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STATISTICAL REVIEW  
OF THE  
LITERATURE OF SHORTHAND.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SHORTHAND WRITERS,  
AT HARRISBURGH, PA., U.S.A., 1884,

BY

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England.*



LONDON:

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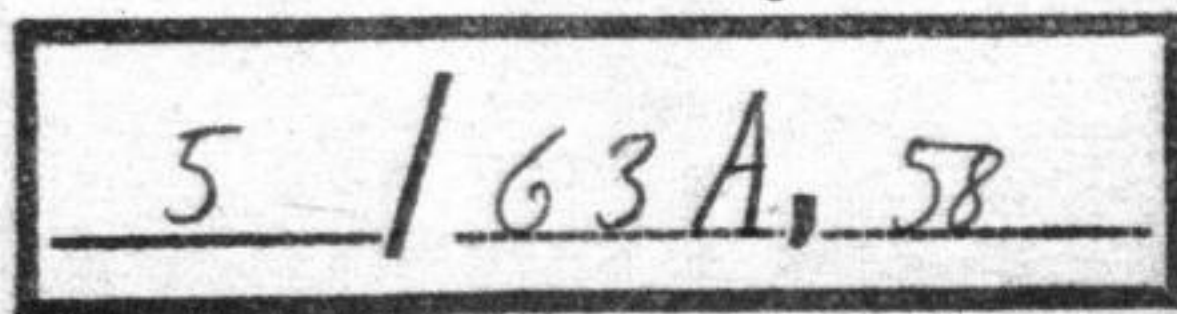
FRED. PITMAN, PHONETIC DEPOT, 20 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

BATH:

ISAAC PITMAN, PHONETIC INSTITUTE.

1885.

*Price One Penny.*



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7. 94



# STATISTICAL REVIEW

## OF THE

### LITERATURE OF SHORTHAND.

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The literature of shorthand has frequently heretofore constituted a subject of some investigation, and of much speculation; but I believe it is only now that we are enabled to speak of it as having been made the subject of exhaustive research. The recent appearance of Mr Julius Ensign Rockwell's unpretending volume, "The Teaching, Practice, and Literature of Shorthand," published in the form of one of the "Circulars of Information of the Bureau of Education," Washington, Government Printing office, 1884, will be found to justify all that is here implied.

But in order to make this position good, and of demonstrating how far in advance of all previous works on the literature of shorthand, Mr Rockwell's efforts have gone, some detailed comparisons are necessary.

#### 1. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SHORTHAND.

The first work of which I have any knowledge, wherein is attempted any comprehensive record of the literature of shorthand, is that of James Henry Lewis, in 1816, namely, "An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of Stenography, extracted from lectures delivered at different periods by the author, comprehending an important and critical examination of the various systems down to the present time. Illustrated with numerous examples of their comparative excellence and defects; also the true date and title of each system, accompanied with their respective alphabets. By James Henry Lewis, of Ebley, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, inventor and original propagator of the new method of teaching writing; professor and teacher of shorthand; author of a treatise on the art, (on an improved plan,) and shorthand writer in the courts of law." London, printed for the author, and published by Sherwood, Neely and Jones, Paternoster row. Price one guinea. 1816, (2 titles, xxiv. and 214 pp., including 16 plates). In this work is included more or less detailed reference to all the works on shorthand, (mostly English), of which the author then had any knowledge. He afterwards acquired information regarding many others. His 14 plates of engraved alphabets of shorthand are designed for 83 examples, several not filled in. Of these the English authors number 80; but as six are repetitions of alphabets by the same authors, the net number is 74 English authors and 3 foreigners, making in all 77.



I shall speak of Mr Lewis's library of shorthand books under another head; section 3.

*Pitman*, 1847-68.—The next writer on the literature of shorthand was Mr Isaac Pitman, the inventor of Phonography, namely, "A History of Shorthand," by Isaac Pitman, first published in the *Phonetic Journal* in 1847. In 1852 and 1868 editions were written by him in lithographed Phonography. London: Fred. Pitman, Phonetic depot, 20 Paternoster row; Bath: Isaac Pitman, Phonetic Institute. 1852, (167 pp., 1868, 192 pp.) In this work mention is made of 120 systems, of which four are by anonymous authors. The third edition, 1868, contained reference to 133 systems (4 anonymous)—of which six were French and German and Spanish authors, and two were American systems. In this edition was contained the alphabet used by Tiro (B.C. 60).

Mr Pitman is now carrying through the press another edition of the same work; but I am not aware how many additional authors are included.

*Cooper*, 1858.—At this date Mr Thompson Cooper published his *Parliamentary Shorthand*, and therein was contained a list of 194 authors of shorthand systems. Of these 22 were French, 11 German, 1 Danish, and another a Spanish author. Deducting these 35 foreigners, there remain 159 British authors—many of these being among the then most modern. There was no attempt at bibliography, but simply a chronological list of authors—the most complete which had then been made.

*Levy*, 1862.—Mr Mathias Levy published "The History of Shorthand Writing;" to which is prefixed the system used by the author, (pp. viii., 194, and plate). Therein mention is made of 130 authors of shorthand systems, all of them English. A good deal of pleasant information about the systems and their authors is given in a popular form. There is no attempt at bibliographic arrangement, or at much detail.

*Anderson*, 1882.—Mr Thomas Anderson published a "History of Shorthand" with a review of its present condition and prospects in Europe and America. Therein he enumerates the authors of 147 English systems and gives the alphabets of 100 of these, together with those of a few foreign authors. He also gives an enumeration of foreign authors, as follows: French, (including 11 anonymous authors,) 121; German, 101; Italian, 35; Spanish, 18; American, 17. And 26 works in Latin are enumerated, some of which were originally published in other languages. The total number of authors enumerated by Mr Anderson is 365; and brief references are made to some others. From an international point of view this is the most complete work yet issued.

*Heffley*, 1883.—Mr N. P. Heffley, of New York, contributed a paper to the International Congress of Shorthand Writers, U.S., wherein were enumerated 224 English shorthand authors. In



this list I have found several names with which I was not previously familiar. See vol. of "Proceedings," pp. 54-7.

