

# THE CANADIAN PHONETIC PIONEER,

A Monthly Journal, Devoted to the Spread of the Writing, Printing, and Spelling Reform.

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["Had this art (Phonography) been known forty years ago, it would have saved me twenty years hard labor."—Hon. Tho's H. Barton]

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## Phonography in England.

Our phonetic friends across the Atlantic seem to be in trouble. The cause of it we will briefly explain. Mr ISAAC PITMAN, the original inventor of Phonography, to whom we all owe such a debt of gratitude, has an original way, or rather, a way of his own of promulgating the Reform; and when he conceives an idea, however impracticable or unwise it may happen to be, the remonstrance of older and wiser heads, be they as the sands upon the sea shore for multitude, and as the prayer at Gethsemane for earnestness, are of not the slightest avail. Great as is the boon which has been conferred upon the world by Isaac Pitman, it is now becoming a universally prevalent opinion among those who are acquainted with the facts, that the subsequent course pursued by that gentleman has retarded the advancement of the Phonetic Reform more than any opposition with which it has met. Out-and-out opposition of the phonetic principle is susceptible of being easily met and triumphantly overcome, but contention and wrangling about the details of the system by its leading men, is apt to frighten the public out of having anything to do with it. We have never heard of a disagreement of any moment of which Mr. Isaac Pitman was not the originator. It seems quite impossible for him to let well enough alone, no matter what the consequences of not doing so may be. We shall not now go into the whole history of his innovations, and the sacrifices of time and means he has made in carrying them out to the detriment of the cause, only to abandon them after demonstrating to his entire satisfaction what his friends, one and all, had told him would be the result in time. His last innovation is the reversing the order of the dot vowels. Instead of I-EX I-AY I-AH, and I-E-K-I-A-I, Isaac Pitman prints I-AH I-AY I-EX, and A-I E-I I-I. The advanced phonographer will see that this change effects the system very materially. Not only must the reading and writing of the dot vowels be reversed in the Corresponding style, but all the

dot-vowel word-signs in the Reporting style that are now written above must be written below, and those that are now written below must be written above. As was to be expected, the announcement of these changes, by their author, was followed by an expression of disapprobation from almost all parts of the phonographic world. Nevertheless Isaac Pitman went on to print and circulate new editions of his Instruction Books, and Phonographic Vocabulary, suppressing the remaining copies of the old editions, so that none can now be obtained. His friends remonstrated with him and proposed to take an expression of the opinion of the Phonographers of Great Britain upon the subject and leave the decision of the matter with them. They met with the usual success. Isaac Pitman would have his own way, and would do what he liked with his own invention, forgetting that others had now a large interest and stake in the cause as well as himself.—The leading Phonographers however, resolved on taking a vote for their own satisfaction, hoping that an overwhelming majority of the oldest and best friends of the Reform might have some weight with Mr. Pitman.—The vote has been taken, and in a pamphlet before us, from the "Examiner" office, we have the result, including the name, residence and phonographic standing of each voter. The figures standing in favor of the innovation, 119. Against it, 618. Majority for the standard system, 529. The phonographic age of the voters vary from a few months to twenty years. The oldest phonographer on the list is Mr. Henry Pitman (Isaac did not vote) of twenty years' standing, who, with his and Isaac's father, voted against the innovation. Along with them also we find the names of the editors of all the phonographic periodicals in the kingdom, except the "Correspondent," which is edited and published by Isaac Pitman himself. Whether this expression of opinion will have the slightest influence upon the mind of Isaac Pitman or not we would scarcely presume to say. We fear however that it will not. Isaac Pitman has

now had his new set of Instruction books in the market for some months, and his are the only works of the kind issued in Great Britain. More than this, he has recently obtained a copy-right of Phonography, and now forbids, with the mandate of the law, the publishing of any books or works in phonographic characters that do not suit him. This being the case, we are inclined to the opinion that the editors of the other English phonographic Magazines had better beware lest their opposition to the new vowel scheme brings down upon those periodicals the proscription of the author of the system in which they are printed. With a copy-right of the system in his hands, we do not see but that the inventor of Phonography can bid defiance, if he has resolved upon so doing, to the taking of a vote, or to the strongest remonstrances of the most intimate friends.

Here, in America and in Canada, we have no such trouble as that which, at the present moment, so strongly agitates the minds of our English brethren. Happily we are entirely independent of the caprice of Isaac Pitman, for we have, published in the United States, a more complete and beautiful set of Instruction Books than Isaac Pitman ever did or, we might add, ever will produce. It might be truly called a new era in the phonographic cause when Bonn Pitman—a younger brother of the author of the system—came to the United States and commenced the publication of Phonographic works from STONE ENGRAVING. Besides the very extensive list of works published by Bonn Pitman, there are three other publishers of standard phonographic works, viz: Messrs Longley, of Cincinnati, who publish the "American Manual of Phonography;" Messrs Fowler & Wells, of New York, who publish Webster's Teacher, and Andrew J. Graham of New York, publisher of the "Hand-book of Standard Phonography," and lately publisher of the "Universal Phonographer"—a large-sized monthly Magazine, from stone engraving. It is scarcely necessary to say that these publishers repudiate the change attempted to be made by Isaac Pitman, for the simple reason, mainly, that it will break up the beautiful order that now exists in the formation of the vowels by the mouth. As an instance of Bonn Pitman's want of faith in the ultimate triumph of his brother's latest innovation, we might remark that he keeps his graver still more busy than ever in the production of new books, to supply the great and increasing demand for reading in the phonographic system.