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CONTENTS. *November*

The New Light-Line Phonography—Critical and Commendatory Comments.

EDITORIAL NOTES:—Bad Grammar—A Reporter's Illegible Longhand—Japanese Studying Science in English—The Use of the Dash Illustrated—A Laconic Telegram.

Canadian Shorthand Convention—By some Anonymous Critic; with a Correction of a Wild Assertion. Phonographic Facts and Fancies—The Relation of Phonographers to the Spelling Reform; with Editorial Comments.

News Notes—An Interesting Batch of Canadian Items

CORRESPONDENCE:—Employment for Shorthand Writers, by Fred. W. Wodell, Hamilton; with Editorial Criticism—"Fac-simile" Notes, by L. E.

A Transliterated Transcript—"Reporting at Pshaw-talk-way"—Tuetonic Translation of Thornton's Light Fantastic Phonography.

SHORTHAND:—Reporting at Chautauqua—Illustrating and Comparing Thornton's Light-Line Method and Isaac Pitman's Free-Hand Unshaded Phonography.

Phonographic Facts.

BENGOUGH'S
COSMOPOLITAN
SHORTHAND WRITER.

Conducted by THOMAS BENGOUGH, Official Reporter, York County Courts.

VOL. III.

TORONTO, NOVEMBER, 1882.

No. 7.

THE NEW LIGHT-LINE PHONOGRAPHY.

The author of this work* is a comparatively young but rapidly rising member of the stenographic profession, and has had a valuable experience in its various branches. The Light-Line "System" so called, has been used and tested by the members of his firm. It is therefore natural and commendable that Mr. Thornton should feel desirous of giving to the phonographic world the benefit of his experience. Speaking generally, the book does not depart very much from the beaten path of the standard phonographic systems. The author acknowledges his indebtedness to Mr. Isaac Pitman, and thus exhibits a fair-mindedness which prepossesses the reader in Mr. Thornton's favor. The main feature of the Light-Line style of phonography—for it cannot properly be called a "system"—is simply an extension of Isaac Pitman's principle of *indicating* the vocalization of a word by its *position*. The "reporting" style of phonography is distinct from the "corresponding" chiefly on this account—the vowel marks being *indicated* (though not written) by the position of the consonantal outline. Mr. Thornton argues that if the vowels themselves can be dispensed with, so can the sub-vocal elements found in *b, d, j, g, &c.*, which are represented by *heavy* strokes—the shading being added for the sake of distinction, in accordance with the analogical principle—"a heavy sign for a heavy sound." "It is but carrying Mr. Pitman's idea a single step further to eliminate the *sub-vocal* along with the *vocal* elements." Mr. Thornton contends that "the real *reading* feature of any phonographic word is the general shape of the consonant outline. The shading or lack of shading no more determines its legibility than the vocalization or non-vocalization. This is so essentially the case that it has become

the experience of the most expert stenographers that outlines which depend upon shading for their legibility are in general unsafe outlines to adopt. Now it has been found in actual practice that the distinction between these light and shaded stems may be substantially done away with in all ordinary reporting; not but that a few outlines may need shading, as certain other outlines need vocalisation, but in no other way. The great bulk of the words in no way require this distinction to be made."

We presume that the author intends this argument to apply wholly to his own method; but experience proves that it applies practically to the standard systems—Pitman's, Graham's, and Munson's. For our own part, we have not found that legibility is lessened to any appreciable extent by writing pure Isaac Pitman's style with a MacKinnon pen, the writing point of which is a stubborn *stub* and not a flexible *nib*, so that all is "shade," and "light lines" are impossible. But our experience is not singular, for, as all verbatim reporters know, speed annihilates all mathematical precision, and, as our correspondent, "L. E.," observes, "shading is discarded entirely." This being so, what need has the world for another and a new "system" which claims to do only what reporters are every day doing? Practically none, as a system, but this book may give rise to discussion and invention which may result in a phonographic revolution. Its appearance is to be hailed with pleasure by all who take an interest in the *science* of shorthand. The basis of the book is phonetic—a strong point in its favor as against the orthographic and elliptic inventions; for if we are to have a revolution, it must be on the phonetic line.

The engraved phonographic outlines in the book are produced by the wax process, and are admirably clear. If the author had taken another step, and so adapted the geometric forms that they might be "set up" with movable types as our ordinary

**The Modern Stenographer*.—A complete system of Light-Line Phonography, by George H. Thornton, A. M. President of the N. Y. State Stenographers' Association, Stenographer of the N. Y. Supreme Court, Eighth Judicial District. New York: D. Appleton & Co. Toronto: Bengough's Shorthand Bureau. \$1.25.

printed matter is now composed, he would have won undying renown. These processes for engraving shorthand are slow, costly and cumbersome. Is there no inventive genius who will take some standard system and modify it to meet this new development called for by the hosts of phonographic readers? The mechanical execution of the book is first-class, and the arrangement of the material is good. The author introduces the shaded strokes at the beginning of the book, as illustrated in our October number, but gradually dispenses with them as he proceeds. This inductive method is employed throughout. There are some confusing illustrations, such as the words *true*, *crew*, *unscrew*, being written with a diphthong of the *you* series, as in the word *few*. Is this a "modern" twist? These words are pronounced *troo*, *kroo*, and *unskoo* on this side of the line. The author states clearly and briefly a most important principle in this sentence:—"Nothing gives a stenographer the ability to write an outline with ease and rapidity like a knowledge at the time of writing it that it will be readily legible." This syllogism sweeps away all the sophisticated cobwebs of contracted outlines put forth for brevity alone. In accordance with this truth, a list is given comprising only 160 word-signs, referred to by Mr. Skot in his letter published in the WRITER last month. The other words of the language are to be read by peculiarity of outline. The words *did*, *do*, *had*, are represented by the *T* stroke above, on and through the line respectively—the old vowel scale, *ee*, *a*, *ah*, being adopted. Some new adaptations of curves and ticks have been introduced. The second long dash vowel *o* as in *roam* is written *parallel* to the consonant stem to distinguish it from *u*, as in *rum*, which is written in the usual method, at right angles to the stem. This expedient is not new, having been adopted by Andrews and Boyle as far back as 1847, and later by Marsh. Mr. Thornton extends this principle of distinction to consonants of the *pl* and *pr* series by striking the vowel through the stem *obliquely* if long and at *right angles* if short.

A small hook inside the large shon nook adds *f* read as *of*, as in *confusion of*. A large final hook on straight hooks adds *ter*, or *der*, and the small hook inside this large one adds *n* as in *better than* (*b-shon-n*). *I* and *the* are represented by an oblique tick at the beginning of the next word. The word *or* in such a clause as *May or June* would be indicated by writing the phonographic form for June below that for

May,—a very convenient plan, which applies also to figures. In a phrase such as *did he*, the author allows the form *d-s-r* (up) to be used, as it does not conflict with others.

