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BENGOUGH'S
COSMOPOLITAN
SHORTHAND WRITER.

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

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(For the COSMOPOLITAN SHORTHAND WRITER.)

HOW I BECAME A PHONOGRAPHIC REPORTER.

BY JON SKOT.

Twenty-five years ago, when I was a young man, I became influenced by an intense desire to learn the art of verbatim reporting. The mystic characters of shorthand excited and stimulated my curiosity. That, by means of these cabalistic and perplexing signs, thought could be transmitted to paper as fast as the speaker uttered it in words, was astonishing. I was fascinated by the mysterious art, and resolved to discover the secret of the adroit and rapid manipulation which achieved such wonderful results.

Upon inquiring I found that very few people, even among those of superior education, knew anything about shorthand except that it was extremely difficult to learn, requiring years of patient labor before the student of the art could report a speech verbatim. It was also intimated to me that it was a much more difficult task to read shorthand than it was to write it. That this should be the case appeared very singular. Experience, however, verified the observation; although, so far as Phonography is concerned, I discovered, in time, that the cause of embarrassment in deciphering it is not so much in the art itself as in the excessive use of arbitrary abbreviations, and because of its being badly written.

Investigation disclosed the fact that there were several systems of shorthand, each of which claimed for itself the distinction of being the best. A method of "writing by sound," termed "Phonography," had, a few years previous to the time of which I write, been invented by Mr. Isaac Pitman, of Bath, England. As a system of shorthand it had proved superior to all that had preceded it. Instead of taking as its basis the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet

and representing each by an arbitrary sign, it took the forty-two elementary sounds of the language, and represented these by straight lines, curves, and dots, which bore such a relation to each other, and to the elementary sounds, that by the principle of association of ideas they were comparatively easy of acquisition. This art of Phonography was based upon the underlying science of Phonics, and thus had a philosophical foundation. Each of the signs of its alphabet represented but one sound, consequently the word "though," instead of being spelled with six letters, was spelled with but two, as there are but two sounds to be represented. I made up my mind to study Phonography, and as I determined to master the art, I procured such instruction books as were to be obtained at the time, and such as were afterwards published. These I carefully studied, and by doing so I found that while the basic principles of Phonography remained about the same as when first invented, the art, in practice, was greatly modified, changed, and even confused, by the introduction from time to time, of "improvements," many of which were mere individual conceits. Through adopting these innovations I had to unlearn many things which I had learned; my progress in speed and accuracy was retarded; and I had, at last, to rely upon the results of my own experience in actual reporting, and upon the experience of thorough practical reporters with whom I became acquainted. In order that others may be spared the delay, perplexity and drudgery which I endured in becoming a phonographic reporter, I give here the results of my experience in testing the merits of the various "systems" of Phonography.

In common with most people who have an erroneous idea of what is required to constitute a system of shorthand, comparatively easy of attainment and adequate to the needs of the verbatim reporter, I believed that the greater the number of abbreviated outlines of words which I committed to memory the greater would be my speed in writing. The authors of the instruction books that I studied seemed to be aware of this false idea on the part of the tyro in reporting, and they encouraged him in it by presenting for his use an array of fascinating expedients and a multitude of elaborate contractions. The theory was very prepossessing, but the practice was an abortion. In pursuance of my resolution to be as nearly perfect as possible, I endeavored to master all the expedients, contractions and arbitrary signs for words with which the most popular phonographic text-books abounded. I devoted weeks, months, and even years, to the task, but without success; and although I have met many reporters who have attempted the same thing, I never found one who had effectively and completely embodied in his practice the multitudinous abbreviations of the instruction books.

I order that I may be fully understood, I wish to say here, that although in Phonography a word is spelled solely by its sound, yet, owing to the flexibility of the system, a word of more than one syllable may be represented in more than one way, and the greater the number of syllables in a word the more do the outlines that will express it vary. Of these outlines the one that is the briefest to the eye is not always the speediest to the hand. There is, therefore, a choice of outlines, and his ordinary practice not only makes the reporter familiar with those which are the best for his purpose, but enables him to make, on the instant, the most appropriate outline for a word that is seldom used. As the vowels are omitted by the reporter, his word outlines, in order that they may be rapidly written and easily read, should be such as are formed with the utmost facility and are suggestive of the complete words that they represent. Let us suppose that the student of Phonography learns an abbreviated outline—which really amounts to an arbitrary contraction—for the word "subordinate." The contracted outline is not apt to be suggestive. It must, by special practice, be so thoroughly mastered that the hand will write it instantaneously, and the eye will unhesitatingly recognize and read it. If it is not thus completely familiar-

ized it is a cause of hesitation, and is a positive detriment to speed and accuracy. The word "subordinate" is of comparatively rare occurrence. A man may report three months in court, or anywhere else, without hearing it, and if he had never spent time and labor in committing to memory and practising an arbitrary outline for it, he would write its full consonant skeleton as rapidly as he heard the word spoken, and if suddenly called upon to read the sentence containing it he would do so without any hesitation. Now if a student undertakes to learn contractions for six or seven hundred, or more, such words as "subordinate" so perfectly that he will not fail to write them, and also to read them, on the instant, it will be seen that his task is most severe, and is besides actually unnecessary. It is the laboring over contractions of this nature that causes so much time to be spent in learning to write Phonography swiftly, and, what is more difficult still, in learning to read it rapidly and accurately.

It is estimated that of one thousand words of any speech, sermon, evidence, or conversation, about six hundred will be such words as "a," "and," "the," "is," "was," "on," "in," "he," "may," "could," etc. To state the matter briefly: about three-fifths of our spoken language consists of conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and of the most familiar of the remaining "parts of speech." A not very extended list will embrace all the words that occur so frequently that, for the sake of speed, it is absolutely necessary to have contracted methods of expressing them. As the reporter, except in very special cases, omits vowels, words such as "in," "he," and "may," consisting of but one consonant and one vowel, become "sign-words" by simply omitting the vowel, and are readily memorized as specific. To load the memory with an accumulation of words that are not of the most frequent occurrence burdens the mind with a task that can be more easily accomplished by the swift hand, retards progress, and impairs accuracy. By leaving out the multitude of unnecessary "sign-words" with which the text-books are crowded, the pupil saves time and wearying labor. He will become just as rapid a reporter as he who devotes an extra year or two to the toil of memorizing these words and the outlines that represent them, and the balance of accuracy will always be in favor of him who writes a full outline for a word, because he who writes a contraction is ever in danger of forgetting it at the

moment he wants to use it, or of being puzzled when he attempts to read it. The best reporters of the present day disapprove of contracted outlines, except in the case of words of very frequent recurrence, and favor full outlines, which are generally easier to write and are always easier to read than contractions. If the phonographer is employed by a business firm as corresponding clerk, he will find certain technical words peculiar to the business constantly recurring. He can very easily, if he so desire, make contracted outlines for these words, but for anyone to attempt to memorize such outlines for the technical terms of every business, trade and profession, is to attempt more than the ordinary human intellect is capable of accomplishing.

My experience with text-books taught me another valuable lesson. I found that little "ticks" and "curls" were used to represent such words as "of," "or," "on," "we," "you," etc. These words are of the most frequent occurrence. They, also, enter into the composition of numberless words and phrases, and are extensively used in the interrogatories of the lawyer examining a witness. Almost any one will admit that he who writes a free, flowing hand will write with much greater ease and speed than he who writes in a stiff, contracted manner. I found that the effect of these microscopic signs was to actually retard the free movement of the hand. They gave the writing a cramped and spotted appearance; could not be made with such unerring accuracy as to be always of the proper size; were, consequently, a source of confusion; and could not be employed in numbers of oft repeated phrases because they would not combine with other signs. To the ordinary observer a minute scratch or curl is a very excellent sign for a word; it has quite a pretty appearance in a printed reading lesson; and can, apparently, be written with great ease and speed. When, however, one is writing at the rate of one hundred and fifty words per minute, and the hand has instantly and frequently to curtail its movement to make the aforesaid scratch or curl, it will be found that a longer or more flowing sign can be made with greater ease, and, on the average, strange as it may appear, with equal speed. Unless the brief sign expresses more than one word, its brevity of form does not compensate for the difficulty of making it accurately, a difficulty that increases in proportion to the degree of speed at which

you are writing. With regard to these signs, therefore, I adopted the method of a system that does not use scratches and curls, but gives the full alphabetical sign for such a word, for instance, as "ought." When the sign is written half its proper length it expresses "ought it," and thus, by indicating an additional word, it compensates for the actual, though not always apparent curtailment of the movement of the hand in writing it. It is very difficult to find two phonographers who use the scratches and curls who can read each other's writing, but the writer has been one of six working in the same office who did not use them, and who could transcribe each other's notes with the utmost readiness. Indeed four of us did little else than transcribe the notes of the other two, who were regularly employed in court, and who never, except in an emergency, transcribed their own notes at all.

