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All about Shorthand

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ABOUT

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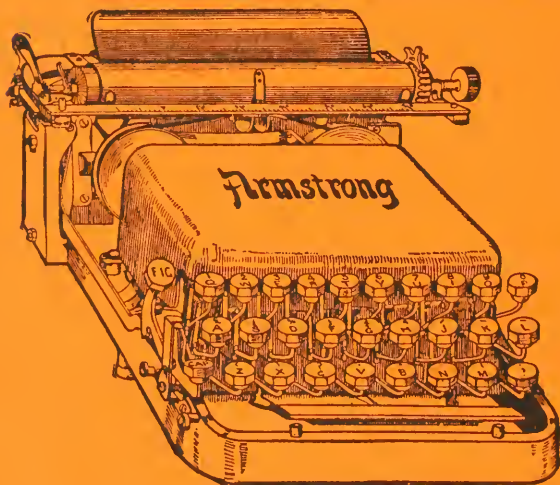
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By  
ALBERT P. GREEN.



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## CHAPTER I.

---

### A Short History of Shorthand.

---

“ Whence did this wondrous mystic art arise  
Of painting speech and speaking to the eyes,  
That we, by tracing magic lines, are taught  
How both to colour and embody thought ? ”

THERE is nothing new under the sun—with the possible exception of the new star in Perseus—and the art of Shorthand writing is by no means a new one, as many people suppose. On the contrary, the art is a very ancient one, and the formulation of Shorthand systems appears to have occupied the attention of men from times immemorial, and we have references to the subject far back in the history of man, in times of which the history ceases to be history and fades into fable.

Antiquity  
of  
Shorthand.

At a very early period the Egyptians, who were famed for their learning, used figures and symbols called hieroglyphics. The ancient Jews also had a method of brief writing for the contraction of the Hebrew language, and our first historian, Herodotus, tells us that traces of abbreviated writing were discovered among the Persians in 480 B.C.

Before the Christian era, however, we have no authentic facts to prove the existence of a system of Shorthand. On the other hand, we have evidence in the writings of famous men, such as Cæsar, Horace, and Tacitus, that Shorthand was extensively used by the Romans.

The first known system of Shorthand owed its origin to one Marcus Tullius Tiro, who was born in the year 103 B.C. Tiro was a slave, and took his first and second names from his master, Marcus Tullius Cicero, the great Roman lawyer, whose orations are famous the world over. It is interesting to see how thus early in the history of Shorthand the ability to write it proved of value to a young man starting life, for Tiro made himself so useful to his master in the work of

The  
earliest  
known  
Shorthand.



and used by the Emperors themselves. It is said, too, that St. Paul dictated his Epistle to the Colossians to a Shorthand writer. Apparently strikes were not unknown in these "good old times," for St. Augustine tells us of Shorthand writers going out on strike, and succeeding in their demands. We do not mention this incident in order to incite other Shorthand writers to go and do likewise! Many of the early Popes had their Shorthand secretaries; to be shorthand secretary to a Pope was not in those days an altogether delightful thing, for we read that Pope Vigil, finding his secretary inclined to be sleepy and not sufficiently *vigilant*, dealt him a vigorous box on the ear, from the effects of which he died.

Strike of  
Shorthand  
Writers.

Throughout the Middle Ages the art of Shorthand writing appears to have been entirely neglected. The introduction of modern Shorthand synchronises with that great revival of learning which has made the reign of Queen Elizabeth famous for all time.

First  
English  
Shorthand.

In 1587 Dr. Timothy Bright published his "Characterie, the Art of Short, Swift and Secret Writing in Character," which he dedicated to his Queen, "Good Queen Bess," as she is affectionately known. Not many years after, in 1602, John Willis, a Bachelor of Divinity, published his work on "Spelling Characterie," so called to distinguish it from previous Shorthand systems, in which each character represented an entire word. To Willis belongs the credit of giving to the world the first Shorthand alphabet, and the first system based on the phonetic principle, or writing words according to their *sound*, instead of according to their *spelling*. Bright had advocated writing by sound to some extent, but not in a thorough and consistent manner.

Willis.

From Willis's time to the eighteenth century the history of Shorthand resolves itself into a mere repetition of names of Shorthand authors. There are, however, a few interesting facts to be noted.

Of Shelton's Shorthand, published in 1620, it may be said that it formed the basis of many systems published after it. And here it should be noted that the working materials at the disposal of the Shorthand inventor are so few that there are no two systems, out of the many published, that do not bear *some* resemblance to one another. Shorthand inventors are not, however, to be accused of plagiarism on this account.

Thomas  
Shelton.

