

**SHORTHAND: A
SCIENTIFIC AND
LITERARY MAGAZINE,
VOL. I.- 1881, 1882**

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Shorthand: A Scientific and Literary Magazine, Vol. I.- 1881, 1882 by Dr. Westby-Gibson & Mr. A. L. Lewis

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DR. WESTBY-GIBSON & MR. A. L. LEWIS

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SCIENTIFIC AND
LITERARY MAGAZINE,
VOL. I.- 1881, 1882**

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SHORTHAND:

A SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY MAGAZINE,

(WITH ILLUSTRATIONS,)

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE ART,

AND CONDUCTED UPON INDEPENDENT PRINCIPLES BY

DR. WESTBY-GIBSON AND MR. A. L. LEWIS,

(FELLOWS OF THE SHORTHAND SOCIETY).

*The Organ of the SHORTHAND SOCIETY, the SHORTHAND-WRITERS'
ASSOCIATION, and other Kindred Institutions.*

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VOL. I.—1881, 1882.
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1882.

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1 to 16. Illustrations to Papers by Guénin, Rundell, Anderson, &c. No. 6, May, 1882. p. 101.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

Shorthand:

A SCIENTIFIC MAGAZINE.

Pocknell's "Legible Shorthand."*

THE object of the Inventor of "Legible Shorthand" is to make Shorthand characters as legible as common print. The method is set forth in the book just published. The preface to the work records no less than five *inventions*, five *improvements*, and seven *advantages* over current systems. Among these is the power of indicating all vowels without writing them: a very important gain. The alphabet is the foundation of the system. First of all the letters have each a straight stroke allotted to them. Difference in length and thickness, which has been proved by "Phonography" to be practicable in fast writing, is adopted. Secondly, each stroke has two attendant curves corresponding in length, thickness, and slope to the stroke. The initial and final vowels are shown by using these curves instead of the strokes; and the eye sees the vowel, so to speak, in the hollow of each curve. *Medially* the curves serve to facilitate the junction of letters. If a *mute* vowel ends a word it is shown by finishing the outline with a stroke instead of the curve, and thus a distinction is obtained between the sounded and unsounded final vowel—an important gain in preventing the clashing of words. Next, a system of joined vowels is especially useful, when attached to the curves, in writing monosyllables and brief words of one consonant without lifting the pen and yet showing all the vowel-places to the eye of the reader. This ingenious contrivance does away entirely with the great trouble which monosyllables have hitherto caused to Shorthand-writers, because such words are always uttered so fast that the briefest possible way of writing them is an absolute necessity, and the impossibility of writing-in the vowels in such words has always tended to illegibility.

If there were nothing else in the system to commend it, these novelties would do so. But the author does not rest here. He shows every *medial* vowel in every part of a fully-written word, and in every part of a shortened word as far as the ordinary spelling of the shortened word is followed. This the author found could only be done by having double characters to correspond with all the double letters, treble characters for the treble letters, and so on, as exhibited in longhand writing, where double consonants without intervening vowels are constantly occurring in almost every word. For a long time, as the author explains in his book, this theory (which was admitted at the Shorthand Writers' Association to be the correct one) could not be reduced to practice, but when the treble-character alphabet occurred to the author all obstacles vanished, and the placing of hooks, circles, and loops (which the author calls "symbols" to distinguish them from the ordinary "characters" of the alphabet) at the end of each character, on all sides, gave a power of representing by a combined form (called in the system the *coalescent* form) all the combinations of consonants that occur in longhand without the intervention of a vowel.

