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Biographical Sketch of the Eminent Phonetician, Author and Inventor.

THIS distinguished phonetician, whose original researches and publications have done more than those of any other author to place on a scientific basis the study of the art of speech, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on the 1st of March, 1819. He is the second son of the late Alexander Bell, Professor of Elocution, London; and, having shewn special aptitude, he settled in London, in 1834, as his father's assistant, and had thus the opportunity of special training and practice in the cure of stammering and other forms of impeded utterance, as well as in imparting the principles of elocution to extensive classes in the great metropolis of England. Mr. Melville Bell removed to Edinburgh in 1843—Prof. D. C. Bell, his elder brother, having, in the meantime, settled in Dublin—so that the Messrs. Bell, father and sons, were simultaneously acknowledged as the chief instructors in their peculiar art in the capitals of England, Scotland and Ireland. Mr. Melville Bell's success in Edinburgh was not only brilliant but steady; and, for more than twenty years, he enjoyed the highest reputation as teacher, lecturer and author, filling the important position of Professor of Elocution in the rival colleges of modern Athens, and gaining such special celebrity in the removal of stammering, that pupils attended him from all parts of the world.

In 1854 he published his system of stenography, and for the "new principle" therein developed, of showing the *position* of the vowels without requiring their notation—a principle which may be advantageously introduced into many systems of phonography—he was awarded the silver medal of the Royal Scottish Society of Arts. Professor Melville Bell's Phonetic Alphabet has the peculiar advantages of uniformity and philosophical accuracy; so that it is more rapidly written, and more easily read, than many of the rival sys-

tems. It may be accepted as an undoubted fact that, had not the engrossing nature of his professional duties and private studies prevented, he might have been enabled to popularize his steno-phonography, and to secure its general adoption. But his projects extended beyond this narrow limit.

On his father's death, in 1855, Professor A. M. Bell removed to London, where he was appointed Lecturer on Elocution in University College. For nearly thirty years he had been laboriously engaged in perfecting his system of Universal Phonetics, and in 1867 it was published under the name of "Visible Speech." By this remarkably simple system, it is possible to note down, and consequently to reproduce, every variety or shade of sound or of articulation which the human organs can by any possibility form. On account of the *universality* of the system, its author asked for the assistance of the British Government, that it might be made a free gift to the world at large; but Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister of the day, while admiring the invention, was not disposed to assist the inventor. Professor M. Bell, therefore, in 1868, paid his first visit to America, where he was most warmly received; and, in three successive years, had the distinguished honor of delivering three courses of lectures and readings in the Lowell Institute, of Boston—the great centre of American literary activity.

Professor Melville Bell's fame will henceforth rest chiefly on his "Visible Speech," which is now largely employed in the instruction* of foreigners in English, as well as in the dissemination of every variety of spoken language. Especially in India, in China, and in Japan, as well as in Africa and America, it is largely employed by the missionaries of the various Christian churches. But the most valued *home-use* of the Visible Speech Symbols, (which, we may add, are extremely simple and strictly phonetic,) is in the instruction of the deaf and dumb, enabling them to read, to write, and to speak with remarkable distinctness and accuracy. This development of the system is due to the ingenious labors of Mr. Bell's only surviving son