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Yours Always
J. William Bell

THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED SHORTHAND WRITER.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1881.

No. 10.

Editorial and Contributed.

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*.

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 short-hand? 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 confederates 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

country to the other. Lord Castlereagh exhibited himself as "standing prostrate" at the foot of Majesty, and as "walking forward with his back turned on himself." Sir Frederick Flood, one of the Irish members, and a great stickler for *verbatim* reports, appeared one morning as having, on the previous evening, enlightened and delighted the House with the following profound philology and brilliant eloquence:—"Mr. Spaker: As I was coming down to this House, to perform my duty to the country and old Ireland, I was brutally attacked, sir, by a mob, Mr. Spaker, of ragamuffins, sir. If sir, any honourable gentleman is to be assaulted, Mr. Spaker, by such a parcel of spalpeens, sir, as were ather attacking me, Mr. Spaker, then I say, Mr. Spaker, that if you do not, Mr. Spaker, be ather proteefin' gentleman like meself, sir, we cannot be ather coming to the House of Parliament at all, at all, Mr. Spaker. And, sir, may I be ather axing you, sir, what, sir, would become, sir, of the business of the country, Mr. Spaker? Will you, sir, be ather answerin' meself that question, Mr. Spaker? It's meself that would like an answer, sir, to the question, sir, as soon as convenient, sir, which I have asked you, Mr. Spaker."

This, as may well be supposed, proved an extinguisher to Sir Frederick Flood's *prechant* for *verbatim* reporting. He went—the day on which his oration appeared—to the editors of all the morning papers, and said he would thereafter leave his speeches to "the discretion of the reporters."

PROVINCIAL JOURNALS ADMITTED TO THE PRESS GALLERY OF THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS.

REPORTING in the British House of Commons has, during this session, received many additional facilities. It has been arranged to accommodate nearly double the number of reporters in the press gallery, which has been heretofore confined to London newspapers and press associations. This year many of the provincial journals will be represented, but as only one representative is allowed to each journal, and as it takes about five times as long to transcribe notes as to take them down, it is evident that alone it would be impossible for a provincial journal to have full reports of the debates in their paper the next morning. This is overcome by what is known as "combinations" composed of seven or eight representatives of as many journals and they form themselves into a "gang," who, in turn, appoint one of their number captain to direct the efforts of the others. He perhaps decides that each shall have three minute turns, and with watch in hand gives the signal for one man to begin and another to take his place when time is up. Then six or eight men writing three minutes each, gives each man fifteen minutes or more to

transcribe his notes, and by the time the last of the "gang" has had his turn, the first will have had his notes transcribed and be ready to go on again. The paper for transcription is the semi-transparent, and is arranged between as many black sheets as there are representatives in the combination, so that each one has a copy to send to his journal. In this way, on a speech of two hours duration, the first member of the "gang" will have completed his work before the speaker, and the last will finish a few minutes after the oration is closed.

What may be done by this kind of union was illustrated on one occasion at Birmingham, when Mr. Bright was supplied with a printed copy of his speech before he had left the platform.

PROPOSED CONGRESS OF JOURNALISTS.

From the Reporters' Magazine.

THE representatives of the press in the city of Brussels were recently invited to attend a meeting for the purpose of considering a proposal relative to the establishment, in Brussels, of a central office for the press of all nations. It was proposed to name a committee to issue a circular to the chief editors of the press, inviting them to attend a Congress to be held in September next, and to prepare a programme. The object of the Congress, as stated, was not very clearly defined, and was generally found to be impracticable. After a long discussion, in the course of which the English correspondents present explained that they had no authority to take any action whatever in the name of the papers they represented, the matter was left to the Belgian press-committee, who will probably issue invitations to the Congress to be held there at some future time, without, as far as appeared, any definite objects.

There have been many talks of a Congress of journalists, and we believe the journalists of Germany and Italy did meet and draw up for themselves codes of honor. But in the absence of a representative, and recognized association of journalists, of each nation, we fail to see how "a central office of the press of all nations" can be regarded as other than a purely chimerical idea.

