

Shorthand, and yet as legible as Longhand, is supplied in Phonography, the invention of Mr. Isaac Pitman, of Bath. It is already used by many thousand persons in this country and in America, with perfect fearlessness for all the common purposes of writing,—for correspondence, in book keeping, for writing sermons, essays, etc. that are to be read in public, and for reporting the proceedings of law courts and legislative assemblies. It is a system of Phonetic Shorthand, as rapid and as intelligible as speech itself; of which it is, as used in correspondence, an exact picture; and as used in verbatim reporting, a perfect and intelligible outline. Phonography is based upon a correct and practical analysis of spoken language, and represents words as they are really pronounced. There is every reason to believe that, in the course of time, it will entirely supersede Longhand, except in legal documents, titles of manuscript books, headings of chapters and pages, leading words in written indexes, addresses of letters, and parcels, etc.; where the bold appearance of Longhand, in comparison with Shorthand, affords greater facilities for reference. The following facts may be taken as indications of the future general adoption of Phonography:—No one who is practically acquainted with the system, ever thinks of employing Longhand when writing to a person who has a knowledge of the Phonetic Shorthand alphabet. The alphabet of the system, and the ability to read it, may be acquired in three or four hours' study. The ability to write Phonography at the rate of twenty words per minute,—the average rate at which Longhand is written,—may be acquired by any one who can already write Longhand, in one month, by practising from half an hour to an hour per day. By continued practice, increased facility is attained, and in six months the student of the art is able to report a slow speaker verbatim, at the rate of a hundred words per minute. One or two months' additional practice will enable him to write at the average rate of public speaking, which is one hundred and twenty words per minute.

From the Illinois Teacher.

**Phonetic Instruction on Trial.**

All who are interested in inquiring into the true merits of phonetic teaching as a means of introduction to our literature in its present dress, will be interested in the following letter from the Superintendent of Public Schools in Syracuse, N.Y.

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION,  
SYRACUSE, November 26, 1858.

Mr. JNO F. BROOKS—Dear Sir; Your letter of the 23rd inst. is before me. It is with pleasure I reply to your inquiries.

One year ago the Board of Education was induced to make an experiment designed to test the merits of the phonetic system in teaching children the first principles of reading. For this purpose three classes were supplied with Longley's Phonetic Cards and Primer. The experiment was so far a success as to influence the Board to adopt the system for all the primary departments. Children on entering the school are required to spend the first year in learning to read Phonotypy. In this time we take them through the Primer and

First Reader (Longley's), using the cards during the whole course. We then put them to reading and spelling in a Second Reader of ordinary print, requiring, however, all words to be analyzed by sounds as well as spelled by letters.

We meet with some difficulties. One of the greatest is, not having teachers who understand the system and the proper modes of applying it; another is, the prejudice of the community. To remedy the first, we put our best female teachers in the primary departments, and pay them the highest wages. These teachers, with a few exceptions, have used a commendable degree of industry in qualifying themselves to teach the system successfully, and have accomplished this to as great an extent as we could reasonably expect. If the system is pursued another year, we shall look for much more favorable results than we have yet seen; though the results already attained are much more desirable than those accomplished by the old method of instruction.

To overcome the second difficulty mentioned, the Board purchased the books and furnished the classes with them free of charge, and prevented the children from taking them home until they were sufficiently advanced to read them. In this manner we have avoided coming in contact with the popular prejudices in a remarkable degree. When intelligent parents have witnessed the results of the system in their own children, they have invariably become its warmest advocates.

We have not used the system in all our schools long enough to test its merits in every particular as to its general workings, and only one of the experimental classes has been kept together. The results, however, in this class, I consider a fair example of the workings of the system. The children composing this class were those who entered the school for the first time, most of them not knowing their letters. A few had been taught the alphabet, but this proved rather an hindrance than an advantage. The parentage of the children was the same as that found in most of our schools—a mixture of American, German and Irish. The pupils were taken as they were sent in, with a view to give the system a fair test. The teacher was young, with only one year's experience—an assistant in the primary department. She knew nothing of the system as a means of teaching children to read; hence she had everything to learn as she advanced with the class. She however brought to the work good natural powers, very well cultivated by study, and a commendable degree of earnestness. She had no difficulty in taking the class thoroughly over the Primer and First Reader in the course of the year.

We now came to the point where we expected difficulty. The question was seriously asked, "How shall we make the transition from the Phonetic to the ordinary print?" It was at first determined to use a Transition Reader. By corresponding with the Rev. Thomas Hill, of Waltham, Mass., who has spent much thought on this subject, and who has tried the experiment in the schools of his place of residence, we were assured that such a reader was not necessary. We then put *Webb's Second Reader* into the hands of the class. We have used the reader for years in our schools. The first two weeks removed all our anxiety and the difficulty in the way of transition. The

class took up the book as if they had been familiar with it, and required much less special instruction than other classes advanced to the same point in the usual method. The only instruction required of the teacher was to give the powers of combination in letters with which they were not acquainted. These they readily learned, and soon became as fluent readers in the ordinary type as in that in which they had been taught.

Our anxiety was now in regard to spelling. This, too, was speedily removed, for the phonetic class were very soon the best spellers of their age in the school. The very irregularities of the Romanic orthography seemed to aid them in learning to spell. With these points settled favorably, we considered the experiment a perfect success.

The following is a summary of some of the results of the experience in this class:

- 1st. A distinctness of articulation never before obtained. This is so marked and uniform that the most delicate ear will find it difficult to determine the nationality of the pupil by any peculiarity of accent.
- 2d. Independence in getting out the pronunciation of new words.
- 3rd. A rational and practical knowledge of the relation of letters to words.
- 4th. An increased facility in learning to spell. To this might be added. An increased activity of mind, induced in the child by the fact that every step of the process by which he has learned to read has been intelligible to himself.

I was induced to bring this class before our Teacher's Association at last meeting. The examination then had showed conclusively the foregoing results. Wishing to subject the class to the severest test possible, I, without the knowledge of the teacher, procured another Reader and put it into the hands of the class. It proved to be much more difficult than the one they were using, and the class never saw the book until it was put in their hands. I expected a failure, but was most agreeably disappointed, for every member of the class was able to read the first piece opened to with a distinctness of utterance and a propriety of pronunciation which might well be imitated by most teachers.

I have already been more lengthy than I intended. But I hope our success, imperfect as it is, may encourage others to adopt the system. I have not attempted to advance opinions or theories in this matter, but to give the practical workings of the system so far as we have tried it.

I remain yours very truly,  
GEO. L. FARNHAM, Superintendent.

PHONETIC ASSOCIATION.—A list of the new members of the Association should have appeared in the present No., but we have now not space sufficient. See next issue.

TERMS OF THE PIONEER.—For one copy one year, 25 cents. For six copies to different addresses \$1.00. For seven to one address \$1.00. For thirteen to different addresses, \$2.00. For sixteen to one address, \$2.00. For fifty to one address, \$5.00.

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THE TEACHER.—A book of directions to persons wishing to become Phonographic Teachers; written and printed in the Corresponding Style.—Price, \$1.16.