Phonography recognizes three "positions" in which a word can be written, depending upon the accented vowel in the word being a "first"- "second"- or "third-place" vowel. These "positions" are: above the line, on the line, and through or below the line. When one writes a word in Phonography the outline is first flashed through the mind. If "position" has not to be considered, the word will be written on the line, and the mind is instantaneously relieved, so far as the word is concerned, from any further effort. If, however, "position" has to be considered, it will be seen that the mind has to make two efforts, one to create the outline and the other to determine its "position." In the majority of cases the latter effort is wholly superfluous and unnecessary. Except in comparatively a few instances a word with more than two consonant signs in its outline will be read with ease if written on the line, although its accented vowel would, if the usual rule were followed, cause it to be written above or below the line. I question if any of the advocates of strict adherence to "position" have become, after years of practice, so expert as to write every word in the "position" demanded by the rule; and if they have become so elaborately exact they have given themselves a vast amount of unessential labor. I found that after the mind had formed the outline of the word, the effort necessary to determine the "position" was a source of hesitation, and I discovered that some of the best verbatim reporters paid but little attention to the subject except in certain special instances.

When a word of very frequent occurrence such as "about" is represented in Phonography by a single alphabetical sign, the word is termed a "sign-word," and the sign which it indicates is called a "word-sign." Two or more of these "word-signs" are often combined to form a "phrase-sign," when "sign-words" follow one another in this manner: "about which," "it can be," etc. This "phrasing" is, under certain conditions, a valuable aid to speed. The instruction books, however, give the student too many "phrases" to commit to memory and incorporate with his practice. I lost much time endeavoring to memorize "phrases," until I conceived the idea that I could, when writing, form at the moment, upon general principles, all the "phrases" that were really essential to speed. Soon after this, in order to perfect myself in Phonography, I entered the office to which I have already alluded. Here, from time to time, I transcribed the notes, taken in court, of three verbatim law reporters, one of them being the official stenographer of the judicial district. These men, of course, all wrote the same system, and yet there was the greatest dissimilarity in their phrasing. Indeed their notes differed as much in character and general appearance as did their handwriting. The temperament and peculiarities of each expressed themselves in his phonography. I therefore ceased to learn "set phrases," and soon found that my phrases formed themselves with facility and without any special effort to make them.

One important element of legibility is commonly disregarded by the phonographic reporter. The legibility of ordinary handwriting depends very much upon the letters being properly formed and joined. The same thing is true of phonography. It is impossible for anyone but himself to read the notes of a phonographer when the characters are distorted. Indeed the writer is too often himself perplexed and puzzled by his own notes, and loses valuable time in the effort to decipher them. His accuracy is, also, affected by his being unable to tell what some askew outline means, which may be supposed to mean one thing, while it really means something very different. The time and labor devoted to acquiring the ability to write phonography symmetrically will be amply compensated by augmented speed, legibility, and accuracy.

There is one point more to which I wish to allude. Nearly all the phonographic instruction books teach first a "correspond-

ing style," and then a "reporting style." The former "style" requires the pupil to insert the vowels and to use two "positions." The latter "style" omits the vowels, and teaches three "positions," besides a quantity of extra "word-signs" and make-shifts. When learning the first the pupil omits a great deal that he could learn at the time. When he advances to the second he has to unlearn more or less of what he has acquired. All this is a serious hindrance to progress. There is no necessity for such a distinction being made in "styles." The learner should be taught the "reporting style" from the commencement, and when he corresponds with a friend he can insert or omit vowels as the circumstances require. In fact the textbooks contain a mass of rules, distinctions and discursive paragraphs that are altogether superfluous, and are utterly disregarded by the experienced verbatim reporter. Phonography, in common with other arts, will improve, but the improvement will simplify the art, and not render it more and more obscure, intricate, and difficult of attainment.

Now, from years of observation, experience, and practice, I have deduced the following conclusions, which, I hope, will prove of benefit to students of the fascinating art of Phonography:

First,—It is only the most constantly recurring words that should be memorized as "sign-words." Second,—No attention should be paid to forming contracted outlines for words that do not frequently occur. Third,—As few ticks, scratches and curls as possible should be used. Fourth,—Except in some special cases, all outlines consisting of three or more consonant signs should be written on the line. Fifth,—The general principles of "phrasing" being mastered, no time should be spent in learning "phrases." Sixth,—A free, bold manipulation of the pen or pencil should be acquired, so that the phonographer's notes may be symmetrical and legible. Seventh,—Let the pupil begin with the "reporting style," and the "corresponding style" will take care of itself.

If the student will be guided by the above conclusions he will save himself two good years of exhaustive drudgery, and countless moments of excruciating perplexity. It was through the practice of these principles that I became a phonographic reporter.

NO YOUNG MAN should omit to make shorthand a study. It will pay him.

VIEWS OF A VETERAN SHORTHAND WRITER.

The opening meeting of the English "Short-hand Society" was held on Tuesday, November 1st, 1881, at the City Club, Ludgate-Circus, London, and was remarkably well attended. The President (Mr. Cornelius Walford, F.S.S., F.I.A.), delivered a lengthy address. We have space for extracts only.

If I were required, said Mr. Walford, to indicate what I regard to be one of the indications of a higher state of intellectual superiority in man, I should at once say that it was to be found in the initiation, and yet more in the practical use, of shorthand!

I need not enter minutely into the debatable question of the precise period when the art of stenography was first contrived or brought into practice. Whatever the period, it will be found one of advancing civilization. It may be that the claims of the "Tironian Notes" carry the discovery back to the time of Cicero—1st century B.C.—an epoch of great intellectual advancement. It is equally probable that the advent of the printing press and its adaptation to the events of everyday life in the development of newspapers was really the advent of the actual practice of stenography.

The art, whenever invented, is to be regarded as closely associated with the progress of an enlightened administration of justice. From the time that evidence, in the sense of the term now understood, came to be admitted in the course of legal proceedings—by no means coeval with the institution of trial by jury, for until within the last two or three centuries the jury did not constitute an impartial body, independently selected to determine upon the weight of evidence; but themselves were rather the accusers, and were selected from the fact of their having a prior knowledge of the matters in accusation, or of the general repute of the person charged—from the period, I repeat, when testimony came to be used in an independent sense, it became necessary to have available the means of recording such testimony apart from the tedium of written questions and answers—a process which is only retained in one remaining form of a court of inquiry, viz., the court-martial.

And what a wonderful advancement was the application of the art of stenography, as against the previous impunity of perjured witnesses—aye, and even against the machinations of unjust judges. The actual testimony of witnesses on record in the possession of impartial reporters, it became common to both sides, and was, indeed, available to be placed, if need were, before the highest court—that of public opinion!

The art of shorthand, in the light of being a handmaid and something more—an incorruptible associate and protector—in the administration of justice, has not, in my opinion, been heretofore sufficiently considered. The shorthand writer engaged in judicial proceedings, exercises a high and important function. It is

quite a common occurrence in cases of appeal, to have references to the stenographers' notes, alike for the purpose of determining the weight of evidence as for ascertaining the direction of the judge to the jury. Hence it is of consequence that the reporter be sufficiently qualified for his work—otherwise, instead of aiding the cause of justice, he may (unwittingly indeed) prove an agent in its miscarriage. To say that he must be a man of integrity seems, in such a connection, quite superfluous.

The first recorded instance I have met with of the stenographic reporting of a trial is that of Rich, who reported the prosecution of Lieut. Colonel John Lilborne (or Milbourne) in 1651, for treason in writing a paper called *England's New Chains*—a trial regarded as so important that there have been published 200 books and pamphlets relating to it and the surrounding circumstances, most of which may be found in the Library of the British Museum. Here the accused gave a certificate of, or bore testimony to, the accuracy of the report.

In the matter of freedom of speech, too, the function of the stenographer has been one of growing importance. Freedom of speech has developed with the growth of the newspaper press. Oratory may, indeed, be addressed to the masses personally present, who hear and judge for themselves. But where one assembly is held for no other purpose than that of influencing those personally present, an hundred are held whereat the proceedings are intended as much for the thousands who are absent as for the scores who are present. It is the peculiar province of the stenographer to perform the important function of placing on permanent record such proceedings. Here again proficiency in the art is of high consequence, for it is required to be known, not what might have taken place, or ought to have occurred, but what did actually take place—that is what was said (*i.e.*, the substance of it), and the order in which it was spoken.

It is, perhaps, almost unnecessary to say to this assembly, many of whom are proficient in the practice of reporting, that a man may be able to write shorthand and may yet be totally unqualified to present a true and faithful account of what has really transpired on any given occasion. Yet this has been made lamentably clear quite recently in the case of the Irish police reporters. Many of these, probably, were able to record quite accurately certain disjointed phrases of speech. But if they took these ever so accurately, without the surrounding and continuing context, it is easy to imagine what great injustice might be done; and this was the charge continuously made against them.

This leads me further to say that a mere shorthand writer may lack many of the qualifications of a reporter. A shorthand writer may be a born expert. A reporter (in the true sense of the word) is a creation—created by long and varied experience—educated in the

ways of the world, in the intricacies of public life, and has to possess faculties which find no place in school examinations, and which have—perhaps from sheer want of appreciation of their merits—received no recognition in university honors.