*Rockwell*, 1884.—And now we reach Mr Rockwell. He has confined himself almost exclusively to English and American authors, several of whose works have been printed in other languages. His Bibliography embraces no less than 447 authors; of these he has determined the date of publication in 409 cases; while in the 38 others the date yet remains undetermined. A more detailed analysis gives the following result:—

Published in the United Kingdom .. ..	338 works.
"    "    United States .. ..	99 "
"    "    Canada .. ..	3 "
"    "    France (English systems) ..	2 "
"    "    Germany .. ..	1 work.
"    "    Cape Town .. ..	1 "

Total 445 works.

These are distinct works, not editions. Of editions I shall treat under a special head (section 2). Of the American works it is important to remark that but 14 were printed up to 1842; and 85 since. Mr Rockwell's table gives 112 alphabets of shorthand.

*Westby-Gibson*, 1884.—Under this head I may perhaps refer to the incompleted work of Dr Westby-Gibson, the learned editor of the periodical entitled "Shorthand," who has been long engaged, incidentally, in the compilation of a "Key to the Literature of Shorthand," embracing the works of all nations. He informs me (for the purpose of this Address) that his list now embraces (by a remarkable coincidence, having reference to the present year of our Lord) 1884 names of authors of 2850 works (including therein titles of anonymous works) either quite distinct, or with the text or title page so varied as to be considered by him separate books. In addition it contains 340 periodicals (shorthand) existing or discontinued; 300 works printed in characters; 205 papers, essays and paragraphs (in other works) referring to or illustrating shorthand; and 395 kindred works on phonetics, alphabets, cipher writing, universal language, etc., making in this second enumeration 1240

2850 works referred to above

4090 total references. These are not bibliographic in the strict sense of the term, as the shorthand titles only are given: *vide* letter dated 26th July, 1884.

## 2. CIRCULATION OF SHORTHAND BOOKS.

Having ascertained as near as may be the number of separate works on shorthand which have been published in the United



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



the progressive editions are not enumerated, as is the case with later works. An advertisement of this work in the *Mercurius Politicus* of 3rd October, 1650, is one of the earliest business advertisements known.

Probably stenography was as popular amongst the educated classes in the 17th century as it has been at any time since. It is sure proof in this direction that the Book of Psalms in metre was published in this system. Tachygraphy was also published in Latin in 1671; but greater than all, it was in Shelton's characters that the immortal Diary of Samuel Pepys was written—a work which has done more to render us familiar with the social life of our ancestors, at a most interesting period of English history, than any other. Mr J. E. Bailey read before the Manchester Historical Society in 1875, a most interesting paper on the Cipher of Pepys's Diary. I put the entire circulation of Shelton's shorthand works at 20,000 copies as a minimum. I have several editions of Shelton in my own library.

There is a book on shorthand by S. Shelton, published in 1672, bearing the title "Brachygraphy, or the Art of Short Writing," etc., London, 1672. The author says, he received his instructions 30 years before from his old master and namesake Thomas Shelton. Dr Gibson says it is simply a copy of Thomas Shelton. There is one of these in the British Museum, which contains the book-plate of Horace Walpole.

*Metcalf, Theophilus.*—The first edition of his Radio-Stenography was published in 1635; 6th, 1645; 7th, 1649; 10th, 1681; 19th, 1679; 35th, 1693; 55th, Mr Rockwell supposes, in 1750. The book is a very small one; my own edition in 1649 consists of 18 pages of print. The edition of 1652 was of the same external dimensions, but extended to 26 pages, part print and part engraved, with thirteen engraved plates added, giving a total of 39 pages. The 10th, with a new table for shortening words, has the same number of pages. Taking each issue at 500 copies we have here a total of 27,500 copies. I have three different editions of Metcalf, the earliest imperfect.

*Rich, Jeremiah.*—It was in 1646 that there appeared a small book: "Charactery, or a most easie and exact method of swift writing whereby sermons and speeches may be exactly taken, word for word, from the mouth of the speaker with much ease and speed. The full understanding of this art is easily attained in one week's time, by the help of this book only. Invented and exactly composed by Jeremiah Rich, teacher of the said art in St Olive's parish in Southwark, at one Mrs Williams, a midwife, London, printed by Peter Cole, at the sign of the Printing Presse, in Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange; pp. 4 and 20." The characters used in illustration are inserted by hand, that is, written in. Several editions, under varying titles, speedily



appeared. But the preceding was only, so to speak, introductory to his more popular work: "The Pen's Dexterity," first published in 1659, and which rapidly became popular; the fifth edition was published in 1680. Other editions continued to appear long after the author's death, the 20th edition as late as 1792.

Rich's system embodied the phonetic idea. He says "true spelling is not observed, but the right sound of words, therefore omit all superfluities, etc." His list of arbitraries was most charming in its ingenuity, and fascinating to the student. I speak feelingly on this point. This was the first of the early English systems which I learned as a student; and I found no difficulty in acquiring it. Its arbitraries I could remember on account, mainly, of their aptness, and I should probably have written it to this day, if Isaac Pitman had not invented Phonography. I had previously learned Mavor's method—one hardly to be named in the presence of the great names now before us.

In evidence of the popularity of Rich's system there was published in 1659 "The Book of Psalms, according to the art of shorthand taught by Jeremiah Rich, with the New Testament." These works were also published separately. They were followed by the whole Book of Psalms in metre. This, (as published separately) is one of the smallest books known ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. by  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , weight under one ounce), it contains 213 pages engraved. The engraver was Thomas Cross, who was engaged upon the three works named, continuously from 1648 to 1659. These books were sold in a case, with a "key," being the first edition of the "Pen's Dexterity." One of these sets was recently offered for sale at Bristol, England, for several pounds, and found a ready purchaser in Mr Heffley of New York.

Rich's system was further perpetuated by the following authors or publishers:—William Addy, in his "Stenographia," 1664, which passed through at least one other edition; Samuel Botley, in "Maximum in Minimo, or Mr Jeremiah Rich's Pen's Dexterity completed," published 1674, of which certainly one other edition was published; Nathaniel Stringer in "Rich's Redivivus," about 1680, which reached another edition, (price 14s.); Philip Doddridge, in his "Brief and Easy System of Shorthand, first invented by Jeremiah Rich and improved by Dr Doddridge," 1799. "N.B. Copies with the characters made with a pen, six shillings." Various editions of this issue continued to be made during the present century, one in Oxford in 1805; one by Wood in 1830.

