



CONDUCTED BY T. WILLIAM BELL.

### Personal.

We were favored a few days ago with a very pleasant visit from Mr. Thos. Bengough, official reporter of York County (Ont.) Courts, editor of the *Christian Helper*, and conductor of the *Canadian Illustrated Shorthand Writer*. Although this gentleman's visit to St. John was not as long as his friends desired it to be, it was long enough to impress them with the genial and inspiring disposition of his character, and to form the basis of an acquaintance that it will not be desirable to soon forget. We learned from Mr. Bengough that he was on his way home from Saratoga, where he had been attending the fifth annual meeting of the New York State Stenographers' Association. Being considered a jolly good fellow, Mr. B. was elected an honorary member of the association.

### Printer-Phonographers.

As I stated in my former paper, the reporter is often compelled to carry on two or three different operations in his mind at one and the same time. In this very respect printers have the benefit of practical experience in their business to aid them in becoming good reporters. In setting up from manuscript, the printer often has to compose very rapidly, and at the same time correct errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation, for, as we all know, even the immaculate editors do not always furnish their copy in as perfect a state as could be wished, while the "great unwashed" (public) would seem to think that the printer can make good English out of the worst jumble of words that could be penned by man.

This discipline gives the printer an immense advantage in learning phonography over those engaged in other pursuits. A great familiarity with all the styles of composition, and numberless forms of expression in use by speakers and

writers, and, indeed, with the great family of words, is necessary for the reporter; and thus the printer already has, and is, therefore, in a much better position to avail himself of phonography than the great majority who take up the study of the art. At a meeting of the New York State Stenographers' Association, held at Saratoga last year, Mr. W. H. Slocum, a law reporter of Buffalo, said he believed "a printing office was the best primary school for a reporter." And he was right. Of course, there are botches in the printing business who cannot do satisfactory work at their own trade, and who could not be expected to do satisfactory work in a profession requiring such close application and quick wit as that of reporting; but I am speaking more particularly of those workmen who are a credit to the art of printing, and who take a pride and interest in doing their work well.

We think, then, it may be regarded as established that a good printer is well qualified to take up the study of shorthand and make a success of it.

Now, allow me to give a few words of counsel as to the method of study. After the principles have been fully mastered the whole secret of the student's success lies in the word "practice." Practice, incessant practice must be the motto. Practice night and morning; in heat and in cold; practice during the "dog days," and when the thermometer registers 40° below zero. Again, no one must be in too great a hurry to become a rapid writer, or they will be apt to defeat their own ends. The effort to write faster than one is really able is sure to result in the formation of a bad style of writing—a habit that is certain to give trouble, and which will cause much labor and loss of time to unlearn. Slow and sure should be the aim of the student.

And there will come a time in the practice of the student when he will feel as though he were not making enough progress for the time spent, when a gain of one or two words per minute a day will be all he can make, and when the longed-for goal of verbatim speed seems as far off as the day of judgment. Just at this period of the student's experience comes the crucial test. It is at this stage of progress that the true is separated from the false, the wheat from the chaff, and the true student sticks to his task, and finally overcomes the difficulty, while the false and half-hearted gives up in disgust. In my