The main function of a reporter is to render, as it were, a miniature view of actual occurrences, omitting nothing material, especially following the language of a speaker, yet curtailing perchance his wearying tautology, and amending, as almost of necessity, his mutilated grammar.

We all of us remember the old style of reporters, who were entirely innocent of the art of stenography in its scientific application. There is, indeed, now a class of persons—summary writers of the proceedings in parliament—who, by long training, have learned to abandon notes, and to record, as it were upon the brain, the very essence of the debate they are to reproduce. But even these occasionally find the power of taking an accurate stenographic note of vast service. They belong to a different school to those longhand summary writers of the preceding generation, who rendered good service to journals limited alike in space and scope.

When I speak of the reporters of the old school—some of whom were stenographers, but the greater proportion of whom, as already stated, were not—I am driven to think of the difficulties under which those who had mastered stenography labored. Of the many systems which existed before the advent of Isaac Pitman, I am bound to say that I regard them, with hardly an exception, as singularly imperfect. They showed, indeed, what could be done by arbitrary signs and cabalistic combinations! But they were in no sense scientific systems, capable of being extended to all the requirements of modern stenographic practice. Their authors, almost invariably, fell back upon arbitrary signs for nearly all beyond those ordinary words which can be expressed by a single character or by the most simple combinations. The characters, indeed, do not admit of extended combinations in an intelligible form. Arbitrary abbreviations being not only admissible but absolutely essential, every stenographer could make his own, and usually did so. It was in many cases easier to invent than to remember—besides it was at best but a game of individual ingenuity and power of adaptation.

I shall never forget how nearly I was being driven from the pursuit of stenography in despair. I had learned Odell's shorthand when I was a lad at school. I tried my hand at sermons of course—had ground to begin on—no pauses for cheers or laughter—not even a solitary "hear, hear," to relieve the tedium. The system, if it may be called so by bare courtesy, was utterly inadequate. But many of the phrases of the preacher were capable of easy conversion into arbitraries, and so I got along as a matter of speed. But when I ventured upon a translation the result was too often

quite distressing. Next, I tried my hand at local agricultural meetings. But here another and quite different set of arbitraries came into play as expressive of the mysteries of deep draining and the fattening of prize cattle. Finally, a trial in the Law Courts proved the shortcomings of all the aids I had previously devised, and I grew entirely out of heart.

The next incident in my stenographic career is one still deeply impressed upon my memory. The scene was the opening of a literary institution, the principal actor a baronet of honored name, and of some aspiration to learning. Parnassus-hill had been raked over for high sounding words, running into any number of syllables, richly interlarded with poetry, and moderately so with quotations. I had been offered a respectable fee by a local publisher if I would render something like a verbatim note of the address, which it was not expected would be a formal written one. The first five minutes convinced me that my stenography was altogether up a tree on this occasion. I faltered and finally broke off, endeavoring to cover my defeat by appearing deeply absorbed in the speaker; and in some measure I was so, for I discovered the thread of the discourse seemed to strike chords not altogether unfamiliar. In truth I began to think I could spot passages from Channing's works, Elegant Extracts, and Knox's Essays, and that therefore my memory and past reading might go a long way towards helping me in reproducing what my stenography had utterly failed to accomplish. All was going on pleasantly in this direction, when a sound of continued rustling of paper immediately behind me arrested my attention. On turning round to discover the cause, I recognized a face I had seen at meetings of importance elsewhere. It was, in truth, one of the principal reporters of the leading county newspaper. My nose was now entirely out of joint. The work would be done over my head, but I found consolation, at least diversion, in a new direction, and this was in carefully watching the contortions of the pencil of my accomplished rival. I had never seen such characters in any system of stenography with which I was familiar. They were not only far more complicated than the Chinese characters, but they were much larger. Many of these characters so rapidly produced—built up apparently with the wildest dashes of the pencil, void of system, to say nothing of science, as it seemed to me—were as large as half-crown pieces, and resembled more than anything I could then, or since, imagine, caricature faces. I was fairly carried away into an entire forgetfulness of time, place and circumstance. The operator became suffused in a dense perspiration from his labors—for the reader of the address seemed intentionally to increase the rapidity of his utterance. I too, perspired in amazement. I felt myself indeed a novice in stenography. Could it be possible that such a performance constituted a necessary portion of the duties of a perfected shorthand writer? An hour had

passed. The address came to an end. There were other merely formal proceedings, of which my neighbor took a less laborious note; but still his performance was prodigious. How could such hieroglyphics even be deciphered?

The proceedings terminated. I kept close to my laborious rival, intending to ask him, at the very least, whose system he practised, and perchance how long it took him to learn it? In this desire I found myself making my way unconsciously towards the orator of the evening. The next thing I heard was an application to said orator, in the name of the county journal he represented, for the loan of the MS., and the request was somewhat reluctantly granted. This opened up to me a new view of reporting, and while I was pondering upon it, and how entirely I had permitted myself in my inexperience to be circumvented on my own ground, my friend of the mysterious pencil had disappeared.

To say that in my midnight reflections—that terrible chewing of the oud of disappointed hopes and abortive ambitions—I did my rival the injustice of believing that his laborious gesticulations and profuse perspiration were but means to an end, and that end the coercing of the semi-learned baronet into parting with his notes, is, I fear, but an admission of the exact truth. But I afterwards discovered, and now gladly admit, that I did him a great injustice. I soon learned that the apparent madness of his style had a great deal of method in it. I have since seen him write, and know that he faithfully transcribed many thousands of columns of such labored mysteries. The only diplomacy he employed on the occasion referred to (in, I fear, such tedious detail) was that of being prepared for a refusal of the loan of the MS. by its author. And this useful lesson many of us have learnt the force of in the course of our experience. *Semper parati*—"Be always prepared"—is an excellent motto for a young reporter. The older ones have the precaution engraved upon their memories. [Mr. Walford then gave a learned dissertation on the literature of shorthand, for which we regret we have not space. A general discussion followed.—Ed. C. S. W.]

A meeting of the Canadian Shorthand Writers' Association will be held in the Parliament buildings, Ottawa, on Monday, February 18, at 10 a. m. for election of officers and other business. This official notice foreshadows the renaissance of this association, and it is hoped that with the increased experience and the large increase of membership which will have accrued to the association since its last meeting, there will be a strong and vigorous organization, which will do a real service to the profession in this country.

From the 1st of January there will be published in Vienna, twice a week, a paper which is printed in at least twelve languages. By and bye samples will be gradually issued in more than two thousand languages and dialects.

[For the WRITER.]

SHORTHAND AMANUENSIS WORK.

BY CHAS. A. MARCH, CHICAGO, ILL.

To learn to be a reliable shorthand amanuensis for a business house, I should say, if I were asked, is not so very difficult, except that it does require a great amount of patient, persevering work. As to special ability, or aptitude for that kind of work, that has not so much to do with it; it is the quantity of constant work which tells in this study. More would succeed in their attempts to learn shorthand if they simply had more "stickativeness" in their composition. No doubt many a poor fellow who gives up shorthand in despair or disgust, would find he had enough of that desirable quality if he would only believe it, and shake himself, like Sampson, and go to work. To use a rough expression, he should take hold like a bull-pup, and not let go. Suppose he begins with that determination and grip; then I would say, after my own short experience of two years, work at it two or three hours daily,—five or six would doubtless be better. Then :

I. Go over the lessons of the text-book and write all the exercises, turning them both ways, into short and longhand, and so proving the correctness of your work. Practice a great deal on the word-signs, contractions and arbitrary positions, making up your own exercises for that purpose if those of the text-books are not enough.

II. As soon as this preliminary work is mastered—and don't confine yourself to it too long—strike out boldly into copying from miscellaneous reading matter wherever found; magazines are good, and use the dictionary constantly so as to learn the best outlines; the student cannot trust to his own raw experience in this, but should at least give his shorthand dictionary a fair trial, and it will probably save him much bungling work. For each to follow his own sweet will on phonographic outlines is much the same as if we all should spell the English language, not according to Worcester, Webster, or other good authority, but each according to his own individual fancy; the result would be very undesirable, and, to say the least, inconvenient. It is a good plan to make lists of words, at the top of your exercise page or elsewhere, whose outlines you are unfamiliar with, and practice on them often.

