

ANALYSIS

By J. M. REASER, Prin. Com'l Department

Pitman-Spencerian Chartier



Among the foremost novelists of the world and time was Charles Dickens, a parliamentary shorthand reporter. He studied and used a system to which I am going to devote reverential attention.

Like Robert Fulton's steamboat it was the first system—at least with the English speaking race. The only difference is that Fulton's achievement is unquestionably the progenitor of our mighty ocean greyhounds, our battleships, our Louisiana. Fulton's craft grew. The parent Pitman did not. It required an approach to the subject entirely different from that for the devising of which Sir Isaac was knighted, to attain a result whose simplicity, ease, legibility and reading power destined it to rule the world—the SPENCERIAN CHARTIER System of Shorthand. Remember those words—AN APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT ENTIRELY DIFFERENT.

David Copperfield (which is, most of the time, simply a character used by Dickens for his own autobiography) thus describes the trials and tribulations of the weary and heart-rending time he had in learning Pitman to prepare himself to report Parliament—AND THERE IS NOT A MAN WHO ATTAINS THIS PROFICIENCY IN PITMAN WHO WILL NOT TELL YOU THAT HIS TRIALS HAVE BEEN JUST AS GREAT AND AS LONG AS HIS OWN.

I bought an improved 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 position, meant such a thing, and in such another position something else entirely different, consequences that resulted from marks like flies' legs; the tremendous effects of a curve in a wrong place, not only troubled my waking hours, but reappeared before me in my sleep. When I had groped my way through these difficulties, and had mastered the alphabet, which was an Egyptian temple in itself, there appeared a procession of new horrors called arbitrary characters—the most despot characters I have ever known. 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.

This is Charles Dickens' own account of his struggles with what may be called the parent system of all shorthand now in vogue. It is a vivid and true picture of the struggles of the best and brightest minds who undertake, with this medium, to report so exacting and difficult a kind of work as debates and speeches—with this exception: SOME NEVER LEARN PITMAN, IN SPITE OF EFFORT. OTHERS NEVER ACQUIRE A FAMILIARITY WITH WHAT THEY WRITE SUCH AS TO ENABLE THEM TO TRANSCRIBE IT ACCURATELY AND FLUENTLY.

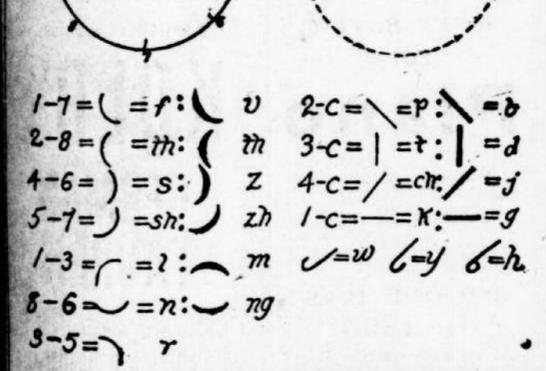
TO EXAMINE WHY THIS IS SO—TO LAY BEFORE YOU WHY IT IS NOT SO WITH THE WONDERFUL SPENCERIAN CHARTIER SYSTEM IS THE AIM OF THESE COMPARATIVE ANALYSES.

Sir Isaac Pitman was born in 1813. He was a scholarly thinker. In 1837 he published what he called "Stenographic Soundhand." The system, the invention of a trained, logical and well-ordered intellect, reflects those intellectual qualities.

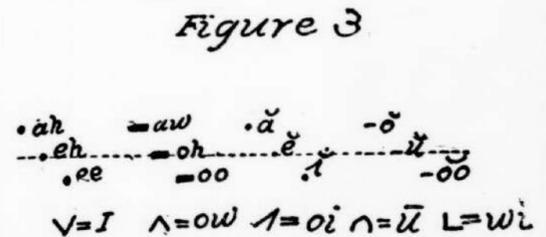
You can trace the mental process by which Sir Isaac devised the alphabet which once ruled the stenographic world. Sir Isaac, a graduate of the British Normal College, fell back on the sternly useful circle; the angle or slant of straight lines, and finally succeeded in composing an alphabet, itself easily remembered, but, used as a shorthand system, presenting difficulties it requires months and years to master so thoroughly as to be able to take testimony, speeches, etc., with it. In some instances, a heavy percentage, this mastery is never attained.