Is there, however, any reason why journalists in this country should not form for themselves a representative association for the fraternal discussion of matters affecting their profession? Such an association might do much to promote the best interests of journalism in many ways. Some of the most useful reforms, and not a few of the grandest schemes of science, have been initiated in papers read before representative associations. Then why should not journalists combine and agree to spend a pleasant evening together, now and then, to discuss, in a friendly way, the history of their past, the stirring incidents of their careers, or even the crude fancies of to-day, which, after all, may perhaps be destined to become the revolutionary force of no very distant morrow.

MY AMANUENSIS.

Inscribed to Miss Lizzie Hand, by S. B. Sumner.

A handsome maiden here at my right hand,
A sonnet for her album doth command.
She's trebly handsome;—for, you understand,
She writes, and has, and is a handsome Hand.
To phrase it handsome: handsome little "Liz."
Not only handsome does, but handsome is.

SYSTEM IN OFFICE WORK.

BY W. O. WYCKOFF.

What system is preferable to a lack of system requires no argument. "System in office work"—stenographic office work,—is no exception to the rule.

The stenographer who has little or nothing to do may get along well enough without regard to system or method of any sort; and so, too, without great inconvenience, he may, and often does, dispense with an office even.

In an office from which, and in which, is transacted the reporting business of an entire judicial district, in addition to such miscellaneous work as may from time to time present itself, system must be invoked or confusion is inevitable.

Perhaps the work of no professional is so easily and so readily systematized as that of the stenographer.

In order to have anything like a perfect system in an extensive shorthand business, some conveniences are necessary. The work that may be done in an office comprising a single room seven by nine may be systematized, undoubtedly, but the consideration of so limited a subject would scarcely be worth the time. As a rule the proprietors of such offices are those who insist that the way of their Grand-fathers—the good old way—is the best. To such the introduction of "System in office work" would probably be a hindrance rather than a help.

The office of the stenographer of to-day, who is keeping pace with the times, consists ordinarily of two good sized rooms, and generally of three. In an office of this character properly furnished, a systematical way of doing things follows almost naturally. At least one convenient desk with pigeon holes and places for necessary books, &c., will be found in the principal business room of such an office. The transcribing room, if one is dedicated to that purpose, should contain suitable cases for note books, which should be numbered and placed in such order therein that any number may be referred to instantly. If books are not used in taking notes, shelves for holding numbered boxes with close covers will answer the purpose. Where books are used, a sufficient space should be allotted to blanks, where a supply should always be found ready for any emergency. In fact no matter what sort of stationery is used it should be purchased by wholesale and kept on hand ready for use.

The Topeka (Kansas) Stenographers' Association have introduced a bill making their tariff \$10 per day, 10c. a folio.

THE ART OF CONDENSING; OR, MR. BEECHER ON REPORTING.

BEFORE preaching upon this occasion Mr. Beecher advanced to the front of the platform and said.

I wish to say a word or two on the subject of the reports made of my sermons from week to week. Twice within a year the land has rung with excitement, furious anger and criticism on account of reports of my sermons that were grossly wrong—what may be called "the bread and water sermon" for one, and what may be called "the abolition of hell" sermon for another.

I do not believe any one ever intentionally misrepresents. The gentlemen who serve as reporters here are—so far as I have had the pleasure of their acquaintance—gentlemen; and I am under obligations to them, as is the Christian community, in very many respects. Some of them I know and I esteem very highly their acquaintance. Nevertheless there have been several instances in which, if they had designed to misrepresent totally, they could not more successfully have done it. Allow me to say that my sermons that are worth any criticism at large are selected by the editor of the *Christian Union* and generally printed without any revision and generally without my knowing which of the two on Sunday is to be printed. I have not time to revise or consider them, and if I should set out to do it I should simply try to write a better one all the time. I leave them, therefore, to the reporters and the managing editors, and I don't know, from one week to another, which sermon is to be printed. The cases are very rare in which I think it necessary to look over a sermon.

