

of vital and far-reaching importance. It has, in truth, been the subject of more attention, of more discussion, and of more controversy, than almost anything else, if we except religion. Fifty years ago there was, speaking broadly, but one system of education; that system which over-fed and over-exercised the mind, and under-fed and under-exercised the body; which translated *educio*, "I cram in facts," not "I draw out faculties;" which tasked the memory and snubbed the reason; which considered mythological fables and correct scanning more important than scientific truths and correct living. To-day there is nearly as much dissent from this old academical orthodoxy as from the old ecclesiastical orthodoxy. On every side we hear of "some new thing" in education; some fresh theory, some sanguine suggestion. We have watched the battle of Classical *versus* Mathematical subside into occasional local light-skirmishing, and have seen it followed by the advance of natural science upon the strongholds of literary and metaphysical culture. We long ago decided against the hot-house mental forcing system, and wrote up as our motto, *mens sana in corpore sano*; it being a question, in England at any rate, whether the reaction has not gone too far in favor of the body. Corporal punishment has been frowned down to a mere gentle reminder of what it once was; and the "tunding" case at Winchester raised, at the time of its occurrence, an energetic discussion of the wisdom of the monitorial and self-governing system among public-school boys. These, together with the numberless other controversies and changes, at which we cannot now even glance, indicate, without doubt, a state of healthy and promising activity; and from out the clash of conflicting theories and systems much good has been and will yet be evolved. This stage of zealous

enquiry and suggestion, although it may, superficially, present an appearance of some confusion, is a great step in advance of the uniformity of stagnation which preceded it. But it is an advance only when considered as a transition stage to another and ultimate uniformity, that of demonstrated and established principles. It is as a means, not as an end, that all this dissent and controversy are valuable; and if they were to lead to nothing definite and settled, they would be the symptoms of a feverish unrest than which even a stationary conservatism would be less hopeless.

Therefore it is well to enquire whether, in all our reforms and among all the changes of late years, we have been indeed advancing, or whether we have been working at random. Have our improvements been made on the patchwork and cobbling system, or have they been carried along the lines of first principles in the endeavor to approximate to a definite ideal? Have we any clear conception of the ends in view? In short, have we settled the one question which underlies and embraces all the rest, whether our educational system is to be empirical or scientific—scientific, that is, not merely in subject-matter, but in its methods and aims?

There is, happily, no doubt that we have not merely patched up the outworn errors of a false system, but have made real and material progress, based upon a general conception of the necessity of adhering to first principles; although there has been a somewhat limited and vague recognition of the actual nature of those principles. Education, perhaps, more than most other subjects, has felt the great scientific influences of the day, and has been pressed forward by them. It has received direct impressions from the liberal educationists whom these influences have produced, and who have done valuable work