

There are thousands of living testimonials to the efficiency, the beauty and adaptiveness of Pitman's shorthand in Great Britain and America. It recommends itself to the attention of those interested in the diffusion of letters—to those self-applying persevering youths who would strike out a path to eminence, and to those parents anxious for the success of their children. Many men of influence and position made phonography their passport, and a list might be enumerated containing many names of Senators, Judges, &c. The desire to write fast is natural, the necessity to write fast is imperative and the ability to read what is written completes the science. Who has not listened with rapture to some soul-stirring sentence or some glowing panegyric—some beautiful sentiment or some scathing invective, and wish for means of arresting it from oblivion? Who does not resolve every new year to keep a diary, but the tediousness of the operation overcomes the interest and the record expires with the first month? To the merchant, the lawyer, the divine, it is of incalculable benefit, while it is not less so to anybody and everybody employing our common long-hand. This is an unquestionable age of progress, when the refulgent beams of the sun of true philosophy scatter the accumulated mist of servile ages and awaken the nation to a sense of their power. Old customs only live on their merits. Their ancestral potency is found to be an illusion when tried by the standard of practical ability. A great man once said: "To save time is to lengthen life." What better exemplification of the aphorism could be had than in the acquisition of shorthand? It is a great art designed for a great purpose, and whether the tardiness in regard to it dies with the present generation or not, phonography will eventually find its level among the sciences, become a branch of scholastic education, and as it grows in age and extent, deserve and elicit the admiration of an intelligent humanity.

REPORTING IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT SIXTY YEARS AGO.

THE Press is often jocularly called the Fourth Estate. No chairman at a dinner would think he had "ably" occupied the head of the table unless he used the phrase in proposing a certain standard toast—which, by the way, is usually relegated to the fog end of the programme, gallantly coming after "the Ladies." But the title is one which is, by no means, a mere joke. Indeed, under free institutions like ours, in which the people are the real sovereigns, the Press, which guides the people, may well be called the First Estate.

The Parliamentary reporters of the British Press of sixty years ago, were certainly a most influential set of men, wielding considerably more power than their *confreres* of to-day. Not that they were men of greater ability

or accomplishments, but perhaps chiefly because they were not. They did not, as a rule, write shorthand, and therefore more had to be trusted to their judgment and discrimination in the practice of their profession. They are credited with great tact, and wide knowledge of human nature, as well as specific information as to the merits of the speakers, and questions more immediately under their attention. We are told the more prominent debaters of the House rarely had occasion to find fault with the reporters, though members on the back benches frequently complained of unjust treatment—generally, of course, in the matter of being "cut down."

Among the many distinguished men who have been ornaments to the profession, Dr. Johnson was among the earliest reporters of the debates in Parliament. Later on we find the names of Dickens, Hazlitt, Sir John Campbell, and Allan Cunningham.

The salaries of the reporters on the morning papers were from three to five guineas per week. On the leading journals reporters received, with few exceptions, five guineas. Some of the reporters were employed for sessional work only, having no regular connection with the press.

The majority of reporters, however, were engaged annually but many of them had reduced salaries during the recess. The majority of those then in the gallery, were Irishmen. The first great preponderance of Irishmen over Englishmen and Scotchmen, was remarked in the time of Sheridan. That accomplished wit and orator was the means of getting many of his countrymen engagements on the newspapers of his day, and they very naturally took every means in their power to get their friends into situations in the gallery when vacancies occurred, or when the demand for more lengthened reports required an increased reporting establishment. In this way the majority of gentlemen in the gallery from the sister-island was kept up. The number of Scotch reporters was small, it was only seven out of eighty, including the reporters from the evening papers. Some of the gentlemen were engaged for long periods in the gallery. One on the *Times*, another on the *Morning Chronicle*, and two on the *Morning Advertiser*, were severally reporters in the time of Fox, Sheridan, and Pitt. One gentleman was in the gallery, without the intermission of a single session, for more than thirty-four years.

Complaints were sometimes made by members that their speeches were not given *verbatim*. Fine speeches some of them made, when their wishes were complied with. The plan of giving *verbatim* reports was tried by Dr. Stoddart, (afterwards Sir John Stoddart) when he conducted *The New Times*. The result of the experiment was such as to prevent any calling for *verbatim* reports afterwards. The members made downright fools of themselves, and set the public a laughing, from one end of the