problem may still be a moot point. But there is no doubt that in the other two matters the Minister took exactly the course he should have taken, and he has ever since displayed a justifiable, if somewhat tiresome, pride in his achievement.

Perhaps because of his success in these matters, at any rate, he has ever since devoutly believed in this principle of uniformity. And so the present régime may be characterized as the apotheosis of unification; dovetailing has been the supreme science of educational government, and, with one exception, that I shall come to later, the Minister is never so happy as when killing at least two birds with one stone. How often in his speeches does he dwell on the one grand system that leads from the kindergarten to the university—"Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" And the *Globe* regards it as the great glory of our school system, the one great object to be kept in view that there shall be no waste from unnecessary duplication. Now, it does not do to exalt any one principle to so dangerous a pre-eminence. To repeat an expression I have already used, this uniformity may be a good servant, but it is a bad master. The Minister apparently