That Rich did a great deal to popularise stenography in the United Kingdom during the second half of the 17th century, is absolutely clear; and I have reason to suppose from various manuscripts and shorthand notes in books, that a great many of the learned professors at the Universities became familiar with, and practised, his system. I assume that taking all the editions



of himself and his subsequent editors and publishers, not less than 50,000 copies of Rich's system were promulgated. They are not unfrequently met with.

*Weston, James.*—In 1772 Weston published "*Stenography completed, or the Art of Shorthand brought to Perfection.*" "By this new method," said the title page, "any who can but tolerably write their names in round hand, may with ease, by this book alone, without any teacher, take down from ye speaker's mouth any sermon, speech, trial, play, etc., word by word, though they know nothing of Latin, and may likewise read one another's writing distinctly, be it ever so long after it is written. To perform these by any other method extant, is utterly impossible; as is evident from the books themselves." All this was very attractive; perhaps not the less so from being entirely untrue. It was an obvious attempt to outdo Rich. The book itself is one of the most beautiful ever issued from the press, or rather from the hands of the engraver. It is from copper plate almost entirely, having no less than 86 engraved pages, with a noble portrait of the author. It was also protected by a special patent from King George I., giving the author the "Royal Privilege and Licence for the sole publishing and printing thereof for the term of fourteen years," on account of the great labor and expense of fitting the work for the press. It was published at one guinea, and as a work of art was cheap at that price. It passed through a number of editions speedily—no less than 9 down to 1748. I have the two earliest editions. The book is by no means uncommon. It commends itself to second-hand booksellers, who occasionally ask an absurd price for it. In several of the copies I have seen, as also in one of my own, there is written in the splendid caligraphy of the author, "This book is not to be lent out of your own house; it being sold to you on that condition by me, James Weston." Then follows a receipt for the purchase money with the name of the purchaser and a further memorandum: "The last leaf shows how to learn by this book."

*Gurney, Thomas, and others.*—The earliest edition of *Brachygraphy* with which we have heretofore been familiar, was published in 1750. Mr Rockwell, on the authority of a statement in the 17th edition, puts the first issue as early as 1740. The edition marked as the second was published in 1752. There were several intermediate editions of undefined dates, and we reach the 8th in 1772. The 9th, by Joseph Gurney, was published in Manchester in 1773. Various editions by different members of the Gurney family follow, till finally we reach the 17th edition published by Butterworth, law bookseller, London, in 1869. This was a twelve mo. book, with 70 pages, and 11 plates, with portrait, etc. Gurney's shorthand will always maintain a special interest from its being the one employed in the official work of



the Government Parliamentary committees, Royal commissions, etc. Numerous important trials and law cases have been reported in it and published—enough to constitute a very considerable library. The late Mr Justice Gurney used the system for taking judicial notes—being one of the very few English judges who have lightened their labors in this manner. I believe other systems are used by some of Mr Gurney's staff.

*Byrom, John.*—The first edition of Byrom's Universal English Shorthand was published in Manchester in 1767; 2nd edition 1776. This was an important 8vo book of 102 pages and 13 engraved plates. A modified edition of 76 pages and 20 plates was published in Edinburgh in 1776. This system received the distinction of a special Act of Parliament for its protection. (The 15 George II., ch. 23, for 21 years from 24th June, 1742.) Byrom's system of shorthand became best known through his pupil, and ardent admirer, Thomas Molineux, of Macclesfield. His Abridgement of Byrom was first published in 1796; the second edition, Introduction to Byrom, in 1802, pp. 104, and 20 plates; the 6th edition, London, 1873.

John Palmer published an "Improvement upon Byrom" in 1774. Joseph Nightingale published several works based upon Byrom, between 1811 and 1823. C. W. Jones published "Byrom Improved," about 1832. R. C. Roffe, pupil of Molineux, published "Stenographical Accidence, or Byrom's Shorthand made easy" in 1883, which passed through several editions; also a Catechism of Shorthand upon the system of Dr John Byrom, in 1834. Roffe made Byrom still further known in the pages of "The Grand Master," 1860—a work of which but 20 copies were printed. Other writers, as James Adams, 1814; Gawtress, 1819, and Kelley, 1820, made Byrom's system known. Thus at least some 20,000 of Byrom's shorthand became circulated—probably many more. Some of the above are not unfrequently met with.

*Taylor, Samuel.*—Mr Taylor first published his "Essay intended to establish a Standard for a Universal System of Stenography" in 1786, price one guinea. It speedily passed through several editions with various titles; the so-called 5th edition (really the 7th issue at least) being published in 1814. Since then, various "new and improved" editions have been issued, the last in 1865. Beyond these the system has been reproduced in various forms and under the names of various authors. Thus, as early as 1812, there was published by Lackington and Co. "Stenography or the Art of Shorthand Perfected" which passed through various English editions; the 24th, without date, I have seen; and then was published by C. Mangan in Boston, U.S., and passed through three editions at least.

In 1812 Odell adapted it, with results which will be specified under his name; in 1823 William Harding, of whom I shall also



speak separately. The same year, Mr C. T. Gould published in Albany, U.S., "The Analytic Guide and Authentic Key to the Art of Shorthand." It went through many editions, the last apparently in 1858; and from this an edition was republished in England.

In 1825 Duncan Macdougall published an "Improved System of Shorthand," which passed through several editions. This was Taylor's system. In 1840 Mr W. B. Templeton published in London and Manchester "Six Lectures on Shorthand, in Taylor's System," while in 1882, Mr Alfred Janes, a well-known member of the London Parliamentary reporting staff, published "Standard Stenography," being "Taylor's Shorthand, Improved and Adapted to modern requirements." In addition to the foregoing, the system has been translated into the French, Italian, and German languages. If we estimate the aggregate circulation of Taylor's system at 100,000 copies, we shall probably be well within the mark. This is exclusive of Odell's and Harding's adaptations of it.

