

EDUCATIONAL REFORM.

CAREFUL students of the history of education have noticed the fact that its reforms swing from extreme to extreme. At one time it will become the fashion to lay great stress on the training of the will. Schools will accordingly become places where children are submitted to semi-mechanical processes of discipline to the neglect of individual insight and ability to think. Gradually the pendulum will swing to the other extreme and discipline will be neglected for the intellectual self-activity of the pupils. At first it is astonishing to see this incompatibility between will-training and intellectual development. Any one would suppose that the better the school as regards obedience to rule, the formation of correct habits and the subordination of selfish inclinations to the good of the institution, the better would be the intellectual progress. "Intellectual development must be based on moral character." It does not seem possible that there can be such a mistake as over-education in the direction of morality and good behavior. And yet it has always happened that schools managed by pronounced disciplinarians become more or less mechanical in their methods of instruction and are prone to encourage verbal memorizing rather than original thought. This, too, is a matter of race.

The protest of the new education against the old education strengthens its cause by an appeal to the scientific method, and to the importance of comprehension and insight over mere verbal memory and parrot repetition. But it gets so far in some of its applications that it develops weak traits of its own. It leaves the children so much to their caprice that they fail to develop what is called character

or moral tone. They are self-indulgent and have to be amused or else do not choose to give their attention. They are great at play but good for nothing at real work. They do not respect the organization of the school in which they are enrolled and they will not respect the social whole in which they grow up. They will pass through life stumbling over themselves—not able to discriminate their idiosyncrasies from their rational aims and purposes or from their moral duties. In the end even their mastery of scientific method will not avail to save them from becoming sour and misanthropic. For they will not be able to combine with their fellow men—they will have no directive power. I do not know of any educational reform so much needed as a theory and practice of education which unites and adjusts these two tendencies—that of the old education toward will-training and that of the new education toward intellectual insight and power of independent thought.

It is the unconscious conviction of the advocates of the older education that character is more important than knowledge. This conviction steels them against the adoption of the good that the new education offers. They see something amiss in the theory of the new education. But they do not realize how fully they could unite what is good in both systems by rigidly confining their mechanical methods to discipline of will training and adopting the methods of the new education for instruction or intellectual education. The disciplinary side would retain its military exactness without harshness, for the pupil would be permitted to understand and appreciate its motives. On the other hand, in his intellectual work