

Truly," or "Your's truly." The letters which closed with "your's struley," "You's Trury," and "Your truthly love" were beyond criticism.

The writing in copy-books is generally good, and in a large number of schools both teachers and pupils take pride in having the exercise-books well kept and the writing and figuring carefully done. The effect of this is seen in the improved appearance of the examination-papers, which are now less seldom open to objection on the score of scribbling and general untidiness.

Notwithstanding the improvement which has been made in the treatment of arithmetic in our schools during the last few years, failures in this subject are still very numerous, though not more so than in spelling and in composition. Every year greater attention is being given to the form in which the sums are set down, and this of itself is a very great aid to accuracy. As a rule, neatness and correctness go together, and with these rapid working is frequently conjoined. The untidy worker—the boy who scribbles down his computations, and is in too great a hurry to put down the explanation of each step as he proceeds—frequently gets into a fog before he is done, and, groping about to find out his position, he finds his time has slipped away, for time never flies faster than when you are working against it on an examination-paper. As a relief from the severe strain of problems in vulgar and decimal fractions, from the puzzling over questions in proportion, stocks, discount, partnership, &c., it would be an excellent thing to give the higher standards an occasional half-hour at simple addition or at addition of money columns. Let the pupils have a fair fight for the first place in accuracy and speed. The boy who is dull enough when problems are to be solved brightens at the prospect of a struggle in which everything is plain and straightforward. Carrying it through with spirit and good-humour, the teacher will find this practice keenly relished by his scholars, and a capital training for them.

In the revised syllabus composition takes rank as a "pass"-subject, grammar, with which it was associated in the old syllabus, being now relegated to the list of "class"-subjects, except in the Fourth Standard, where it still holds its place as a "pass"-subject. The prominence thus given to composition has had the effect of procuring for its teaching a larger share of the teacher's time and attention, and the scholars have had more practice in this subject than they were accustomed to have in former sessions. Considerable improvement was therefore to be looked for in the essays and letters of the scholars, and in the majority of the schools this expectation has been realised. Numerous defects still mar the exercises given in by the pupils, even where the teaching has been efficient, and the instances of really worthless exercises were more common than they might have been if certain of the teachers had taken pains always to prepare themselves for the lessons they were to give, and had been more careful to have all faults in the children's exercises corrected, and the exercises rewritten.

In spite of the flutter of excitement produced by the changes in the drawing regulations, and the despairing attitude assumed by some teachers with regard to the new requirements, a great deal of excellent work has been accomplished by those who set themselves at once to make the best of what every one must admit was no light undertaking. In the majority of the schools the requirements have been fully complied with in Standards I., II., and III.; and in the best-taught classes it was a positive pleasure to see how deftly the little hands manipulated the rulers and set-squares in drawing horizontal lines and vertical lines, angles and triangles, squares and hexagons. The children appeared thoroughly to enjoy this part of their examination; and in the oral questioning on their knowledge of the various figures they eagerly contended with one another for the privilege of answering. In some schools, again, "the fingers were all thumbs"; and the whole business—acute and obtuse angles, isosceles triangles and scalene triangles, diagonals and diameters, segments and sectors—was a confusing puzzle. In the higher standards there was a wide range in the quality and amount of work done in different schools, but on the whole there was good reason to be satisfied with the endeavours of the teachers to comply with the requirements.

"CLASS"-SUBJECTS.—Among the "class"-subjects the highest marks were awarded for geography, which is a "class"-subject in Standards II. and IV., and a "pass"-subject in Standards III., V., and VI. There is great want of intelligence in the treatment of this subject in many schools; and in very few is full advantage taken of the numerous ways and means by which the teacher of capacity and resource can make the geography lesson one of the most instructive and delightful lessons of the day. Grammar, formerly a "pass"-subject, was placed among the "class"-subjects in the revised syllabus. On this account teachers have devoted less time to it; but where it was well taught before no great falling-off in the quality of the analysis and parsing has been strikingly noticeable. In about a dozen schools very good marks were obtained; but there were just as many schools whose marks for grammar were far from satisfactory. The freedom which the revised syllabus allows to teachers in the selection of lessons in history has not so far led to any marked improvement in the appearance made by the children while under examination. The dozen dates stipulated for in the regulations were almost always as well known as the multiplication table; but, strange to tell, some had learned the dates of events which were not included in the selected lessons. They had the date, but nothing more. In every school science and object-lessons were taught; and in many instances the character of the work done was deserving of commendation.

ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS (MARKS 0 to 20).—In every school the children were presented for examination in recitation and in the subject-matter of their reading-lessons, and the average mark obtained was 12 in each subject. Drill was taught in all but six of the schools; but singing had not been taken up at all in about one-third of the schools, and in only ten schools was there any part-singing. For drill and for singing the average mark was 11. In ten schools no sewing was taught, these schools being in charge of men, and the average attendance being below the limit which must be reached before a sewing-mistress is allowed by the Board. The average mark for sewing was 14.

In my report last year attention was directed to the question of irregularity of attendance. An analysis of the quarterly returns discloses no improvement this year. It is so far satisfactory that