*Lewis, J. H.*—Mr Lewis published the first edition of his Ready Writer in 1812; another edition in 1815. The next edition I have met with (and I remark the same in Mr Rockwell's Bibliography) is the 20th, without date, but title page slightly altered, issued from the Shorthand Institution, 113 Strand. The next issue I meet with is designated the 95th edition, issued from the same address; and finally the 97th edition, address unchanged. It is an octavo vol. of 172 pages. This is the only instance of a popular shorthand author wherein no trace of intermediate editions is found.

Then there is his Historical Account (already noticed), the first edition of which was published in 1816, by Sharwood, Neely and Jones, Paternoster row, pp. xxiv. and 214, with 17 plates, crown 8vo. Price one guinea. Another edition, really the same book, printed at the same time, but with a new title-page, was published by Simpkins and Marshall, without date, price 12s., pp. 216, crown octavo. I do not know how many impressions constituted an edition of this work. My own copy, which appears to be a first edition, has the following advertisement: "To prevent the Public being imposed upon by any spurious edition of this work, it is published as the Act of Parliament directs; and every genuine copy of it is numbered, signed and sealed by the author's own hand and seal." The number written in plain figures under the seal is 5025, then follows the signature. There has been some question raised regarding the real authorship of this most interesting work. The story is too long to go into here. Mr Lewis's family believe him to have been the author. Does not the "dedication" to Dr Haworth, M.P. throw some light upon the question? The author says: "It is a duty to the public and to myself to bear testimony to the warmth of your friend-  
*and to the value of those suggestions by which my humble Treatise*



*has been augmented and improved.* Here is a frank and honorable acknowledgement of services. The italics are mine. I cannot frame any estimate of the entire circulation of Mr Lewis's shorthand works. It must have been considerable, but the works are not often met with.

*Odell, George.*—The first edition of his shorthand appears to have been published in 1812; the 9th in 1835; another in 1837; the 29th apparently in 1848; the 47th edition (now announced as "Taylor's improved") in 1858; the 48th in 1860; 50th, 1866; the 54th in New York, 1867; the 59th in London; the 62nd in New York without date; and the 64th in the same city, also without date.

The 59th edition was issued by Groombridge and Sons, who had published it from the 9th edition onwards. The circulation of the previous editions I have no means of determining, but the publishers announced that this was the "Two-hundred and eighty-seventh thousand."

I take an especial interest in Odell's shorthand. It was one of the systems I learned in my youth, and I can say with a clear conscience that it is of no earthly use to any man who has to make stenography a professional pursuit. Whatever merit there may be in Taylor—and there must be merit having regard to some of the men who continue to use it—it has all been "improved" out by Odell. The circulation has been very large, and copies found may be treated as worthless.

*Harding, William.*—In 1832 Harding published "Universal Stenography," etc. "The first part founded upon the general principles of the late ingenious Mr Samuel Taylor." This became immediately popular; 2nd edition, 1824; 4th, 1825; 18th, 1832; revised edition, 1860. This book is very freely met with, but I fear is of no value to the student, and of very little interest to the collector.

*Pitman, Isaac.*—The inventor of Phonography has probably accomplished more than all his predecessors, in the direction of popularising shorthand—a view which the following figures go to confirm.

The first edition of Phonography—"Stenographic Sound Hand" it was then called—was published in 1837. The first edition of the "Manual"—not then so called—in 1840; 3rd edition, same year. The 4th edition, 50,000 copies, 1841; 5th edition, seventieth thousand, 1842; 10th edition, 150th thousand, 1857; 11th edition, 1862; 175th thousand, 1863; 12th edition, 220th thousand, 1868. Finally in 1883, (still 12th edition), 394th thousand, and in 1884 was issued 425th thousand. There have been several American editions of Phonography, which are not included in the numbers here given.

The first edition of the "Reporter's Book" (which became the



"Reporter's Companion") was issued in 1843; 2nd edition in 1846; 3rd, 1849; 4th, 18th thousand, 1853; becomes the "Phonographic Reporter" in 1869; 43rd thousand in 1870; and then various editions reaching in 1884 to 118,000.

"Exercises in Phonography" were first published in 1847; the 210th thousand was published in 1884, price one penny.

The "Phonographic Instructor," afterwards called "Phonographic Teacher." The earliest edition of this work I have met with is the 9th edition, published 1852; the 220th thousand was announced in 1853; many intermediate editions, a revised edition in 1874, and 924th thousand in 1884.

Here I have selected only four of Mr Isaac Pitman's publications as examples; and the aggregate circulation shown is 1,677,000. I knew, large as these figures are, that they were small compared with the actual facts. Hence, in view of this sketch, I recently addressed a few queries to Mr Pitman personally, and from his reply dated "Phonetic Institute, Bath, 14th July, 1884," I take a few passages, either in elucidation of the preceding, or as embodying facts of interest.

Concerning the "Manual," he says: "Of the four previous editions about 20,000 were sold. Of the 5th edition, when it was first called 'A Manual of Phonography,' I printed 10,000 as a Pocket Edition; royal 32 mo., roan, 2/; 8,000 of the People's Edition, 8vo., 1/; and 6,000 of the School Edition, 8d." I numbered the editions up to eleven, and then gave up this mode of reckoning and merely mentioned the number of copies on the title page. From the 5th edition to the present time I have published 425,000 copies of the "Manual," and of the "Phonographic Teacher" 884,000. The annual sale of the "Teacher" is about 60,000; "Manual," 20,000; "Reporter," 10,000; I have also about 14 reading books printed in shorthand, and Mr Frederick Pitman has about 10. This large amount of shorthand literature has been disposed of in Great Britain, the Colonies, and the United States. A larger proportion has been circulated in the North of England and Scotland than in the South of England. Canada and Australia have taken about the same quantity as England in their ratios of population. A very large portion has gone to the United States. My trade with the United States and Canada increases fast."

