

ECHOES FROM THE CLASS-ROOM—VI.

BY A. H. MORRISON, BRANTFORD COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE.

ON METHODS.

To educate the reason we must proceed after the manner of Socrates. He called himself the midwife of the mind. We must help the reason to come to birth. For this purpose we must use the method of question and answer. It is slow but efficacious. Kant, in his treatise on logic, classifies the methods of teaching under three heads: (1) *acroamatic*, where the professor simply teaches; (2) *erotetic*, where both pupil and teacher ask questions; (3) *catechetical*, where the teacher alone asks questions. It is the second of these which Kant prefers.

THE foregoing extract from Oscar Browning's "Educational Theories" is well worthy the deliberate consideration of the teacher and the student. The teacher, for much of his professional *modus operandi* is involved in the substance of the sentences quoted: the student, for these same sentences are finger-posts on the high road to culture, term synonymous with knowledge; apposite, versatile and exact, together with that refinement of desire and taste, which should ever accompany learning, which should grow with its growth, overlay each successive step in life's ascent, and form the true apex of humanity's manifold being.

It has been too much the rule, I fear, to interpret dogma as infallibility, more especially when that dogma has the countenance of a great name. Trust, which is but another name for faith, is worthy of all praise, but even faith may go too far. The precepts of Mr. Square on the one hand, and of the Rev. Mr. Thwackum on the other, have been, when too rigidly observed, productive of much evil. The first would shackle all senti-

ment in an iron chain of conduct; the second would give the body to the stake and the soul to eternal perdition. We sometimes forget that we too, as individuals, have the privilege of free thought; that we, too, have our reasons stamped with the impress of Nature's great lawgiver, and so, renouncing, for far less than a mess of pottage, the great birthright of our humanity, sell ourselves to the bondage of a name, and fall down to worship the manes of a fallacy. Fielding, speaking of critics and criticisms, says: "The world seems to have embraced a maxim of our law, viz., *cui quique in arte sua perito credendum est*; for it seems, perhaps, difficult to conceive that anyone should have had enough of impudence to lay down dogmatical rules in any art or science without the least foundation. In such cases, therefore, we are apt to conclude, there are sound and good reasons at the bottom, though we are unfortunately not able to see so far." But, I maintain, we should *attempt to see*; then, if reason remain blind, depend upon it, there is some fault in the construction of the lenses through which we peer. As I have before said, it is folly to slight old landmarks. Thoughtless revolutions are to be deployed. But there is such a thing as true reform. And that reform is to be effected, first, by sound study, and afterward by self-reliance and common sense.

There is a medium in all things. It is well to have a sure foundation. But let us first ascertain that it is sure. Then, by all means, let us build rationally, as thoughtful architects of the mind, not as blind copyists, the