III. As soon as you can copy a newspaper or other article into shorthand with considerable accuracy, without much reference to dictionary, get some one to read to you for two or three hours daily, regulating his speed according to your ability to write correctly and legibly; and this writing from dictation can be kept up with profit, even if it costs something, for many months. Read considerable, or all, of your own shorthand every day. It is well to vary the dictation exercises by reading back what you have just written, while the reader corrects your mistakes by reference to the printed page ;

it is a stimulus to read to some one, rather than to read alone. When you can get a small part of a moderate speaker's address, attend all the public meetings possible, for practice. Work of this kind, kept up unflinchingly, will doubtless bring the success sought, unless the student has unusually poor ability, or is unusually lacking in his early education. Probably the trouble often is, where shorthand students give up in despair, that they have at the outset under-estimated the amount of daily practice required to master the art within say a year or two years, so as to do good amanuensis work. They get a little fagged out, and begin to take it in more and more homeopathic doses, often skipping a day, or even a week, in their practice, until it looks as if their main object was to see how little work they could do on the shorthand without giving it up altogether. The question should be how much, not how little time they can give to it. A whole-souled devotion to the work, no matter what the labor or cost may be—and time need be the only expensive outlay—will do the business, even without a teacher, and without any great genius. To become a good court stenographer doubtless requires more special qualifications. But there is, we think, a great and increasing demand for reliable amanuenses at comfortable salaries. Here, in Chicago, ladies occupy positions in that line in some of the largest houses. We understand Chicago has the reputation of paying clerks, generally, poor salaries. That may be a libel on many excellent houses; but the writer, when applying for a shorthand position, here, at a certain publishing house, was told, when he put his desired salary at what he thought was moderate enough, that they could get a plenty of clerks to do the work for from six to eight dollars a week! We are glad to say that Prof. Brown's Bureau did not have the giving of that desirable (?) position. The writer has found ability to use the type-writer quite a necessary qualification in his own case.

MICROSCOPIC WRITING.

With reference to the query at the end of the notice which appeared in our issue for April, relative to Mr. G. H. Davidson's recent very remarkable shorthand achievement, we learn that it took him about twenty-four hours to write upon the post-card in question the 32,673 words, not consecutive hours, we suppose we need scarcely add. The writer himself does not pretend to decipher the photo, which is, of course, much less clear than the original writing, but he undertakes to read the latter without the aid of any magnifying glass. Mr. Davidson evidently possesses the faculty of writing very minutely, and perhaps some of our readers will hardly credit that he has written the Lord's Prayer four times, in longhand, in the space of a three-penny piece. Here no suspicion arises as to all being written as stated, the words being all legible to the ordin-

ary naked eye. And as he believed that if he tried he could write almost as much again in the same space, we have, with his courteous consent, put his calligraphic powers to a test of our own choosing. We requested him to oblige us by writing in microscopic longhand the daily prayer for printers translated from Ernesti's "Die Wol Eingerichtete Buchdruckerey," dated in the 281st year since the discovery of the art of printing, and quoted by Mr. William Blades in his *Medallic History of Printing*. The prayer is as follows:

A DAILY PRAYER FOR PRINTERS.

O Lord, Almighty God, printing is a noble and a glorious art, a blessing Thou hast reserved for mankind in these latter days; an art by which all conditions of men, and especially thy Holy Church, are greatly nourished. And since, good Lord, Thou hast of Thy free grace given me the opportunity of exercising an art and craft so exalted, I pray Thee to guide me by Thy Holy Spirit in using the same to Thy honor. Thou knowest, dear Lord, that great diligence, continual care, and accurate knowledge of the characters of many languages are needful in this art, therefore I call to Thee for help, that I may be earnest and careful, both in the setting up of types, and in printing the same. Preserve my purity; that so after a life here besting a printer, I may hereafter at the last coming of my most worthy Saviour, Jesus Christ, be found a good workman in His sight, and wear the everlasting crown in His presence. Hear me, dearest God, for Thy honor and my welfare. Amen.

In response to our request, Mr. Davidson encloses us various specimens of his minute writing, and in longhand he has written the above "Printers' Daily Prayer" nearly twice in the space of a three-penny piece. He writes: "Hitherto I have only tried the Lord's Prayer, the wording of which being familiar, people experience less difficulty in deciphering my writing. I enclose a photo of the Lord's prayer, written four times in the space of a three-penny piece, and the longhand of the "Printers' Daily Prayer is equivalent to the former written in five times the same space. You will notice that in the "Printers' Daily Prayer" I have had to divide some of the words, and my divisions have not always been syllabic; but considering the smallness of the space at my disposal you will probably not be inclined to find fault with my production on that account. The shorthand contains the "Printers' Prayer" four times, and the writing is perhaps somewhat closer than that on the card which you recently noticed in your journal. If you could send me a pen finer than the one herewith, which is what I have been using, I could doubtless write very much closer." I have not yet come across any finer nib, but probably you may have done so."

We shall be happy to show to any of our readers the samples of penmanship alluded to above. We perhaps need hardly remark that Mr. Davidson is otherwise entitled to be considered an expert penman when we add that he can write shorthand at the rate of 180, and longhand at the rate of 80 words per minute; and besides he can engross in old style and write ornamentally in black to any degree of elaboration. Moreover he can copy, with pen and ink, woodcuts like *Punch's* cartoons, with such fidelity

to the original, that the difference is only observable on account of the ink he employs being blacker than that used by the printer.

Such manipulative skill and wonderful eyesight as must be possessed by Mr. Davidson are great gifts, even for a man of the age of thirty-two, and as they can only co-exist with, as we should imagine, a very perfect condition of physical health, we trust that these rare faculties may be preserved to him unimpaired for many years to come.

The foregoing was written for insertion in our May issue, but was crowded out. We have since learnt with great regret that Mr. Davidson was taken ill on the 18th, and died after a few hours of unconsciousness. The sudden death of an intimate friend on the previous Monday caused a shock to his nervous system, and this sadly terminated the career of an exceptionally talented young man.—*Printing Times and Lithographer.*

PHONETIC SPELLING.

Mr. J. Howard Hunter, M.A., as Principal of the Ontario Institution for the Education of the Blind, at Brantford, Ont., wrote as follows in a recent report:—

"Until the world insists upon representing the vocal essence of a language instead of its mere conventional form, we cannot have a universal alphabet for either blind or seeing. Phonetic spelling is, however, making its way, and we are apparently on the eve of a great revolution. Some of the public journals have lately been using such forms as *program*—which is already recognized by so accurate a scholar as Mr. Skeat in his *Etymological Dictionary*—and *catalog*, which has the justification of the German form. But the English Philological Society goes vastly farther. That learned body, whose head-quarters are at University College, London, and which reckons among its leading spirits such names as F. J. Furnivall, the eminent Shakespearean scholar, has already adopted such changes as *iland* for *island*; *foren* for *foreign*; *rein* for *reign*; *feld* for *field*; *ake* for *ache*; *ov* for *of*; *traveler* for *traveller*; *ar* for *are*; *giv* for *give*; *cum* for *come*; *du* for *due*; *lookt* for *looked*; *tugd* for *tugged*; *er* for *re* (in *centre*, etc.); *driven* for *driven*; *promis* for *promise*; *forset* for *forfeit*; *hight* for *height*; *o* or *e* for *eo* in *people* (*peple*), *jeopardy*, *yeoman*, etc. These apparently startling changes are really in most cases only restorations of the old and simple spelling, from which, on a sorrowful day, our forefathers strayed, leaving their posterity to wander up and down in the wilderness these four hundred years or more. To the blind, in a much greater degree than the seeing, these changes are important, spelling is so difficult without sight, and space is so valuable in embossed books. At the Louisville Convention, a committee was appointed to report on the whole question at our next biennial gathering, which is to be held in August, 1882, at Janesville, Wisconsin.

NO LITHOGRAPHED PAGES.

We issue this number *minus* the usual lithographed pages, hoping that the doubling of the amount of reading matter will recompense for the variety of phonographic characters. We are making business arrangements which we trust will enable us to make a permanent enlargement in size of the magazine.

NEWS NOTES.

CANADA.

Mr. George Eyvel, a member of the Hansard staff of reporters in the House of Commons, has disposed of his interest in the *Sarnia Observer* to his former partner, Mr. Gorman, who will conduct the business in future.

Mr. James L. Gould, formerly of Hamilton, is now shorthand writer for Messrs. Beatty, Chadwick, Biggar & Thomson, Solicitors, in this city. He came to Toronto on a telegram from us, and was at once placed in the position.

Mr. Edwin Hartt, formerly of Clinton, was placed, through our Bureau, with the firm of M. Staunton & Co., wall paper manufacturers, Toronto and Yorkville, some months ago. He is filling the position with credit to himself and pleasure to his employers. He is one of our most promising "boys."

Mr. Wm. C. Coe, Deputy Clerk of the County Court for the County of York, learned shorthand, and has made a good use of it. He now takes all the County Court examinations, and writes them out on the Caligraph purchased from our Bureau. He produced in one month sufficient work to pay for the machine, and is now on the high road to prosperity and fame.

Mr. Edward E. Horton has been working assiduously for several months past in perfecting his new type-writing machine, which he thinks of calling the "Typograph." He has secured patents in Canada and the United States, and is applying for a patent in England. The new machine combines several most valuable advantages not to be found in any other machine. We had the pleasure of seeing and testing the model machine while it was "in the rough," and we can testify to the ease with which it moves. We predict a revolution in the type-writing business when this machine is placed upon the market.

Speaking of female shorthand writers leads us to speak of female type-writer operators. Miss Horton, sister of Messrs. E. E. and Albert Horton, two of our best Canadian reporters, was one of the first in Canada who used the type-writer. She is employed pretty constantly by her brothers and other reporters, and can write for a whole day—as she has done for us—at the rate of about 35 words per minute. She makes a neat and accurate transcript. The demand for type-writer operators must increase as the system of shorthand writing becomes

more popular, and ladies who don't use short hand, as well as shorthand writers, should learn to operate the machine.