Let's look into this, first tracing the steps of Sir Isaac's pioneer work, and then analyze why this system, having no reference to English spelling, to the ingrained habit of the mind by which people spell and write in longhand, requires so much study and work of the student of it before he can master it.

Sir Isaac took a circle and cut it up into as many parts as would enable one to use the segments or arcs as symbols for consonant sounds without confusion. This is indicated by the points checked off in the



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circle of Figure 1, marked with numerals from 1 to 8. Segment arc, 1-7, he called "r"; curve, 1-8, "th"; curve, 4-6, "s"; curve, 5-7, "sh"; curve, 1-8, "t"; curve, 3-5, "c". Having thus obtained six consonant signs or symbols, he doubles the use of five of these by writing them heavy and thus giving symbols for the heavy sounds of these five consonant signs. Thus the sign for "r", written heavy, becomes "r"; "th" (as in "myth") becomes, written heavy, "th" (as in "with"); "s" becomes "s"; "t" is written upward or downward, the usefulness of this segment of the circle is single; "c" written heavy becomes the vowel sound, "ch"; "m" and "n" are the top and bottom of the circle.

SIR ISAAC WAS STILL SHORT AT LEAST EIGHT CONSONANT SOUNDS, and he proceeded to use all possible unconfusable radii of the circle for these missing consonants: Radius, 3-c, he called "p"; 3-c, "q"; 4-c, "ch"; 1-c, "k". Observe, please, that there is not a single other segment of the circle or radius thereof which can be used without imminent and even hopeless danger or confusion, but he had now all necessary CONSONANT SOUNDS and the EMBRYO of a system, HOPELESSLY NONFLUENT, and DESTINED ABSOLUTELY TO FAIL, for the reason of its CUMBERSOMENESS, a vast dictionary of word-signs.

HE HAD NOT YET A SINGLE VOWEL SIGN. Of these—in the writing of English, these vowel signs are absolutely imperative, at least: ah, eh, ee, aw, oh, oo, and (short) a, e, i, (short) o, u, oo.

The device by which Sir Isaac attained their expression is hopelessly defective, as will be shown. He made position the expression of the vowel, calling above the line, on the line and below the line the three positions. "Ah," for instance, is indicated by a heavy dot above the line. That heavy dot on the line or in the middle of the stroke or letter becomes "eh" and in the last place, "ee". Written light, it becomes the short sound of the same vowels. Taking a short dash and writing it heavy in these three positions, he furnished his system the second series of long or heavy vowel sounds, "aw," "oh," "oo"; and, writing them light, the second series of short vowel signs, "o," "u," "oo" (short). The diphthongs are arbitrary characters, as are "i," "u."

That is the alphabet of the system for the invention of which Queen Victoria conferred upon Sir Isaac the great honor of knighthood! With these signs anything can be written, in some sort of a fashion, but before a man can take testimony or speeches running from 125 to 200 words a minute, or twice as fast as a clock ticks, he has to acquire a skill, to so make this system a part of him, to so WRITE SOUND (as it is called) that the apparent simplicity vanishes and he finds that he is against practically the problem which kept the immortal Dickens sleepless, hewing down forest after forest of difficulties even in his dreams.

This article proposes to discuss this matter to finally—to show the relative merits of the Spencerian Chartier and Pitman.

It is not doing so in a spirit of cavil; of the 114-foot craft of Fulton, which made its way laboriously up the Hudson at five miles an hour. But it is certain that the restlessness and energy of man had been content with it and declared it the finest possible boat that human genius could build, and would not to-day be crossing the ocean in a little over four days on mighty leviathans which are practically safe against all storms and which breast the fiercest of them without a perceptible decrease in speed!

This is the age of progress. Progress is impossible if we cling with blinded eyes to opinions which we have accepted for their age and by reason of no thought which we ourselves have spent.

Progress is possible only as a result of investigation—and investigation is the child of freedom from bias, freedom from accepted conventionalities. Fogyism has no place in America.