Now, an ordinary sermon upon some moral or ethical question may be reported in outline or condensed very successfully, because the reporters are gentlemen not merely of education but in many instances college men, and, therefore, within their own realm of familiar thinking and reading and observation, competent. But when sermons involve a large amount of doctrinal discussion or of nice distinction, where they cover a large ground with intricate details, the training of the gentlemen that report has not been such as to make them adequate to this work of condensing an hour's sermon into a compass which may be read in five or ten minutes. *Condensing is in itself the weightiest of literary tasks*, but to condense fairly what has been spoken in the intense enthusiasm of the hour is a still more difficult task, and to condense that which is still more in substance dependent for its accuracy upon the very phrase or the very collocation, is simply impossible under the circumstances. It may be taken down *verbatim*, but to be taken down here and there with signs and sketches and condensed by an outside person is a task which the most adventurous might fear to undertake. Some of the gentlemen who report here pick out certain sentences only. They stick in their

thumb and pull out a plum. If there is a figure that in its setting is entirely proper they will pull it out and let it stand alone that it may seem very audacious. From all these causes come scattering reports, and the shorter they are and the more pungent the better they are liked. Men like a little pepper and short snatches of queer things, or of old phrases, or of ludicrous images. These are naturally sought and put into the newspapers and sent abroad all over the country.

Now, I don't object to it for myself. I would just as lief they would continue to do it, so far as my own personal feeling is concerned. Only this, I know that if Professor Pierce had in his lifetime undertaken to give an hour's discussion upon one of the abstruse subjects, no man on earth would have tried to give it in the space of three minutes. If Professor Agassiz had spoken on some scientific subject requiring exact terms, no man would have done it with him. If the reporters wanted an exact statement they would have gone to him or else omitted it altogether. So it is in all professions except that of the preacher. The reporters, many of them belong to the university of letters and they are accomplished, personally and materially, in literary matters, but my impression is that the writers for the New York "dailies" have not had a very strict religious education. (Smiles.) There are one or two papers in New York that are so anxious on the subject of Christian disposition that they give their whole influence to save it from danger; but in general I think I may say that the training of the gentlemen who conduct that paper has not been theological. (Laughter.) I would not mind the misrepresentations for myself, but they disturb a great many good men. They disturb particularly the editors of religious newspapers. They take them up and moan and lament the defects and heresies and other pulpit troubles which afflict Plymouth Church. Now, I am a kind and good-hearted man and I cannot bear to give these good men distress and I think this unconscious wrong done by the reporters to the feelings of religious editors ought to stop. Then this misrepresentation has another effect—it lays me under the imputation of hedging. I may make a statement which will be perfectly correct and which I am willing to stand up to, but it will come out in the newspapers in a manner which is very surprising to me indeed. When I see it I don't know my own offspring. It will go all over the land if it is daintily done. A week or ten days after the sermon will come out in full and people will say, "Well, there's nothing in that." "No," says another, "there's nothing in that." Ah, he has just corrected that; he did not dare stand to it." Thus I am charged with insincerity and with want of courage, and with hedging.

I have said these things not for the sake of asking the gentlemen to be more careful. I ask nothing at all; I am quite content to leave the reports of my sermons to that general

equity and honorableness which I believe pervades those who are not in the profession of reporters.—*N.Y. Herald*, Jan. 1878.

HANDWRITING AND CHARACTER.