The legibility thus gained is immense, because if a single consonant is "Legible Shorthand," 107 pp., 2,500 cuts, 3s. cloth. To be had of E. Pocknell, 2, Falcon Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

invariably written with a single character of the alphabet, and a compound consonant is always written with a "coalescent," it follows that where the junctions of the characters and coalescents occur there must always be a vowel "understood." Thus, in a sense, the word is *pictured* in accordance with its formation; and as the same form in regard to the identical collocation of vowels and consonants rarely occurs in comparison with forms that have the same consonants but a differing disposition of vowels, the advantage of "Legible Shorthand," as contrasted with former systems, where this plan cannot be carried out, is apparent at once. The author shows this in his book by one out of thousands of examples that might be quoted—viz., a form having the consonants "brst," which, in a system that has no means of showing the *place* of the medial vowels, might stand for *Barnet*, *brunt*, *burnt*, *brunette*, and *baronet*—whereas when the places of the vowels are shown by the junction of the single with the double consonants the clashing is reduced to *ast*;—thus: (the hyphens and asterisk showing the vowel-places)—B-rn-t, br-nt, b-rnt, br-n-t*, and b-r-n-t. A reference to Dimbleby's dictionary will show how constantly whole groups of words under the old systems must necessarily have the same Shorthand outline, leading to errors in reading even by the most experienced writers, and landing the youthful practitioner in no end of confusion.

Another advantage possessed by "Legible Shorthand" over current systems is the power of absolutely fixing the first syllable of a word when that syllable is formed of two consonants having *one* intervening vowel, as in the word *baronet* just quoted. This is effected by what is called, to distinguish it, a *syllabic* character, and is merely an inversion of the coalescent form—so that while the system will express any double or triple combination of consonants without intervening vowels, it will also express any syllable of the above form in the language. It will be obvious to those who watch the very clear instructions given in the book that these *syllabic* and *coalescent* forms cannot be used indiscriminately, and therefore the syllabic is only applicable at the beginning of a fully-written word, but is usefully applied afterwards in the "abbreviating methods."

The pith of the theoretical part of the system is contained in the above devices; their value, reduced to practice, will be appreciated by practical men, some of whom give their testimony in flattering terms which the author prints in the volume.

An exposition of these devices is given as applied to longer monosyllables. The author deals with them according to their formation—i.e., the disposition of the vowels and consonants which make up the word; and, applying the principles already explained, he gets, by simple and regular rules, which admit of no exception, and do not require the aid of "position," a varying outline for each word in such groups as *gain*, *gone*, *gun*, *guinea*, *again*, *agone*, *agony*, all of which Taylor and Lewis wrote with one and the same outline, and which are not much better expressed in Phonography unless the principle of *position*, so difficult to remember as used in that system, is brought to the aid of the outline. When it is remembered that the author has effected this improved legibility without at all sacrificing Brevity, but, on the contrary, increasing it, in addition to showing the vowels in such words without writing them, then his claim to having revived the Legibility of the longer old systems, while retaining, or surpassing, the brevity of the modern systems, must be held to be fully established.

In a limited space it would be impossible to mention all the subsidiary methods employed in bringing into one whole a scheme which is eminently adapted to the English language, and might also be applied to any other language; but there are important points that must not be left unnoticed. "Position" to distinguish vowel-sounds is discarded, except as to monosyllables of one consonant, as *aa, ia, oa, ere, ire, ore, &c.*, where the author simply *permits* it, but does not advocate it. "Position" he applies to *classes* of words, such as those carrying prefixes, and long words which are commonly expressed in Shorthand by a part only and not the whole. He contends that the burden on the memory, which the principle of "position" always involves, and which becomes an insuperable objection to the study of some systems, is reduced to a *minimum* by his plan. The characters of the alphabet, and the symbols, are all available for expressing prefixes, to the number of 100, and such words are *commenced* above the line.

Again, partly-written words signify the whole when also written *above* the line, certain rules being observed to distinguish them from the prefix-words. The partly-written words are called *logograms*—a term now well understood by Phonographers, and according to the scheme some 7,000 logograms might be formed, of which the author gives about 500 in neatly-engraved types. Other abbreviating methods are also employed. Thus the beginning and end of a word may be so written as to signify the whole, when distinguished by the last part written *across* the first; and words such as are abbreviated in longhand—viz., *agl.* for agricultural, *mfr.* for manufacturer—are expressed by another distinct rule. Words expressed by initials, as F.R.S. (Fellow of the Royal Society), are also provided for; and hackneyed phrases may be expressed below the line, when the writer is hard pressed, by the initial letters.

