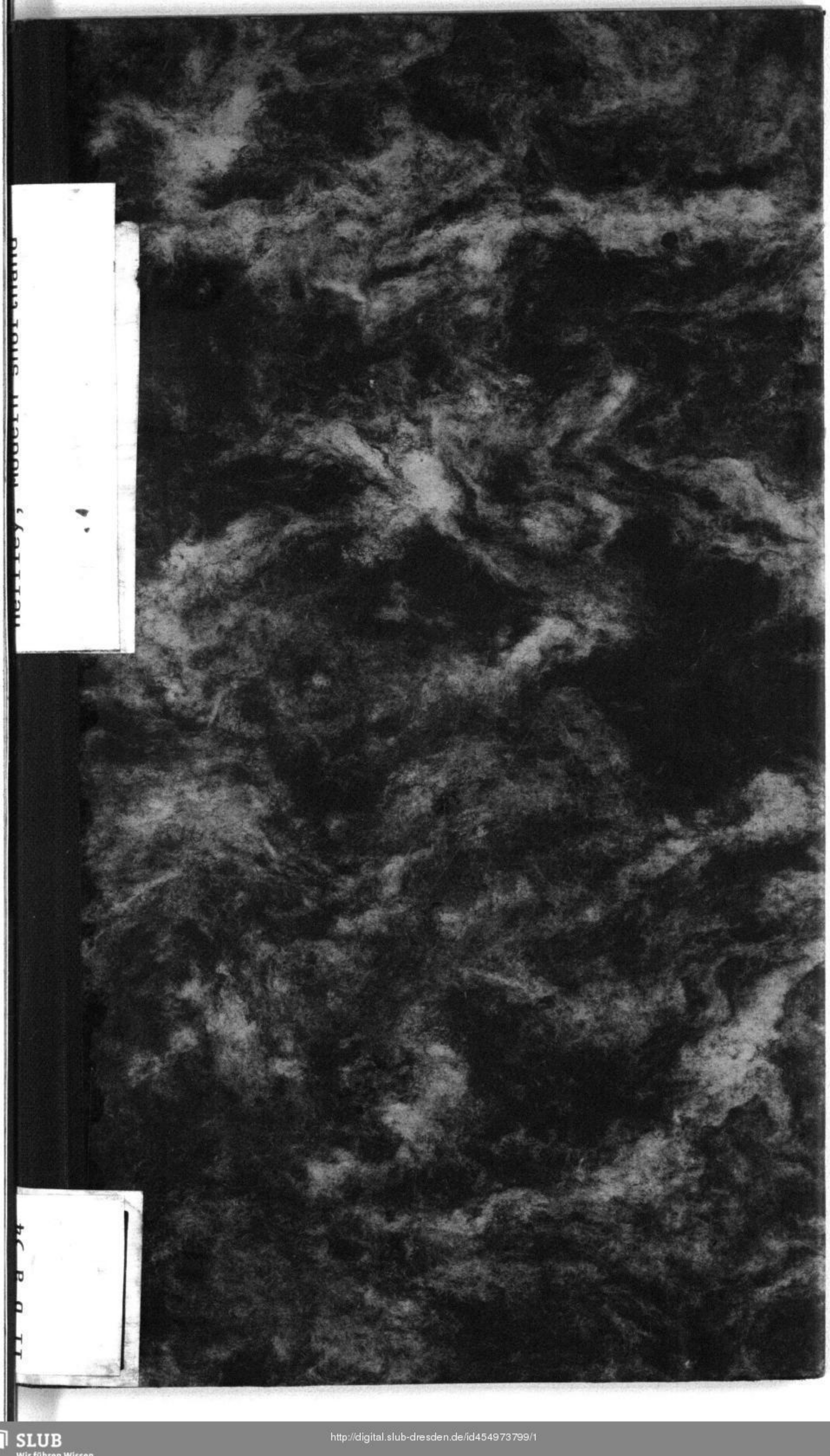

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MODERN SHORTHAND,

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE Seventeenth

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Nineteenth Century.

BY NORMAN P. HEFFLEY.

(Reprinted from the Proceedings of the New York State Stenographers' Association for the year 1895.

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1895.