It is said that Jeremiah Rich's Shorthand, published in 1646, was used in the work of copying down Shakespeare's plays. Nor was its use always an innocent and praiseworthy

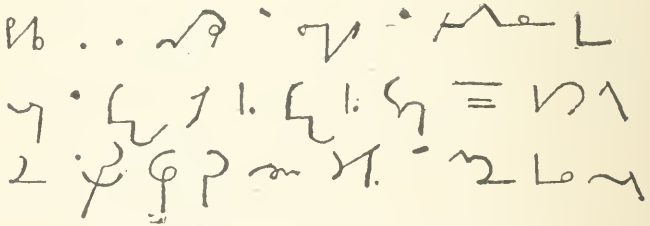
Shakespeare  
and  
Shorthand.

one, for we read that theatre managers engaged Shorthand writers to take down plays as acted at other theatres for presentation at their own!

Locke, in his famous essay on Education, refers to the Shorthand system of Jeremiah Rich; he speaks very highly of it, but thinks it might be made easier and shorter, a criticism that might well be applied to many other systems. It is said that it was in Rich's Shorthand that the great Samuel Pepys wrote his celebrated Diary, which he kept in Shorthand for ten years. It is also related that Pepys took down in Shorthand from King Charles the Second's own mouth his account of his flight after the battle of Worcester in 1680.

The  
Shorthand  
Renaissance

Since the time of Queen Anne the world has been literally deluged with Shorthand systems, and this would seem to denote an increased need for, and appreciation of the art. Only a few of these systems have been at all widely used, and most of them are now as dead as Queen Anne herself.



SPECIMEN OF "GURNEY'S IMPROVED SHORTHAND."

Thomas  
Gurney.

In 1740 Thomas Gurney published a system of Shorthand, which was really, as he admitted, a modification of Mason's Shorthand, published in 1672. Gurney was the founder of the firm of W. B. Gurney & Sons, who have been the Official Shorthand writers to the Houses of Parliament since 1813. Gurney's Shorthand is still used by the staff of the firm in their Official work, and it is used to some extent by other professional Shorthand writers in the United Kingdom and Australia.

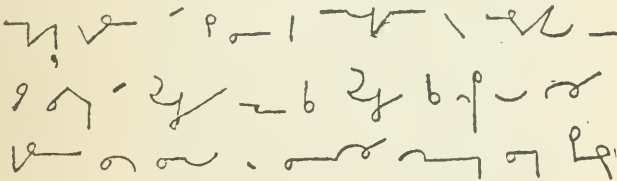
John Byrom.

Dr. John Byrom deserves special mention as being apparently the first to advocate the omission of vowels in writing Shorthand. This omission, though open to severe criticism, has been largely adopted in the later Shorthand systems. Byrom, whose system was published in 1767, was a great rival of James Weston, who had also published a Shorthand of his own. This rivalry was carried to rather an extreme point, and even-

tually Weston challenged Byrom to a trial of skill, which, after being accepted, resulted in Weston's defeat. Byrom was a poet as well as Shorthand expert, and in one of his poems he gives some good advice, which might with advantage be adopted by young Shorthand writers of the present day, viz.: to write down "any bright passage" that may strike the mind. He says:

"Were it not for the written letter,  
Pray what were living men the better  
For all the labours of the dead?  
For all that Socrates e'er said?  
The morals brought from heaven to men  
He would have carry'd back again;  
'Tis owing to his Shorthand youth  
That Socrates does now speak truth."

Charles Wesley, the hymn writer, brother of John Wesley the great evangelist, was one of Dr. Byrom's most successful



SPECIMEN OF "TAYLOR'S SHORTHAND."  
(Odell's Edition.)

pupils, and we are told that he wrote a very beautiful Shorthand. There are a few writers of Byrom's Shorthand at the present day.

Taylor's Shorthand first saw the light in 1786, and since his time it has been published in many different forms. It was used largely in this country during the early part of the nineteenth century, and is still used by many official Shorthand writers. Adaptations of Taylor's system are also used in Holland and Portugal. Although Taylor did so much for Shorthand, very little is known about his career.

To Simon Bordley belongs the great distinction of publishing—in 1787—the first system of Shorthand in the Script style, *i.e.*, with the slope and movement of ordinary longhand.

The year 1834 saw the birth of the great Script system of Gabelsberger, and it is this system, and the Script system of Stolze, published nine years later, that now predominate in

Rival  
Authors.

Samuel  
Taylor.

The First  
Script  
Shorthand.

Gabelsberger.

Germany, Austria, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy, Russia, Norway, Roumania, Servia, Sweden, and Switzerland. There is no country in the world, by the way, where the use of Shorthand is so general as it is in Switzerland.

The Commune of Munich, "the Metropolis of the Arts," and the birthplace of Gabelsberger, has shown its appreciation of his services to mankind, by ordaining that his tomb shall be carefully preserved for ever; the street where he lived is named after him, and his statue in bronze has been erected in the town. Over a thousand books of all kinds have been issued in connection with this famous German system.



THE LATE SIR ISAAC PITMAN.