 YOU never take a pen in hand but you are showing something of your own character. The very style of the handwriting is an element of the determination of character. The way in which a man dashes off a letter is very much the way in which a man uses his voice. There is a modulated ease in the tones of handwriting. Without professing to be experts, like Messrs. Chabot and Netherclift, we can certainly gather a general idea of character from handwriting. A minister was commenting on a very strong despatch in the presence of his sovereign. "The language is strong," said the statesman, "but the writer does not mean it; he is irresolute." "Whence do you see irresolution?" said the king. "In his *n's* and *g's*, please your Majesty." Only it is to be said that a great deal of humbug is often talked by people who profess to be judges of handwriting. I showed a professor of caligraphy a letter which I had received. He took a very unfavourable view of the handwriting. It was the handwriting of a man without learning, without genius, without feeling. "And now, sir," I said, "will you look at the signature?" The letter was written by Lord Macaulay.—*London Society*.

Biographical Sketches.

T. WILLIAM BELL,

Whose portrait we give in this number, is a native of Montreal, 21 years of age, is familiar with seven leading systems. Commenced with Duploye in the early part of 1877; passed his examination, received a diploma from Paris and became a member of "L'Institut Stenographique des deux Mondes" in October of same year. He is a thorough Grahamite and has done much to bring the use of phonography under the notice of typos through the columns of the *Printers' Miscellany*, of which he is the phonographic editor.

JOHN CAREY.

John Carey, of Quebec, was born in that city in December, 1857, and was educated in the Quebec Seminary. He is a law student, and has recently obtained the degree of Bachelor of Law (L. L. B.) at Laval University; began the study of Graham's system in January, 1877, and was the first to introduce shorthand reporting in the Quebec Law Courts, of which he was appointed official stenographer in September, 1877; is a member of the firm of Carey and Lynch, reporters. Has reported many important trials, amongst others that of the "Atalaya" last summer, and a great number of railway cases.

Communications.

THE QUESTION OF SPEED.

HAMILTON, 20th Jan'y, 1881.

To the Editor of the WRITER:—

SIR,—Being only a "fledgling reporter" I should not perhaps find fault with the experiences and opinions of "old stagers," but I cannot forbear doing so regarding Mr. Geo. C. Holland's letter in your December issue.

I have been laboring under the impression that when I would be able to follow a speaker at say 150 to 180 words per minute, I could call myself a good reporter, but that letter just "settled" me. I had very great doubts about the ability of anyone to write 281 words per minute—I thought it rather *fast ink-slinging* so I tried what I would call a very fair test. It is a well known fact that a reader can read a speech much faster than an orator can deliver one. I took up different articles, one on astronomy, another on science, a newspaper editorial, and two or three others on different subjects, and read just as fast as I possibly could without any regard to punctuation or expression, and the following is the rate of the different trials:

—1st trial, 256 words per minute; 2nd, 200; 3rd, 256; 4th, 296; 5th, 312; 6th, 275; 7th, 275; 8th, 240; and a few others varying from 245 to 260. Now of one thing I am positive, *there is not a reporter in existence to-day who could have followed me in a single one of those trials.* You will also notice that only *two* of them were equal to or greater than the speed mentioned by Mr. Holland. Now if anyone will take the trouble to read over an article or two at any of the above rates, he will see the absurdity of claiming any such speed as 281 or 240, or even 200, in the matter I read at that rate. It seems to me almost idle to contradict such a statement. But 281 words! why it beats greased lightning. I would like to know what kind of an article, on what subject, and under what circumstances Mr. James Hoiland made that remarkable speed.

Yours Fraternally,

T. J. GODFREY,
late *Spectator* reporter.

To the Editor of the SHORTHAND WRITER:

DEAR SIR,—I am reported in the *Oshawa Reformer*, and subsequently in the *SHORTHAND WRITER*, as having written 1960 words in a ten minutes "take." while recently reporting one of Mr. Blake's speeches. As I do not claim such a rate of speed, I wish to correct a wrong impression. On the occasion referred to my hand was considerably out of practice, and I found that it taxed all my skill to keep up with Mr. Blake. In transcribing my notes the "copy" was taken from me sheet by sheet and sent to the printer. The last was a full page, and I thought I would count the number of

words on it to ascertain the rate at which Mr. Blake spoke per minute. I multiplied the number of words on the page by the number of sheets, and the amount was 1960. I was astonished, because I never flattered myself that I had attained such a speed, and when I announced the result the other reporters expressed some doubt about it also. Next day when the printed report appeared and my ten minutes' "take" was counted, I found that it amounted to just 1690 words, or 169 words per minute. Let other reporters sigh for 200 words-a-minute speakers, I have more respect for the orator whose tongue wags under 160.

