

To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*

DEAR SIR,

Having recently enjoyed the account by T. M. Flett of a nineteenth century arithmetic exercise book (*Gazette*, 351, p. 18), I was interested to come across a letter written in 1846 by my great-uncle, then a schoolboy of 12 or 13. His arithmetic seems to take over where that described in the previous article stopped. I am curious to know the nature of Alligation, and Single and Double Position; still more, what sort of treatment of Vulgar Fractions was given as a *sequel* to Compound Interest, A.P.'s and G.P.'s?

Although only the second paragraph is relevant mathematically, I transcribe it all for its own interest. I have reproduced the spelling and punctuation as they stand, and only wish I could reproduce too the excellent handwriting of the original.

No. 1 Robert St.,
Higher Temple St.,
Near Ardwick Green.
June 15th 1846

My dear Parents,

Aware that you will naturally expect my improvement to be commensurate with the opportunity which in your affectionate regard for my welfare you have so amply afforded me, I feel anxious that my progress, during the halfyear that is about to terminate, should not disappoint you.

Sensible of the importance of a due improvement of time I have endeavoured to increase my knowledge of English Grammar, Geography, History, and the composition of Letters. In Arithmetic, after finishing Practice, I have passed through Simple Interest, Commission, Brokage, Compound Interest, Discount, Equation of Payments, Barter, Profit and Loss, Partnership, Alligation, Single and Double Position, Exchange, Conjoined Proportion, Arithmetical and Geometrical Progression, Permutation, and now entered upon Vulgar Fractions. The Chronological Chart, which has been done to facilitate my knowledge of English History, I trust will be acceptable.

I have been reminded that youth is the seed time of life which requires persevering labour, and that without this, to expect from it the advantages which it promises in future years, would be as absurd as for the husbandman to expect an abundant harvest, who in spring neglects to plough and sow his ground. Impressed by this sentiment I hope I have acted to some degree under its influence, therefore, venture to hope that the above statement will prove satisfactory to you, if so, I shall feel highly gratified, and be encouraged to recommence my studies after the Vacation with renewed determination.

I am, my dear Parents,
Your affectionate Son,
R. G. Hartley.

Yours etc., MARY HARTLEY

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Legon, Ghana*