I have given these facts feeling sure they will be interesting to you; placing, myself, the most absolute reliance upon all that Mr Pitman states. Dr Westby-Gibson, (referring to works on Phonography), says, in a note to me, "My 'Key' whether right or wrong, has over 60 books fairly to be noted as distinct, and exclusive (of course) of books in character, and of magazines. If I were to add editions, there would be over 400, and the magazines would be legion." If we add to the preceding the numerous



publications of Mr Benn Pitman, in this country (America), and of other authors under different designations, the literature becomes prodigious. Mr Isaac Pitman remarks in the letter already quoted "In America a very Babel of Phonography prevails, through the publication of half a dozen differing systems, based on mine, by as many publishers, whose books are 'entered according to act of Congress,' etc., etc."

So again, in the United Kingdom there are imitations of Phonography without end; some of them so barefaced, and others so clumsy, as to be disgraceful to their authors, and something very much like a fraud on the purchaser. These in a certain sense swell up the phonographic shorthand literature.

Finally we have the various phonographic periodical publications, some twenty in number. The *Phonetic Journal* having a weekly circulation of 19,000, completes this vast array of "Pitmanic Shorthand Literature."

*Summary.*—Regarding the aggregate circulation of the works in this division, more particularly specified in conjunction with the works of 400 British authors not so specified, the figures run into several millions. One cannot help the reflection that if it takes some 700 or more bullets fired by drilled soldiers, to kill a human being on a field of battle, how many shorthand books must be hurled at the heads of ambitious students in order to produce a good competent shorthand writer? In the Society of Arts examinations, 1884, while about 23 per cent of the students in all classes failed to pass, in shorthand the proportion was 46 per cent, or just double. Thus out of 234 who entered for shorthand 110 failed. I fear the results of such a comparison, if capable of being made with exactitude, would not be complimentary to shorthand literature. On the other hand, it must be remembered that each of the 2,015 newspapers now existing, (July, 1884), in the British Isles, has several more or less capable shorthand writers attached to its staff; while many of the "Dailies" have half-a-dozen or more of such; to which must be added the staff of parliamentary reporters, law reporters, Gurney's reporters, private stenographers, etc., making up a grand army of fully ten thousand effective writers, finding lucrative employment and developing enormously the brain power and moral force of the country. This is no mean result to be able to credit to the other side of the account.

### 3. SHORTHAND LIBRARIES.

Hitherto I have taken note of shorthand systems only, as published in separate works; and of different editions of such works. We have now to endeavor to discover to what extent such works, and their several editions, have been preserved by collectors. Under this head I shall have to confine myself very much to facts within my own knowledge. Of course there may exist libraries



with which I am not acquainted. I shall be very glad if it be so; and still more glad to have details of these from their owners, or others, having authentic knowledge regarding them.

*Lewis, James Henry.*—The earliest library of shorthand books formed of which I have any personal knowledge, is that of the late Mr James Henry Lewis. Inferentially at least, we may trace something of the growth of this library. In his *History*, 1816, already referred to, he says, p. 212, "My library of shorthand books and manuscript curiosities in the art, are, I believe, unrivalled in this or any other country. Many of the volumes described in the present publication are unique, and have only been collected at a great expense of time and labor." And in a note he adds, "My collection has cost me more than fifteen years labor, and an expense of more than five hundred pounds." Either Mr Lewis did not in his edition of 1816 give an account of all the printed works he had, or his manuscripts must have constituted an important part of his library, to justify the estimate of value already named.

In a paper contributed by Mr A. L. Lewis to "*Shorthand*" (11 p. 9) viz., "Some notes by Mr J. H. Lewis for a further edition of his *Historical Account of Shorthand*, arranged for the Shorthand Society by his son, A. L. Lewis, F.C.A., M.A.I.," the exact nature of the subsequently acquired works is stated in detail. There are a good many 17th century books. In 1853 Mr J. H. Lewis died, at the age of 67. One of his sons (not Mr A. L. Lewis) carried on the business until 1870. After that the collection of printed books was offered for sale, some by public auction and others by private contract. There were in all 240 distinct works, with 131 duplicates and triplicates, bringing up the total number to 371 books.

These were mainly disposed of to four purchasers, viz.: British Museum, Bodleian Library, Birmingham Free Library, and myself. Feeling the importance of tracing these works, on account of the rarity of many of them—there was no copy of Bright amongst the collection—I contributed to "*Shorthand*" a complete detailed list of the collection, to which Mr A. L. Lewis appended the names of the respective purchasers, by indicating numbers. See vol. 1, pp. 163-177-180. Already one portion of these is lost for ever in the burning of the Birmingham Free Library, hereafter referred to.

*Pitman, Isaac.*—The world-famed inventor of Phonetic Shorthand has not been an ardent collector of shorthand literature. He has, I believe, simply purchased those that have come in his way; but his hands have been too much occupied with the promulgation of the art, to leave time for any detailed study of its literature; of, course beyond that necessary to the preparation of his *History* already referred to. He has always known where



to find such works as he desired to make reference to. We understood him recently to say that his collection did not exceed 100 volumes, and that it was quite miscellaneous. He has some important works bearing upon language, in the direction of spelling reform. Some of the early editions of his own works are this year exhibited in the Health Exhibition in London.

*Bailey, J. Eglington.*—The greatest collection of books on shorthand in England at the present day is that of Mr J. Eglington Bailey, of Stratford, by Manchester, who has been deputed to write the "History of Shorthand" in the new edition of the "Encyclopedia Britannica" now in course of publication.

Some two years ago his shorthand library consisted of about 700 volumes made up as follows: various English authors, 360; French, 70; German, 50; MSS., 30; Isaac Pitman, different works and editions, 200; total, 710. But about that date he prepared a printed list of authors he still wanted, numbering 167, many of which he recently told me he had obtained; so that his collection is now considerably augmented. He is particularly rich in the different editions of the 17th century authors—Willis, Shelton, Rich, etc. These editions he has had richly bound; and they constitute an almost unique collection. He continually has shorthand books reported to him from different parts of England, and is ever ready to exchange duplicates with friends.