A. HOLLAND,

Senate Reporter.

OTTAWA, Feb. 1881.

Transcript of T. William Bell's Reporting Notes.

LECTURE BY MR. J. E. B. MCCREADY.

Subject:—"THOS. D'ARCY MCGEE."

Delivered at the Mechanic's Institute, St. John, N.B.,
January 24, 1881.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The men who moved upon the stage of political life in Canada at the date of the Union, have been since passing away one by one. Howe, of Nova Scotia, statesman, journalist and orator, went down full of years and honors. George Brown, of Ontario, whose pen was so mighty, whose spirit so dauntless, whose influence so wide, was struck down untimely by the assassin's bullet. Cartier, the great leader of French Canadians; our own Charles Fisher, Holton, Sandfield McDonald, D'Arcy McGee, are gone. Others of that company, not less distinguished, still live. A century from now our grandchildren will look back and say, "There were giants in those days." To those who are gone we owe at least this tribute of mention, for they are dead, and the dead are soon forgotten. Among them there are few figures more conspicuous than Thos. D'Arcy McGee, the apostle of confederation and its most eloquent defender. Thomas D'Arcy McGee was born in Carlingsford, Ireland, in April 1825, when the "Emerald Isle," afterwards so dear to his heart, was renewing its mantle of green. Forty-three years later, on an April morning, in the city of Ottawa, when the Canadian winter still lingered, the last snow was stained with his life-blood, as he was foully slain. Of the intervening years, twenty were spent in Ireland, twelve in the United States, and ten in Canada. In each of those terms of years, in each of these countries, he had at various times been widely known as a lecturer, journalist and orator. Like many who have achieved greatness, he was not descended from a long line of noble ancestors, but had the fortune to be borne the son of an honest man and a good woman.

MIXING THE SYSTEMS.

To the Editor of the WRITER :

DEAR SIR.—The question of systems is of little importance to the practical stenographer. It does not matter much to a man who can follow with ease the most fluent speaker, whether he is adhering strictly to the system he adopted at the beginning of his phonographic career, or whether he has introduced certain innovations which to him are advantageous. What he wants is to be able to write and read quickly, or, in other words, the first consideration with him is speed and legibility. With the student it is different. He watches every departure from the correct system laid down in his book and if he is an enthusiastic student he will readily appropriate all improvements and apply them to his own use, but he does not like to see the particular system which he has made his study mixed up with several others, to the detriment of them all. An article appears in the December number of the SHORTHAND WRITER headed, "Practical Stenography," and said to be written in Graham's system. With the exception of a few contractions, and these are generally written out of position, there is scarcely any likeness between this production and "Graham's Standard System of Phonography," as I understand it. In some instances where the writer has thought proper to insert vowels to secure legibility, the vowels have generally been transposed, and what is worse, consonant-outlines, depending considerably on position for their legibility, have been written in the first place instead of the third, and *vice versa*. We cannot expect gentlemen who have their time well occupied with professional duties to be careful in their writing for our benefit, but we can ask them to leave us alone, and not make things worse by mixing everything up and calling it a "system." It is not fair to the student, and it is not fair to the system. I do not claim that Graham's system is any better than the others, but I contend that so far it has not had a "fair show" in the SHORTHAND WRITER, not from any fault of yours, Mr. Editor, but because the disciples of Graham have not come forward with their specimens, as the writers of the other systems have done. Cannot some of the many followers of Graham be prevailed upon to give us a genuine specimen of the "standard system" now and then.

AN OTTAWA STUDENT.

