

made a serious error. My advice to all disciples of the noble art is to continue in their present positions if they are in any way lucrative, and not leave them to come here, where it is very uncertain they may secure employment, as at present the country is not in demand for the shorthand fraternity. A. B.

[NOTE.—Everything is "booming" and "buzzing" in the North-West, and shorthand writers have hard work. Mr. Perkins, who left Toronto and took a position on the press in Winnipeg, is about to return to this city, unable to stand the pressure.—ED. C. S. W.]

REPORTING FOREIGN LANGUAGES.

EDITOR WRITER,—In your July issue, you characterize the report of Carl Schurz's speech in Boston a "great feat" because, though delivered in German, the speech was simultaneously translated and reported in English. You add that you "believe the French reporters in the gallery of Ottawa perform a similar marvel with the English speeches." It should be remembered, however, that the reports of the Parliamentary debates published in the French newspapers are merely synoptical, and therefore there is no marvel in that performance, for it is no more difficult than summarizing a French speech in English longhand.

There is, however, one reporter in Canada who, during his connection with *Hansard*, invariably reported in English the speeches delivered by members of the House of Commons in French. I refer to Mr. John A. Lumsden. The translation was instantaneous, and the notes, which were *verbatim*, were written in the English form. I believe Mr. George Holland does something of the same kind in the Senate.

Yours truly,

THOS. JNO. RICHARDSON,

*Ex-Contractor for House of Commons
Ottawa, Ont.*

"*Hansard*."

THE RELATION OF THE SYSTEMS.

EDITOR WRITER,—It seems to me you might do your young enquirers a service by explaining what "Benn Pitman's system" really is, and why it is so popular. It is nothing more nor less than Isaac Pitman's discarded ninth edition. When the tenth edition appeared, Mr. Benn Pitman and a majority of phonographers on this side refused to follow the old leader on account of the change in the vowel scale, and they have had the vantage ground and have very naturally more than held their own. Benn Pitman's and Graham's approximate so closely to each other that any one who can read the one can decipher the other. "X."

[ED. NOTE.—Surely the Millennium will soon arrive in the phonographic world. Benn's is Isaac's system; Graham's is nearly like Benn's (or, as Mr. Graham would put it, Benn's is very similar to Graham's); and another cor-

respondent—a Munson writer—tells us he can easily read Isaac's, though he never paid any attention to it or any other except Munson's. Surely we be all brethren! Isn't there a poet among us who can celebrate the coming jubilee in respectable verse? *Cosmopolitan* for ever!]

MR. CRAWFORD'S FAMOUS FEAT.

EDITOR SHORTHAND WRITER,—You ask what your readers have to say to the assertion that Mr. Crawford took evidence at the rate of 160 words a minute for five consecutive hours, the usual delays being included in that time. Mr. Editor, I have nothing to say to it; such a statement speaks for itself. N. S.

[ED. NOTE.—Mr. Crawford has given us the reference to date on which the evidence in question was taken, and we intend to secure a copy of the transcript, which is now being made, with a view of verifying the statement.

ORIGIN OF MODERN SHORTHAND SIGNS

BY EDWARD POCKNELL.

I have met with many Shorthand writers who have inquired the origin of the signs or marks now in use in modern Shorthand systems, but with few who could answer such questions with any degree of accuracy. The Shorthand historians have naturally judged the systems of authors as a whole, and have therefore not descended into minute detail, so that many questions of interest as to where certain signs originated cannot be solved by a mere reference to those histories. The young writers of the past twenty-five years appear, as a rule, to think that the signs they daily use were invented during this century, and have no hesitation in ascribing them to living persons. Thin and thick strokes and curves, half-length and double-length characters, are believed by many, as an article of faith, to have been unknown forty-five years ago; while combined consonant characters (dissimilar from the joined simple characters) are regarded as of equally late origin. Those who hold such opinions must be prepared to abandon them; for in pursuing a careful investigation into the chief of the older systems between 1602 and the present date, I have met, sooner or later, with all the main principles, characters, and devices which go to make up modern Shorthand. The results are too voluminous to give in full as an appendix to a new system; but I can give "chapter and verse" for the following statements:—

The use of two sizes of characters I have traced back to 1602, a year to be remembered by all Shorthand writers, when John Willis published his small but remarkable treatise on the Art, which contains many of the leading principles adopted in all systems to the present day. Willis used dot-vowels in position against his characters, in the way familiar to the wri-