With all honor to the great intellect of the student who has, in spite of all the criticism to which his system is open, made it possible for men to transcribe thought with the swiftness with which it glides from the tongue, THIS ARTICLE ASKS THAT YOU INVESTIGATE WHAT IT IS SEEKING TO PUT BEFORE YOU WITH ALL DEPENDENCE AND HUMILITY, BUT WITH A CONVICTION THAT EVERY CLAIM AND ARGUMENT ADVANCED IS BARE, SOUND, TRUE—WORTHY OF YOUR ATTENTION, INASMUCH AS THE DAY IS FAST ARRIVING WHEN EVERY CHILD IN THE THIRD GRADE WILL BE LEARNING SHORTHAND (SPENCERIAN CHARTIER SHORTHAND) WITH AN EASE AND READINESS IMPOSSIBLE IN ANY OTHER SYSTEM.

THE GREAT PITMAN'S DIFFICULTIES

Before we go any further in this analysis, and while you have the alphabet of the Pitman system fresh before you, let me give you another plate in order that we may make plainer our talk. I pick this plate at random. It is a Pitman transcript of an utterance of the great showman, P. T. Barnum, and here is what he said, written in longhand:

"As far as business is concerned, I have a particular hobby. My craze is that every young person, of both sexes, should learn at least shorthand and typewriting. Here you have mental discipline and knowledge together, knowledge, too, that is almost certain at some time to be convenient and practically available. I cannot conceive that one who knows these two branches thoroughly will ever need to go hungry in the present generation, for they have a constantly widening use."

Know Pitman thoroughly! Truly P. T. is a humorist. P. T. was either ignorant of his subject or joking.

How many there be of these craftsmen in this city of almost 400,000 souls? Count them over—those who really answer P. T.'s description. You or anyone with the slightest sort of memory can learn that alphabet which has just been given and which, with endless use and practice, can enable one to do that speedily, but try, knowing this alphabet, to take a

transcript of stock and pay over the price thus deposited to the owner or owners of said shares and shall issue new certificates of stock therefor. If more than one stockholder signifies a desire to purchase the stock in question, the same shall be divided pro rata in accordance with the holdings of such proposed purchasers.

2. In case of the death of any stockholder, the option is hereby granted to the remaining stockholders to purchase the stock held by said deceased stockholder within ninety days following such death under the same terms and conditions and by observing the formalities hereinabove set forth.

3. The active business of this corporation may be terminated at any time when and if at a meeting called for that purpose after ten days' written notice, stock amounting to one-half of the total stock issued and outstanding shall have been sold or otherwise disposed of by the board of directors, and the proceeds of such sale shall be distributed to the stockholders in proportion to their respective holdings.

4. In order to avoid disputes the annual and semi-annual report and monthly trial balance shall be made up and any dispute, on any or all items thereof, shall be submitted to arbitrators, one to be selected by the board, another by the objecting stockholder and a third by these two acting together. The report of the majority to be final.

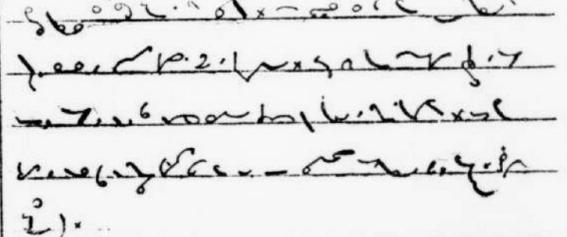
Provided nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the parties agreeing among themselves as to the price of such sale.

ARTICLE VIII. No stockholder shall be held liable or responsible for the contracts, faults or debts of the corporation, nor shall any mere formality in its organization have the effect of rendering this charter null, or of exposing any stockholder to liability beyond the unpaid balance due on the shares owned by him.

ARTICLE IX. This act of incorporation may be changed, modified or altered, and this corporation

speaker at 150 words per minute, and see how thoroughly you really know it. See if you don't find your pencil with the same sort of fits that afflicted that of the great Dickens.

JOKER BARUM'S WORDS IN SHORTHAND



The above is the plate showing the transcript in shorthand of Barum's point of view of shorthand. It is probably written by a man who answers Barum's description, full of word-signs, correctly used—a perfect specimen.

First, let us call your attention to the fact that the vowel-signs are entirely eliminated—and believe me when you are taking a speech, you have no time for vowel-signs with Pitman shorthand. THE REASON WHY IT TAKES YOU SO MUCH PRACTICE TO MAKE THIS SYSTEM VALUABLE TO YOU IS THAT YOUR EYE, YOUR INSTINCT MUST BE TRAINED SO THAT YOUR EYES ALMOST SUPPLY THE INVISIBLE AND NON-EXISTING VOWELS. In fast writing you are forced to drop the vowels. We set forth here one proposition of shorthand which defies refutation.

