

examination will convince most people that the test will be thorough and searching, and that the certificate can only pass into the possession of those who really deserve it.

"Examiner—Mr. Frederick Pitman.

"1. A member of the local board will be asked to read to the candidates in a distinct manner a passage containing about 150 words, of a historical character; the first portion of the matter to be read at the rate of 50 words per minute, and the second at the rate of 120 words per minute.

"2. He will then read a portion of about a similar length on a scientific subject; in this case likewise reading the first part at 50 and the second part at 120 words a minute.

"3. Lastly, he will read a paragraph from a badly composed and confused speech, at the rate of 150 words a minute.

"4. These passages will be prepared by the examiner, and be forwarded to the secretary of each local board.

"5. All these passages to be forthwith written out in longhand, and given to the member of the local board, who will note on the paper of each candidate the time occupied in taking down and transcribing each passage. In writing out the confused paragraph it is expected that the candidates will, to the best of their ability, put the language into proper form.

"6. The rude shorthand notes must be given up with the transcript. Paper of post 8vo size—about 7 inches by 4½ inches—should be used, both for the shorthand and the longhand transcript, the writing being on one side only. The shorthand should be written upon paper ruled with double or single lines; the transcript should be made on unruled paper of the same size. It is preferred that both the notes and the transcript should be written in ink. It is also desirable that the examination papers should be arranged in the following manner:—The three shorthand papers of each competitor should follow each other in the order in which they are read, and the three corresponding longhand papers to follow in the same order—the six portions being fastened together.

"7. The examination will involve the following points:—Rapidity in taking down from dictation; rapidity in transcribing into longhand what has been taken down; accuracy in the transcription.

"It will be seen that the candidates must cover 150 words a minute, which, taking into consideration the probability of excitement, etc., means that a man must be equal to 160 or 170 words a minute under ordinary circumstances. A great many boast of high speeds, and talk of 150 as mere child's play, but we are of opinion that the most astounding statistics that could be published of interest to phonographers would be a list of men who can really do an honest average of 150. Even including our professional brethren outside of shorthand writers pure and simple who are constantly doing nothing but verbatim work, we don't believe one person could be found to show a fair average

speed of 150 words a minute for half an hour, out of those who have professedly 'gone in' for speed."

PHONOGRAPHIC FACTS AND FANCIES.

ISAAC PITMAN AND THE CORRESPONDING STYLE—
A COSMOPOLITAN JOURNAL.

It cannot have escaped the notice of the most unobservant with what persistency the phonographic publications of Isaac Pitman are thrust on the American market, and that, too, even in these times of cheap literature; at ridiculously low rates. This is no mere money speculation. Mr. Pitman, I take it, is firm in the belief that his present form of writing is the most perfect of its kind, and is naturally anxious to see its general adoption to the exclusion of others that deviate, in his view, from the paths of rectitude. Coupled with this is the old and pleasant dream—but still a dream—of the ultimate triumph of the "corresponding style" in its race with longhand. It were a kindness to seek to disabuse the mind of Mr. Pitman and the more zealous of his followers of such erroneous notions. Of the many modifications of phonography in use in America there is no single one, nor is there likely to be one, of such distinguished merit as to deserve universal patronage; and it is fortunate, in some respects, that such is the case. A monopoly of phonographic copyright would be as distasteful here as the existence of a privileged class or an established church. Honor enough for Mr. Pitman that the lineaments of his original invention are plainly discernible in all our leading styles or forms of phonography.

With due respect to our noble leader, whom none can hold in greater esteem than the writer, it seems to me that, in connection with phonography, there has been too much conservative bondage from first to last. What is it but a *tool*, the prospective life-long user of which should have the right to lubricate, sharpen or remodel to his heart's content? Why should not phonographers be accorded the same elbow room as neighboring skilful farmers, who, each in his own way, by apparently diverse methods, is able at the year's end to show equally handsome returns? All our "systems" are good enough for reporters' use, and any one of them is good enough as a ground work on which to make one's own amendments. Granted that "shorthanders" in general are not competent to judge of the quality of phonographic improvements, and that rapid writers rarely make changes either for better or worse, still some are found in both classes who adhere with profit to the maxim; "Prove all things and hold fast to that which is good."

A *liberal* magazine will tolerate all styles of phonography as far as the length of the tether will admit; the lovers of a *cosmopolitan* journal should go a step further, and when called