

Hayne, on the Constitution, would have been lost to posterity. It was only at the special request of Mr. Webster that he consented to take notes, and this speech proved to be, in the opinion of expert critics, the greatest forensic effort of the 19th century. It is owing to private enterprise entirely and not to the wisdom of Congress that this and many of the great speeches delivered in our early Congresses have been preserved, although the importance of having its proceedings officially reported was continually brought to its attention.

In contrast to the early opposition to the official employment of reporters, it may not be uninteresting to repeat the words used by a member of the House of Representatives a few years ago, in order to show the value now placed upon shorthand in making an authentic report of its proceedings.

“The publishers of the *Congressional Globe* are required to employ the best corps of reporters in the world. These reporters must not only be able, amid the confusion which so often prevails here, to catch every word addressed to the House, but they must dress it into shape, preserving at the same time, as far as possible, the precise language and argument of the speaker. We tumble into their ears oftentimes a muddy stream which filters through their brains and drips from their finger ends clear and bright. It often sounds horrible, but they make it read tolerably well. Some of us are wanting in respect for the King’s English; they are not. Our eloquence and logic are often too irresistible for grammatical restraints; they carefully gather the words and marshal them in proper lines. Our impetuosity sometimes shoots over the idea and leaves us in a labyrinth of words; they clear away the redundant rhetoric, catch the idea, and put it in its proper place. It often requires an effort even for them to chase it down, and sometimes they find the alarm was false and that there was no idea at all. Occasionally we get up and roar for an hour at the top of our voices, and we would have no listeners, were it not that those patient and long-suffering men are paid for listening. Once in a long while we jump to our feet, wild with indignation over some reflection made upon the section of the country we have the honor in part to represent, and throw up such a torrent of mud as might eclipse the worst geyser on the Yellowstone. Others may escape to the cloak-room and console themselves with a cigar until the