Canadian business men are rather conservative, and it will probably be some years before they will think of employing female shorthand writers. A few of the more adventurous of the fair sex have, however, undertaken the study of the art, in spite of the prejudice, and one of them has been rewarded to some extent. Miss Georgina A. Fraser, who studied under Mr. R. Fielder, of Montreal, has now a place in our office as shorthand correspondent. She writes Isaac Pitman's system. The other day a notebook containing the notes of a case we reported several weeks ago was handed to her for transcription, no explanation being given as to the nature of the case or the names of the parties, and she produced an accurate transcription with but a few omissions where abbreviations had been used or technical words had occurred. Perhaps this is not a very marvellous feat, but we submit to Canadian business men, that it is as remarkable as any ordinary young man could have accomplished, with similar advantages,—for Miss Fraser does not profess to be able to write more than 100 words per minute.

Mr. Thomas Pinkney is perfecting a very useful invention which will do away with reporters' note books in the ordinary sense, and will substitute therefor a continuous roll of paper, after the fashion of the "web" printing presses. Speakers will then spin out eloquence by the yard, lecture-lovers will buy wisdom at so much per foot, and the vocabulary of the reportorial room will undergo a complete change. The junior reporter, who has just returned from the lecture hall with half a dozen rolls of paper containing phonographic characters, will be told by the city editor: "You will have to cut that down, Jones; we cannot take more than ten yards of that stuff." Reporting contracts will have to be made on a new basis when these books come into use. Instead of a *per diem* allowance, an arrangement will be made to charge so much per *mile*, and the ingenious inventor will doubtless simplify the operation of measuring by some simple device. But however we may joke about this matter, Pinkney evidently means business. He is as mum about the new contrivance as Darius Green was about his new "flying machine." We hope and believe the invention will be more reliable and useful than that marvellous complication.

AMERICAN.

Mr. Eugene P. Newhall, the first shorthand writer who obtained a position by means of our Bureau, is now in Chicago, as private secretary to Mr. James W. Scott, publisher of the *Chicago Herald*. He recently had the honor of reporting the River Convention, held in St. Joe, Missouri, being the only shorthand writer present.

The demand for shorthand writers in the United States is large, and rapidly increasing.

In railway, manufacturing and insurance offices in Chicago, shorthand writers are paid from \$60 to \$85 per month. Newspapers pay their stenographers \$100 or more, per month. Type-writing machines are so generally in use there that the capability of operating them is now considered a necessary part of a stenographer's business. They are not so generally employed in railway offices as in insurance, etc., but the principal roads have them. Where a man is employed in both capacities he receives \$10 or \$15 a month extra; salary in this case usually amounting to \$70 or \$80 a month.

Mr. Fred W. Craig, late of Peterboro', called on us last month and asked us whether we had anything to offer in the city. We applied in the affirmative, and accompanied him to a law office, in which we had been asked to fill a vacancy. As none of the principals happened to be in, we left, intending to call again, but on the way Mr. Craig stated that he would prefer Chicago, and asked if we had anything there to offer him. We again replied in the affirmative, and on the strength of our brief acquaintance gave him an introduction to our Chicago agents, by means of which he was placed in a few days with the Pullman Palace Car Company at a salary of \$60 per month, and left for St. Louis that night. His merits were immediately recognized, and an increase of salary to \$75 per month was promised, and has since been granted. Mr. Craig's previous engagement was on the Midland Railway. He writes a beautiful longhand, has a good shorthand speed, is a teetotaler, and has qualifications which fit him for taking a high position. We predict unusual success for him and wish him all the good that he can possibly enjoy. It is a pleasure to place such young men in lucrative and honorable positions.

FOREIGN.

A. Gentile, of Leipsig, has taken out a patent for an "Automatic Rapid-writing Apparatus." By means of it he claims to be able to register the movements of the vocal organs so that the words appear legibly on paper at the same rapid rate as spoken, without any further action on the part of the speaker.

OUR BUREAU DRAWER.

One of the greatest difficulties we find in filling positions in the mercantile world is in regard to penmanship. For several weeks continuously we were on the look-out for a shorthand writer with a bold, plain hand, to whom the salary of \$1,200 was promised at the start. We admit that the principal in this case was rather exacting; but as a general rule shorthand writers pay too little attention to their style of writing. The light-and-heavy-stroke styles, particularly those with flourishes, as taught in the commercial colleges, are practically useless in business, and the sooner the teachers and pupils know this the better. What is needed more generally is a "civil service" hand—the style of writing which can be read without dif-

sculty, and that will not worry the reader by questionable flourishes. Benjamin Franklin said he owed his first success in life to his good hand-writing.

The demand for good shorthand writers is constant and increasing. The difficulty is not to secure positions for them, but rather to procure competent men for the positions. The demand must increase as business becomes more active. The business world to-day is characterized by bold enterprises, huge mercantile projects, and intense activity in every commercial sphere. Shorthand writers are no longer a luxury; they are a necessity in every business where there is competition, and where the saving of time is important—and this applies to every branch of business. The salaries of shorthand writers in Canada are low as compared with those of other skilled laborers; but it must be remembered that business men in this young country need education in this matter, and that salaries will increase as the knowledge of their work becomes familiar to business men. Shorthand writers having the requisite ability, who wish to procure situations either in Canada or the United States, can do so by applying to us, as our Bureau arrangements enable us to fill vacancies with rapidity and with satisfaction to all parties.

Canadian shorthand writers are always at a premium in the United States, and many of them whom we might name have succeeded beyond their most sanguine anticipations. Young men who had learned shorthand have procured positions in the States, and by dint of persevering labor and close attention to business they have risen until they have become superintendents and managers of railways and important manufacturing establishments. There is no field which presents such excellent prospect for large remuneration and high position as that of shorthand writing. By its aid, a young man who is sober, steady, reliable, and intelligent can secure honor and wealth.

As a specimen of rapid promotion we cite the following case: A young man wrote us from a Canadian city, asking for particulars as to how we conducted our Bureau, and enclosed a stamp for reply. At the moment of receipt of his letter a vacancy existed in a law office in this city, and we had been asked to send a shorthand writer. Mentally judging from the penmanship and composition of the letter that the applicant would "fill the bill," we wired him to come to Toronto at once, and afterwards wrote him particulars. Immediately on receiving the telegram, and without waiting for the letter, he came down. Upon introducing himself we dictated a letter to him—a regular business letter in connection with the Bureau—and were satisfied that he would stand the test of actual work, though he had not had any experience as an amanuensis. We then introduced him to the legal firm, and he at once secured the position. This was an exceptional case, of course, but it shows that it does not take us long to put the right man in the right place.

A shorthand writer who has had his application on file in our Bureau for many months, writes us, impatiently, to know why he has not received an appointment, while others he could name, who filed their applications after he did, have secured good positions. An answer is easy—from our standpoint. Our correspondent's acquirements are limited, and his education is defective. We could not conscientiously recommend him for the good positions that others have secured, and he had placed his salary so high that we could not offer him a position suited to his capacity. Of course this explanation would not be satisfactory to him, for he has a very high estimate of his ability; but we give it for the good of present and prospective applicants, in the hope that they will give heed to two points; (1) not only to acquire shorthand speed, but also perfect themselves in spelling, punctuation, etc., before registering; and (2) not to put too high a value on their services, and thus debar us from offering them positions suited to their capacities, and by means of which they could rise and "develop."

We can count by the dozen the shorthand writers to whose success in life we have contributed, and we take the greatest pleasure in the thought that there is not one of those whom we have placed of whom we have had reason to be ashamed. We want intelligent, active, ambitious, persevering, steady young men, and no others, to register their names on our Bureau. Business men don't want drones, and therefore we don't want them. We are not nearly so anxious to secure the commission from shorthand writers for procuring them good positions, as we are to place competent young men in positions where they will do credit to themselves, bring honor to us, and give satisfaction to their employers.

LITERARY NOTES.

THE SHORTHAND REVIEW. Organ of the Seovil system. Wolfe & Fracker, Cleveland, Ohio. Quarterly. \$1 per annum.

No. one of volume five comes out with a new title page, modelled very closely after that of the COSMOPOLITAN SHORTHAND WRITER. It contains a fine portrait of Rev. W. E. Seovil, A.M., the inventor of the system.

COMMON SENSE. Published semi-monthly in the interest of Truth, and devoted to the complete education of our race. Monroe: Pa.

The number of this periodical before us contains nine pages of common sense—or what we presume to be such—and the other seven pages consist of advertisements—which is simply another species of common sense. Nothing uncommon in the make-up or matter; but we suppose that anything out of the ordinary, common run should not be looked for in such a publication.

PROCEEDINGS of the International Convention of Shorthand Writers of the United States and Canada. Chicago: Brown & Holland, 50 Dearborn St.; Toronto: Bengough's Shorthand Bureau, 57 Adelaide St. East, 50 cents.

This 86 page pamphlet contains a full report of the speeches, papers, and discussions of the shorthand writers assembled in Chicago on the 1st and 2nd Sept., 1881. There is much valuable matter in it, and every reporter should secure a copy. The price is within the reach of all. We shall give our readers some extracts from it in future issues.

