

The development of adaptability is, then, an essential even when the character of the environment is largely determined; how much more is it necessary when the environment is almost unknown. Perhaps we may find an example of the greatest lack of broad adaptability in the scholastic education of the middle ages. Largely in the hands of the clergy and bestowed on those who were to enter its ranks, it left almost entirely out of consideration the wider environment of the everyday world. Possibly it was in harmony with the cloistered environment in which it found its headquarters, but with the cares and trials of the outer world it had little to do, the result being that its possessors were, as a class, divorced from mundane affairs, and had little part in human progress. With the Renaissance in the fifteenth century, however, a new factor was introduced, a spirit of self-reliance, an assertion of individuality, a tendency towards personal inquiry and investigation replacing the blind submission to authority which characterised the earlier period. In literature there was a return to the study of the original sources, and science began to assume its modern inductive methods and to profit by the example of such men as Leonardo da Vinci and Francis Bacon. The deductive methods of Greek philosophy were, however, very firmly implanted and the progress of the inductive method was slow; but gradually the cleavage between the two methods became distinct, the literary discipline remaining largely under the dominance of the older deductive and scholastic methods, while the sciences more and more were coming under the influence of the inductive method, which we now recognise as the scientific method.

And wherein does this consist? What is the characteristic of the scientific method? Von Baer in his autobiography defines it as observation, reflection and deduction; it consists in seeing, thinking and drawing a conclusion, three distinct processes, and each without the others more or less futile. To many people science means a process of weighing, measuring and describing, but this is only one of its three factors, that which furnishes the data which are to be studied and compared with others until they lead to some definite conclusion. The mere accumulation of facts is not science, any more than are the most brilliant coruscations of the imagination, or the profoundest meditations. Facts by themselves are of no more value than bricks lying in a confused heap by the roadside. They must be studied, compared and arranged in orderly sequence before they can yield results of value, results which point to further possibilities and so lead to progress.

That is the scientific method: see, think, deduce. But is not that just what we are doing all the time? Perhaps so. Perhaps, like Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who found that all the time he had been talking prose without knowing it, we have been using the scientific method