MODERN SHORTHAND

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH TO THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY NORMAN P. HEFFLEY.

Since the publication in the proceedings of this association of the paper which I presented on "Ancient and Mediæval Shorthand," it has been my intention to submit additional papers for the purpose of giving a connected history of our art from the earliest time to the present. I would have submitted the following several years ago, but have refrained from doing so owing to the little interest generally manifested in such history. However, in the hope that additional information may tend to create increased interest in the matter, I beg your indulgence for presenting this brief running commentary upon the history of Modern Shorthand. This paper takes up the subject from where it was left in the previous one, namely: at the close of the sixteenth century, and brings it down to the invention of phonography by Isaac Pitman in 1837.

When shorthand was first used in England is hard to determine. The first professional work has been ascribed to John Jewell, Bishop of Salisbury, in the middle of the 16th century. There is no doubt but that he wrote some species of shorthand, as described in a Latin work published in 1573, two years after Jewell's death, by Lawrence Humphrey, who says: "He was always a tachygraphist and polygraphist, so that he could express many things quickly and neatly; he took down discourses almost to the word." Jewell also reported the lectures of Peter Martyr, in 1549, in England, and also at Strasburg, and was one of the official writers at the great disputations on the Sacraments of the Altar, in Oxford, in 1554.

This brings us down to about the close of the 16th century, or the Golden Age of English literature, which age was, in many respects the most remarkable in the world's history. In it is enshrined that galaxy of immortal names of scholars, statesmen, historians, poets,—including such men as Spencer, Sidney, Scott,

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.

The treatise contains a table of about 500 words, with the characters to designate them. Concerning these, the author says, "These words thou art to get by heart and therewith the making of the figure of the character, so as to do it readily and clean; then to be able to join every character to the word pronounced, without book, or set of any pattern before thee. This done, thou art farther to proceed and to learn how to refer either words of like signification, or of the same kind, or contraries, unto those that be called characterie."

Notwithstanding the author displayed considerable ingenuity in the production of his scheme, yet "on account of its obscurity and perplexity, it presented impediments so numerous and discouraging, that nothing but a determined resolution and intense application could master it." To acquire a knowledge of the art sufficiently well to make it practical for difficult reporting purposes was almost out of the question.

The method adopted by Bales was to divide the words into dozens, each dozen headed by a Roman letter, which letter, with certain commas, periods, and other marks placed about it, was to distinguish the words from each other. This method was, of course, extremely burdensome to the memory, and the ability to report a speaker was unquestionably never attained by any one. In 1590 he published an improvement of the system entitled "A New Year's Gift for England."

The next author was John Willis, who published, in 1602, a work entitled "The Art of Stenography, or Short Writing by Spelling Characterie," which he styled, "A new-sprung imp." With this work it may be said that modern shorthand became an accomplished fact, and, although subsequent systems for nearly two hundred years were but a little improvement upon Willis, the reporting of sermons, trials, plays, parliamentary proceedings, etc., became of frequent occurrence. Shakespeare's plays were surreptitiously obtained by reporters and published, which accounts for the various discrepancies existing in the early editions of his works.

We might quote a few expressions of the most noted Shakesperian commentators on this point: Mr. Dyce says: "The quarto edition of 1603 exhibits a text mangled and corrupted throughout, and perhaps formed on the notes of some shorthand writer who had imperfectly taken it down during representation." John

Payne Collier says of this edition: "That where the mechanica skill of the shorthand writer failed, he filled in the blanks badly from memory."

We might also mention a few instances of difference met with in Hamlet. "I have heard of your *prattlings*, too, well enough,—God hath given you one *pace*." While another rendition is: "I have heard of your *paintings*, too, well enough—God hath given you one *face*." In Romeo and Juliet, where Juliet snatches Romeo's dagger, and as she stabs herself, says: "This is thy sheathe; there *rest*, and let me die"; the shorthand reporter making it; "This is thy sheathe; there *rust*, and let me die. Or, again: "It is not alone my inky cloak, *good mother*"; "It is not alone my inky cloak *could smother*."