The above are the chief points of a remarkable system which several experts, who were good enough to watch the proof-sheets, have declared worthy of supplanting Phonography, which has so long and conspicuously held the field; but after a lapse of nearly fifty years since that method came before the world, it is not surprising that one of its practitioners should have obviated defects which many have hitherto striven, but unsuccessfully, to remedy. But he had to begin *de novo*, and has formed his superstructure upon a wider basis, which allows greater scope for dealing with the anomalies of the English language. The principle of Phonetics, on which all systems have been more or less based, is followed as closely as the Practice of the art could be made to harmonise with the Theory of that law; but the author does not scruple to accept the aid of what is termed "*Stenography*" when any advantage can be gained thereby.

STENO.

ONE of the latest French works on Shorthand is a *Cours de Sténographie*, by L. P. Guéin, Revising Stenographer to the Senate. It has already reached a second edition, and is published at a franc by Telmer and Co., 43, Rue du Four-Saint-Germain. The system is preceded by the remarks of the author on the Tyronian and modern methods of Shorthand. The method explained by the author is based on what some people would call the "*Stenographic*" plan, and bears a remarkable resemblance to many of the preceding French writers, especially to that of M. A. Roby, *Officiel Sténographe*, published in Paris in 1870.

History of Shorthand.

BY THOMAS ANDERSON.

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CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE : OF WRITING : OF SHORTHAND.

“*Cedant literulis cunctas artes, queis sine magnus
Orator nemo, nemo poeta fuit.
Absque hac arte sacra studiis decus omne periret,
Sua vilisque lingue gloria cuncta viris.
Littera scripta dedit populi quod blanda loquela
Vivat, cum populo non sit in orbe locuta.*”

NICOLS, *De Literis Inventis*, Lib. II. l. 31.

FEW, we may, perhaps, imagine, will feel inclined to dispute the high pre-eminence which has been so gracefully vindicated in these lines for the place and power of letters. To the literary art, literulis, as the polished elegiacs of the mediævalist proclaim, the whole commonwealth of other arts must bow down and resign the palm, since, without it, oratory, philosophy, and poetry or song—*Ich dien* in the heraldry of the mind—were each and all bereft of many a lasting charm. There are inventions of to-day, like the telephone, the phonograph, and the photophone, which may well excite our astonishment; but though they certainly supplement they can never supersede the use of writing, which is now, as truly as the hour when it was first so styled, the most admirable of all the admirable inventions of man. That it is a human invention at all has been generally denied, and many scholars, especially theologians, have regarded it with reverence as a direct Divine endowment. But whether they were mistaken or not, writing has always, indeed, been recognised as a capital possession, on account not only of its elegance and its ingenuity, but also because of its undoubted and indubitable utility. “‘Tis to writing,” to quote a passage of much excellence, “‘Tis to writing,” says Dr. Mavor in his *Universal Stenography*, “thousands are indebted for half the pleasure of their existence; to it we owe that social intercourse of words, and sweet communication of sentiments with friends and relations, perhaps separated from us by oceans and continents; by it we are enabled to participate their joys and condole their misfortunes; by it we can express the language of the heart, when the eye that brightens with joy or swims in tears is invisible to them, and the voice that would soothe affliction or congratulate success is impossible to be heard.”

True! Yet has this benign art higher title to our esteem, for is it not the sovereign perpetuator of science, its heritage, its safeguard, its treasury and reward? How marvellous, that by the marks and mystic forms we call letters, which are the impressive ensigns of the pen, words, those audible images of the unseen world within, are visibly portrayed; and when speeding onward to decay on the bosom of the very air they are born of, from the lips of the impassioned patriot, devout philosopher, gifted statesman, or profound divine, are pursued by skilful fingers, arrested and apprehended in their aerial flight—nay, touched even in the article of death to an instantaneous resurrection, to be wafted world-wide and across the centuries, for the admonition and delight, the government, and the solace of all our kind!