**Isaac Pitman.** Among the writers of Taylor's system (improved by Harding) was Mr.—afterwards Sir—Isaac Pitman, and it was while engaged in the work of editing a manual of Taylor's system that the idea of inventing a new and more perfect system was suggested to him. The suggestion bore fruit, and in 1837—auspicious date—he published his system of *Phonography*, being a *phonetic* system of Shorthand, or writing according to *sound*. Sir Isaac was an ardent spelling reformer, and would have liked to see our ordinary writing spelt phonetically. He signed his name "Eizak Pitman," and his correspondence was written in the same "fonetik" manner.

He confidently asserted that phonetic spelling would be the spelling of the future, "as sure as yonder setting sun will rise again in the morning," as he remarked on one occasion. The sun duly rose next morning, but it does not yet appear that the idea of phonetic spelling is in the ascendant also, and the philologist will not regret this.

Although Sir Isaac did not succeed in reforming our ordinary spelling, his Shorthand became popular. The rapid spread of education, the wonderful strides made in the art of printing, and the advent of a free press, the penny post, and the steam engine, all combined to increase the usefulness of Shorthand, and Pitman's, as the result of an effective propaganda,



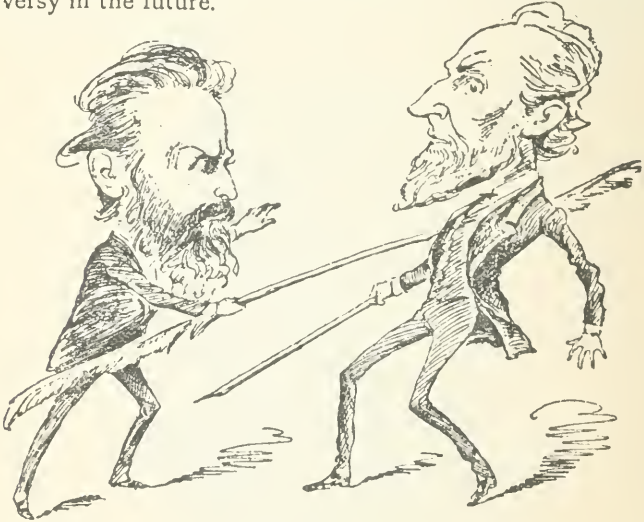
MR. THOMAS STRATFORD MALONE,

Author of *Script Phonography*, Shorthand Instructor at Strand School and Civil Service Dept. King's College, Clark's College, University College School, etc.

was largely adopted, and in the course of time it gradually replaced to a large extent most of the older English systems. Writers of these were not over anxious to welcome the intruder, but their feelings had to give way before the cause of progress. At the present day it may be said that Pitman's Shorthand is much more largely used in the United Kingdom than any other system. At the same time, it would be very far from the truth to suppose that it has an entire monopoly. Several of the older systems are still used by

reporters and official Shorthand writers, in the House of Commons, the Royal Courts of Justice, and elsewhere, while there are also several younger systems of Shorthand which are now very frequently met with at the reporter's table and in business offices, such as Script Phonography, Sloan-Duployan Shorthand, and the Oxford system.

The annexed cartoon, which appeared in *Moonshine* some years ago, reminds one of the great controversy which then raged between the two leading systems. The recognition of the fact that there is room for all, should prevent useless controversy in the future.



Number of  
Systems  
in use.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that there are no less than twenty-two different systems of Shorthand in present use by reporters and journalists on the Press of the United Kingdom. It is evident, therefore, that such a thing as a monopoly of any one system does not exist, and rightly so, for the noble art of Shorthand is subject to the same laws of evolution and progress as is everything else in the finite world. "The old order changeth, giving place to new," and this has been a notable feature of the history of Shorthand. Teachers of Shorthand are wont to deprecate the introduction of new systems, because it may necessitate a revision of their own methods, but they ought to view the matter in a larger light and a broader spirit.

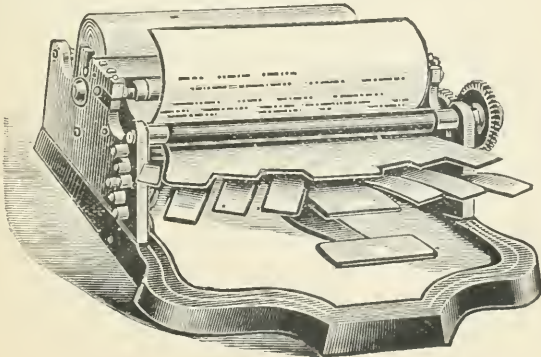




MR. J. M. SLOAN,  
Author of Sloan-Duployan Shorthand.

The history of Shorthand is brought up-to-date with the mention of Stenotypy, or Machine Shorthand. This system being a new departure, not a great deal has as yet been heard of it, but it is of sufficient importance to demand notice.

The Stenotyper is a machine somewhat like a very small typewriter; it has however only six different keys, three of those in the illustration being duplicates.