Many other instances might be quoted, but these are sufficient. In Shakespeare's time there was a desire to prevent people becoming acquainted with plays that were produced, except by representation on the stage, and as these plays created quite an impression at the time, it can be readily seen why shorthand writers were employed to secure them for publication. It is now conceded that the plays of Romeo and Juliet, Henry V., and Hamlet, were secured and published in this way.

Not only were Shakespeare's plays obtained by reporters, but others as well. Thomas Heywood, who was a dramatist of considerable note, and a contemporary of Shakespeare, wrote a prologue, in which he says, they, the shorthand writers,

> "Did throng the seats, the boxes, and the stage,
> So much, that some by stenography drew
> The plot; put it in print; scarce one word true."

In Act 4, Scene 3, of the play called "The Devil's Law Case," by John Webster, occur these lines, which show the early use of shorthand:

> "Do you hear, officers?
> You must take great care that you let in
> No brakigraphy-men to take notes."

"Brakigraphy" was a name given to stenography, consequently the allusion to "brakigraphy-men," or stenographers.

Beaumont and Fletcher, also noted dramatists of this age, likewise suffered from these piratical publications. The shorthand reporter in "The Pilgrim," act 4, scene 3, made it read:

> "I dizen'd him
> And pinned a *plum* in his forehead."

Plum puzzled many people. "It must be the name of a cap," said one. "The author intended to write nonsense," says another. "No," says Collier, "the shorthand writer, finding the letters *p l m* in his notes, hastily concluded that it meant *plum*, instead of *plume*—pinned a plume in his forehead."

One more reference from these authors and I will not bother you with further examples of the incompetent shorthand writer of nearly three centuries ago. It is from one of the plays by the same authors:

> "You are an ass.
> You must have all things construed,
> And *pierced*, too."

When the sensible shorthand writer would have transcribed it, "You must have all things construed, and *parsed*, too."

As we have said, Willis' system was published in 1602, and as some of these plays of Shakespeare and others were printed in the following year, you can see how rapidly a knowledge of the art spread, unless, indeed, they were reported in some other system of which we have no knowledge, for it is hard to believe that they could have been so accurately reported if Bright's or Bale's systems had been used.

Willis' system was based upon the orthographical principle—that is, having a character to represent each of the letters of the alphabet, and by joining them together be able to spell words. This you will readily understand was a vast step in advance over having an absolute character for each word. It, however, lacked one of the essential elements of a practical system, namely, the representation of the various vowel sounds of the language. On account of this deficiency in his, and subsequent systems, it became necessary to introduce symbolic or arbitrary characters to represent words and phrases. The first inventor of these symbols was reduced to the necessity of employing them by reason of the awkward and lengthy manner in which many important words were necessarily expressed when written according to the system.

Notwithstanding the difficulty which attended the learning of these systems the authors were not of that opinion. We will refer to a few of their roseate views, to show their extravagant claims, egotistical and self-laudatory commendation.

Bright, in his preface, says: "Thou hast here, gentle reader,

the art of *short*, and so of *speedy* writing, to which none is comparable, plainly delivered unto thee, so as by thine own industry, thou mayest attain it if thou wilt but one month take pains therein, and by the continuance of another month mayst thou attain to great readiness." It is needless to say that the system could not be easily learned, notwithstanding he says it could be done in two months.

The title of one of John Willis' works reads: "A school master to the art of stenography, adapted to the understanding of the meanest capacity." The title of a work by Edmund Willis is: "An abbreviation of writing by character, with plain and easy rules for the speedy performance thereof, without any other tutor." In the preface of one of his editions, he congratulates himself on the success of his labors, as follows: "I have now, by further enlargement of this book, brought it forth stronger limbed and more able to do the world service, for the advancement of those public ends whereunto my desires have wholly leveled, God's glory, and the benefit of many thousand souls in the posterities yet to come, when myself shall return to Him that made me and be gathered to the sepulchres of my fathers." After speaking of the propensity of the age to slander and envy, he says: "But I thank God that I have that testimony within myself which shall be as a good tide to take me off from such shelves. My testimony is mine own conscience, that my intentions are not hereby to sound a trumpet before myself, but only to do somewhat for public good, which may further mine accounts at the last day, that I have not altogether run in vain, neither labored to no purpose."

