

grateful for this friendly aid, I accepted the proposal; and night after night, almost every night, for a long time, we had a sort of private Parliament in Buckingham street, after I came home from the doctor's.

"I should like to see such a Parliament anywhere else! My aunt and Mr. Dick represented the Government, or the Opposition (as the case might be), and Traddles, with the assistance of Enfield's Speaker or a volume of parliamentary orations, thundered astonishing invectives against them.

"Often and often we pursued these debates until the clock pointed to midnight, and the candles were burning down. The result of so much good practice was, that by-and-by I began to keep pace with Traddles pretty well, and should have been quite triumphant, if I had had the least idea what my notes were about. But, as to reading them after I had got them, I might as well have copied the Chinese inscriptions on an immense collection of tea-chests, or the golden characters on all the great red and green bottles in the chemists' shops!

"There was nothing for it, but to turn back and begin all over again. It was very hard, but I turned back, though with a heavy heart, and began laboriously and methodically to plod over the same tedious ground at a snail's pace, stopping to examine minutely every speck in the way, on all sides, and making the most desperate effort to know these elusive characters by sight wherever I met them."

Whether the learners of shorthand to-day, experience as much difficulty as did Mr. Dickens, we are not prepared to say, but we have been told that it is very difficult, because there are so many persons of more than ordinary ability who have failed to master the simplified systems now in use.

Returning again to the publishers of text-books on shorthand, but leaving the authors of the 17th century, whose systems we have referred to, we find the next system worthy of note, was published in 1750, 150 years after Willis, by William Tiffin, which was as much an improvement over Willis' system as his was over that of Bright; because he devised a scheme for the representation of all the consonant and vowel-sounds of the language. There was, however, something still lacking to cause its universal adoption, and it was not until nearly 100 years after Tiffin that