We have thus briefly touched upon what we consider the salient features of this new scheme, the author of which might properly exclaim, in the words of the poet, slightly modified—

"Man wants but little here below,
And wants that little *light*."

It may be admitted as a mechanical principle, as expressed by Mr. Munson, and expanded by Mr. Thornton, that "increase of speed is attended with decrease of force, and, therefore, that all stems should be written as light as consistent with legibility." It may also be "so apparent that a plain system can be written with a greatly increased rapidity, that it is hardly worth while to demonstrate it." And yet we venture to suggest that the other axiom quoted from Mr. Thornton himself, as to ease and rapidity in writing resulting from confidence in legibility, will commend itself to many stenographers who have studied the *science* of phonography. The shaded systems have the double advantage, as pointed out by the inventor of phonography—(1) the memory is not burdened with a multitude of signs, and (2) the mind perceives that the thin strokes correspond with the light articulation and the thick stroke with the heavy articulation. On the first of these points Mr. Thornton's system is at fault, for it provides *new* forms for words which should be shaded, rather than make them as they should consistently be made. This departure from the pure phonetic basis results in the positive disadvantage of additional forms, which burden the memory, and the negative disadvantage of the loss of the phonetic mnemonic. The book is therefore to that extent unorthodox, and puzzling to students; but to professional stenographers we can confidently recommend it as furnishing valuable information and hints. The argument of numbers is against this, as it is against all new methods; and students who take up Thornton's method would require to discard the special forms when corresponding with writers of other systems. If friend Thornton had compromised the matter by adopting Pitman's, Graham's, or Munson's system, and adapted them to his new ideas, we would have thought the millennium might be near at hand; but these departures from the beaten and well-tried paths confuse and

confound the phonographic world, and therefore retard the progress of our noble art-science. The author tacitly admits the solidity and popularity of the pure phonetic principle which gives the heavy sign to the heavy sound, by making it the basis of his own work. How many practical stenographers are ready to abandon this well-tried foundation, and build with other and lighter material?

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The *Globe* has been arguing that the bad grammar which prevails is not traceable to newspapers. In the *Globe* itself we find this expression: "The sale will be made by tender, and as the stock is first-class there is little doubt *but* that the bidding will be lively." This little disjunctive conjunction made the writer say just the contrary to what he meant to say, which was, that there was little doubt that the bidding would be lively. The *but* not only throws doubt on the writer's assertion; it actually belies it. The sentence as transposed would read: "There is little doubt of anything but this, that the bidding will be lively—this is very doubtful." This is an illustration of "how not to do it."

The *Globe* reporter who woke up on a recent Saturday morning, after a hard night's transcribing of an important speech, must have echoed Job's exclamation: "Oh, that my words were written with an iron pen"—meaning the type-writer. The printers made horrible work of the transcript, and the caligraphy seems to have puzzled the proof-readers, for they let pass the errors in despair. The report speaks of matters declared by our "said Convention" to be within the competency of the Legislature, when the reporter meant "Constitution." The report further says that "no act of the Provincial *regulations* can become law," when the scribe wrote of Provincial *Legislatures*. The report speaks of Government action "behind which is *conceded* the party intent." The pencil-driver wrote *concealed*. One of two suggestions might be made in the premises: Let the reporter transcribe on a writing machine, or let the printers learn phonography, so that they may read the geometrical outlines, which would be far more legible than this reporter's "copy" seems to have been.

Prof. Marshall, the newly-installed Science Master in Queen's College, Kingston, was formerly connected with the College of Engineering in Tokio, Japan. In his inaugural he states some interesting

facts in reference to that country. Philologists will be chiefly interested in this allusion:—"As all the lectures were given in English, it was necessary that the students should know this language. Such a people [ignorant of science] you may imagine, not only had no words to express over modern scientific ideas, but their language was not even capable of expressing them. In these circumstances it was much better to use words already invented by the discoverers of the ideas themselves, and indeed by doing this they did nothing more than Europeans have themselves done, for nearly all our scientific terms are of Greek origin." And yet, though foreigners can learn Greek scientific terms through the medium of the English, English boys and girls can not be—or are not—taught in three years to read or write correctly a simple newspaper paragraph!

Punctuation is an important study, though usually neglected. The omission or insertion of a punctuation mark may completely alter the meaning or dull the edge of a sentence. Take this as a specimen, clipped from one of our daily papers:—"The attitude of the Republican papers after the great defeat of their party is one of depression, though some of them see destruction to the Democrats in that they have been too successful. One of them has Governor-elect Cleveland *trembling before his own colossal shadow and regretting his great majority, which is the very height of absurdity.*" To what does the editor allude as "the very height of absurdity"? Is it to the "colossal shadow"? If it be colossal, it is certainly a "very height." Or is it the "great majority" to which the editor refers? That would fit the expression, and the punctuation points in that direction. But no, that cannot be the meaning. If we take the whole clause from "One" to "majority" we can make sense of the sentence; but all this guessing and analyzing would be unnecessary had the editor inserted a dash after the comma following the word "majority." As the sentence stands it is forceless—a dash would give it point and power.

Mr. E. B. Eddy, the match-maker of Hull, Que., must have studied shorthand in his younger days. The newspapers tell us that he was in Boston when a recent fire occurred at his works. Immediately on its breaking out one of the managers telegraphed: "Your premises are all on fire. What shall we do?" Half an hour after the laconic reply came, "Put it out!"

THE CANADIAN SHORTHAND CONVENTION.

BY SOME ANONYMOUS CRITIC.

[The following racy sketch of the Canadian Convention was unofficially reported for the *Shorthand News*, and appeared in the October number.]

The first Canadian Shorthand Convention that really deserved the name was held at the Rossin House, Toronto, on Tuesday and Wednesday, August the 29th and 30th. The shorthand writers, assembled from all parts of the country, formed themselves into an association, to be called the Canadian Shorthand Society. Mr. G. B. Bradley, of the Canadian Hansard staff, was elected President, and Mr. Thomas Bengough, Secretary. To his latter gentleman and to Alderman John Taylor, of Toronto, belong the credit of working up the interest in the convention among Canadian shorthand writers. Mr. Taylor was elected the honorary President of the society. The presence of ladies was an agreeable feature of the sessions of the convention, and at the public meeting, held in the City Hall on Wednesday evening, there were present a great many ladies belonging to the Toronto Ladies' Literary Club, the members of which are amongst the most thoroughly intelligent and cultured women of the country. The proceedings of the convention were officially reported by Miss Fraser, a lady who is associated with the genial secretary in his office work, and whom he has trained to take his notes of court proceedings and transcribe them on the type-writer, without any help from him in the reading of them, beyond an occasional deciphering of a form representing some technical term. Miss Ashley, of Belleville, read a well-written paper on shorthand writing and efficient women to write it. In this paper she made a strong appeal to the sterner sex to give the ladies every facility in pursuing the profession of shorthand writing, but in the case of the gentlemen present Miss Ashley need not have pleaded long, for they all seemed most glad to have the ladies with them, and supported her arguments heartily.