By means of various combinations of these keys, the Stenotypist is enabled to write abbreviated Longhand, at speed, in type composed of the dot and dash. Unlike the typewriter, the paper moves forward automatically, the lines commencing and ending without the operator's knowledge or assistance. The machine is also quiet in working, and simple in construction, being operated on the knees. The promoters of this little machine claim great advantages for it, among others that it turns out *printed* Shorthand, which can be read with accuracy by any person conversant with Stenotype. An interesting feature is that the machine can be operated in the dark; this is not of very great importance, but certainly might be useful in special circumstances, as for instance in reporting a lantern lecture. Here is a specimen of Stenotype. This is about half the width available on the Stenotyper.

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## SPECIMEN OF "STENOTYPE."

The total number of English systems of Shorthand that have been published is nearly five hundred. The following is a Chronological list of some of the more important authors, with the dates when their respective systems were first published. G. denotes Geometric, and S. Script, which terms are explained later on.

G. 1587 Dr. Timothy Bright  
 G. 1602 Rev. John Willis  
 G. 1620 Thomas Shelton  
 G. 1646 Jeremiah Rich  
 G. 1672 William Mason

The most notable Shorthand author of his century. Taught his system in Gracechurch Street.

- G. 1727 James Weston  
 G. 1740 Thomas Gurney  
 G. 1750 William Tiffin  
 G. 1767 Dr. John Byrom, F.R.S.  
 G. 1780 Dr. William Mavor
- Published "Universal Stenography," a system which was popular in its day, but is now forgotten.
- G. 1786 Samuel Taylor  
 S. 1787 Simon Bordley
- 1802 Richard Roe
- G. 1812 G. Odell
- G. 1812 James Henry Lewis
- G. 1823 William Harding
- G. 1833 Thomas Moat  
 G. 1837 Isaac Pitman  
 G. 1852 J. D. Everett  
 S. 1860 Alfred Geiger
- G. 1862 F. Redfern  
 S. 1863 Gustav Michaelis
- G. 1877 Rev. James Williams  
 G. 1881 Edward Pocknell
- Published "Cadmus Britannicus," the first system of Shorthand in the Script style. Some Shorthand authorities refer to Roe's system as a Script system, but it was not entirely so, as the letter H was written with a backward slope.
- Published a revised edition of Taylor's Shorthand.
- Published "The Ready Writer."
- Published another edition of Taylor's Shorthand called "Universal Stenography."
- Published an English adaptation of the German system of Gabelberger.
- "Edeography."
- Published an English adaptation of the German system of Stolze.
- "Alethography."
- "Legible Shorthand."

G. 1882	Alfred Janes	"Standard Stenography," and "Shorthand without Complication."
G. 1882	Edwin Guest	"Compendious Shorthand."
G. 1882	J. M. Sloan	Sloan-Duployan Shorthand.
S. 1886	Thomas Stratford Malone	"Script Phonography."
S. 1886	Henry Richter	"Graphic Shorthand," being another adaptation of Gabelsberger's system.
S. 1887	Rev. D. S. Davies	"Sonography."
S. 1887	P. Kingsford	"Oxford Shorthand."
S. 1888	Hugh Callendar	"Cursive Shorthand."
G. 1901	J. Hughes	"Hughes' Shorthand for the New Century."

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## CHAPTER II.

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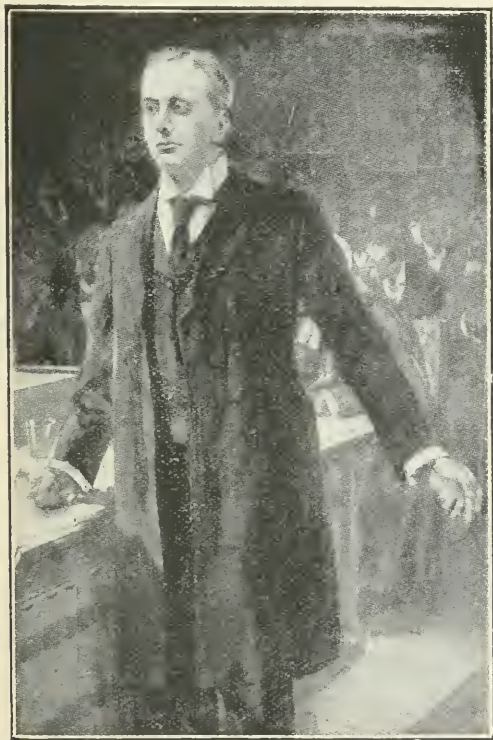
### The Value and Uses of Shorthand.

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THERE can be no doubt that mankind owes a great debt to the art of Shorthand writing. The debt is, indeed, an incalculable one, for without its aid some of the noblest utterances of our best and greatest men, utterances which were often the parents of great movements, would have been lost to the world, and the movements themselves never inaugurated. Diogenes says: "Shorthand writing first brought to light the sayings of Socrates, and made them known to men"; and it is certain that we should not have had the orations of Cicero to-day without the help of Tiro's Shorthand.