*Pocknell, Edward.*—My good friend Mr Edward Pocknell, to whom shorthand in England owes so much of its present revival,—for it was he who really founded the Shorthand Society in 1881—has a considerable and growing collection of shorthand books, some 350 volumes in all, representing about 120 different systems, of some of which he has many editions. This collection is particularly complete in the most modern works on shorthand. All these he scans with a critical eye, in search of real improvements. With the practical advantages of the systems of the old masters he is equally familiar. In his attempts to render shorthand really legible he is doing good service; and in every sense he is an enthusiast in matters stenographic. He bids me especially say how much he regrets that his professional and other engagements prevent him from being amongst us on this occasion in person, as he is in heart.

*Barnet, Mr.*—This gentleman (member of the firm of Barnet and Bucklen, shorthand writers, Chancery lane) has a number of curious books on and in shorthand, some of which were exhibited by Mr Reed, president of the Shorthand Society, recently. I am sorry I cannot give any sufficient details of them on this occasion.

*Walford, Cornelius.*—Of my own library it will be supposed I shall say something. I commenced as a youth to purchase shorthand systems, and usually learned to write those which I acquired. I cannot say the result was at all worth the labor, until, in a



fortunate moment I met with Isaac Pitman's Phonography, but for which I probably should never have become a practical shorthand writer.

While as a young man I did a good deal of reporting, for the last 35 years I have used Phonography chiefly for literary purposes—for professional purposes usually employing a phonographer, to whom I dictate. I desire here to speak of the ability of many of the young men so employed. Some have speedily found more remunerative openings, and have become secretaries, public accountants, literary men, etc. Shorthand does unquestionably sharpen the intellect.

In the active years of professional life I did not go on purchasing shorthand books. The sale of Mr Lewis' library (already spoken of) in some degree stirred me up again, and I purchased a great many of the works thus offered. I ought to have purchased them all and exchanged my duplicates. The formation of the Shorthand Society in 1881, really put me upon my mettle; but other buyers were now in the field, and I have not made many important additions. Every year adds something. My collection now stands about thus. Total, say 400 volumes; made up as follows: English systems, 300; foreign, 40; various works relating to the subject, 60. I have about twenty of the 17th century authors; and a manuscript copy of Bright, as also of the "Grand Master."

*British Museum.*—The National Library of England is by no means so rich in shorthand literature as could be desired. It must be remembered indeed, that the library itself is not an old one. It originated in 1753 with a grant of Parliament of £20,000 to the daughters of Sir Hans Sloane, in payment for his fine library, and vast collections of nature and art which had cost him £50,000. Other libraries have been added, but these not of such a character as to have made stenography, or cryptography, a speciality. The first marked acquisition of early shorthand systems dates back only to the dispersion of Mr Lewis's books in 1871. There probably is not in this library at the present moment more than from 750 to 800 shorthand books, old and new, British and foreign, stenographic and phonographic.

Dr Westby-Gibson confirms this estimate. He says: "I don't think from the British Museum catalogues and admission into the galleries, I could make up a list of more than 650 to 700 distinct works of all nations in this interesting chapter of literature." But, he adds, "The store is always being increased, however, and especially since the Shorthand Society brought it into higher importance;" *vide* letter, 26th July, 1884. In a later note he says, "There are no copies of Bright, 1588; Bales, 1590; Folkingham, 1618; Labourer, 1620; Willoughby, mentioned by Coles, 1621; Witt H., 1630; Mawd, 1635; Farthing, 1654;



Bridges, 1659 ; Heath, 1664 ; Facy, 1672 ; Bartlett, mentioned by Coles, 1674 ; and some others well known."

*Bodleian Library* (Oxford).—In this library, dear to every lover of shorthand literature from the fact of its containing the only known (printed) copy of Timothy Bright—which came to its keeping with the Douce bequest—there are registered up to this date 286 works or editions of shorthand. I say up to this date, because the work of sorting and cataloguing a great accumulation of small fry is still progressing, and not less than 19 new additions have thus been discovered since the learned librarian of this noble institution placed his slips at the disposal of Mr Rockwell. It is most welcome news that a library like the Bodleian, stored with books of great rarity, should be engaged in the preparation of a "Subject Catalogue" for the benefit of its readers. We all owe Mr Nicholson a debt of gratitude for undertaking such a list.

*Birmingham Free Library*.—This library had a collection of 122 works on shorthand, or bearing upon stenographic history. Some of these were of considerable rarity. No less than 79 had been purchased from the collection of Mr J. H. Lewis, already described.

In 1880 the library and its contents were entirely destroyed. There was one 16th century book, viz.: Polygraphia, by the learned Benedictine abbot Trittenheim—better known by the latinized name of Trithemius—published in Cologne in 1571—the 6th book of his folio Polygraphia, gives in red and black his principal alphabet, called "Ciceronian." There were eleven 17th century works, including the Stenographia of Trithemius, Cologne, 1621. I have an edition of the same, 1635. The remainder were 18th and 19th century works.

I published a detailed list of these burned shorthand books in "Shorthand." All will be glad to hear that under the authority of a liberal library committee, the accomplished librarian, Mr Mullins, has commenced a new collection of shorthand works.

It will be remembered that Trithemius—whose great speciality was secret writing (originally steganography, or cryptography), is believed to have revived the practice of stenography in modern Europe ; hence the interest which attaches to his works.

*Chetham Library*.—In the famous Chetham Library, in Manchester, there is a valuable collection of shorthand books, numbering from 120 to 140 ; some of them of considerable interest. These books were principally collected by the late Mr John Harland, (who died in 1868), in view of preparing a history of shorthand, which he never completed. There are about 25 seventeenth century books, and 40 eighteenth century. There were some shorthand works in this library before the Harland collection came in.

*Manchester Free Library*.—In this most excellent library there



is a small collection of shorthand books, amongst them some of the early English authors. But there is something even more interesting than these, viz. : The manuscript history of shorthand in a crude state, as prepared by the late Mr John Harland. We may be sure our friend Mr Bailey will some day present to us, in some form or other, all that is valuable in this. In the meantime the efficient librarian, Mr Sutton, will gladly produce it to any student of shorthand who desires to see it. I have to thank him for his civility on a recent occasion.

*Library of Corporation of London* (Guildhall).—In this most valuable library, free to all comers, there are only some 30 or 40 works on shorthand at the present time, but they are of early authors. I shall hope to see this branch of study receive due attention at the hands of the ever-obliging staff, as space and opportunity permit.