One of the most pleasant features of the gathering was the consideration shown to the young shorthand writers by the many old members of the profession present. Young Ambitious was made to feel perfectly at home, and that he was looked upon not as a nuisance, but as the stenographer of the very near future.

The addresses of the delegates from a distance were highly interesting, and in some cases amusing. Among those who took a great deal of interest in the proceedings was Rev. Robt. Torrance of Guelph, a writer of an old English stenography. He gave a very amusing account of the way in which he came to learn shorthand at home in Scotland, over forty years ago. He stated, with pardonable pride, that he had notes at home, taken many years ago,

which he could now read with great facility. But at the public meeting before mentioned, he tried to put up a job—if one may use the expression—on the shorthand writers present who had read papers before the convention, for which he deserves to be placed on record. Mr. Torrance was making a speech, and again told his experience in learning shorthand, and with what facility he could read his notes, and made this cruel remark: "But, Meester Chairman, I may say that I observed one thing at the meeting this day which to me appeared extremely odd, and that, Meester Chairman, was this: all the shorthand writers who read essays read them from longhand, and not from shorthand notes." Now, coming right after the reverend gentleman's declaration of his own ability to read his notes taken years before, this was just a little too bad. So to relieve the minds of the public from the false impression which the gentleman's statement would be likely to leave upon them, a delegate arose and informed those present that, while it was true that the authors of the papers had read them from longhand manuscript, it was done because the papers were to be given to the printer, and to have written them in shorthand and then had to transcribe them for the printer would have been a waste of labor. And to make assurance doubly sure, the delegate further informed the audience that he had at that moment a United States postal card, on which was written, in one of the modern systems, an essay, which was read from that card before the Chicago convention of one year ago.

Mr. E. V. Murphy, of the Murphy Brothers, senate reporters, Washington, was present on both days, and helped to make the proceedings enjoyable. Mr. J. K. Edwards, also a congressional reporter, formerly on the staff of the *Toronto Globe*, arrived on the second day. Mr. Murphy told a brace of good stories of his reporting life, which aptly illustrated the trials and tribulations reporters have to go through in the course of their work.

On one occasion he was detailed to report the speech of a very prominent man. On arriving at the hall it was found that the gentleman had taken too much stimulant for his brain; and ere he had gone far in his speech the reporter had made up his mind that he was in for a hard night of it. The net result of the night's work on the part of the reporter was a mass of notes, which were fearfully and wonderfully made, so far as the language was concerned. In despair the reporter at a late hour sought an interview with the befogged and befogging orator, and told him that unfortunately, he was unable to make a readable report of the speech. By this time the great man had sobered up considerably, and he asked the reporter to sit down and read to him some parts of the speech which he had already to write out. Mr. Murphy complied, and read a few paragraphs. "O, my dear sir," said the orator, "that is not what I said at all; that will never do. Now just sit down, and I will

tell you exactly what I did say." Forthwith he dictated to the tired but willing scribe a speech both powerful and polished, and which read like an essay when it appeared the next morning in the paper. When the orator had finished, he said to the reporter, "Now, sir, don't you again attempt to report a speaker when you are drunk!"

Dr. Wild, the seer of Bond Street Congregational Church, Toronto, and an old shorthand writer, addressed the public meeting in the council chamber, and in the course of his speech made some statements which were thoroughly in keeping with his name. Speaking of what shorthand had done for him in his youth, Mr. Wild, who is quite a popular pastor in Toronto, said that in the days of the Chartist agitation in England he had earned as much as \$50 per night reporting the speeches of the leading speakers, some of whom spoke at the rate of 150 and others at the rate of 200 words per minute, he himself being at the time only eleven years of age. When the worthy doctor made this announcement, your reporter happened to glance round the room, and was surprised to notice a large number of the shorthand writers present looking at each other with a curious smile on their faces, and some of them I am sorry to say, with their tongues thrust sideways in their cheeks, thus conveying the impression to my mind that they did not believe Dr. Wild's statement. It is really too bad that real genius is always so modest. Here we have had a shorthand genius residing within our borders for years, and never knew it, until at last the exigencies of the occasion compelled him to speak.

There was a very marked contrast between two representative professionals, at this convention. The one, Mr. E. V. Murphy, one of the celebrated Murphy brothers, senate reporters at Washington, and the other Mr. George Bradley, the President elect of the Canadian staff of Hansard reporters. Mr. Murphy is a tall man, of commanding presence, evidently accustomed to speak in public and to do so with success, as well as to report the speeches of others. He speaks with a pronounced Eastern American accent, and with a dry humor that at once puts him on the best of terms with his audience. He is an adept at paying a neat compliment, without making you feel that he is flattering you, and you leave him, after a few minutes' conversation, with a feeling that you have been talking to a most courteous gentleman, who is not only an expert in his profession, but also a man of varied attainments and general culture. Mr. Bradley stands before you as a typical Englishman. Of medium stature and very florid complexion, he impresses one with the idea that he is essentially a refined man, and that he is deficient in steady, persevering will power. Yet such an impression is but partially correct. Mr. Bradley is a man of refinement, and also of power, but it is rather that power of endurance and resistance which belongs to men of fine organization, than the aggressive

force characteristic of the physically powerful man, who, from the very nature of his organization, knows not what fear or weariness is. Then there was a great contrast between the two gentlemen in their speech. Mr. Bradley has the strongly marked accent which belongs to the educated Englishman, and though he speaks with just the faintest indication of a drawl, is in reality a faster speaker than Mr. Murphy. Both are gentlemen recognized as of the front rank in their profession, though having been trained in widely different schools. The remarks of Mr. Bradley, when taking his seat as President, showed him to be a man of clear views, sound judgment, and liberal instincts, though in many things he is conservative.

Mr. Thomas Bengough, the secretary of the society, and the man to whom it owes its existence, is a well-known gentleman among the shorthand writers of Canada, especially among the younger members of the profession, many of whom he has been instrumental in bringing to the front. He is a small man physically, but in his case, as in that of many others, it will not do to measure the spirit by the size of the body containing it. His two great hobbies are "system" and "phonetics," and these he is ready to put forward and, if necessary, defend at any time. All his actions are characterized by a nervous energy, that threatens in time, if not subdued, to wear out the rather frail machinery which it propels. System in his work, in his office, in his home, in everything with which he has to do, Mr. Bengough must have, and there are many worse hobbies than this. But when it comes to phonetics, as I have said once before, I want to cry off. Mr. Bengough is a persistent advocate of spelling reform, and is always talking or writing it up, but many of his friends take the liberty of enquiring why he does not begin by reforming the spelling of his own name, and spell it "Bengof." Mr. Bengough being a professional court reporter, and a thoroughly practical man, will make a most efficient secretary for the society.

