

get up clubs and canvass for subscriptions. An alteration in the "attachment,"—twisting a screw, for instance,—would translate a speech spoken in French into the best of English, while the shifting of a lever would turn on the poetry spout, and the novel sight might be witnessed of Jones' stump speech on the corruption of the other party appearing in the next day's issue of the paper in the finest of blank verse, and all this without the interference of human hand or brain! In fact the more the subject is considered, the more extensive does the field for improvement appear, and our only astonishment is that it has not been occupied long ago. We do not care to take up the role of a prophet, but we venture to predict the present style of flesh-and-blood reporting will be superseded by machinery before—well, say the 31st of February, 3010.

STARTING IN LITERARY LIFE.

(From the *Phonographic Meteor*.)

IT has been suggested that an article on "Starting in Literary Life" would find many attentive readers. Let us at once say that we do not feel capable of doing justice to such a theme. It is impossible to codify the laws that govern individuals, and advice to persons seeking literary reputation, whether given by us or by others, could not and cannot be relied upon. The doctrine of chance enters so largely into the question that there is a great difficulty in the way of following general counsel. Particular cases require different consideration. In a given instance, one might tell another how to act, but no chart can be laid down to guide a literary explorer, who must discover and do battle with the snags and quicksands that lie athwart his course as well as may be. There is no royal road to success in authorship. Success sometimes comes in a sudden and bewildering manner; but more frequently it has been sought in a way that is heart wearing and tortuous. Consider how long it took Thackeray to win even recognition as an established author! As often as not, the pre-

tentious writer is as successful as the most genuine artist in words. As a personal accomplishment it is desirable that all young men who aim at self-culture should know how to deliver themselves after the literary manner, but it is another matter when incapacity tries to force itself unduly into notice, and takes to book-making. This sort of thing saps the foundation on which legitimate authorship rests. Genius will always find a way for itself by virtue of its inherent force; the lower faculty, talent, wants more or less adventitious help in the shape of generous encouragement to enable it to fructify. Public opinion will, in the long run, discern whether a man is possessed of talent or not, and with the knowledge that now obtains will soon snuff out the paste and scissors thing, while appreciating more generously the man who *creates*. But, after all, were we seriously asked by anyone in whom we were specially interested as to the advisability of entering the lists of literature, we think we could not do better than give him *Punch's* laconic advice "to persons about to marry." We have frequently heard the reportorial profession—and it is a profession—run down as being unworthy of the consideration of a man with brains equivalent to his ambition. That the duties of a reporter are frequently of a most difficult kind there can be no question, but that, as we have seen it stated, the reporter is a mere machine, and only in very exceptional cases has a chance of developing himself, no one who knows anything about newspapers will believe for a moment. Had we space we might explode the foolish fallacy with voluming evidence. The profession reportorial is unquestionably an honorable one. It has been honored, and, as it seems to us, ennobled, by one of the greatest men of the century, a man who should be an inspiration and an example to every individual member of the newspaper office. Charles Dickens was a reporter, and his struggles with the stenographic art, an acquaintance with which is so essential in the reportorial calling, are duly recorded in a certain book called "David Copperfield." Let us hear no more condemnations of this absurd character.

Editorial Notes.



Capt. E. G. Hall, an accomplished Graham writer, died at Salamanca, N. Y. on the 29th of March last.

We call the attention of Canadian readers to the letter of Mr. Dan Brown, extending an invitation to the forthcoming convention to be held in Chicago. We shall be pleased to give space in our columns to any wishing to communicate their views on this important subject.

Not a few young American lawyers combine Court reporting with the practice of their profession.

The Legislature of Indiana has decided that Shorthand reporters are to be appointed in the Circuit Courts only, the remuneration to be \$10 a day.

The work of moving into our new premises (of which a cut is given in our lithographed pages) has unavoidably delayed the issue of this number of the *SHORTHAND WRITER*. Arrangements have been made, however, for the regular appearance of the magazine on the 15th of each month hereafter.