

THE CANADIAN PHONETIC PIONEER,

A Monthly Journal, Devoted to the Spread of the Writing, Printing, and Spelling Reform.

William W. Orr,

[“Had this art (Phonography) been known forty years ago, it would have saved me twenty years hard labor.”—*Hon. Tho's H. Denton.*]

Publisher.

VOLUME I.

OSHAWA, C. W., AUGUST, 1858.

NUMBER II.

Correction.

In the hurry of getting out the first number of the PIONEER, it was dated “JUNE” instead of “JULY.” The error was not discovered until several hundreds had been worked off and folded. Those of our subscribers who have been expecting the July number along some weeks ago, will see in this a sufficient explanation of the cause of their disappointment.

A Word to Friends of the Reform.

We wish to say to the friends of the PHONETIC PIONEER that its prospects are not of the most cheering nature; and it will depend upon those who take an interest in Phonetic matters to say whether we shall be obliged to submit to a loss which we cannot very well afford to sustain, in carrying into execution the work we have undertaken. Some of our friends have done well, and many lovers of Phonography, totally unknown to us, have cheered and aided us in our work by their sympathies and by ordering a number of copies at the club rates. Notwithstanding, however, that we have, so far, circulated nearly twenty thousand copies of the first number throughout the Province, at great expense, we have not yet received one hundred subscribers, and nothing but our promise to go on, and the hope that each passing week will bring us largely increased lists, keeps us from abandoning the task. We commenced the work without expecting any very large amount of support, or that we would not have to spend twenty or thirty dollars in the enterprise above all receipts, but when, as at present, we shall have to go to treble or quadruple that expense, with no other reward than the consciousness of having done something to benefit our fellow men, we think we have a very good plea for calling upon the friends of the reform, throughout the country, to assume a portion of our pecuniary burden, and share with us the gratification of doing something to aid in the dissemination of phonetic knowledge. We do not ask assistance for ourself, for we can make a living as well as other people, but we ask support to the cause we are endeavoring to promote—the cause of phonetic education. Our aim is to call such a degree of attention to the subject of phonography and phonetic spelling, as to cause their early introduction into all the colleges and grammar and common schools of our land. No more effectual way of accomplishing this presented itself to our mind than the publishing a journal which could be strowed over

the Province by thousands, causing many to go to work to acquire the art of writing short-hand for themselves—thus preparing them to use their influence in their localities for its introduction into their halls of learning. We are pleased to learn that efforts have been commenced, with this view, in several localities, since our first issue, and that phonography is now taught, in different sections of the country, by common school teachers, on their own account, to many of their pupils. We know of others who are qualifying themselves to follow so good an example, and trust it will not be long ere every school-teacher in the land will fit himself for becoming thus practically a helper in the “writing reform.”

But to return. The manner in which we wish the friends of the reform to aid us in disseminating a knowledge of its merits is, to increase our list of readers. It is just as easy writing for five hundred or a thousand as for fifty, and if we had a thousand paying readers, we could furnish a much larger paper at less cost than we can at present. At present we have not more than five hundred subscribers now, to make our paper pay printing expenses, to say nothing of our own labor. We have put the club price down to the mere cost of printing for the express purpose of inducing the friends of phonography to lend a helping hand in distributing it to their neighbors, and we hope they will avail themselves of the opportunity afforded them of benefitting the cause, and at the same time encourage us in our efforts. An unknown friend in Toronto has just sent us nine subscriptions which he procured without even having a copy of the paper, and sends \$2 for sixteen copies, for which he says he will get names without any trouble when he has a copy of the paper to exhibit. How many others will follow this example—take the responsibility of getting sixteen or more subscribers, or subscribe for sixteen or more copies to distribute among, or send to friends? We hope for a cheerful answer from many, and shall we be disappointed? What say you, friends?

We are particularly anxious that every school-teacher and clergyman, and the professors and students in our colleges should, at least, see a copy of the PHONETIC PIONEER. We shall be happy to send any of our subscribers, who write for them, post paid, half a dozen or more copies of the July number, free of postage, for the purpose of supplying such persons with a copy each, and we hope our readers will take the trouble to see that their school-teachers, ministers, etc., are supplied with a copy of the July number, or that they are already subscribers.

POSTAGE STAMPS.—In sending subscriptions to the PIONEER, or for books, the total value of which does not amount to one or more even dollars, use half-penny, five cent, or ten-cent postage stamps. They are as good to us as the metal, and can be procured at all the post offices throughout the land. Postage must always be pre-paid.

Learning Phonography.

How long does it take to learn Phonography? This vague question is often asked, but seldom properly answered. It is a question too general and indefinite to be replied to as it stands. It is generally understood, however, that by “a person” is meant the quicrist, whoever he may be.—In order to give a specific answer to any particular person, we must know two or three things about him. We must know, first, how *fast* and how *well* he wants to write. Second, how much *undivided attention* per day or week he can give to the study; and third, we must know what his capacities are for learning *anything*. There are people to whom any study whatever would be dry and tedious, with the aid of the best teacher. Those who can acquire other branches of learning quickly will make rapid progress in Phonography, and vice versa. Physiologically speaking, those who have the organs of form, size, constructiveness, concentration, and firmness well or largely developed, are the best fitted for becoming good phonographic, as well as good long-hand writers.

Being capable of writing phonography fast, is not all that is comprehended in the idea of a good short-hand writer. Writing a thing is of very little value if neither the writer nor any one else is able to read it. We know *fast* writers who are very poor reporters, simply because they execute so badly that it takes them a long time to decipher what they have written, and with reporters time is very precious. Undecipherable writing, however, is by no means a necessary concomitant of Phonography, for there are many fast writers of long-hand who have to take special pains, and write slowly, in order to be understood by their correspondents. A neat penman in the old style of writing will, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, make a good phonographer in every sense of the term. A poor writer of long-hand, to become a good phonographer, will require to practice more and take more pains to write correctly. Many very poor long-hand writers who study phonography, become excellent penmen, in both the old and new styles, simply through the pains taken in practising the interesting art of short-hand.

Between the time in which a person of ordinary abilities can learn phonography, and the time it generally takes to acquire the art, there is much difference. We would scarcely be justified in stating the precise time in which experienced phonographers say the art could be learned, for we very much fear that the experience of our students would not bear us out. The great majority of those who enter upon the study of phonography, of themselves, are laboring people, who work from eight to ten hours a day, and attend three or four evening meetings per week. With other incidentals to take up a portion of their