

Byron, Bacon, Raleigh,—as well as the incomparable Shakespeare. It is not remarkable, therefore, that an art of such intrinsic excellence as shorthand should have its origin, or rather second birth, at such a time, to cap the climax, as it were, and enfold the true type of lofty aspiration and manifold activity of Elizabethan England.

Beginning at about the year 1600, it would require volumes to do justice to the subsequent history and development of shorthand, so that we shall only be able to make a few superficial references to them. It was at this time, when Gruter and Lipsius were engaged in their work in connection with the Tironian Notes, as explained in our former paper, that an Englishman, Dr. Timothy Bright, prepared and published, in 1588, a system of shorthand, entitled, "Characterie; an art of short, swift, and secret writing by character." Before its publication, we have no authenticated facts proving the existence of any system of shorthand aside from the unintelligible Tironian Notes, and the efforts of John of Tilbury. After its appearance, however, works on shorthand became, "Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks in Valombrosia." From that time to the present, (300 years,) nearly 3,000 editions of works on shorthand have been published; many of them valueless, many of them curious, and many of them meritorious.

There is but one copy of Bright's work known to be in existence to-day, and that is in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford, where I had the pleasure of seeing it a few years ago,—a pleasure which none but a shorthand bibliomaniac could experience.

It was undoubtedly from the Tironian Notes that Bright obtained his inspiration to invent characters to represent words, though it must be admitted that in the application of arbitrary signs, he quite surpassed his prototype. "Neither his ingenuity, however, nor that of Peter Bales, the author of a pretended improvement, under the title of 'Brachygraphy,' could obviate the absolute necessity of having a stenographic alphabet, with which to spell words, instead of having an arbitrary character for each word."

Bright's book is divided into two parts. The first part treats of the production and variety of characters, from the most simple and plain, to such as are doubly compounded. The other treats of the value of characters with regard to their application and use.