

## FIRST LESSONS IN ARITHMETIC.

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IN these days when nearly every county in our Province has its Institute at which the various methods of instruction, in all the branches, are fully and ably discussed by practical men, it seems quite unnecessary to write an article on the above subject, and quite as unnecessary that space should be given to it in *THE EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY*; but when we consider that at our Teachers' Conventions very little time is spent in the consideration of methods of giving introductory lessons—and that it is these lessons that most severely tax the skill and ingenuity of the teacher, I think the *MONTHLY* would do good service in the cause of education, by occasionally publishing plain and practical articles on Primary School Instruction, written by experienced teachers. As it is most important, in a child's education, that we make a right beginning, and lay a proper foundation for the subsequent superstructure, it is the opinion of the best educators that the successful training of the young requires the greatest skill and the ripest experience. We find, however, in our graded schools that the highest teaching talent is given to the advanced classes, and the only qualification required of a teacher of a primary class is the lowest certificate. Such being the case we have no doubt that many a child's education is marred by the blunders and incompetency of his first teacher. With the view, therefore, of being helpful to the inexper-

ieniced teacher placed in charge of junior classes, let me make use of the columns of the *MONTHLY* for the following practical observations on teaching Arithmetic to beginners.

Before commencing the study of Arithmetic as a science, it is essential to the pupil's real progress, that he should be conducted through a course of oral instruction, carried on by means of objects. It is a great mistake that some make in placing text books on this subject into the hands of young children, and of requiring them to pursue the study as it is arranged in these books. The skilful teacher will begin his instructions at a point much further back than that at which authors usually commence their works. The foolish and inexcusable method of making a child commit a rule to memory, and then setting him to work with abstract numbers is rightly condemned by all teachers of any ability, and yet with all the advantages of our Institutes held twice a year, and the great number of professional works to which the teacher has access, this is the method pursued in too many instances. I have seen many teachers give a lesson to young pupils in Addition in the following way. They would first put down a few columns of abstract numbers on the blackboard, tell them to draw a line, show them where to begin, what to put down, what to carry, and all about it, and call this a first lesson in addition. If they had studied out a plan by which the facul-