I must close this rambling report, and this I will do by wishing every prosperity for the *News*, and signing myself

MUSEY-KUSS.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE.

[In connection with the above we append the following note, received in answer to a request from us, from the reverend doctor whose veracity is impeached. The impression conveyed to "Musey-Kuss," who is presumed to have an "ear" for harmony of sounds, was also made on many others from whom we have heard.]

"TORONTO, Oct. 12th.

"Mr. Thomas Bengough.

"My dear Sir,—Your note of the 11th to hand,—having reference to a report of a short speech I made at the late shorthand convention. There seems to be a little misunderstanding as to what I really said, judging from

a report of the same in *Brown & Holland's Shorthand News*, page 166, Vol. 1, No. 8. What I meant to say was this: that I began to learn shorthand when eleven years of age, and when I was about fifteen or sixteen I considered myself a good reporter, for at the time of the Chartist agitation in England I was hired to report the speeches of Ernest Jones and others. Of Ernest Jones it was said that he spoke at the rate of 180 to 200 words per minute. For reporting one of his speeches at Staleybridge I received \$50. This is true, whether I am a real genius or not, modest or not modest. I do not know the age of Brown & Holland, editors of the spicy *News*, but unless they are pretty well advanced it is likely I knew shorthand before they were born. Anyway let us all do our best and keep marching on.

"Yours kindly,
"JOSEPH WILD."

NEWS NOTES.

CANADIAN.

Miss Grace E. Heaton, of Brantford, is conducting a shorthand class in that city.

R. L. Richardson, late of the *Globe*, leaves or Winnipeg to join the staff of the *Sun*.

Robt. M. Pilsworth has left Mulock & Co., barristers, and taken a position with Bethune & Co.

Alma Ladies' College, St. Thomas, has a shorthand class in Isaac Pitman's system, taught by Mr. Yerex, of London.

The Y. M. C. A., in London has organized an Isaac Pitman class, taught by Mr. Payne, formerly of the *Free Press*.

H. J. Wickham, of Bethune & Co., has retired from active engagement as stenographer in order to devote his whole time to the study of law.

Arthur Laughlin having completed his engagement with C. W. Young, of Osgoode Hall, is now stenotyper with Bethune & Co., barristers.

Mr. C. W. Treadwell, formerly of St. John, N.B., has taken a position as stenographer to the Deputy-Minister of Finance, Ottawa. Professional interests in New Brunswick will suffer by this change.

It takes over 44 miles of white paper three feet wide, on which to print each edition of the weekly *Mail*. It also takes over 102 miles of white paper three feet wide, each week, on which to print the Daily *Mail*.

Albert Wood, formerly night editor of the *Hamilton Spectator*, is going to start a paper in Birtle, Man. By the way, Birtle is a happy abbreviation of Birdtail, the name of the creek on which the town is located.

At the close of the East Middlesex Teachers' Association, held on the 27th and 28th, ult.,

during which the Editor read a paper on Phonetics, and delivered a public lecture on Phonography at Victoria Hall, a class in phonography was organized, to be taught by Inspector Dearness, a Benn Pitman writer.

Miss E. Horton, whose expertness on the type-writer we have alluded to, has been engaged with the firm of Mowat & Co., Barristers. This is an initiatory movement in the direction of employing ladies as typers without the general accompaniment of a knowledge of shorthand, in which Miss H. is, as yet, but a student.

Robert M. Henderson, who styles himself a shorthand writer, proof-reader and printer, told the magistrate that if he was allowed to go he would go to the country. The colonel consented, but told him if he ever came before the court again he would get six months. Henderson was drunk again on Yonge street last night and was run in by Constable Somerville.—*World*, Nov. 8.

Mr. A. C. Campbell, recently of the *Globe* parliamentary staff, on leaving to take a position as night editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, was presented by his *confreres* with a handsomely finished scarf pin, bearing an emblem of the *Globe*, on the back of which an inscription was engraved. The *F. P.* is exceedingly fortunate in the choice of its staff, and now possesses two of the most able newspaper men in Canada, Mr. Albert Horton belonging, like Mr. Campbell, to the "breezy, bright and brief" school.

In a sketch of the publishing house of J. S. Robertson & Bros., Whitby, which appeared in the *World*, occurred this paragraph:—"The correspondence of the firm is very large but is greatly aided by the employment of a shorthand amanuensis. The letters are opened by the head of the firm on the arrival of each mail, and the replies personally dictated by him to the amanuensis, both promptness and accuracy being assured in this way." This is a direct testimony to the value of shorthand in business. No business firm, once employing a shorthandman, can keep pace with the times without one."

The Principalship of Pickering College, rendered vacant by the death of Mr. S. P. Davis, M.A., has been filled by the appointment of our school-mate and shorthand friend, Mr. W. H. Huston, M.A. Mr. Huston will be remembered as the gentleman about whom considerable discussion took place last year with reference to the Gilchrist scholarship which he won, but was deprived of through some mistake of the authorities. He has filled the position of House Master in the College for some time past with remarkable success, and we predict for him a like result as Principal. He has proved himself a thoroughly efficient teacher, and has the confidence of the students and public generally.

Mr. John B. Robinson formerly of Guelph, who has been a diligent student of phonography while working as a printer with Dudley & Burns, this city, has been rewarded for his diligence.

He has secured a position upon 'ne local staff of the *Globe*, where he will remain till February, when he will leave for Ottawa, as amanuensis to Mr. George Eyvel, of the official Hansard staff. Mr. Robinson has spared no pains to fit himself for future work. For writing exercise he used Macauley's Essays—the effect of which upon his literary style is plainly discernible already. He learned to write thirty words per minute upon the type-writer in two weeks with only evenings for practice. We predict a successful future for this young man, who secured both the positions referred to through the medium of our Bureau.

Mr. H. R. Wilmot, Shulie, N. S., in renewing his subscription to the WRITER encloses a very beautiful specimen of Isaac Pitman's vocalized reporting style of phonography. The outlines are as clear as copper-plate. The writing is done in violet, and shows well with a carmine line running between the columns. We have considered the specimen worthy of a frame, and it will adorn our sanctum. Enclosed with this specimen was an ornamental ornithological elaboration for which the Commercial Colleges have such an affection, but whose only virtue in our eyes is that they occupy time in production which might otherwise be utterly wasted, besides bringing shekels to the coffers of the Colleges. A third specimen is one for persons of weak eyesight, and consists of the Lord's Prayer written in a circle within the circumference of a dime.