To the Editor of the WRITER :

In "Questions and Answers" in the last number of the WRITER you say stenographers are in demand in Toronto at salaries ranging from \$600 to \$1,000 per year. This has raised the question in my mind, Why do Canadian stenographers come to the States for employment if such is the case? I know two stenographers in Detroit whose salaries are less than \$600, and I am told by one who claims to know, and whom I have no reason to doubt, that there are several in Chicago working for \$35

per month! Very likely their speed is limited to 75 words per minute; but what of that so long as they fill the position to the exclusion of better men? Just as soon as railroad officials, lawyers, merchants, etc., learn that they can get such service at such rates, is it reasonable to suppose they will pay more? To save from twenty-five to thirty dollars per month on one item of expense alone, is it not reasonable to suppose they will be willing to spend a few minutes more of their time each day and gauge their dictation to the capacity of the writer?

I have probably considered this subject more than the majority of my worthy co-workers, and took up the study of shorthand to better my condition as the telegraph ranks were overcrowded. A little more than a year ago a new telegraph company was organized, which filled the telegraph fraternity with joy, as it employed all the idle operators in the country—they were in great demand at good salaries, and many who had left the employ to engage in other pursuits, returned to their "first love," and Peace and Prosperity ruled the hour. A consolidation has recently been consummated whereby hundreds of the men will be thrown out of employment. It will soon be the same with us—our tanks, now full, will, at no distant day, be as overcrowded as the telegraph, and a stenographer outside of the courts will be considered well paid at \$600 a year.

The cry of "students applying for situations when they can take but 75 words per minute is injurious to our interests," is very true, but who is to blame for it? Our own selves. Did we not teach it there would not be so many students to apply, and as the natural result of supply and demand we could command better pay. I do not say a word against those who take up the study themselves and carry it through all its disheartening intricacies to a successful termination without assistance, as they are worthy of the laurels they gain, and will become, each one, an honor to the profession—but I speak of those of our own craft who, for personal gain, teach the art, thus jeopardizing the interests of the fraternity at large, by supplying doubtful goods to a market well stocked with talent. I pray you will not think of me in the connection with "the dog in the manger"—that I want all of this world's goods for myself, as I simply take the position of self-protection. I have a family dependent upon my exertions for support and it is my duty to protect myself and them to the best of my ability. There is not a stenographer in the country but knows these things are as I have said—the daily papers and railroad publications are full of advertisements for situations by men claiming to be experts in the art.

Perhaps I have taken up too much of your space. I will say no more but hope the seed thus sown will bear good fruit, and as you work for our interests would be pleased to have you give your opinion on the subject.

PROTECTIONIST.

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan, Feb. 4, 1881.

Editorial Notes.



Wm. Campbell, lately of Hamilton, is now employed as shorthand writer by the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad Co.

Mr. Haining, lately of Toronto, is now employed by the Great Western Railway Co., at Hamilton, as shorthand writer.

Mr. T. J. Godfrey, Hamilton, will be glad to receive transcripts of the grandiloquent version "The House that Jack Built," see page 159.

There are no official stenographers in Florida. Parties to a suit may employ one if they choose, but it is only done in very important cases.

The shorthand writers acting as secretaries in the Ontario Government Departments are busy, owing to the Legislative Assembly being in session.

The *Cabinet*, from the publishing house of Mr. James Butterworth, South Shields is as usual neatly lithographed, and contains a good selection of miscellaneous literary matter.

The *Phonographic Monthly*, new series, edited by William Goddard, and published by J. Butterworth, 1 Winterbottom St., South Shields, Eng., is very interesting both in literary matter and illustrations.

The *Phonographic Herald* for January is to hand. It contains the continuation of Mr. Thomas' notes on Pitman's Dictionary, which are interesting. The critic points out a good many mistakes in the work, and suggests sundry changes in form which are improvements, and some are not. He has now reached the letter M.

