

the greater part of an extensive programme, this subject must, I think, necessarily suffer, from the inability of the teacher to give undivided attention to it.

WRITING in some schools shows decided improvement, though our schools can never reach a high standard in this respect until greater care is exercised as to posture and the manner of holding the pen in the lower classes: I say the lower classes, because if bad habits are acquired in the earlier stages they will be difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate in the later. Very few schools are exempt from this objection; and it needs only to be present at a writing exercise to be struck by the ungainly and awkward postures assumed by the scholars, with an accompanying incorrectness in the manner of holding the pen. Before a class of young scholars should be allowed to make a letter with the pen there should be very thorough drill in these matters. Whitcombe and Tombs's new series of copy books are now in use throughout the district, and their adoption will, no doubt, facilitate improvement. Early in the year I suggested the use of double-ruled exercise books for the lower classes, and I find a general agreement of opinion as to the beneficial result of the experiment.

ARITHMETIC.—Though the percentage of passes in this subject is lower than last year, this may be attributed more to stricter requirements in the matters of numeration and notation than to any falling-off in the work generally. Indeed, the indications are in the direction of improvement, though not strongly so. A proportion of the questions in Standards I. to IV. were given in words, and strict accuracy in setting down the sums was demanded in all cases. By this means I hope to be able to record in time the absence of difficulty in these matters in Standards III. and IV. In the lower classes the slightest deviation from the most straightforward manner of stating a question is too often a cause of failure. Teachers would find that in blackboard work the introduction of as much variation as possible in the manner of putting sums will be productive of benefit, and have a decidedly sharpening effect. Practice and bills of parcels again present the greatest difficulty to Standard IV. In the former rule there is more accurate working, with an utter absence of anything approaching shortened processes. My questions in this rule were framed with the intention of specially testing the extent to which the scholars had been taught to curtail the work, with the result of showing that such teaching is conspicuous by its absence. For instance, in the following sum, "Find the value of 607 articles at £9 19s. 11½d.," the working would generally run as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
	607	0	0
			9
10/ = $\frac{1}{2}$ of £1	5,463	" 0	" 0
5/ = $\frac{1}{2}$ of 10/	303	" 10	" 0
1/ = $\frac{1}{5}$ of 5/	151	" 15	" 0
1/ = $\frac{1}{5}$ of 5/	30	" 7	" 0
1/ = $\frac{1}{5}$ of 5/	30	" 7	" 0
1/ = $\frac{1}{5}$ of 5/	30	" 7	" 0
1/ = $\frac{1}{5}$ of 5/	30	" 7	" 0
6d. = $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1/	15	" 3	" 6
3d. = $\frac{1}{2}$ of 6d.	7	" 11	" 9
1d. = $\frac{1}{3}$ of 3d.	2	" 10	" 7
1d. = $\frac{1}{3}$ of 3d.	2	" 10	" 7
$\frac{1}{4}$ d. = $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1d.		12	" $7\frac{3}{4}$
$\frac{1}{4}$ d. = $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1d.		12	" $7\frac{3}{4}$
$\frac{1}{4}$ d. = $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1d.		12	" $7\frac{3}{4}$
	£6,069	" 7	" $4\frac{1}{4}$

Answer.

Now, the teacher should not only show how this lengthened process might be considerably reduced, but also the means of working the sum by the method of subtraction.

Farthings.	£	s.	d.
4)607	607	0	0
12)151 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.			10
<u>12 7$\frac{3}{4}$d.</u>		6,070	0 0
		12	$7\frac{3}{4}$
		<u>£6,069</u>	<u>7 4$\frac{1}{4}$</u>

This example was taken from a large class in which the work, on the whole, was very well done; and though it may be considered a rather exaggerated example of the defect, in no one case was the shorter process attempted. The weariness induced by this sort of work, and the consequent distaste for it may probably account for the fact that sums in practice and bills of parcels given in the cards for the Fifth Standard were often badly done or passed over altogether. I have made this special test a feature in all parts of the examination, and I find that those who are presented at extra competitions, and even pupil-teachers, are not free from the tendency to do "round-about papers." I believe it is correct to say that the chief reason urged for the teaching of arithmetic is its indispensibility in connection with commercial pursuits; and therefore it is not too much to expect that our scholars should, on leaving school, be able to perform correctly and quickly the operations connected with the making out of a simple bill of parcels.

All standards were subjected to an oral examination in mental arithmetic with fair results. I adopted this style of examination for the purpose of encouraging teachers to give some portion of