According to the usual practice of those times, there is affixed to Willis' publication a poetical tribute to the author's excellence. A portion of it as follows:

> "Thou hast by art upon such judgment grounded,
> And so exact a method has propounded
> By characters, to write with such speed
> As may be thought by all a worthy deed,
> In which rare art may be well understood,
> How Willis' *will—is* to do all men good."

All his statements seem rather paradoxical, when we take into consideration the fact that his system was not much more than a copy of that of his namesake, John Willis.

The next author of note was Thomas Shelton. In 1641 he pub-

lished several works under various titles, such as "Tachygraphy, the most exact and compendious method of short and swift writing that hath ever yet been published by any." "The tutor to Tachygraphy, explained to the weakest capacities that desire to learn the art." "Zeiglographia, or, a new art of short writing, never before published; more easy, exact, short and speedy, than any heretofore." Theophilus Metcalfe, in 1645, published "Radio-Stenography, or short writing, the most easy, exact, lineal, and speedy method that hath ever been obtained, or taught." Under his portrait in the book, are the following lines:

"Cæsar was praised for his dexterity,
In feates of war and martial Chevalry:
And no less famous art thou for thy skill
In nimble turning of thy silver quill;
Which with the Preacher's mouth holds equal pace,
And swiftly glides along until the race
Of his discourse be run, so that I think
His words breath'd from his mouth are turn'd to ink,"

In 1649, Jeremiah Rich appeared upon the scene, with several works, entitled: "Semigraphy, or Art's Rarity; allowed by the learned to be the easiest, exactest, and briefest method of short and swift writing, that ever was known." Another of his titles was "The Pen's Dexterity," which, the author says, "Was practiced by honorable persons, reverend divines, eminent lawyers, and gentlemen." Under his portrait we find this verse:

"Here Active, and Mysterious Art you see,
Contracted in a small Epitome;
Soon Gained with practice; thus ye meanest Wit
Makes a Diversion of a Benefit.
Thus either Sex, or Age may, old or young
With Nimbler Pen, out-post the Nimble tongue.
Thus to thy Lasting Fame it shall be said;
RICH *lives in Characters*, when RICH be dead."

The Book of Psalms and New Testament were engraved and published in this system in 1659. These works are the smallest books that have ever been printed, considering the contents.

In 1658, Job Everardt published "An Epitome of Stenography." Noah Bridges called his work: "Stenography and Cryptography;" while William Facy designated his: "The Complement of Stenography."

William Mason, in 1672, published a work entitled: "A Pen

Plucked from an Eagle's Wing." Also, "Art's Advancement," and several other works. His portrait adorned this work also and underneath the following lines were placed:

"Let SHELTON, RICH, and all the rest go down,
Bring here your Golden Pen and Laurel Crown.
Great MASON'S nimbler Quill out-strips ye Winde,
And leaves ye Voyce, almost ye Thoughts behind.
In vain may MOMUS snarl; He soars on high;
Praise he commands, and ENVY does defie."

Other curious titles, by succeeding authors, are as follows: "The Flying Penman," "Shorthand Writing Begun by Nature, Completed by Art," "Shorthand, yet Shorter," "Maximum in Minimo, or the Pen's Dexterity Completed," "Shorthand Unmasked," "My Stenographical Sermon Catcher;" and so we might go on to the end of the chapter.

Each of these authors claimed that his particular system was the shortest and most easily acquired of any of the systems extant. Some said their systems could be learned in a few hours, a few weeks, or, at most, in a few months. From what we now know of the perplexity and shortcomings of their systems, and the difficulty of learning them sufficiently well for practical purposes, we can honestly doubt these assertions. In fact, we can definitely prove the contrary to be the case. Regarding the Tironian Notes, a writer of several centuries ago, as referred to in our former paper, said that if you desired to subject a person to all forms of punishment, you would only have to make him learn stenography. We also find a statement somewhat forcibly illustrated by a gentleman who has left his mark, but not his name in a book, which was published in 1674, and which I have here among others on exhibition. The date of his birth and death I cannot give you, but we have the evidence in black and white, showing that at one time of his existence he was a much discouraged and disgusted man. He, too, was somewhat irreverent in expressing his feelings, and as it was more expressive than elegant, we shall not quote it, but you may read it here in the book itself, should you desire.