It is elemental:—The reading power of any system is based on the percentage of vowel sounds you can indicate. Here is another truism: ITS SPEED IS BASED ON THE SPEED WITH WHICH YOU CAN DO THIS.

From these two axioms it is impossible to get away. Now, in this light—so clear and self-evident—let us get at the transcript of what Joker Barum says, as transcribed in the Pitman system.

Notice, please, that the very first three words are written as a word-sign—the very first three words. These first three words are "as far as," and the Pitman system writes them "sfrs". There is not a hint of a vowel sound anywhere. In the position! Why should "as" be written in the first position and in the last position, and each time spell "as"? The accuracy of geometry is sadly deserted in this: "Fr." "far." Is there any possible reason, conceding for the sake of argument that the "fr" is in the first position, why this should not be "far," "far," and since there is mere position visible, why it should not be "offer"? It is, however, "far" to the trained eye in Pitman, for the reason that that house there is a house to your familiar vision. In "business," position pretty well indicates the word. You have "bs" and "ns," and require no flight of imagination to make it out. "Pn" is conventionally in the second position, making it literally and meaninglessly "open" with the "o" long, as in "mode" or "pone" (same long o) or "pain" (long a), or "pen" (short e), etc.

In short, the "pn" in the second position spells "upon," because it is conventionally so accepted. "Concerned" has a little bit of dot before the initial circle—s for "con," an "r" cut half its length, thus adding "dr" and a little "n"—hook—still the "d," created by the shortening of the "g" is read after the "n"—hook. Here, then, are the consonant signs guiding the experienced eye in reading "concerned"—"concerned." "I" is in other "tick" on top of the "v," and "iv" is a word-sign for "have." "Iv" in other words, is "I have." "A" is the dot in the first position. "Particular" is "p" shortened to half length, "a" is the dot in the first position. "Particular" is "p" shortened to half length, "a" is the dot in the first position. "Particular" is "p" shortened to half length, "a" is the dot in the first position. "Particular" is "p" shortened to half length, "a" is the dot in the first position.

What now is really a word-sign? It is something that has to be learned and stored away in the memory. When the first eleven words of the man who says that his hobby is that every young person should learn shorthand "thoroughly," are found to contain seven words that are absolutely to be remembered, it is to be seen at a glance that he is either ignorant of what he is talking about, or has a large and expansive sense of humor. This system cannot be taken on and carried as a sideline. One who learns it has to dedicate himself to it as did Dickens. Another thing, this system cannot be mastered and allowed to rest. Speed, accuracy, a working order of the possession is maintained by constant practice and that alone.

There are sixty-eight words in the rest of what P. T. Barnum here said. There are over forty word-signs in this number. Capacious memory at this gait, don't you think, to know this language of lines and arcs and circles thoroughly—a big word-sign store-house necessary; and you cannot pause, you know, when you are writing 150 words a minute to recall how "I have been," "as far as," "that," "particular," etc., are written. Pitman is almost impossible with night students.

It is strange, almost remarkable, that an analytical genius such as must have been the mind that invented and evolved Pitman system did not reflect that the two greatest impediments in his system were inflicted unabated on all the men and women who studied and the comparatively few who mastered his system:

A lack of vowel power. A diminution of speed proportioned to the number of vowel signs used. Net result—an absolute necessity of an enormous dictionary of word-signs.

A difficulty of mastery increased by every word-sign. A MULTIPLICATION, IN THE CASE OF EXPERTS, OF WORD-SIGNS SO GREAT AS TO MAKE THE WRITING OF EACH EXPERT A SYSTEM OF HIS OWN, BASED ON PITMAN, BUT PECULIAR TO THE WRITER AND ABSOLUTELY UNDECIPHERABLE BY ANY ONE ELSE.

As a matter of my own knowledge I know that Spencerian Chartier shorthand can be learned with one-fifth the study required for Pitman; it can be written faster than Pitman—it makes fewer strokes in writing any given matter—and it can be read with an ease never claimed for Pitman. In fact, people knowing the system, correspond in it and read each other's writing as though it were longhand or Roman print.