WILLIAMS' ALETHOGRAPHIC SHORTHAND. Geo. Harris, Alethic Institute, Gloucester. Toronto: Bengough's Shorthand Bureau.

Mr. Harris has sent us specimens and textbooks of this system. "The Manual of Alethography, being an improved system of shorthand based upon the spoken sounds of the English language, and adapted to verbatim reporting," contains in concise form the principles of the system, which is adapted to both the English and Welsh languages. The *Alethographic Shorthand Journal* is a very neatly lithographed magazine, now in its second volume. We purpose reviewing this system at length in a subsequent number.

PENMAN'S ART JOURNAL. E. T. Ames, 205 Broadway, New York. \$1 per annum.

Type-writing machines are making their way into many business offices, and we are acquainted with an expert type-writing correspondent in this city who never puts pen to paper; but the pen will be an indispensable article of commerce for many years to come. How to use the pen is an important question in which every shorthand writer should be interested. Mr. Ames is a master in his profession, and we believe his *Journal* will be worth ten times its price to any shorthand writer. It is truly an *Art Journal*, and as such, all who love the artistic curves of shorthand will be delighted with it. In this issue we quote from the *Journal* an article on "Flourished Writing," which is worth ten times the full subscription price to prospective amanuenses who are inclined to "flourish" with the pen.

THE UNIVERSAL PENMAN. Monthly. Sawyer Bros., Ottawa, Ont.

The November number contains a variety of articles on penmanship, phonography, and drawing. We cannot see the object in giving illustrated lessons in Isaac Pitman's shorthand when the engravings in the text-books are so much clearer and better than those which appear in the *Penman*. The magazine contains many useful items, however, one of which we quote, as bearing directly on the subject of shorthand correspondence;—"These are days

of unprecedented bustle and hurry: everything must be practical, or die from want of patronage. And the stupid writer, applying to a business man for a position, decides his own ill-luck by hiding the name and address on the envelope with a series of flourishes, through which no business man has either the time or the inclination to flounder." This single paragraph, well digested, is worth the subscription price of the *Penman*—75c.

COMMUNICATIONS.

MR. PRAY'S "FEAT"—"OUTSIDER" AGAIN.

MR. EDITOR,—The paragraph in the Nov. No., beginning "It might amuse"—was written under misapprehension, and some allowance must be made, but it ought not to go without comment.

I confess myself a "15th rate writer" as writers now go, and look up to Mr. Pray merely with the right that a two-penny cat is said to have when she looks at the Queen; but my admiration of him does not require that I should be blind to his little weaknesses.

Mr. Pray objects to stop watches, but he should have the sagacity to perceive that the very fact that he was well watched was all that gave value to his famous feat. For lack of this his Philadelphia experience was scarcely worth recording, for some one will surely rise up and tell us that Mr. Brewster "was too much of an orator to chatter at that rate." Two hundred word writers are not by any means scarce, but, in this connection no man's belief or estimate should be deemed decisive. Mr. Pray talks of mud slinging at Graham's system. He has no ground for his remarks as far as I am concerned. I read Graham's style freely although I have never handled his textbooks, and I did not pick it up from the "imitation systems" either. Let me tell the honest truth about it. A few years ago—Mr. Pray was a baby then—I extracted the bulk of Graham's system from Isaac Pitman's 7th and 8th editions; the remainder I got from the 9th with the exception of a few trifles which I have never been tempted to steal, although I am an inveterate and discriminating phonographic thief.

Mr. Pray may delude himself with the idea that those minor variations constitute the key to supremacy, but the impartial judgment of his fellows will assign the true cause—*manual dexterity regardless of system*.

Rapid writers are not necessarily the best judges of a good shorthand, and I submit that Mr. Pray's sweeping denunciation of all other systems shows that his judgment, in matters of this kind, is not to be trusted.

OUTSIDER.

[This correspondence must now close.—Ed. C. S. W.]

ONTARIO SHORTHAND WRITERS' ASSOCIATION.

The meeting to complete the organization of this Association was held in Shaftesbury Hall, Toronto, on Friday evening, December 23rd. After a little discussion, the By-laws and Constitution were altered as follows: Clauses 3 and 6 of the By-laws were struck out, and clause 3 of the Constitution was amended so as to admit, as members, writers of all systems. Clause 10 of the By-laws was amended, substituting, as official organ of the Association, BENGOUGH'S COSMOPOLITAN SHORTHAND WRITER, for the *Phonetic Journal*. The Revised By-laws of the Association having been adopted, the vacant offices were filled as follows:—

President—Mr. Geo. Bengough.

1st Vice-President—Mr. Thomas Bengough.

The offices filled at the previous meeting were:—

2nd Vice-President—Mr. Robt. Macnabb.

Secretary—Mr. A. Macintyre.

Treasurer—Mr. T. F. Mackay.

It was decided that the meetings should be held on alternate Tuesday evenings.

A TELEGRAPHIC NOVELTY.

DESPATCHING MESSAGES FROM A TRAIN IN MOTION.

(*Santa Barbara Press.*)

On September 27th, through Messrs. Dewey & Co., a patent was issued to a resident of Santa Barbara for a method of telegraphing from a moving railroad car. The invention enables each freight or passenger train to have its own telegraph office. Two wires are required instead of one, and those are suspended directly over the track, and above the moving train. They are parallel, and about eighteen inches apart. One wire is connected with a battery at the station from which the train starts, and the other with a battery at the terminal station. They are so suspended that by a somewhat ingenious arrangement light running wheels can run along them from one end of the road to the other. The wheels are insulated from each other, but are connected with wires that pass down the roof of the car to the operating instrument, and through it complete the circuit. As the car moves, the wheels are drawn along on the wires just above it, and a constant current of electricity is maintained between the initial and terminal stations, through the moving car.

Without attempting to enumerate the advantages of the invention, some of the more obvious may be mentioned. All train reports and all orders from train dispatchers will be communicated directly to the conductor and engineers while the train is in motion. Passengers can receive and transmit messages at any moment during their journey, without any of the inconveniences now experienced. Directors

and distinguished parties travelling in their own private cars will find it especially convenient to have a telegraph office constantly at hand.

But the one great value of the invention, after all, will be its preservation of life and property by preventing collisions. Almost every day heartrending accidents are recorded of colliding trains. A lightning express rushes over long stretches of road between stations without knowing what moment it may crash into an approaching train. Upon leaving a station all communication is cut off until it reaches the next station. With offices upon each moving train, and constant, uninterrupted communication, not only with the head office, but with all trains moving on the same track, collisions would be impossible. The clumsy and expensive machinery of running trains by means of wayside offices would be enhanced five hundred per cent. over the present system. When not in use for railroad business the lines can be employed for the transmission of ordinary messages.

WHO DOES HE THINK FOR ?

[The following remarks have an importance to shorthand writers even greater than to workmen whose services are more mechanical. The subject touched upon is a wide one, and shorthand writers will profit by pondering it.—Ed. C. S. W.]

"I know who he works for, but I want to know who he thinks for?" was the remark of a shrewd business man, a large employer, and generally a liberal one. The remark furnishes a clue to much of the difficulty between the class of employers and the class of wage-workers, which may be profitably used by both. The proprietor employs men, that he may profit by their skill and industry; he can afford to pay them in proportion to their usefulness. The workman sells his services, the strength of his muscle, or the products of his brain, to the highest bidder; the better he is paid for such services, the more care, thought and energy he is likely to devote to the interests of his employer. If poorly paid he will be apt to adjust his work to his wages, and either divide his efforts or neglect his duties. His necessities or aspirations will render him discontented, and his thoughts will be roaming outside of his work. The employee who fails to take a lively interest in the proprietor's business, so far as he can, or to give his best thoughts to the duties required of him, will find himself a dismal failure among the world's workers. One who simply moves mechanically, without giving evidence of any more thought than the machine he operates or the tool he uses, will never advance a step. A man is important in and to the community in the ratio of his uses, and the exercise of his thinking powers only will enable him to utilize his valuable resources.

GURNEY'S WRITERS.

The house of Gurney and Co. must always possess a certain historic interest in the mind of the shorthand writer. But it is not with the history of the house, so much as with the manner in which the work is done by it, that the shorthand world will concern itself. Messrs. Gurney, then (or the present representatives of the original firm of Government shorthand-writers) keep a staff of highly-trained writers to the number of *ten or twelve*. Each of these has attached to him for the work of transcription two shorthand clerks, who have been trained in the system commonly known as Gurney's, and which the elder Mr. Gurney adapted from Mason. During the Parliamentary Session, when the select and private bill committees sit, or when a Royal Commission holds its sederunt, or a Government Inquiry occurs, a shorthand writer attends the sittings for the purpose of taking notes for the use of the Government or the parties. In the case of private bill committees, for instance, which usually sit from twelve to four, the work is performed in the following manner:—One shorthand writer will take a turn from twelve to two, and then be relieved by another from two to four, or till the rising of the committee, if it should happen to sit a little later. But every thirty minutes a messenger from the office in Abingdon-street will bring to the writer a fresh book, which the writer takes while handing to the messenger the one he has been using. This latter, with some fifteen pages of notes, equivalent to *fifty or sixty* or more folios, is carried by the messenger to the office, where the clerks associated with the writer will each take so many leaves and begin to decipher and transcribe; or dictate the notes each to two longhand writers concurrently, while the principal is still busily engaged in taking more notes of the same proceedings. The last turn of his notes the writer himself, on being relieved, or at the close of the sitting, takes to the office, and, if necessary, he dictates such portions as are not already transcribed or in course of transcription. The writer, on his return, finds that a considerable portion of his notes for the day are already transposed into longhand; but these, as well as all the remainder, have afterwards to be carefully read over to the writer, who, with note-book in hand, orders any errors that may be found to be rectified.