Coming down to more recent times, we find that the difficulty was not materially decreased, to substantiate which we have only to quote the words of a man whose name is familiar to every school-boy, namely, Charles Dickens. Mr. Dickens was a shorthand reporter for many years, and in his tale of "David Copper-

field," he gives an account of the trials and tribulations he encountered in his efforts to master stenography. He says:

"I did not allow my resolution, with respect to parliamentary debates, to cool. It was one of the irons I began to heat immediately, and one of the irons I kept hot, and hammered at, with a perseverance I may honestly admire. I bought an approved scheme of the noble art and mystery of stenography (which cost me ten and sixpence); and plunged into a sea of perplexity that brought me, in a few weeks, to the confines of distraction. The changes that were rung upon dots, which in such a position meant such a thing, and in such another position something else, entirely different; the wonderful vagaries that were played by circles; the unaccountable consequences that resulted from marks like flies' legs; the tremendous effects of a curve in a wrong place; not only troubled my waking hours, but reappeared before me in my sleep. When I had groped my way, blindly, through these difficulties, and had mastered the alphabet, which was an Egyptian temple in itself, there then appeared a procession of new horrors, called arbitrary characters; the most despotic characters I have ever known; who insisted, for instance, that a thing like the beginning of a cobweb, meant *expectation*, and that a pen and ink skyrocket stood for *disadvantageous*. When I had fixed these wretches in my mind, I found that they had driven everything else out of it; then beginning again, I forgot them; while I was picking up, I dropped the other fragments of the system; in short, it was almost heart-breaking.

It might have been quite heart-breaking, but for Dora, who was the stay and anchor of my tempest-driven bark. Every scratch in the scheme was a gnarled oak in the forest of difficulty, and I went on cutting them down, one after another, with such vigor, that in three or four months I was in a condition to make an experiment on one of our crack speakers in the Commons. Shall I ever forget how the crack speaker walked off from me before I began, and left my imbecile pencil staggering about the paper as if it were in a fit!

"This would not do, it was quite clear. I was flying too high and should never get on. So I resorted to Traddles for advice; who suggested that he should dictate speeches to me, at a pace, and with occasional stoppages, adapted to my weakness. Very

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

Isaac Pitman published his first work, entitled: "Sound-hand," and remedied the defects of former systems by adopting the simplest possible signs for the representation of the various sounds capable of being uttered. He further displayed his inventive genius by his philosophical arrangement of these characters, together with the expression of the vowels without writing them, thereby gaining the desideratum of shorthand—namely, the ability of writing with the rapidity of speech, and at the same time having the writing as legible as print.

There was published in this country previous to the publication of Isaac Pitman's work, a system by Rev. Phineas Baily, entitled "A Pronouncing Stenography." The first edition of this work was published in 1818,and the second edition was published in 1883. Mr. Baily also had characters to represent all the consonant and vowel sounds. The characters for the vowels were formed from strokes so that they could be connected with the consonant strokes, while Pitman's vowels were represented by dots and could not therefore, be connected, but had to be inserted after the consonant outline was formed.

Time will prevent comparisons and explanations of this system, as well as the other systems which were published in this country previous to 1837, the earliest one of which was a publication in 1789. A second edition of this work was printed at Philadelphia in 1799. This was the Gurney system, first published in England in 1742, and published at intervals from that time until 1884, when the eighteenth edition made its appearance, being equivalent to a new edition every seven or eight years. In 1793, Thomas Lloyd published the Taylor system, and among the subscribers for this book appear the illustrious names of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. Following Lloyd, there were modifications of the Taylor system published by C. Mangan at Boston in 1810, M. T. C. Gould at Albany in 1823, H. L. Barnum at Baltimore in 1824, and Thomas Towndrow published a modification of the Lewis system in 1831, and a system of his own in 1834.

Having thus briefly shown how the systems of shorthand grew and multiplied, we will now refer, for a moment, to instances relating to its practical application for legal and parliamentary reporting. We have already noted how shorthand was used for reporting lectures, sermons, etc. in the 14th, 15th, and 16th cen-

turies, and also for the reporting of the plays of Shakespeare and other dramatists at the beginning of the 17th century.