Coe-e-e, an illustrated shorthand magazine, edited and published by Ralph D. Christie, Melbourne, Australia, comes to hand bearing date, Oct. 1880, having made a jump of six months to get there. The editor will require a hop, step, and jump to get abreast of the times. It is neatly printed and the illustrations are humorous and well executed.

The *Phonographic Meteor*, Mr. Charles J. Payne's tasteful little monthly, is up to its usual standard in lithography and illustrations. The list of contributors to this publication contains the names of some distinguished shorthand writers. The frontispiece by Lehmann was evidently suggested by the gushing lines of Harold Cox, in the same number,—"Five Fair Ones." We feel sure the picture never suggested the lines.

The *Student's Journal* contains a continuation of "The Reporter's List," and a lengthy criticism, on page forty, of Benn Pitman's "Reporter's Companion."

D. L. Scott-Browne would like to be a wag as well as a leader in the phonographic world. His idea of humor, however, is about as curious as his notion of decency. In the Christmas number of his *Monthly* he publishes an alleged portrait of Mr. T. Wm. Bell. This is simply an old wood-cut of an aged gentleman which may in reality be Mr. Browne's grandfather: it certainly isn't Mr. Bell, nor is the "autograph" signature under it at all like that gentleman's handwriting. This "joke" would be sufficiently like a libel if it were not accompanied as it is by a page of abusive and discreditable letter-press. Such stuff as this can hardly be palatable to the readers of the *Monthly*, unless they differ materially in their tastes from the ordinary members of the phonographic fraternity. The January number contains interesting reports of the dinners of the "New York Press Club" and "Law Stenographers' Association" of the city of New York.

An association has been formed in Melbourne, Australia, with His Honor Judge Higinbotham, as President. It is to be known as "The Australasian Institute of Shorthand Writers" and its objects are:—

1. To improve the status of shorthand writers (a) by bringing more prominently before the public the value of shorthand as a time saver and aid in expediting business; (b) by urging upon the Government and other large employers of clerical assistance, the many advantages of utilizing shorthand writers whenever practicable, and by assisting members of the Institute to procure remunerative engagements as shorthand clerks and reporters.

2. To encourage intercourse between shorthand writers of all systems.

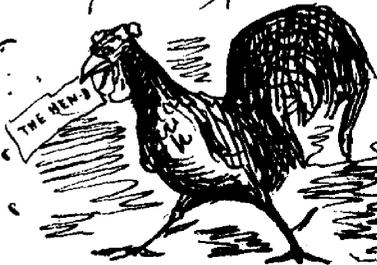
3. To interest beginners to persevere with the study of shorthand by affording them opportunities of meeting for practice, and by offering them facilities for turning their knowledge of the art to advantage.

4. To grant certificates of proficiency to members

5. To form a stenographic library to be accessible to all members.

6. To extend a knowledge of shorthand by all means the committee may deem desirable.





Handwritten shorthand text filling the page, organized into columns and rows, corresponding to the illustrations.

(Written in Isaac Pitman's System.)

PROPOSED CONGRESS OF JOURNALISTS.

(From the Reporters' Magazine.)

The proposed Congress of Journalists
 is to be held in London, England,
 on the 1st of September, 1881.
 It is expected that the Congress
 will be a most successful one,
 and that it will result in the
 formation of a permanent
 International Association of
 Journalists.
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 at the Hotel Victoria, London,
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GRIP'S RELIABLE HOROSCOPE FOR FEBRUARY—MALE.

The month of February is a most
 favorable one for the male sex.
 It is a time of great activity
 and of great success.
 The month is a most favorable
 one for the male sex.
 It is a time of great activity
 and of great success.
 The month is a most favorable
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 It is a time of great activity
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 It is a time of great activity
 and of great success.

Leaves from a Reporter's Note Book.

FAC-SIMILE OF REPORTING NOTES OF T. WILLIAM BELL, WRITTEN IN GRAHAM'S SYSTEM.

(See Key in Common Print.)

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A PAUPER'S DEATH.
 (Written in Graham's System.)

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