

"I shall have to answer that I do not know."

"And won't that be the truth, my dear fellow?"

"The truth or not the truth, it will at least be a confession of ignorance," methinks I hear him reply.

Very well, Mr. Editor, I know how sore it goes against the grain of any of your tribe to be convicted of ignorance on any point of enquiry, and I must not put *you* in a false position, whatever other blunders I may make. No sir, I must keep faith with you at any rate. So here goes for an answer to the first, or rather to the last query,—*Who am I?*

All those of us who are or have been teachers, or are preparing to be such, have had perhaps enough and to spare dinned in our ears about the natural method of imparting instruction. Nature's plan of training is *the* plan, at least so reiterate our educationists of to-day as of fifty years ago, notwithstanding the scepticism that thinks at times to detect a screw loose in nature's method of doing things. And old though I be, even *I* have passed through the mill of the reformers and have been converted. In a word, I am a schoolmaster of the modern school,—that is, if I were still teaching, I would be a teacher of the modern type, I would be a man of the natural method; and, just as the tailor has never been able to disguise the schoolmaster that is in me, after so many years of labor in the school-room, so the natural method, of which I have been a convert ever since my mother showed me what it meant by her example as the first teacher of her children, comes to my assistance in entering upon any new field of experiment. And in writing these, my experiences in life, I must neither shame the schoolmaster in me, nor that method of interesting others which has been of such service to me throughout life. Indeed, if this natural method of imparting instruction to others be what so many of us believe it to be, if it really be the only true method of exciting an interest in any subject, then it behooves me to follow it in arranging these reminiscences of mine; for if I fail to interest my readers, I shall certainly fall far short of success as an author. But what is the natural method as applied to writing books?

"That depends," I think I hear some one say.

"Depends on what, my dear madam?"

"Depends on the kind of book you are going to write."