Shorthand has always been of great value, but to-day, when civilisation has advanced so far, Shorthand is an indispensable adjunct of that civilisation. This is what Lord Rosebery says upon the subject, and no apology is needed for quoting him at length:—"I believe that one hundred years ago the

world would have got on tolerably well without Shorthand ; but at this moment, suppose we can fancy, by any autocratic and natural power, the suspension of Shorthand throughout the natural world for even a week, I want to know how the universe would get on under circumstances of that kind. My imagination cannot grasp the idea. . . . There is a great



LORD ROSEBERY.

economy in public offices which might be looked after as much, at least, as the economy of money, and that is the economy of time ; and as long as we neglect and pass by the obvious economy of time that is to be effected by the greatly increased use of Shorthand in our public offices, I say we are flagrantly neglecting our duty to our country in this respect. . . .

The telegram, the telephone, the postal card, are nothing but the signals of distress of an overstrained civilisation. . . . I believe our first economy must lie in the direction of a much greater employment of Shorthand. . . . In the next place, in these days of rigid and anxious competition in economical matters, we must make it understood to all our growing lads that an almost indispensable condition of a commercial education is a knowledge of Shorthand; and, in the third place, we must make it understood that to all those who aspire to secretarial or responsible posts a knowledge of Shorthand is, at least, equally indispensable.

Shorthand  
Indispens-  
able.

“In the days when women are loudly and justly calling for increased and enlarged employment, Shorthand offers them a pursuit which they are eminently qualified to excel in. . . . I hope with all my heart that Shorthand will penetrate every cranny and crevice of our civilised life. . . . I pay homage to your lithe and noble art, which has added largely to the power and economy of the present day, and is likely to add to them indefinitely in the future; and I pay homage to it further for this reason, that in the past it has recorded the speeches of a Cicero and a Cæsar; and I think in the coming days historians will not be ungrateful to it for having recorded the speeches of a Gladstone, a Disraeli, and a Bright.”

What  
Notable  
Men  
Think.

The late Lord Herschell, himself a writer of Shorthand, once took occasion to say that “Shorthand had become a *necessity* to a majority of those who desired to be employed in commercial life or public offices. It would be impossible to estimate the increased capacity it conferred upon those who were working with their intellects. He dreamed of the time when *everybody* would be taught Shorthand as a matter of course. They should all grasp the fact that Shorthand was of great utility, not only in public offices and commercial life, but to *every human being*.”

The Right Hon. C. T. Ritchie, M.P., the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, was previously President of the Board of Trade, and ought to know something of the subject. This is what he says about the value of Shorthand in commerce: “I am sorry to find that Shorthand is studied by so few. The young men who know Shorthand will get the preference in future.”

At the present day Shorthand plays a useful part in the world of commerce. It is used in nearly all classes of business, no large business house being without its Shorthand clerk, and a capable Stenographer need never be out of employment. **While this is true, it should never be the aim of anyone to be**

Shorthand  
in Business.

a Stenographer and nothing more. The Shorthand clerk in a business house has splendid opportunities, and they should be made the most of. In the first place, he is brought into close contact with his employer or manager; and, in the second place, having the correspondence of the various departments of the business continually passing before him, he becomes conversant with the management and details of the business, and is therefore better fitted for promotion to a responsible position in the house, than is the clerk of any one department. This is what a writer in the business column of the *British Weekly* said recently:

"I certainly endorse your remarks when you say that a Shorthand writer should never be content to remain in that position. Shorthand, as such, should be used as a means to an end, and in that respect I certainly owe more to Shorthand than to any other requirement for several reasons, the chief of which is that it necessarily brought me into direct contact with my employers. This is a very important consideration for a young man anxious to secure advancement in business. You say that the time given to the acquirement of Shorthand might in some cases be better spent in learning German. In this I feel sure you are wrong. A linguist is not in such demand in the commercial market as certain writers would have us believe, whereas Shorthand, if well mastered, will always command a fair salary. With a good practical knowledge of French, and a fair knowledge of German, I find they are practically no use to me in England, whereas I am always able to use Shorthand."

As Lord Rosebery has pointed out, Shorthand offers to women employment for which they are well fitted. At the present day the prospects of the lady Shorthand clerk are very bright; salaries are rising, with the result that more well-educated women are taking to this work than formerly. The statement recently made that the market is over-flooded with Shorthand clerks is not well founded in fact. The market may be over-flooded with types such as this:—

Employer (to Stenographer): "Just take down this letter, please. By the way, I'm in a hurry, so please take it down in *longhand*!"

For *competent* Shorthand clerks, both male and female, there is a steady and increasing demand.

Probably, the Stenographer above referred to was originally a member of the class we read about in the following rhyme:—

#### THE SHORTHAND CLASS.

Nine "wanting Shorthand," came with purpose great;  
 One missed some lessons, then there were eight.  
 Eight "wanting Shorthand," got to page eleven;  
 One found it "horrid dull," then there were seven.