The Toronto University College Modern Language Club is intended to give the student's in modern languages that opportunity for acquiring a practical knowledge of French and German more particularly, which is very imperfectly supplied by the lectures. It has had its origin in the recognition of the speaking and writing of those languages as the only true method of learning them. Its meetings are successively English, French and German, and the programme consists of essays, readings and debates, or, as a substitute for the latter, an informal talk over a chosen subject or author. During last session the professors in these languages were occasionally present and always showed the heartiest interest in the success of the project. Such a practical example of a breaking away from the cramming system deserves commendation and imitation.

As the Canadian libel law stands, actions for libel can be instituted without any guarantee for costs being paid into court. Hence it is that newspaper proprietors are peculiarly open to be made the subjects of that kind of annoyance. The law provides that in some cases security should be given for costs before an action can be brought. This necessary precaution does not apply to libel, and hence those who have to set forth the public news of the day are always at the mercy of the people who fancy that a libel consists in telling unpleasant truths. It is only necessary to make the statement in order to show how needful it is that the law should be so amended as to cause security for costs to be given in cases of action for libel, or that some other course,

such as the concurrence of a Judge in the validity of a suit, should be obtained before it could be progressed with.

“At the suggestion of BENGOUGH'S COSMOPOLITAN SHORTHAND WRITER, the Minister of Education has recently announced his intention of inserting a clause in the regulations re-modelling the High and Common Schools, making shorthand an optional study in the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes of the Province; and he has also amended the regulations relating to Mechanics' Institutes, so that the government grant will be allowed when evening classes are conducted in shorthand. No doubt this step will lead to important developments in the Educational system and will be a great aid towards the Spelling Reform movement. Hon. Adam Crooks is said to be a firm believer in shorthand, both as an educating and money-making art-science.—*Newmarket Era*.” [By a departmental oversight, the High School and Collegiate Institute regulations have been issued without the clause relating to shorthand. The change has been made in the curriculum of Mechanics' Institutes, and several will take advantage of it, notably that of Port Hope.—ED.]

Berlin (Ont.) *Daily News*:—“We see that quite a number of educationists and newspaper people are advocating a reform in spelling. All who are at all acquainted with the English language know that there are many words which have too many letters, and are not spelled according to the proper sound of these letters. Now in our view of the case the only way to reform spelling is to reform it. Some will remember the terse saying of General Grant—who said many terse sayings which became historic. When the politicians and the press of the States were voluminously discussing the resumption of specie payment, the General said, “the only way to resume is to resume”—and resumption came. Now if the Bengoughs (why not Bengof?), Houstons, and other reformers want to see reform in spelling let them reform. Others will probably follow.” So they will. As to the reform in proper names, that is not asked for until the reform becomes general in ordinary words; but when that time does arrive, the name Bengough will not be altered, for the letters, and no others that we now have or probably will have, could more precisely express the true sound, which is that of the Scotch guttural. Usually it is pronounced “goff,” but the termination is the Highland Scotch form, sounded thus:—hard *g*, short *o*, as in *on*, short *u*, as in *up*, hard *g* softened somewhat by the palate, followed by the aspirate *plodent*. The curious may be interested in knowing that *Ben* signifies a *mountain*, and *gough* a *voice*,—hence, if the name be peculiar, there is meaning in it. The pronunciations have been various, ranging thus in absurdity:—Bengoff, Bengow, Bengo, Bun-gay, Bing-gee, and Pink-eye! But the latest and best came the other day on a phonographic postal card—Benjo!

COMMUNICATIONS.

EMPLOYMENT FOR SHORTHAND WRITERS.

To the Editor of the *Cosmopolitan Shorthand Writer*.

DEAR SIR,—Your publication for October has just reached me, and I wish to make a few remarks with regard to some of the statements contained therein. You copy an article from the *Napanes Express*, written by a stenographer who was present at the recent Shorthand Convention in Toronto, in which it is said: "During the convention the subject of shorthand in schools was touched upon. There was considerable diversity of opinion, but the majority decided that it would be a much needed reform. It was clearly shown that with shorthand at least one-third of the time of a school course would be saved, and this itself is a great point in favor of the introduction of shorthand into schools."

Now, sir, I was present at that convention, and I deny that the majority of those present who heard the discussion decided that "it" (meaning the teaching of shorthand in the schools) would be a much needed reform. Nor did they decide that the teaching of shorthand in the public schools is a much needed reform. Nor was it decided by a majority of those present that the teaching of shorthand in the public schools would be a reform at all. It may have been clearly shown to the writer of the article in question that "with shorthand at least one-third of the time of a school course would be saved," but I can assure you there were others present who still doubt that such an amount of time can be saved to the pupil in the public school who is there taught shorthand.

It seems to me that this shorthand "boom" will share the fate of the "boom" in Northwest town lots. Already you are beginning to feel that you have "boomed" shorthand matters so strongly that some amanuenses are taking pupils, and to that extent at least spoiling your business. And so it will be all the way through. I don't deny that my object in writing thus to you is a selfish one. Self-preservation, etc., you know. Yet my motive is one that all shorthand writers who are earning their salt at the business will appreciate, and I don't think many of them will condemn it. I believe in the greatest good for the greatest number—that you can secure good for. But it is possible to overdo a good thing until it becomes of no value to anyone, and that will be the result of shorthand as a business if the present "boom" is kept up. In the *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, of October 22, I find advertisements calling for shorthand writers to the number of four, and advertisements by shorthand writers seeking situations to the number of eight, six of whom profess to be good typewriter operators. One man has the unmitigated cheek to advertise for a "newspaper steno-

graphic reporter" at a salary of \$12 per week. I leave your readers to draw their own inferences. In the meantime, I am,

Yours truly,

FRED. W. WODELL.

Hamilton, Ont.

