

Kingdom and the United States respectively, it next falls to be known, as far as is possible, what has been the circulation of these works. If we are to regard this simply as a matter of average—as say 450 works, with an issue of say 500 each (for large impressions were not formerly taken of works of this class)—it would resolve itself in 225,000 shorthand books issued amongst the English speaking population during a period of less than three centuries. But this by no means represents the actual facts. Many of the individual works have passed through several editions ranging over a longer or shorter period; and in some instances it will appear that of one book there have been issued more copies than the total just stated. Let us take a few examples arranged in chronological sequence:—

*Willis, John.*—In 1602 John Willis, Bachelor in Divinitie, published his “Art of Stenographie, or Short Writing by Spelling Characterie.” This was, in fact, the first alphabetic system of shorthand. Under varying titles this book past through three several editions speedily; the 10th being published at the Tiger’s-head, in St Paul’s Churchyard, in 1628. The 13th edition was published in 1644, and there were still later editions, it is believed. His “Schoolmaster to the Art of Stenography” was published in 1623, and also passed through several editions. Of John Willis it must be said that he was the pioneer of stenographic writing, as now understood in England. Whether he obtained his idea from Trithemius I cannot say. My friend, Mr Pocknell, has written a critical paper on Willis,—and all that Mr Pocknell produces is of interest. Willis’s book is known on this side of the Atlantic, for there are several editions in the Library of Congress at Washington, where there is also, I am informed, a copy of Edmond Willis’s “Abbreviation of Writing to Character,” first published 1618; 2nd edition 1627. It is probable that John Willis’s book had a circulation of 10,000 copies, perhaps more. I have a copy of the 16th edition.

Since writing this paper I am glad to learn that Dr Westby-Gibson is about to republish an edition of John Willis, which will contain some very special facts regarding his alphabet and the early editions of his works, concerning which we know so little.

*Shelton, Thomas.*—The first edition of Shelton’s “Shorthand Writing” was published in 1620; 2nd edition 1630; another edition in 1642; again in 1645, 1646, 1647; six other editions between that and 1710. In 1650 he published his “Zeiglographia, or a new art of Shorthand Writing never before published.” This work which was dedicated “To the supreme authority of England,” being issued in the first year of the Commonwealth, also passed through a number of editions rapidly—eleven, down to 1687, are now known; there may have been many others, for