Seven "wanting Shorthand," attention tried to fix;  
 One couldn't do it, then there were six.  
 Six "wanting Shorthand," to keep on said they'd strive;  
 One broke his promise, then there were five.  
 Five "wanting Shorthand," began the book once more;  
 One got discouraged, then there were four.  
 Four "wanting Shorthand," taxed their memory;  
 One forgot the alphabet, then there were three.  
 Three "wanting Shorthand," more doubtful each day grew;  
 One took to football, then there were two.  
 Two "wanting Shorthand," but rather fond of fun;  
 One joined the dancing class, then there was one.  
 One "wanting Shorthand," found summer very near,  
 And said, "bother Shorthand, I'll try again next year."



SIR EDWARD CLARKE, K.C.

Commerce is not the only field for the Shorthand writer. Given other necessary qualifications, Shorthand will also be useful in starting a journalistic career, and journalism has many attractions for young men of the present day. We as a nation pride ourselves on the high character and traditions of



our Press. Here again, the man who becomes a journalist need not always remain a journalist. Among the greatest men in our land to-day, men eminent in letters, law, and politics, are a large number who, in early days, were working journalists, and the House of Commons at this moment includes several who are still such.

The ability to write Shorthand has sometimes served as a stepping stone to fame and fortune, and this is notable in the case of Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., the eminent politician, and still more eminent lawyer. A Stepping-stone to Fame.

This is what he said recently in the course of a public speech:—

“ Fifty years ago I went as a boy of ten years old to the College House School, next door to the famous ‘ Old Bell ’ at Edmonton, and, although none of the masters teaching the hundred scholars could have, perhaps, passed a respectable examination, yet I learned two things during my two years there, which have been of more value to me than anything else in life, viz. — *Shorthand* and elocution.”

The system which Sir Edward uses is that of Taylor (improved by Harding). So great is his interest in the subject of Shorthand, that some time ago he gave an exposition of Taylor’s Shorthand to an audience of teachers at the College of Preceptors in London.

Shorthand has many uses, and is a helpful accomplishment apart from the question of earning a livelihood. But the young man or woman who can write Shorthand will, other things being equal, be able to make a better start in life than one who cannot, and a successful start is half the battle. The Battle of Life.

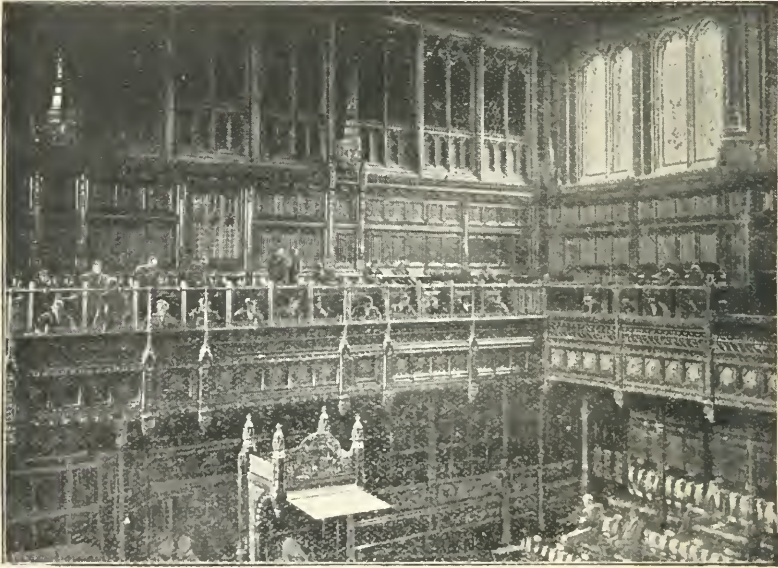
In these strenuous times, when the competition between nations, as well as individuals, grows ever keener and fiercer, and the theory of “ the survival of the fittest ” is seen in practice, it behoves all our young people to equip themselves efficiently for the battle of life, and a knowledge of Shorthand will be a useful weapon to add to their armoury.

### CHAPTER III.

## Shorthand in the House of Commons.

SHORTHAND plays a great part in the compilation of our newspapers, and nowhere is the Press so well represented as in the House of Commons. Only the very best and

most reliable men can of course hope to secure one of these coveted appointments. The privilege of reporting in the House is strictly prohibited in the Strangers', the Speaker's, and the Distinguished Strangers' Galleries, and is confined to the Press Gallery alone. The number of applications for seats in the gallery is greatly in excess of the available accommodation. The majority of Provincial papers are supplied with reports of the House of Commons debates by the Central News and the Press Association.



PRESS GALLERY, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

**How News-  
papers get  
Reports.**

All the big London dailies, and some of the more important Provincial papers, have their own reporters in the House, while some of them also have their own "special" or "descriptive" reporters, whose work differs materially from that of the ordinary reporter.