*Shorthand Writers' Association*.—This active society which has for some years flourished under the presidency of Mr Woods (from whom I bring a letter of greeting to this Convention), has a collection of about 100 systems, which is being steadily augmented.

*Shorthand Society*.—It has been one of the features of this Society to pay especial attention to the literature of shorthand, and it has commenced the foundation of a library in a modest way. It is depending mainly upon donations from its members and friends. Its motto in this matter is "The smallest donation thankfully received." From such small beginnings do great results sometimes flow. I trust it may be so in this case. A library to which its members can readily turn for the solution of points in practice, or to trace the progress in invention, cannot fail to be of much use. A great deal must necessarily depend upon the librarian in such a case. He must be stimulated and encouraged by seeing that a real interest is taken in the enterprise.

*Universal Shorthand Library*.—An advertisement in the *Phonetic Journal* announced the establishment of this library in April, 1884. Its purpose seems to be mainly to provide a medium for consulting shorthand periodical publications.

*Guenin, L. P.*—M. Guenin, the revising stenographer to the Senate of France, and himself the author of a recent work on shorthand—"Cours de Stenographie," which speedily reached a 2nd edition—has founded a considerable library of shorthand books. The exact number of his collection I do not know; it is growing rapidly, and I believe Mr Pocknell, Mr Bailey, and others, have made numerous exchanges with him.

I may take this occasion to say that I think the system of exchanging amongst collectors an admirable one. It is an easy means of rendering collections more perfect, and also of preserving



duplicates, which by being aggregated, are in danger of being simultaneously destroyed.

*The Royal Stenographic Institute* reports under date, June, 1883, through Dr Zeibig (*vide* Rockwell, p. 15) that the works on shorthand in all languages of which its officials have cognizance, number 3,295, made up as follows: Latin, 91; German, (see explanation below), 1,434; English, 780; Welsh, 8; French, 490; Italian, 151; Hungarian, 75; Spanish, 71; Russian, 52; Bohemian, 33; Polish, 22; Swedish, 22; Portugese, 16; Dutch, 14; Croatian, 7; Danish, 7; Roumanian, 6; Bulgarian, 4; Slavonian, 3; Grecian, 3; Slavonian, 3; Norwegian, 1; Finnish, 1; Turkish, 1. Of the German works, 684 relate to Gabelsberger's system, and 482 to Stolze, leaving 268 as applicable to German shorthand generally. Of the English works, 370 relate to Isaac Pitman's Phonography, or some modification of it, leaving 410 for English authors generally. A later statement prepared by Dr Zeibig gives the total shorthand works in the Dresden Stenographic Institute at 3,422 works, of which 923 are in the English language. Dr Westby-Gibson says, in a manuscript note, "The Stenographic Institute at Dresden has no doubt the finest stenographic library in the world, but taking the 1883 enumeration, 3,295 works on shorthand" (Rockwell, p. 15), it is a most misleading statement. The works on shorthand must be many hundreds less, if we exclude those which have been wrongly included, viz., 1. Editions without any variation, except date or publisher's name, or place, or a few items of extra information. 2. Books printed in stenographic or phonographic characters. 3. Magazines.

*American Shorthand Libraries.*—I hope it may not be considered presumptuous, if I venture to say a few words about American collections of shorthand books. Every collector in England—not only of books on shorthand, but on most other subjects—has his attention often drawn to the fact that there are collectors in America; for thereby not only do books become correspondingly scarce, but the price of such as remain becomes considerably enhanced. A few years since when I asked a second-hand bookseller for some shorthand authors, the answer I received was, "The last copy I had was sent to Mr Heffley of New York, from which I hold unlimited orders." Now, if I ask for a shorthand book of any kind, ancient or modern, the answer immediately is, "I sent it a few days ago to Mr Rockwell at Washington." As collectors we are much indebted to the learning and enterprise of the second-hand booksellers.

*Rockwell, Julius Ensign.*—To Mr Rockwell's shorthand library and the good use he has made of it, we all have great reason to be thankful; and further, we all have a very direct interest in the growth of that library, in view of future editions of his



"Bibliography." He informs me that his library now consists of about 450 volumes, made up largely of general shorthand literature, and not containing at present many of the early authors. These he hopes to obtain in due course.

*Heffley, Norman P.*—Mr Heffley's library consists of about 260 volumes, and embraces most of the best literature of and concerning shorthand, including several of the 17th century authors. He has shown great dexterity in the acquisition of this collection.

I must not forget to offer Mr Heffley the best thanks of myself, and I think I may add, of all lovers of the literature of shorthand, for his charming Biography of the Father of Stenography, Marcus Tullius Tiro, together with the Latin Letter "De Notis" concerning the origin of shorthand. (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1882, and now out of print). I hope he may live long enough, and receive encouragement enough, to proceed with his translation of Prof. Zeibig's History of Shorthand.<sup>(1)</sup>

*Mr Carey* (Carey and Parkhurst), of Brooklyn, has a valuable collection of shorthand books, including many of the early English authors. I much regret that I have not yet been able to make the personal acquaintance of Mr Carey, or to see his library.

*Yale College Library* contains some valuable books on shorthand. I am unable to specify any particular works; but I am glad to think that early shorthand literature finds there a resting place.

*Chicago.*—I am glad to learn that your energetic secretaries Messrs Brown and Holland, have in view the formation of a shorthand reference library, and I am sure all who can will gladly aid it. I gladly contribute a few duplicates to it.

*Watkins Reference Library.*—There are in this well-known library at Hartford, Conn., some valuable editions of early English works on Stenography. When I say that these works were secured for it by that renowned bibliopole, Mr Henry Stevens of Vermont, (American by birth, English by adoption, and possessing all the good qualities of each nation)—I think I need say no more. I have no statistics of the number of shorthand works there contained; nor do I know whether any additions in this direction continue to be made to it.

