

THE MICHELA STENOGRAPHIC MACHINE.

FROM the *Magazine Fur Stenographie*, of Berlin, we translate the following interesting account of the Michela Stenographic Machine to which we alluded briefly in a recent number of the WRITER:—

The apparatus is enclosed in a small case 40 c.m. long, 25 c.m. wide and 5 c.m. high, and is fixed on three feet which are fastened to the lower part, and are easily removed.

To secure speech each syllable must be reproduced with one touch. To this end the ten fingers of the performer are applied on the keyboard, which resembles that of a piano and has likewise black and white keys. As each finger can at the same time touch two keys, a white and a black, without moving the hand, it is obvious that the performer makes with each movement of the hand over twenty signs. Each uttered syllable is reproduced by a touch of from one to ten keys, according to the length of the syllable. The keys touched work through levers upon a line of pins which are placed in the middle of the apparatus vertically before a strip of paper which rolls itself up alongside the line of keys. The pins, which are moved upward by the keys, touch a strip of paper and press marks upon it which are distinguished one from another by form and position. The impress of these marks is effected either dry or with ink. In the latter case a second strip of paper, which is penetrated by ink, is employed, which unrolls itself with the first strip of paper and passes between the pins and the strip of paper which is destined to receive the marks, and touches those places with ink which are marked by the pins. After each movement the keys which have been played upon, or touched, work in rising upon a small toothed wheel which moves forward a tooth, and by means of a roller passes the strip of paper further on. The syllables are thus written, one underneath the other, and are read as is common writing.

With the apparatus by Gensoul, which was formerly used, for a sentence one-and-a-half lines, a strip of one metre in length or more was required, but with this machine by a strip of only one decimetre a pretty long sentence can be secured. The reading presents no difficulty whatever; fourteen days are sufficient to get proficiency therein. At a trial in Paris of this machine a lady (Miss Guillio), who played the apparatus, understood French very imperfectly. The trial commenced with a speech on railways by Mr. Michela, which was delivered very rapidly. This was rendered by Miss Guillio without difficulty at once. Afterwards Mr. Pierre read a page of the Official reports of the Chamber of Deputies, after which President Gambetta made accompanying remarks in Latin. At last the President himself spoke and tried to cause an interruption from the public, but he did not succeed on account of the general attentiveness of the hearers. Miss Guillio, in spite of her slight knowledge of the language, rendered the

dictates with remarkable correctness. As she did not understand many words of the language, she read badly and divided the board, and caused from the beginning and ending of the divided words remarkably comical syllabic combinations, but the exactness was notwithstanding complete, and the trial was the more successful, as the intelligence of the lady in no wise could have replaced omissions in the writing. At the present time the practical question of introducing this machine into Parliament is under consideration. Whether sufficient performers can be secured to give the matter study remains to be seen. An illustration of the apparatus is given on page 26.

PHONOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGES.

(A TORONTO MERCHANT.)

SO rapid has been the progress of phonography since its birth that to-day it is used in every part of the civilised world. And why should it not be so? That it is so is amply proven by the interest manifested in it by all nations. From the ice-bound regions of the north to the sunny south, from the glowing east to the ruddy west, and no matter where you wish to travel you will find the beautiful art in constant use. While we naturally bestow our thankfulness and gratitude upon Mr. Isaac Pitman, "the inventor or father of phonography," as he is sometimes called, yet a great deal is due, and justly so, to Mr. Andrew J. Graham, James E. Munson, Benn Pitman, Scovil and many other pioneers who have labored hard to bring phonography up to its present state of perfection. By phonography it is possible to report the most rapid speakers. Were it not for that the particulars of our parliamentary proceedings and debates would be very meagre and uninteresting. The reporter goes to the Parliament, takes down the speech or speeches, and immediately wends his way to the telegraph office and despatches it at once to the newspaper, and the next morning the people can read in full all that has taken place on the previous day. Now, without the aid of shorthand it would be impossible to do this. In olden times, according to Mr. Pitman, the newspaper was issued at uncertain intervals, no doubt due to the delay occasioned in obtaining reports for publication. But phonography does not confine itself wholly to the Editor's sanctum. It is used extensively in our law offices, railway offices, wholesale establishments and other places of business where writing forms a great part of the business. The clergyman in his library, the author in his study, the teacher at school, all know its value. The lawyer, merchant or secretary can dictate his letters to a correspondent, who in turn writes them out in longhand to be signed, and then they are ready for the mail. In this way many letters are answered which would otherwise be overlooked. I say then for this reason that it is invaluable to the merchant, and all who have occasion to use it.