Though the decipherers exhibit great skill in reading their principal's notes, to which they have gradually been accustomed, sometimes a great number of corrections have to be made, especially if the phraseology happens to be of a technical kind. The correction of errors which arise in this way is often the most tedious part of the day's performance of the shorthand writer. So carefully, however, is this correcting done that the notes of Messrs. Gurney's writers are very rarely questioned, and should a mistake creep in it will generally be found owing to some witness having spoken

inaudibly or in a confused manner, or in some provincial dialect with which the writer is not too well acquainted. The writer who takes the last turn of the day is often engaged late at night before his work is all clear.

In the case of a select committee one shorthand writer generally takes the whole of the notes, and there are usually two days' interval between the sittings of the committee. Select committees and Royal Commissions tax the powers of the shorthand-writer more than the ordinary private bill committees, inasmuch as the questions are frequently put in a somewhat desultory colloquial manner, and they sometimes require not a little pruning to put them in a presentable shape.

The work of note-taking alone, with a system so long as that of Mr. Gurney, is a great strain to the physical powers of the writer, and the mental exertion is also very great. Some of the less robust members of the Government staff have been known to succumb altogether to the work, after recourse to all kinds of expedients to maintain their powers of endurance. When the work of a Session is particularly heavy the ordinary staff is not sufficient for the work to be covered, and expert writers of other systems are called in from the staffs of the principal firms in London. The Gurney notes are all stored in the archives of the office, and it has occasionally happened that the same notes have been transcribed again after long lapse of time—a proof that the system of Mr. Gurney, though cumbersome, has the merit of a great degree of legibility, beyond what is generally supposed. A high opinion of Gurney's system must therefore be formed by any one who has had the opportunity of testing it. It is undoubtedly not a pretty system; but an ugly note when once on paper can scarcely be forgotten, therefore ugliness even has its advantages, notwithstanding the dictum of some inventors more recent than Mason and Gurney.—*From "Shorthand" for August, 1881.*

RHYTHM OF HANDWRITING.

Dr. J. H. Wythe, of San Francisco, "maintains that every man's handwriting is infallibly distinguished by three characteristics, that may be detected by the microscope, while they escape the eye, which he calls the rhythm of form, dependent on habit or organization; the rhythm of progress, or the involuntary rhythm, seen as a wavy line or irregular margin of the letters; and the rhythm of pressure, or alternation of light and dark strokes. The proper microscopic examination of these three rhythms under a sufficient illumination of the letters, cannot fail, he believes, to demonstrate the difference between a genuine and an imitated signature."

The Doctor's theory we believe to be sound; but we would prefer to more simply define the "three characteristics," as habits of form, movement, and shade; these, in connection with other attendant peculiarities of handwrit-

ing, furnish a basis sufficient to enable a skilful examiner of writing to demonstrate the identity of any handwriting with a great degree of certainty.

In extreme cases, and especially skilfully forged signatures, the aid of the microscope will be necessary for a proper examination, but for the greater proportion of cases of questioned handwriting a common glass, magnifying from ten to twenty diameters, will serve much the better purpose, as it is ample to reveal the characteristics of the writing, while its greater convenience of use and broader field of view are greatly in its favor.

In the writing of every adult are habits of form, movement, and shade, so multitudinous as in the main to be unnoted by the writer, and impossible of perception by any imitator. Hence, in cases of forged or imitated writing, the forger labors under two insuperable difficulties, viz.: the incorporation of all the habitual characteristics of the writing he would simulate, and the avoidance of all his own unconscious writing habit, to do which in any extended writing we believe to be utterly impossible.

How far this inevitable failure may be discovered and demonstrated depends upon the skill of the forger, and the acuteness of the expert.—*Penman's Art Journal.*

FLOURISHED WRITING.

Of all things in business writing that annoy and disgust practical men of affairs superfluous and flourished lines are the chief. Unskilful and bad writing may be excusable for many reasons—such as extreme haste, unfavorable circumstances, or physical inability; but for useless unmeaning flourishes there can be, to a practical business-man, no satisfactory reason or excuse. To him they are not only a sheer waste of time and energy, but are ugly excrescences upon the writing which he can neither tolerate or excuse. The Quaker yea and nay idea of speech is applicable to business writing—plain, simple, legible forms, easily combined—most fully meet the demands of business. So-called authors of so-called systems of practical writing abounding in multifarious complex and difficult forms, for letters with superabundant flourishes are simply plagues and hindrances in the way—of learners—to good, practical writing.

In ornamental or artistic penmanship, which is practised only by professional writers, a certain amount of variety and flourishing, when executed with taste and skill, is not only admissible but desirable, but the great mass of our school-children have not the requisite time or taste to acquire such professional skill; good practical writing is all they seek or desire, and are under the necessity of acquiring that in the most certain and expeditious manner. To place before such, copies of complex, flourished and unsystematic writing, is a wrong which can be accounted for only on the ground of ignorance or knavery on the part of the authors or teachers.

There should be a clear and sharp distinction between practical writing for the masses and professional writing for the few.—*Penman's Art Journal.*

BRILLIANT NEWSPAPER FEAT.

ONE OF THE THINGS REPORTERS HAVE TO DO TO KEEP UP.

One of the most brilliant feats of French reporting is the following. It happened at the time when the great Troppman murder case was agitating Paris and France, and when everybody was eager for details. A reporter who had the matter in hand left Paris for Cernay, where the father of Troppmann resided. He arrived, called upon the Justice of the Peace and the Commissaire de Police, invited them to follow him to the Mairie, took his seat in the Judge's chair, and there, with unparalleled audacity, ordered the garde champetre to go and bring before him the assassin's father. The officers did not say a word; the reporter had conquered them by his air and demeanor. When the father of Troppmann was brought before him, the reporter interrogated him as though officially commissioned to do so. The result of the cross-questioning was that the son had written to his father on the eve and on the day of the crime. "Monsieur le Commissaire," said the reporter, "please go the witness's house and seize these letters."

The functionary obeyed; the letters were brought, the reporter read them, found them full of evidence of Troppmann's guilt, copied them carefully and with a solemn air. Then, with respect, he handed over the originals to the Justice of the Peace, asked him to seal them carefully and keep them for the future use of the court. The reporter put the copies into his pocket, saluted the gentlemen and left. It was 1 o'clock in the afternoon, and the train that was to bear his letter to Paris would not leave before evening. If he sent his precious report by that train it would be too late for the morning edition of the paper.

Besides, he met two other Paris reporters, who had just arrived, and who would soon learn the news at Cernay and send it on to Paris at the same time he did his report. What does he do! He goes up to his brother reporters and says: "I am dying of hunger, my friends. Let us breakfast together. You go to the tavern there and order a good dejeuner, with plenty of wine, you know, and I'll come presently." The two reporters did as he bade them, while our friend jumped into a waggon, had himself driven to the station, after hard begging and giving money, was allowed to leave on a luggage train, then about to start, caught a passenger train for Paris at a junction further on, and arrived at the office of his paper late at night. He communicated his information, and the first page, which was already "closed up," was completely reset. The next morning 80,000 copies of the paper were sold.—*From The Parisian.*

HOW THEY GOT EVEN WITH SOME GOTHAM DINERS.

How great a power the reporter really is in journalism was manifested in New York city some years ago—it was a long time since. James Gordon Bennett was still alive, and so was Horace Greeley, but both were old men, if silvered heads and beards make age. It was when A. A. Low, the then president of the New York Chamber of Commerce, had returned from a European tour. A great complimentary banquet was given Mr. Low at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. His Honor the Mayor was there; so was Judge Brady; in fact, all the big guns of the bar, and all the famous editors, except the elder Bennett, who never went to dinners. After all the magnates were seated, the reporters were admitted—there were fourteen of them—and were taken to a long table which was not set for a dinner, though admirably adapted for writing purposes. The waiters trooped in with the viands, but ignored the reporters, who bore the slight until the courses had been served; then, by mutual agreement, they arose and tramped silently out of the banquet hall in Indian file. Horace Greeley, Manton Marble, Jones of the *Times*, Hudson of the *Herald*, Brady of the *Mail*, and Brooks of the *Express*, saw the departure. Mr. Greeley laughed and said, "Bless'd if the boys ain't serving 'em just right." The guest of the evening looked on in dismay. He was primed with a long speech that he wanted well reported.