*Congress Library, Washington, D.C.*—I have already mentioned that in this famous library—famous amongst the great libraries of the world—there is a considerable number of shorthand books. I am sure the energetic librarian, Mr Spofford, has only to know how much interest attaches to the literature of shorthand just now, and to remember how much the records of Congress are indebted to the stenographic art, in order to induce him to keep this particular section of his grand collection up to date.

1. Since this was written I have had the advantage of making Mr Heffley's personal acquaintance, and have seen his library. He is in earnest about shorthand books.



## PRESENT ASPECTS OF SHORTHAND LITERATURE.

Never was shorthand literature more active than at the present moment—due, I think, in no inconsiderable degree, to the foundation of the Shorthand Society of London. Round that Society seem to be constantly rallying all the lovers of shorthand literature; all the authors of modern systems of stenography. There, ever there, is Edward Pocknell, proclaiming “Legible Shorthand.” There, too, is Edwin Guest—the welcome Guest—with his “Compendious Shorthand;” Professor Everett, with his “Shorthand for General Use;” there again, Mr J. B. Rundell, with his “Civil Service Shorthand;” there enthusiastic Mr Alfred Janes, with his “Standard Stenography”—Taylor perpetuated; there Mr Thompson Cooper, with his “Parliamentary Shorthand;” there Mr A. L. Lewis, as the champion of the “Lewisian system;” there, too, is the learned Thomas Anderson, who is preparing a system yet unnamed, which he pretty clearly intimates is to eclipse them all, and Phonography in particular; there also is Dr Westby-Gibson, grave, learned and critical; there the gentle Petrie, learned in the mysteries of type-writer and reporting machines, which he is ever seeking to adapt to the wants of the reporter. There, but too occasionally, serene and calm, the Father of Phonography, Mr Isaac Pitman, well content (as indeed he should be) with the part he has played, for a full generation and more, in the development of the stenographic art. There also sits (in the presidential chair as is his due) Mr Thomas Allen Reed, believed, and I think justly, to be the most rapid shorthand writer the world has ever seen. There, until cut down by ill health, was often seen the accomplished Charles Wyman, printer and gentleman. There, again, are met champions of the Gallery, grave Clarkson, genial Francis Turner, and others; also various experts in Parliamentary Committees—men who systematically record and make intelligible the proceedings of learned societies, Wright, Humphries, and many others, famous in their special lines, with whom it is a privilege to associate. And there finally are seated in the background many able young men, novitiates and more advanced students, who are to constitute the stenographers of the succeeding generation.

I do not know whether the collectors of shorthand systems, more particularly of the earlier systems, have reason to be thankful for the prevailing activity in stenographic literature or not. There is a good deal to be said on both sides. So long as there is a demand for books they are generally forthcoming. Booksellers especially take note of books that sell. That is their business. Books that do not sell go to the wall speedily, they die out, are lost and forgotten. I have an impression that it is from this latter cause alone, which so long prevailed—that the earlier



shorthand books have become so difficult to meet with. It can't be that, in a literal sense, they have become "scarce." Books of which tens of thousands have been printed, as I have shown was the case with many of the early shorthand systems, can hardly become obliterated. Many are stowed away amongst the forgotten books in libraries; unbound, unlettered, and from their small proportions in many cases unnoticed. It very rarely occurs I have reason to believe, that any old law library is dismantled, in which there are not discovered one or two early shorthand books. On the other hand, it must be admitted that there is a great wear and tear, an absolute though involuntary destruction of books, in certain cases. I have given some consideration to this problem. The solution I have to offer applies with peculiar force to books on shorthand, arithmetical books, dictionaries, and other minor educational works. These are purchased largely by students. Was there ever—within the last three centuries at least—a real student who did not almost instinctively divine that shorthand would be of great service to him during his student career or later? A very large proportion of students do acquire the art of shorthand, in a greater or less degree of perfection, and they almost necessarily learn from books. The book itself, if a small one, is carried in the pocket till practically worn out. Many of the early shorthand books I have purchased have been dogs-eared, within the eighth of an inch of their lives. If they survive the student period, they are too often utterly discarded when their owner enters upon the serious business of life. Few men take any interest in their schoolbooks; they generally loathe the very sight of them; and hence the neglect they share—a neglect which means annihilation. The manner in which books once famous do utterly disappear from sight, is very marvelous, and could be illustrated by many instances; one will suffice:—Thomas, printer to the University of Cambridge, England, published in 1580 a dictionary which speedily became famous. It passed through five impressions in eight years; and in all—according to the editor of Stevens's Latin Thesaurus—there were fourteen editions. These early editions became very scarce; especially the first, so much so that Ainsworth says, in the preface to the first edition of his dictionary, that he had not been able to procure a sight of it.

Some of the early editions of the 17th century shorthand systems have become scarce in a like degree; but they do turn up, and my belief is, will continue to do so, just in proportion as there is manifested a growing interest in the subject. We may all aid each other's collections by indicating to the bookseller those who are seeking such works, and stimulate the trade in that manner.



## CONCLUSION.

It is quite time that I brought this too protracted address to a close. The subject has grown upon me. The circumstance of being specially invited to attend this Convention and meet so many congenial minds, has stimulated me. The additional fact that I stand here as a representative—I am sorry to say the sole representative—of the various British Stenographic Associations and authors, has put me further upon my mettle. The presence of Mr Rockwell has especially moved me. I have been for a whole life time contemplating doing what he has just done, that is, to prepare a Bibliography of the Literature of Shorthand. I have lived where the materials could be obtained with comparative ease. He has been placed in a position of difficulty—difficulty at nearly every step. He has achieved success; I am vanquished. But if vanquished, I endeavor to hope that I am not disgraced. My heart is still imbued with a love of shorthand literature. I hope even yet to make contributions to the history of the art. But this I desire especially to say in conclusion, that neither I nor any other man could write the history of shorthand efficiently until such a Bibliography as Mr Rockwell has prepared, was at his command.

## SHORTHAND INSTRUCTION BOOKS.

*The Books recommended to the Student on commencing the study of Phonetic Shorthand are the "Phonographic Teacher," 6d.; "Key," 6d.; "Exercises," 1d.; and "Progressive Studies," 1s. The members of the Phonetic Society correct the lessons of learners gratuitously. See the last page of the "Teacher."*

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