One of the earliest legal reports to be found in print, is that of a famous Republican agitator in London, in 1649. It is described in the title page as having been "exactly penned and taken down in shorthand as it was possible to be done in such a crowd and noise."

From this time on shorthand was very generally used for legal purposes, for all state trials, trials for treason, for the Popish plot trials, etc.

The earliest official appointment of a shorthand writer to take notes of legal proceedings, was that of Thomas Gurney, in 1738, by the Corporation of the City of London. He also did general reporting, and the business established by him has been conducted by members of the Gurney family from that day to this—or, over a century and a half. They have records of daily engagements extending back to 1785, or a little more than a century. It is needless to say that this is the oldest firm of shorthand reporters in the world.

The greatest trial which Thomas Gurney ever reported, and which was perhaps the greatest trial in all history, was the trial for the impeachment of Warren Hastings, whose life and achievements read like a romance. As this was a trial of great importance and world-wide interest, we cannot refrain from quoting an extract from the exhaustive description of it by Macaulay, as given in his life of Warren Hastings:

"On the thirteenth of February, 1788, the sittings of the court commenced. There have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewelry and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was exhibited at Westminster; but, perhaps, there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interest which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot and in one hour. All the talents and all the accomplishments which are developed by liberty and civilization were now displayed, with every advantage that could be derived both from co-operation and from contrast. Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled

centuries, to the days when the foundations of our constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshiping strange gods, and writing characters from right to left. * * * *

"Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter King-at-Arms. The judges, in their vestments of state, attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy Lords, three-fourths of the Upper House as the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The gray walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the ambassadors of great kings and commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labors in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition, a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There too, was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia, whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has res-

cued from a common decay. There were members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticised, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock hangings of Mrs. Montague. And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone round Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

"The Serjeants made proclamation. Hastings advanced to the bar and bent his knee. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, had made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place he had so borne himself that all had feared him, that most had loved him, and that hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. * *

"The charges and answers of Hastings were first read. The ceremony occupied two whole days, and was rendered less tedious than it would otherwise have been by the silver voice and just emphasis of Cowper, the clerk of the court, a near relation of the amiable poet. On the third day Burke rose. With an exuberance of thought and a splendor of diction which more than satisfied the highly-raised expectation of the audience, he described the character and institutions of the natives of India, recounted the circumstances in which the Asiatic empire of Britain had originated, and set forth the constitution of the Company and of the English Presidencies. Having thus attempted to communicate to his hearers an idea of Eastern society as vivid as that which existed in his own mind, he proceeded to arraign the administration of Hastings as systematically conducted in defiance of morality and public law. The energy and pathos of the great orator extorted expressions of unwonted admiration from the stern and hostile Chancellor, and, for a moment, seemed to pierce even the resolute heart of the defendant. The ladies in the galleries, unaccustomed to such displays of eloquence, excited by the solemnity of the occasion, and perhaps not unwilling to display their taste and sensibility, were in a state of uncontrollable emotion. Handkerchiefs were pulled out; smelling-salts were handed round; hysterical sobs and screams were heard; and Mrs. Sheridan was carried out in a fit."

Such is a brief description of this famous trial, a trial which

continued eight years, and in which were engaged the most famous men of English history, such as Burke, who, Macaulay says, was, "in amplitude of comprehension and richness of imagination, superior to every orator, ancient or modern." There was also Fox, the great champion of the American colonists against those laws which precipitated the revolution; as well as Pitt, Sheridan, Windham, etc., all intellectual giants and men of rare ability, and it is doubtful if ever there were engaged in any single trial so many famous men. Thomas Gurney was the official reporter for the government, and William Blanchard (author of a system of shorthand) for the defendant. Had they not had shorthand reporters to expedite its proceedings, this trial might have lasted for a quarter of a century instead of eight years.

Thomas Gurney was also officially appointed by Parliament just previous to the revolution of the thirteen states, to report its proceedings, and its proceedings have been reported by the Gurney family until the present time.