For the purpose of transcribing their Shorthand notes, the reporters are provided with a large committee room, a writing room, and a smoking room. Some reporters take turns of half an hour, and some of a quarter, the length of the turns being gradually lessened as the evening progresses. Towards

the close of the debate, the reporters are relieved every five minutes, or, in the case of *The Times*,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  minutes, so that the reports are ready for press a very short time after the close of the debate. There are no less than nine different systems of Shorthand in use in the gallery. A corps of over a hundred messengers is employed in taking the reports, as they are prepared, to the newspaper and telegraph offices. *The Times* has a special telephone, and its reports are sent by it to the *Times* office, where it is immediately set up in type by a receiving telephonist. There is only one corps of reporters for both Houses of Parliament, as the House of Lords seldom sits beyond the dinner hour, and rarely has much business to transact. When the sitting in the Lords ends, the reporters there adjourn to the Commons to help their colleagues in the more onerous work required to be done there.

In addition to reporting the debates, there is a large amount of Shorthand writing done in connection with the various Select Committees of the House. Here the system of taking turns is not in vogue. The sittings of the Committee last three, four, or five hours, and each official Shorthand writer usually takes down for not less than two hours or more than four hours at a time. To be an official Shorthand writer necessitates the possession of a good general education and very high technical skill. The Gurney system is the one most used for this work.

Committee  
Work.

While only the best men are employed as reporters in the House, mistakes will sometimes occur. On one occasion, years ago now, the great Edmund Burke having observed that "virtue does not depend upon *climates and degrees*," he was reported to have said, "virtue does not depend upon climaxes and trees"! On a more recent occasion a speaker referred to the Report of Lord Peel (on Temperance) as "the Repeal of Lord Port"! On this occasion the position was reversed, and it was the reporter who put the speaker right. One more example will suffice. A legal gentleman, in the course of an eloquent speech, quoted from Shakespeare the lines, "A man may smile and smile, and be a villain still," and the reporter furnished it, "The moon may smile and smile, but by heavens, it's there still!"

Some  
Amusing  
Mistakes.

## CHAPTER IV.

## Which System Shall I Learn ?

THE study of Shorthand is one that seems to have attractions for countless thousands, but it is to be regretted that so few carry their studies to a successful conclusion, the majority being satisfied with a very cursory acquaintance with the art. This ought not to be the case, as the Shorthand student of to-day enjoys advantages which were not available for the Shorthand student of a generation ago.

The immortal Charles Dickens, in his *David Copperfield*, which contains the story of the great novelist's own life, gives us a graphic description of his attempts to learn Shorthand. The passage is well worth quoting.

How  
Charles  
Dickens  
Learnt  
Shorthand.

Having thoroughly made up his mind to begin the study, Dickens tells us, "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; and 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, then there 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 mean expectation, and that a pen-and-ink sky-rocket 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 them up, I dropped the other fragments of the system; in short it was almost heart-breaking. . . . 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 vigour, 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! . . . The result of much good practice was, that by-and-by I began to keep pace pretty well, and I 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."

In spite of the difficulties above referred to, Dickens eventually succeeded in getting into the Reporters' Gallery of the House of Commons, as the representative of one of the morning papers, like his father before him. Subsequent to that he started the *Daily News*, of which he for some time acted as editor. Dickens succeeded in *spite* of the difficulties; much more than ought others to succeed when the difficulties have been removed, for it is now possible to gain a mastery of the "lithe and noble art," without following the tortuous pathway which Dickens and his contemporaries had perforce to tread.

The question at the head of this chapter is one which the intending student will have to answer, and in his own interests he should answer it for himself. Naturally, every student would like to learn the *best* system, but as Shorthand experts differ very much as to which is the best, the selection must be made by the student himself. In considering the question, there are one or two important facts to be borne in mind.

All Shorthand systems are divided into two great classes, the Geometric and the Script styles. The Geometric system is one the alphabet of which is largely made up of the circle and its segments, together with various straight strokes, which are written some vertically, some with a forward, and some with a backward slope. A Script Shorthand is one which is written with the uniform manual movement of ordinary longhand.

Geometric  
and Script  
Shorthand.

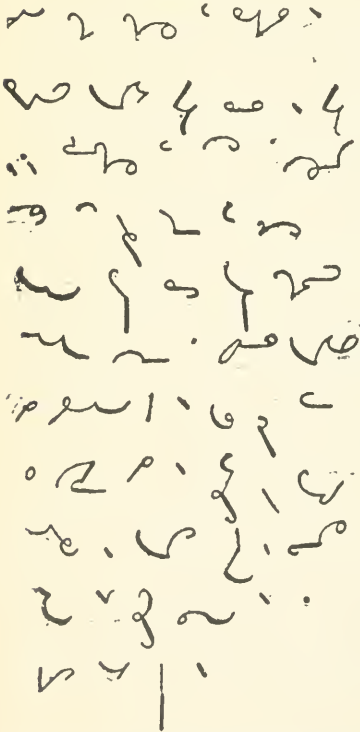
Shorthand systems are again divided into two; first, those which have the vowels detached from the consonants, and indicated by dots and strokes, occupying fixed positions in reference to the consonants, such as above or below, to the right or left, at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end; and, second, those systems where the vowels and consonants are connected in their natural order without lifting the pen.