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directors. Said board at its first meeting after its election shall appoint from among its members, a president, one or more vice-presidents, a treasurer and secretary. It may, in its discretion, consolidate any two offices into one. It may even elect a secretary who is not a stockholder or director. The president shall, from time to time, appoint and discharge such clerks, agents and other employees as he may deem expedient in the proper conduct and management of the affairs, business and concerns of said corporation.

All stock in this corporation shall be held upon a condition precedent and under contract and agreement in the nature of vested rights that all such stock is so held and assigned, and that the interest therein, for the transfer of the same hereinafter set out, to-wit:

First. No sale or other transfer of shares of stock in this corporation shall be valid until and unless the opportunity has been first afforded the shareholders of record at the board of directors of the corporation, who are hereby constituted agents of the other stockholders for the purpose of such notice, and said board of directors shall give notice of said notice by notifying the best address of each shareholder of record of the date of the meeting of the board of directors of the corporation, and the value then found and established there shall be added twenty-five per cent., and the sum thus found and established shall constitute the value of said stock.

If within twenty-four hours after such notice the owner, his agent or representative, does not exercise his right in establishing the price or value of the stock, the board may proceed without further delay to the sale of the stock at public auction, and the proceeds of such sale shall be distributed to the shareholders of record at the time of such sale, and the value then found and established there shall be added twenty-five per cent., and the sum thus found and established shall constitute the value of said stock.

Upon the receipt of the last mentioned notice, the board of directors shall advise the person owning said stock, or his agent or representative, to join with said board in fixing the value of said stock, which value shall be established on the basis of the most annual or semi-annual statement or report of the corporation and the last monthly trial balance as presented to the stockholders, and to the value thus found and established there shall be added twenty-five per cent., and the sum thus found and established shall constitute the value of said stock.

If within twenty-four hours after such notice the owner, his agent or representative, does not exercise his right in establishing the price or value of the stock, the board may proceed without further delay to the sale of the stock at public auction, and the proceeds of such sale shall be distributed to the shareholders of record at the time of such sale, and the value then found and established there shall be added twenty-five per cent., and the sum thus found and established shall constitute the value of said stock.

Upon receipt of the offer or acceptance of any purchase hereunder, the board of directors shall thereupon give notice thereof to the owner of the stock, his agent or representative, and before the expiration of the period of eighty days aforesaid shall cause the same to be followed by the execution of a deed or other instrument conveying the shares of stock and pay the price or value thereof and cause the same to be transferred to the purchaser of the stock.

The preference, option and right of purchase heretofore vested by paragraph First in the other shareholders shall exist in the case of the death of any shareholder, and shall be followed by the execution of a deed or other instrument conveying the shares of stock and pay the price or value thereof and cause the same to be transferred to the purchaser of the stock.

Third. The preference, option and right of purchase heretofore established in favor of his wife share in proportion to his existing holdings in the stock, but should any shareholder fail to exercise his right in regard to his rights shall pass to and be absorbed by the other shareholders, provided that the same shall be followed by the execution of a deed or other instrument conveying the shares of stock and pay the price or value thereof and cause the same to be transferred to the purchaser of the stock.

Fourth. All certificates of stock shall bear upon their face a brief reference to the rights herein established in favor of the stockholders.

As the whole more fully appears by the annexed certified copy of the minutes of said meeting, made a part hereof.

This done and passed in my office, on the day, month and year, first above written, in the presence of Frank R. Twomey and Frank J. Basile, competent witnesses, who have signed with the signers and me, the notary after reading the whole.

(Original signed:) Ernest Lee Jahnke, Notary Public, Parish of Orleans, Louisiana.

F. B. Twomey, P. J. Basile, Felix J. Dreyfous, Not. Pub.

I, the undersigned, recorder of mortgages, in and for the parish of Orleans and state of Louisiana, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing agreement to the act of incorporation of "The Jahnke Navigation Company" was this day duly recorded in my office, in book No. 10, folio 1911.

(Signed) EDWARD D. R. Recorder of Mortgages, Parish of Orleans, Louisiana.

Felix J. Dreyfous, Not. Pub.

A true copy from the original act of incorporation of "The Jahnke Navigation Company" was this day duly recorded in my office, in book No. 10, folio 1911.

(Signed) EDWARD D. R. Recorder of Mortgages, Parish of Orleans, Louisiana.

Felix J. Dreyfous, Not. Pub.