Previous to Gurney, Sir Henry Cavendish, a member of parliament, took copious notes of its proceedings, from 1768 to 1774. In the preface of these, he says: "My original design was to take down the headings only of the several speeches, but in subsequent sessions, the debates will be found more at large and with very few omissions, except in the case of a few members whose rapid delivery outran my ability to keep up with them." He also says, by way of excuse, that "Those favorite words 'hear, hear,' frequently echoed through the house and forbade all hearing."

In America, shorthand was professionally used during colonial, revolutionary and constitutional times.

In 1735, in New York city, a trial between the publishers of the *Journal* and *Gazette*, in which a number of questions regarding the liberty of the American press were in dispute, was reported by Edward Morris, a relative of the great statesman, Gouverneur Morris. The trial of the accused soldiers, just after the Boston massacre, a trial in which the names of Adams and Quincy appear, was taken in shorthand and published.

The minutes of the debates and proceedings of the convention of 1787, which adopted the Constitution of the United States, were taken in shorthand. The proceedings of many of the conventions of the Thirteen States, convened to ratify the Federal

Constitution, were stenographically reported; such as the Virginia Convention, where one of the most memorable and important discussions that ever occurred anywhere—a discussion participated in by Madison, Marshall, Randolph, Patrick Henry and George Mason, or the New York convention, in which Hamilton, Clinton and other notables took part, and also those of Pennsylvania and the two Carolinas, were taken in shorthand. We might also mention earlier conventions which met previous to the Revolution to protest against the enforcement of the unjust laws of England, such as the Virginia convention, when Patrick Henry electrified the audience by his intense patriotism at the time he uttered those memorable words which called forth cries of treason from every part of the house; or, on another occasion when he declared: "I know not what course others may pursue, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death." Who, therefore, can say that shorthand has not been of great value to America in preserving the words and thoughts of all of our Revolutionary heroes, including Washington, Madison, Jefferson, and Franklin (who was also a writer of shorthand), from oblivion—words and thoughts which have been of inestimable benefit to our country.

Nor did the use of shorthand end with the formation of our government. The proceedings and debates of the first Federal Congress in 1789 were reported and published by Thomas Lloyd, to whom we have already referred as publishing a system of shorthand in 1793. Of this report Van Buren said: "It was tolerably full and obviously fair." Shortly after this, Lloyd returned to England, where he published some of the debates, for which he was confined in Newgate as a political prisoner for five years.

As is well known the proceedings of almost every congress have been reported, though they were not reported officially until 1848, when the present method was adopted, namely, that of employing official shorthand writers, and publishing the proceedings entirely under the direction of the government. Prior to 1848 they were reported and published by contract, although at almost every session of Congress resolutions were introduced for the adoption of the method now in vogue.

In the first Congress, 1789, a resolution was introduced banishing reporters to the gallery. It read, in part, "That the several persons who have published the debates in this House have misrep-

resented them in the most glaring deviations from truth, imputing to some members arguments contradictory, and which were never advanced. To others remarks and observations never made; and, in a great many instances mutilating and not infrequently substituting whole arguments, upon subjects of the greatest moment; thus throwing over the whole proceedings a thick veil of misrepresentation and error; which being done within the House, at the very foot of the Speaker's chair, gives sanction and authenticity to those publications, that reflect upon the House a ridicule and absurdity highly injurious to its privileges and dignity." After debate the resolution was withdrawn without action.

In 1790, permission was asked for the reporters to return to the floor of the House. In the debate one member said: "It has been said that it was the design of the shorthand writers to give a partial representation of our proceedings. I believe if they are not correctly given it is due to the hurry in which business of this kind is conducted." This member also said that he had noticed in the reports that a bill was presented for the "safe keeping of the accounts of the United States" when it should have read "the Acts of the United States;" and again, "that a committee had been appointed for the regulation of the *barbers* of the United States," which should have read, "for the regulation of the *harbors* of the United States." This clearly showed that the words were incorrectly understood by them, and for that reason he wanted them placed where they could hear correctly.

In 1792 a resolution was introduced as follows: "Whereas, an impartial publication of the debates of Congress will aid the Executive in administering the government, the Judiciary in expounding the laws, the government and citizens of the several states in forming a judgment of the conduct of their representatives,—Congress themselves, in revising and amending their legislative proceedings; therefore, be it RESOLVED, that persons of good reputation and skilled in the art of stenography, be, at the next session appointed by ballot, to take and publish, impartially and correctly, its proceedings, etc."