[NOTE.—There was no formal decision of the question so ably discussed in the Convention by Mr. Wodell *against*, and Mr. Huston *for* the introduction of Phonography in the Schools. The majority of others who participated—if not all—opposed Mr. Wodell. If the question had been put to vote, we imagine the majority would have voted *yes*; but this is simply conjecture, biased, perhaps, by our own belief in the advisability and feasibility of making Phonography a school study. Now Mr. Wodell reiterates the argument, elaborated in his essay, as to the "abuse" of Phonography. It should be borne in mind that there is an important difference between the *personal* and the *professional* use of Phonography. It is recommended as a school study because of its value in mental discipline, and for its use to the pupils as a time and labor saver. A very small proportion of these would ever become stenographers, or even "shorthanders." Over 160,000 copies of Pitman's "Teacher" have been sold, while the text-books of other systems have been distributed to more than double that number; but where are the 500,000 shorthand writers? They are not all dead, truly; but they are certainly not all "live." If, therefore, a very small proportion of present and past pupils have made it their means of livelihood, it is reasonable to suppose that a similar proportion of pupils, studying for other professions, will do so, especially if the shorthand business goes on degrading at the rapid rate indicated by our correspondent. But, let come the worst—or, as we consider it, the best—and granting that there would be scores of reliable shorthanders where now there is but one, would not the problem be solved by the eternal principle of the "survival of the fittest"? The possession of first-class facility in this art-science argues a wide range of knowledge, and a mental training fitted for other professions. As the profession develops, the lines will be drawn more strictly, and while the weakest will go to the wall, if crowded, the strongest will come to the front. If, being there, they are not satisfied with the stipend, it should not be a great effort to find more lucrative employment in another profession. Even an unskilled employer can soon detect slop-work, and as the demand for shorthand grows, and the number of practitioners increases, employers will be at once more critical and more appreciative. This subject is important, and if there are two sides to it let us hear them. As to our "boom" proving a "boomerang," if we suffer by it it will be because of modesty in urging our claims; but we shall have this consolation, that if we be guillotined on the machine of our own construction we shall die in the interests of science, if not for the

good of shorthand humanity. Logically, friend Wodell should object to the teaching in schools of music—lest professional musicians be knocked “out of tune”; of book-keeping,—lest bookers lose their “balance”;—nay, he must object to education of every kind and degree, lest educators be forced to abandon their work of “teaching the young idea how to shoot,” and—shoot themselves in desperation. *Reductio ad absurdum!*
—Ed.]

“FAC-SIMILE” NOTES.

To the Editor of the Shorthand Writer.

SIR,—I have no doubt that some shorthand writers will pronounce the *fac-simile* notes of Mr. Watters, published in the August number of the WRITER (which, by the way, owing perhaps to some freak of the Post Office, reached me only two months late), very slovenly and ill shapen, and compared with the outlines of the text-books, perhaps they are open to such a charge. But to most verbatim reporters, I fancy, these very qualities are the most convincing proofs that Mr. Watters’ “copy” is just what it pretends to be—a leaf from his note-book. The notes usually produced in rapid verbatim reporting are vastly different from the exact geometric forms which flow slowly from the pencil in cold blood, so to speak. They are as different as is the everyday MS. of the average man of business from the copperplate outlines after which his handwriting is presumably modelled—more so, indeed, in proportion to the greater latitude allowed in selecting phonographic outlines. To the young phonographer who regretfully finds himself gradually but surely drifting away from the strict outlines laid down in the text-books, it may afford an encouragement to know that not only is Mr. Watters one of the most rapid of Canadian reporters, but that he reads his notes with great ease and rapidity. The same remark is true of many first-class Canadian reporters of my acquaintance, and if I may judge by the *fac-simile* outlines published in the English magazines, it is true of the majority of professional reporters in the old country as well. The acute angles of the text-books became well rounded in hurried note-taking, “perpendicular” lines incline, perhaps somewhat crookedly, to the horizon, and horizontals to the zenith; arcs of circles become straight lines, and shading is discarded entirely. In fact so rare is it to find the verbatim notes of a rapid speech written with any thing like geometric precision, that to most reporters the presence of sharp angles and careful shading in a note-book is evidence either that the writer has been “skipping,” or that he has been enjoying what is a very rare treat in this land of fervid declamation—reporting a slow speaker. There are some partial exceptions to the rule, I am aware. There are some reporters so gifted mentally and manually that their notes even when taken very rapidly might almost be printed as models for the beginner. Among such I might mention Mr. T. J. Richard-

son, of Ottawa, one of the best all-round shorthand reporters in America, who writes very plain, legible notes with few of those ingenious contractions so favored by many phonographic authors, and so carefully avoided by experienced reporters. Mr. T. W. Gibson, secretary to Hon. Mr. Pardee, a younger reporter, but one who is thoroughly efficient in every branch of his profession, also writes very clear phonographic outlines—so legible that page after page of his notes may be read by brother reporters. But these, and a few others, are the proverbial exceptions that prove the rule. And while I would strongly advise learners to cultivate precision and neatness in practice as the best foundation on which afterwards to form a good practical “hand,” I think it is well for them to know that it will be as impossible for most of them to adhere to rigid geometric outlines, as for business or professional men to continue writing their correspondence in the fairly shaded script which was “set” them as “copy” in their schoolboy days.

To my mind many of the *fac-simile* notes published in the phonographic magazines are transparent humbugs. They pretend to be taken from actual note-books, but they are evidently the result of slow and elaborate writing. They deceive and mislead the young beginner. Let us have a page or two red hot from the speeches of Sir John Macdonald, or Mr. Blake, delivered in the House of Commons, or on the stump, just for a change. I would open the ball myself, but candidly, Mr. Editor, I’m afraid to put forward my uncouth pot-hooks side by side with the tribe of the *fac-similes* who all write so beautifully and so much alike. But if Arthur Wallis, or Albert Horton, or George Holland, or G. B. Bradley, or E. E. Horton, or Isaac Watson, or Joe Duggan, or Colin Campbell should follow the lead of Mr. Watters,—well I’m a coy and bashful creature, Mr. Editor, but there’s no telling what one might do under strong temptation. Meanwhile, I hope you keep a loaded club for the man who writes his *fac-simile* deliberately and with malice prepense.

Yours truly,

L. E.

Toronto, Oct. 30th, 1882.

[Our correspondent has evidently missed several numbers of the WRITER, for we have published *fac-similes* from Messrs. Richardson and Campbell—the former being an extract from one of Mr. Blake’s speeches in the Commons.—ED.]

A TRANSLITERATED TRANSCRIPT.

TEUTONIC TRANSLATION OF THORNTON’S FANTASTIC PHONOGRAPHY.