Detached  
and Joined  
Vowels.

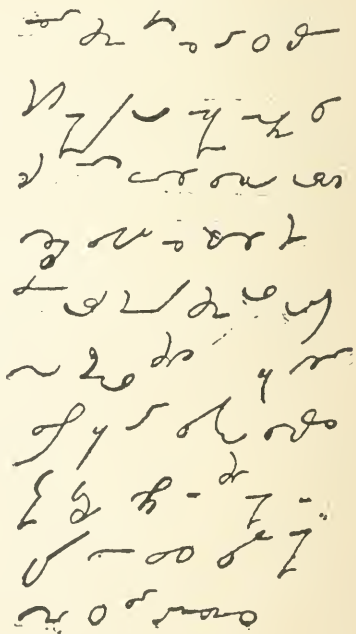
This classification simplifies the question very considerably, for the student has but to decide which of the above mentioned characteristics he prefers, and then select that system which best embodies those characteristics.

Of the various kinds of Shorthand above described, the leading representatives in this country are Pitman's, Script

PITMAN'S  
(GEOMETRIC.)



SCRIPT PHONOGRAPHY  
(SCRIPT.)



Phonography, and the Sloan-Duployan system, and it is very probable that one's choice will rest with these.

Pitman's Shorthand is of course the most famous representative of the Geometric school, and has detached vowels.

Sloan-Duployan is also a Geometric system, being an English adaptation of the French Duployé system, and has joined vowels.

In Script Phonography we have embodied both the Script principle and joined vowels.

In order that the reader may appreciate the fundamental difference between the Geometric and the Script schools, specimens of the two are here appended. The Pitman specimen is written in the "Reporting" style, and therefore the vowels are not actually inserted at all, but are partially suggested by reason of the outlines being written either above, on, or through the line.

Script Phonography is the leading representative in this country of the new school of Shorthand which now rules on the continent of Europe. It has not yet had time to make for itself quite the position that Pitman's has attained in this country, and is not so well known. It is only fair therefore to say that it has already proved its capacity for the highest functions of Shorthand, and is able to accomplish all that can be done by other systems.

It may be interesting to read what a well known authority on Shorthand has to say upon the subject.

Dr. Westby-Gibson, in one of his works published a few years since, makes the following observations on the subject of the rise and progress of the Script style of Shorthand:—

"A movement had" (in the early part of the nineteenth century) "commenced abroad that in the course of another half-century, reaching down to our own time, has had remarkable success, consequent upon the energy of Shorthand inventors, the enthusiasm of advocates, and the generous help of Continental States—in striking contrast to the apathy of England—a movement which has had the effect of dividing the Shorthand world into two strongly opposed forces—the partisans of the Geometric method, and those of the Script-hand method. Scripthead has been in truth like a young tree planted in uncongenial soil, and for fifty years 'time and the hours' had been unpropitious to its development, but after what may be called (without offence to sensitive Germans) its *transplantation* to another soil and a more genial climate, warm with the sunshine and rich with the rains of another fifty-year cycle, the delicate thing has grown into a great and stately tree. Our own times exhibit the German Scripthead like a glorious linden-tree flourishing in grace and beauty in proud rivalry to the old English Stenography. . . . The extraordinary success of the three dominant Script systems is shown by the fact that they have driven out of Germany every Geometrical system. . . . Authors and reviewers seem to have been in sublime

Rise and  
Progress of  
Scripthead.

ignorance of this remarkable movement going on unceasingly across the channel. . . . Now, however, the tide seems to be turning in favour of the Script method in these Isles."

An Important Point.

Intending students are sometimes told by teachers and others that they must learn one particular system, because Shorthand writers have to read one another's notes. The fact that there are as many as twenty-two different systems in present use in this country should be a sufficient answer to this, but the following utterance should also serve to show what is the true position of affairs :—

The *Typists' Gazette and Shorthand Clerks' Journal*, in replying to an enquirer, put the matter fairly by saying : " You may take it as a fact, that not in one case in a hundred is the name of the system used by the applicant for a position enquired into, and that the actual test of experience is alone relied upon by the employer in stenographic labour."

The Civil Service Commissioners accept writers of any system at their examinations, and no rule prescribing any particular system has been adopted at the examinations for clerkships under the London County Council, the London School Board, or the leading Railway Companies. The exclusive recognition of any particular system has never been sanctioned by the Board of Education or by educational authorities generally.

In any case, the object of this little book will have been attained if it has the effect of stimulating the interest of young people in all that appertains to the art of Shorthand writing.





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