In 1795 it was resolved that the Secretary of State be requested to receive proposals from any person skilled in the art of stenography, or capable of reporting the debates with accuracy, etc.

In 1796, the committee known as the Stenographical Committee,

reported that they conferred with a competent stenographer, and the price for a session would be $4,000, and recommended his employment. In the debate upon this report, many flattering things were said about the ability of stenographers. One member, however, said, "The humble demand for $4,000 for the session, is not a great deal more than eight times as much as any member of the House receives. The mere mention of such a sum cannot fail to bring forth swarms of stenographers, as a warm night at the playhouse is said to hatch comedians."

In 1796, Thomas Lloyd returned to the United States, and petitioned Congress to be allowed to report the debates. Other applicants for this privilege were Edmond Hogan and David Robertson, who reported the Virginia and North Carolina state conventions; and, subsequently, the trial of Aaron Burr. No definite action, however, was taken.

So the resolutions came and went, but Congress did not officially employ stenographers. Sometimes they were not even allowed in the house, being banished alternatively from the Speaker's side, from the foot of the Speaker's chair, and even from the gallery. In 1802 the following rule was made: "Stenographers shall be admitted and the Speaker shall assign to them such places on the floor as shall not interfere with the convenience of the House." In 1814 it was resolved that "Stenographers admitted to take down the debates shall take an oath to faithfully and impartially report the debates, etc."

In 1820 it was resolved that "Stenographers who may be desirous of reporting the debates shall swear that they will truly and correctly, to their best knowledge, without addition, diminution, or alteration, report the debates, etc." And so the war continued until 1848, when reporters were officially employed.

Notwithstanding the fact that official stenographers were not employed prior to this time, very full reports of the proceedings were made of every Congress, from the first, in 1789. Messrs. Gales and Seaton reported them from that time until 1824 for a newspaper with which they were connected, and these reports were afterward sanctioned by the government and ordered to be printed. In connection with the reporting by these gentlemen, it may be interesting to note that had it not been for the presence of Mr. Gales, the memorable debate between Daniel Webster and

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 ofttimes 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

danger is past, or fly across the avenue and revive their spirits with a glass of Bourbon. But these gentlemen must stay and take it all. *They guard, maintain and uphold the dignity of the American Congress.*"

The fact that shorthand came into existence in two of the most memorable periods of the world's progress, as outlined in the foregoing hasty and superficial observations, together with the facts given in our former paper, you will readily see that it has an important history and that it rises, venerable and renowned, from the dim and distant past.

At the time when the Romans had extended their sway over the whole of the then known world, it was absolutely necessary that they should have some means of causing the debates and weighty resolutions of the Senate to re-echo throughout the vast Empire, and be quickly brought to the knowledge of the whole people. This necessity was fully met by stenography. Again, in the birth of modern civilization, when sciences, arts, literature, oratory and free government, were undergoing their developments, there was a necessity for something which should facilitate their growth and expansion, so, shorthand comes to the rescue at this crisis, and fills the gap. Or, again, when the multitude of questions involving the rights of citizens, the existence of states, and the responsibilities of nations, required speedy adjudication before our tribunals of justice, the "official" is created in order to secure greater effectiveness. Then, again, when that vast commerce, which is the most important factor in building up and improving all nations of to-day requires something to facilitate its direction, shorthand arises once more; and, by its instrumentality, commercial activity receives a new impetus, inasmuch as by its aid the dispatch of business is greatly increased, and the day may not be far distant when all business correspondence will be conducted in shorthand writing through the medium of stenographic secretaries.

As a resume, therefore of the contents of this and the previous paper, you will see that shorthand served, in manifold ways, the intensely practical people of the largest civilized nation of antiquity; that for ten centuries it became almost as effectively unknown as the cities entombed by the great eruption of Vesuvius, for a detailed and graphic description of which event we are indebted to shorthand; that in the time of the general revival of

learning, after the Middle Ages, this treasure, in common with many others, was unearthed and revived; and that now, in this utilitarian age, through the spread of the Pitmanic Systems it has become of the utmost importance in all governmental, judicial, legislative, and commercial transactions.

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