[For the sake of throwing additional light on the new Light-Line and Lightning Phonography invented and patented by friend Thornton, (but with no serious intention of

making "light" of his method), we give two specimen pages, copied from the "Modern Stenographer." As a set-off to the claims of the inventor, we furnish parallel pages in pure, unadulterated Isaac Pitman style, in order to prove our point elaborated elsewhere in this number—that the aspiring author need not have searched for new phonographic forms, when he could have readily adapted one, at least and we believe any of the standard systems, to suit the object he had in view lightning speed. We claim that the Isaac Pitman specimen is at least as good a "light-line" and lightning phonography as the so-called "Light line," while it has the additional advantage of being a pure phonetic system, which does not involve the introduction of strange outlines. Let the two specimens be critically examined, and we think our readers will conclude that, indeed, the professed "Light-Line" method is inferior in lineality—a very important feature of a reporting system—quite as important as the absence of shading, if not more so. The careful reader will also note that our specimen has hardly any vocalization, while Thornton's is very freely vocalized—a symptom of inherent weakness. The Pitman specimen, tho' written in reporting style, without the accompaniment of shaded lines—which Mr. Thornton argues is necessary to legibility—can be read with ease by any Pitman student who has reached the "Manual." We have shaded a few words—preferring to do this rather than introduce new forms,—viz., *all*, to distinguish it from *of*; *pertaining*, which might be confused with *pertinent*—an outline which Mr. Thornton cannot protect from illegibility, as his hard-and-fast-method entirely forbids shading; and thirdly, *singers*, who might otherwise be *sinners*, as Thornton has actually made them. Mr. Thornton's system will some day bring him into trouble. If the Jubilee Singers should read in the *Chautauqua Journal* a report (taken by Thornton, and transcribed by an amanuensis) speaking of the "Choopilee Sinners" in connection with "weird and fascinating mulattos," these would, we fear, be an exhibition of very unchristian feeling on the part of the "sweet sinners of Israel" aforesaid. Thornton's explanation that his stenographic method paid no attention to the *color-line* would not be satisfactory. The heavy outline for the Jubilee Singers is favored by every argument—the ethnological, physiological, physiognomical, the non-comical, the phonetic, and last, but not least, the peace-at-any-price-ical.—Ed. C. S. W.]

THE EXACT TRANSLATION OF "REPORTING AT CHAUTAUQUA."

"The Pshaw talk-'way itea is the out-cum of a grant conspshun. Its fital ant karakteristik feature iss to develop the manifolt faces off human nature; ant to akomplish this, its penesent purpus, it hass rekoars to all the means ant aplianses hwich our H off progress

so pountifully furnishes. For it among these is the Assembly, helt each year turing the summer months. At thees gatherings, the benefits to pee terivet from personal kontakt with great mints is sawt to be realist; ant to atain this, an elaborat program is anualy preparet, consisting of normal clas exercises in Suntay-skool work, temperance meetings, mishunary konferences, adreeses ant lektures by tistinkwished speakers on relichion, siens, art, literature, ant all kintret subjects pertaining to cheneral kulture. The saluaple thots hwich here hav insepshun must necessarily, for the most part, pee well worthy of being preserft. To akomplish this, tale-y ant monthly journals are publisht under the auspises of the Assembly authorities, hoos aim it iss to precent full and akurat reports of everything pertaining to the stupentus prochekt. The 8 of a larch kore of stenokrafers, therefore, bekums intispensapl. No stenokrafer kan ket an adekwat itea of Pshaw-talk-'way reporting from a mere terekripshun of it. It tiffers from almost efery uther kint of stenokrafik work. There iss, it iss true, a crate variety in the karakter of the reporting. Sometimes it is eacy, sometimes it is moderat, sometimes it is excecetiuly tificult. Some work it is necessary to report with the utmost accuracy the stenokrafer kan pesto upon it; other work has to be kontenst until littl of the orichinal speech remains. The stenokrafer iss often rekward to naro down into a single kolum hwat iss intended to be a verbatim report of a sermon or adres, hwich woot make ate or ten kolums if published as telivert. Fife huntret folios of Pshaw-talk-'way seens ant insidents might be kiven. The work, in cheneral, is fery tiffkult; far more so than kourt reporting, and often bekums the most wearisum trutjery. Yet there are many things to relieve the tisakreabl features of the situation. The pleasant moonlight boat-rites, the weirt ant fasinating mulattos of the Choopilee Sinners, ant the inspiring anthems of the grant Pshaw-talk-'way kwires, the crouts of happy people, telightful excursions upon the lake—these, and many other tiversiones, ameliorate the heart experience of the reporter's life at Pshaw-talk-'way. We are in-fair-play clat hwen it iss all ofer. Yet many are the pleasant memories that we carry away with us—memories that kum pack to us after the season's kloce; ant, howsoefer much we may resolf nefer again to ficit Pshaw-talk-'way's romantic kroves, a year rolling away leafs in our mints a sort off a twilite piktire off the olt tays ant pleasant times we haf enchoyt, ant the summer fints us rety akain to accept the pitter for the sake of the sweet, the tisakreabl features for the sake of the many charming ones, ant spent a summer month in that place, hwere more than all others the lites ant shates off life are prawt out in polli relief; that strain-chest off all, put most telitful resort, Pshaw-talk-'way."—Part of a paper (rit ant) ret pie the author P 4 the N. Y. S. S. A.

THE SHORTHAND "BOOM."

The editor of the *Citizen*, Mr. Wm. Burgess, is not a shorthand writer, but the proximity of his office to that of the Bureau forces a recognition of the great time-and-labor-saver. In quoting one of the replies read in the "Symposium" he writes:—

"The interest recently excited in Phonography is creditable to its advocates and teachers, and an evidence of the growing public appreciation of the proposed short cut to the English language.

It is not surprising that the recent Convention held in Toronto was so successful, if the immense advantages to be derived from the system be taken into consideration. Phonography has made the newspaper press of ten-fold more value than it could have ever been under the old long-hand system. Without it a full report of a lecture, sermon, or parliamentary speech was impracticable. In this busy, hurry-scurry age, too, it is impossible for leading firms to keep up with the times without the aid of an amanuensis, and a shorthand writer is now attached to almost all business houses.

The letters include one from Mr. Sweetnam, Post Office Inspector, the Great North-western Telegraph Company, the Midland Railway Company, several leading firms of solicitors, and some of the principal wholesale houses in the city. In several instances the writers testify satisfactory results from the employment of female stenographers.

It will be seen therefore that there is a uniform testimony as to the great value of phonography for every department of professional and business interest. It strikes us as a singular piece of conservatism that the police courts and other law courts do not uniformly employ shorthand clerks. The painfully slow process of taking down every word of a witness while the business of the court is practically suspended more than half its time must have been obvious to every man who has had any experience in a law court. Yet this could be removed at once by simply substituting for the cumbersome longhand writing the short-cut system of writing by sound."

CONVENTIONAL CANTOS.

COMPILED BY POLYCARP PENDENNIS, B.A.

I'm a Presidential young man,
A very influential young man;
I practice urbanity, but never profanity,
And I'm for John Bull whenever I can.

Imagine me if you can,
As a cosmopolitan young man,
An ultra-phonetical, very æsthetical,
Slightly bald-headed young man!

Remember me if you can,
As one of the Murphy clan;
A-jolly-good-fellow-without-getting-mellow
A starred and striped young man.

