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EVER-CIRCULATOR.

FROM enquiries made, during the past fortnight, we believe there is a desire on the part of a number of our readers to join an ever-circulator. We are willing to do anything in our power to assist in the good work, and if those desirous of joining will send in their names, we will start number one on its rounds on the first day of March, or sooner if the names come in. We refer those unacquainted with the manner of conducting an ever-circulator to the October number of the WRITER. The only expense connected with the enterprise will be the postage necessary to forward it to the next member, which is one cent for 4 ozs., we will furnish the requisite paper and cover, and will be only too happy to publish, in the columns of the WRITER, anything that may be especially interesting in the ever-circulator. Send in your names and let the first number be started as early as possible.

THE BIRTH OF SHORTHAND.

"'Twas Cadmus first found out the plan
Of wafting thoughts from man to man."

HISTORIANS tell us that Cadmus—said to be contemporary with Moses—invented letters and constituted his alphabet out of sixteen of them, and through subsequent ages, with the help of this latter day Saxon wisdom, has added a few more letters. We are sadly wanting in not being able to use a sign for each sound in our ordinary writing. For instance, Worcester has a dozen ways of spelling *mosquito*—a word that any child could spell if the phonetic principle were in common use. With sixteen ways of using the vowel *a*, and seventeen ways of employing *e*, is it any wonder that many men never learn to spell correctly, though employed in reading and writing in the course of their daily calling?

Until some form of stenography was introduced, the world had made little or no progress in speed of writing. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, and Sir John Mandeville transcribed his travels as facile as the majority of the people of the nineteenth century do their corres-

pondence. This dogged observance and blind reverence for the past is incompatible with our ingenious progressive nature, as is also our adherence to what is incompetent to fill the requirements of business and society. The remedy referred to lies in the adoption of shorthand or phonography, by which every sound framed by the mouth for the expression of words or syllables has its representative symbol—firm and unmistakable, a knowledge of which symbol once acquired indexes its pronunciation. The phonographic alphabet contains thirty-four signs composed of dots and the smallest geometrical forms—straight lines, curves and circles—to represent an equal number of sounds. This number embraces all the sounds of the English language, and hence a combination of signs represents a combination of sounds, and a single sign a single sound. As all the world knows, or ought to know, phonography originated with Isaac Pitman, of Bath, England, in 1837, and since that time has spread with unexampled rapidity throughout Anglo-Saxondom, notwithstanding there is still but a mere tithe of the writing population employ it. Its use has been almost confined to professionals, who, by making a virtue of necessity, have adopted it in preference to any other system. Shorter methods of writing than our ordinary long-hand are numerous, both anterior as well as posterior to Pitman. He did not emerge from the cradle a perfect author of a perfect system, but labored, like other mortals, over systems before him, analyzing, comparing and arranging for years until he deemed his work of sufficient utility to warrant a successful reception at the hands of the public. We have accounts of over 200 systems having been in use at various times, but all more or less founded on our imperfect alphabet, and consequently ambiguous and circuitous. And in speaking of his system we mean the cluster of kindred systems that have sprung from Pitman's. His has the three cardinal advantages of brevity, facility, and legibility, a trio of qualities that would have ensured the success of any system. But none of his antecedents had embodied these indispensable qualifications in their methods. If they secured brevity they endangered legibility and *vice versa*.