After an absence of two hours, the reporters returned from the bar-room of the hotel, where they had whiled away the time in sampling icewater, and perhaps something stronger. No sooner had they got back to their table than waiters were sent to them with wine and cigars. Both were indignantly rejected. "We are here to work, not to drink and smoke," said the fourteen in chorus. The chairman of the committee of arrangements came to apologize; he was heard in grim silence. He said a special dinner should be provided. "We are here to work, not eat dinner," answered the fourteen. To work apparently they went; pencils flew over paper; the speakers glanced nervously at the writers; they seemed to suspect their diligence; perhaps they thought it was not deserved at all.

Next morning confirmed their suspicions: the poor snubbed reporters had got even with the millionaires, judges and lawyers. The *Tribune* had no reference whatever to the dinner; the *Herald* had twenty lines; the *World* apologized that the Low dinner was crowded out; in the *Times* there was a stickful dictated by the editor, who smelt a mouse and hurried to the office from the dinner to find not a line of it, just as he expected.

All the reporters were severely reprimanded by their chiefs; one of them—him of the *Herald*—lost his place, for the elder Bennett was a merciless master; he dismissed men for the veriest trifles, but his shrewd managing editor re-engaged all the valuable ones as fast as they were discharged by the inexorable proprietor who, in the last decade of his active life, did not know his employees, with perhaps five exceptions, by sight. However, the poor-in-purse reporters discomfited the millionaires, and from that distant day to this the reporters have not been snubbed by any of the grand public dinners even in New York.—*Printers' Circular*.

If a student convince you that you are wrong and he is right, acknowledge it cheerfully, and—hug him.—*Emerson*.

Since Cornell University College was founded over \$1,500,000 has been given to it for buildings and equipment. The endowment of the institution is over \$1,700,000, which places it among the most richly endowed institutions of the United States.

The desirability of making the proper distinction between the words "set" and "sit" is illustrated in a recent newspaper, in which a recipe for lemon pie adds, vaguely, "Then sit on a stove and stir constantly." Just as if anybody could sit on a stove without stirring constantly.

"The old adage says, that 'many hands make light work.' It is equally true than an additional head will tend to greatly lighten the labor and study necessary to acquire a knowledge of Phonography. A companion and correspondent—with whom we can exchange letters and exercises, with whom we can talk over our difficulties, with whom we can even have a little friendly rivalry in the race for the common goal—is a great incentive to renewed exertion. There is another old adage to the effect that 'competition is the life of trade.' It certainly nerves us to make greater efforts for the accomplishment of the desired object."—*W. T. Dunbar, in Benn Pitman's Ever-circulator*.

The blurring of india ink in working drawings of machinery, has been the source of much trouble and annoyance, and can be easily remedied by making use of the following process to fix india ink on paper, first mentioned in the *W. D. V. Ingenuere*. It is a fact well known to photographers that animal glue when treated with bichromate of potash and exposed to the sunlight for some time is insoluble in water. It has been found by analysis that india ink contained such animal glue, and consequently, if a small quantity of bichromate of potash be used with it, the lines drawn with such prepared ink will not be affected by water, provided that they have been exposed to the sunlight for about an hour.

Bengough's Cosmopolitan Shorthand Writer.

WHAT PRACTICAL PHONOGRAPHERS SAY OF IT.

The following are some of the many complimentary opinions from Practical and Professional Phonographers which have reached us since the issue of the September number, when the change was made in the name and management—editorial and business—of what was formerly THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED SHORTHAND WRITER. The scope of the magazine has been enlarged, and the name "Cosmopolitan" has taken the place of "Canadian"—the local title giving place to the world-wide:—

From G. B. Bradley, Chief Reporter, Official Staff, House of Commons of Canada:—Let me congratulate you on the admirable appearance of the WRITER in its new dress. Its monthly appearance is awaited with interest by writers of all systems. Its pronounced success is fully merited.

From G. G. V. Ardouin, Hull, Q.:—Pleases me very much on account of its crisp, sparkling articles and its truly cosmopolitan character.

From R. Fielder, Montreal:—I am surprised and delighted to find how much it has improved since I last looked through its pages. There is no mistake about its being in the front rank of shorthand literature now. * * * My children are delighted with the cartoons, and quite anxious to learn the "beautiful art," that they may know what all the fun is about.

From E. E. Horton, Official Reporter, High Court of Justice, Ontario:—Allow me to express my pleasure that the editorial management of the WRITER is again in competent hands. I know that the magazine will now be one worthy of the support of professional and amateur alike.

From R. H. O'Regan, Quebec:—I am much pleased with the WRITER, and will use my best endeavors to procure other subscribers for it down here.

From F. O. Hamilton, Red Hawk, Ohio:—I like this part of your paper exceedingly (the fac-simile notes), and I have observed this, that the fac-similes by Graham writers are the quickest and the most neatly written, and best in all particulars. [Of course Mr. H. is a writer of Graham.]

From the Hamilton (Ont.) Spectator:—This magazine, until the September number known as the *Canadian Illustrated Shorthand Writer*, is now published by the firm of Bengough, Moore & Bengough, of Toronto, formerly Bengough Bros. Under the new firm, Mr. Thomas Bengough, a partner, an official reporter, an old printer, and a bright, clever fellow generally, the originator and first editor of the WRITER, again assumes editorial control, and already the journal shows the effect of having a capable and well-posted editor at the helm. Mr. Bengough is well acquainted with the needs of the shorthand profession, and his journalistic training will enable him to present to his readers a mass of well digested and well arranged reading matter that shall be of interest to all shorthand writers. Suggestions are always in order, and we suggest that the WRITER "go easy" on the phonetic reform. Eventually the reform will, we believe, be an accomplished fact, but it is not nice to take in large doses, and Isaac Pitman has lost hundreds of subscribers to his *Phonetic Journal* by his persistent advocacy of the phonetic reform in the columns of that journal to the exclusion of shorthand news. Now that the lithographing of the phonographic portion of the WRITER is done at the establishment of the publishers, all may look for some readable specimen of phonography from their presses. Let every shorthand writer interest himself in the success of this cosmopolitan organ of the profession, and send along his cash subscriptions and all the news he can get from time to time.

From the London Advertiser:—The September number of the WRITER is replete, as usual, with matter of the highest importance to students as well as to experts of the "winged art," containing articles as it does from the pens of professionals, which will prove of great interest to experienced Faber-drivers, and more particularly to beginners in phonography. Being cosmopolitan in its character, followers of any system can find in the WRITER something that will be of interest.

From George Broughall, Winnipeg, Man:—Your magazine, I assure you, is much appreciated away up here in this booming city, where there are quite a number of shorthand writers.

From A. J. Henderson, Official Reporter, High Court of Justice, Toronto:—I was glad to see you back at the helm of the WRITER again. * * * I wish you every measure of prosperity.

From J. Watson, Catonsville, Ohio:—I admire the September number very much. You are on the march of improvement. * * * Your journal is one of my little luxuries.

From H. C. Demming, Official Stenographer, Harrisburg, Pa.:—I am as well pleased with the SHORTHAND WRITER as any that comes to my address, though the subscription prices of all the others are higher. Your magazine is not only well printed on good paper, but the articles are usually well boiled down, and comparatively little chaff finds its way into your columns.

From W. H. Noble, New York City:—A few months since I was delighted to become acquainted with your "Canadian Shorthand Writer." I have since derived great pleasure and profit from its pages. I accept its new name as being more appropriate now than its old one. The "Cosmopolitan" will be more acceptable to English and American readers. I have received from my friends in England several expressions of admiration for your SHORTHAND WRITER. Double the matter and I will gladly pay double the price for it.

From W. H. Huston, M. A., Winner of the Gilchrist Scholarship, and Teacher of Phonography in Pickering College:—I cannot tell you how much I like the WRITER. I have at one time or another subscribed to several phonetic magazines, but none has pleased me as much as yours. May it meet with the success it deserves. If at any time I feel that anything I can write will interest your readers you will have it.

[In a later note written after he had received the Sept. number, Mr. Huston writes:—]

Allow me to congratulate you on the improvement in your magazine. I can heartily endorse your action in changing its name. The time for strife has passed—it should never have been present—and all real shorthand writers must endeavor to heal the breach, altho' too wide, which has been made by contests between rival captains.

From George W. Baldrige, Kansas, Mo.:—In my estimation, all things considered, your magazine "takes the cake," and I wish it full success.

From the Notre Dame Scholastic, Notre Dame, Ind.:—BENGOUGH'S COSMOPOLITAN SHORTHAND WRITER (conducted by Thomas Bengough, official reporter, Toronto, Canada), is a very neat specimen of typographic art, and a good one of editorial ability. The illustrations, by J. W. Bengough, cartoonist of *Grip*, and others, are excellent. The October number contains a portrait of W. H. Huston, A. B., winner of the Gilchrist Scholarship in the University of London, 1881, and now teacher of modern languages and phonography in Pickering College. * * * Besides the sketch of Professor Huston's career, the WRITER contains interesting matter on various subjects relating to education in general and to journalism and to phonography in particular. Mr. Bengough, the editor, is strictly neutral, although himself using Isaac Pitman's system in preference to any other.