Look upon me if you can
As a "Spectator"-ial young man;
A-very-bashful-sandy-moustachical,
Talk-like-a-Ciçero young man.

Conceive me if you can,
As an Osgoode Hall young man;
A-very-judicial, semi-official,
200-a-minute young man.

I'll confess that I am a phonographic sham;
A phonographic sham I undoubtedly am.
If I were to drown I couldn't take down
Any sort of rhyme in any sort of time—
Or even a little dose of ordinary prose,
So, a reportorial sham I consequently am.

I am
A clam—
A tender-footed clam!
The hooks
And crooks
I heartily dislike;
The curves
And swerves
I skip at sight.
The downward "l"
And double "pl"
Rack my brain;
Each eccentric line
And arbitrary sign
Leaves me insane.
Each dash and dot
I early sought
To most completely master;
I tried each night
By the flickering light
To write a little faster—
But all in vain,
I was insane—

and, in conclusion, may state that I have forever cast aside the study of shorthand.

Mr. Chabot, the "expert" in handwriting, just deceased, owed his first leap into celebrity to a will case. The great point made by him was that in examining a large number of documents admittedly written by the testator he had in no single case found the letter "o" connected with other letters, whereas in the disputed will it was sometimes so connected and sometimes not. The will was broken. He was also largely employed in the Tichborne case.

Personally Sir Algeron Borthwick is the most popular journalist in London, as he is the handsomest, except Mr. Pearce, the handsome young man of the *Daily News*. Neither so tall nor so beautiful as the owner of the famous tawny drooping moustache, he is yet very distinguished in appearance and charming in manner. Slightly bald, he displays a fine forehead and a very becoming Henri Quatre beard just turning gray. No man in England has a better reputation for thorough loyalty and high sense of honor, and much as men laugh at the *Post*, all speak well of its genial and scrupulously well-dressed proprietor.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. in relation to the above matter. I have the pleasure to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
 Yours truly,
 J. B. Brough

LEGAL TESTIMONY.

(Specimen of Isaac Pitman's Unshaded Phonography.)

John Doe of the County of ... State of ... do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears to me.

(For the WRITER.)

FONOGRAPHIC FACTS AND FANCIES.

THE RELATION OF PHONOGRAPHERS TO THE SPELLING REFORM.

The prevailing attitude of phonographers towards the Spelling Reform, like that of the public in general, is one of indifference; and it is not altogether surprising that it should be so. Mankind have never shown much zeal in planting fruit trees exclusively for the benefit of posterity, and there is a vague belief afloat that the tree of Spelling Reform is not likely to produce much fruit in our day. However that may be, the position taken is selfish and dishonorable. The reform outlined is a grand one, the blessings resulting from which are destined to be felt all down the ages, and each one of us should feel honored in speaking or writing a good word in its favor. One cannot but admire the faith and perseverance of such pioneers as Isaac Pitman and Elias Longley, who have grappled with the subject all these years through good report and bad report. Let us never forget that phonographers initiated the movement, and how that they are no longer an insignificant body in point of numbers, it would be very fitting that they should take the lead in carrying it on. I am aware that certain learned professors have recently come to the conclusion that something is wrong with the spelling, and propose to experiment a little. Forty years of experimenting ought to suffice; and more than that time has already been devoted to it. It is not so much great learning that is required as careful thought and a little common sense. Gentlemen with very delicate ears are as much to be dreaded in this connection as those who, so to speak, have no ears at all. My belief is that the alphabet wanted will be found either by taking Isaac Pitman's font and substituting a few pieces of Mr. Longley's type, or by reversing this mode of procedure. The former plan would make it more strictly phonetic, the latter, I think, would slightly improve its appearance. The partial reform contemplated by the gentlemen above alluded to can have no other effect than to divert the mind of the public from the Reform proper. Phonographers should set their faces like flint against any half-way doings in a matter so momentous. They can and should have an alphabet worth working for and thinking of. Representative phonographers from English-speaking countries "in congress assembled" should be able to settle this thing speedily and permanently. Unless some such action is taken the Reform must continue to drag, and to dissipate its force. I believe the people are quite prepared for a forward movement, but they cannot brook so many rival alphabets. Longley's belief that the proper one will be secured by the survival of the fittest, is too slow a notion by a hundred years. This thing should be settled now. In the language of a western orator, let Messrs. Pitman and Longley "pool their issues," or allow impartial men to do it for them, and the Reform will take new shape and new life.

These are the first words I have ever written on the subject, although my sympathies have been with the movement ever since the days of the old *Phonetic News*. There are thousands just like me who would instinctively rally round an alphabet that would command their respect, but who are too lazy and lukewarm to do much until this grand climax has been reached. I firmly believe that the time has arrived when a forward effort by leading phonographers would be hailed with *eclat*, and would eventually snuff out the little distracting side movements which bode no good to the cause.

J. W.

[We wish to justify and modify some published statements in the WRITER on this subject. The objection to "half-way doings" might fairly be made to the peculiar spelling used in our May number, and others. In justification we say that "half-way doings" are better than no doings at all. Now as to modification: our criticism of Isaac Pitman's radicalism was justifiable from a Canadian or American standpoint, for on this Continent we have had no such education in phonetics as the English Society has imparted. Where the groundwork is once laid, nothing short of a purely phonetic alphabet would be satisfactory. We are daily receiving evidence of the need of an enlarged alphabet. Why should there not be an International Congress of Philologists to settle upon the alphabet? In the latest number of Longley's *Phonetic Education*, Prof. Earl re-asserts the "survival" argument which our correspondent ridicules,—comparing the introduction of a new alphabet to that of a new harvesting machine or other tool. He contends that while language is a divine gift, the mode of representing it is human, and must be subject to change in accordance with the trend of the times. We see no real antagonism between our correspondent and Mr. Earl. Let a Congress be called to settle the question, and the result would be that the fittest would survive—provided the Congress recognized, without actual and prolonged test, which was most perfectly adapted. We would suggest a middle course. Let there be a Congress to discuss, in all its bearings, the question of a change of alphabet. Then, having decided on the change, without officially adopting any particular alphabet of letters, let there be a test of Pitman's and Longley's, or the two intermingled, for such a time as would be sufficient to discover their relative merits. At the next meeting of the Congress let the question of method be discussed and decided—and we have no doubt wisdom would prevail in the councils of such a Congress, composed of unselfish reformers, and the best system would be chosen. After that, let it be advertised and advocated without cessation,—used in correspondence,—printed in newspapers,—taught in schools and colleges,—painted on signs,—played with by children in the form of toy-letter-blocks,—studied by scientists and sages in standard works,—let this be done, and there will be a complete revolution within ten years. Those who, like the writer, are on the bright side of thirty will live to see it.

ED. C. S. W.]