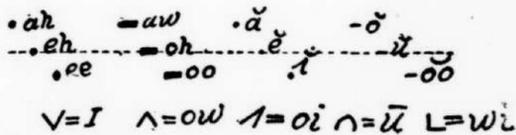


ANALYSIS By J. M. REASER, Prin. Com'l Department

Pitman-Spencerian Chartier



Figure 3



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 Lusitanias. 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 obtain a result whose simplicity, ease, legibility and reading power destined it to rule the world—the SPENCERIAN CHARTIER SYSTEM or 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 THE TIME HE HAS TAKEN AS LONG.

"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; the wonderful vagaries that were played by circles; the unaccountable 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, 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 PLENTILY.

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.

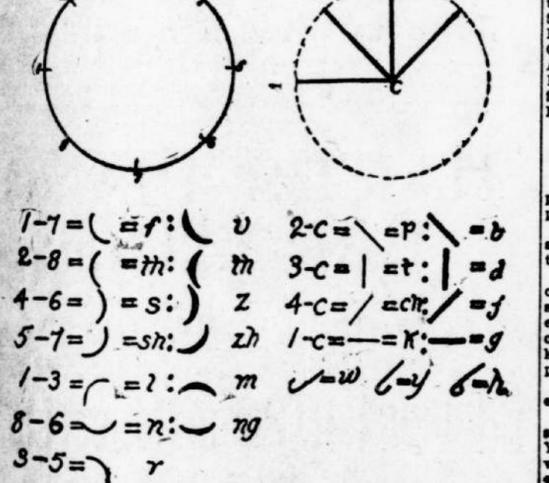
Sir Isaac Pitman was born in 1813. He was a scholarly thinker. In 1837 he published what he called "Stenographic Soundhand."

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 eternally 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 if it before he can master it.

Sir Isaac taught 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



CHARTER OF THE SOUTHERN STAMPING AND DYE WORKS. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, STATE OF LOUISIANA, PARISH OF ORLEANS. Do it know, That on this ninth day of the month of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eleven, there met, William H. Byrnes, Jr., Notary Public, duly commissioned and qualified in and for the Parish of Orleans, therein residing, and in the presence of the witnesses hereinafter named and undersigned, personally named and appeared the persons whose names are hereunto subscribed, all above the age of majority, who severally declare that they are of legal age, and constitute a corporation under the laws of the State of Louisiana relative to the formation of corporations, they have formed and organized themselves into and constitute a corporation for the objects and purposes and under the stipulations hereinafter set forth and expressed, which they hereby adopt as their charter, to-wit:

circle of Figure 1, marked with numerals from 1 to 8. Segment arc or curve, 1-7, he called "f"; curve, 2-8, "th"; curve, 4-6, "m"; curve, 5-7, "sh"; curve, 1-8, "l"; curve, 2-5, "r". 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 "f," written heavy, becomes "v"; "th" (as in "myth") becomes, written heavy, "th" (as in "with"); "m" becomes "z"; "l" is written upward or downward, the usefulness of this segment of the circle is single; "r" written heavy becomes the vowel sound, "y"; "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, 3-6, he called "p"; 3-c, "t"; 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 require, 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 heavy 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, "a," "e," "i," "o," "u" (short). The diphthongs arbitrary characters, as are "y," "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 WRITE SOUND (absolutely) 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 a finality—to show the relative merits of the Spencerian Chartier and Pitman.

It is not doing so in a spirit of cavil. It believes in the sublime dignity of the 114-foot craft of Fulton, which made its way laboriously up the Hudson at five miles an hour. But it is certain if the restless progressiveness and energy of man had been content with it and declared it the finest possible boat that human genius could build, he would not to-day be crossing the ocean in a little over four days on mighty leviathans which are practically safe against all storm and which break 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 DEFERENCE AND HUMILITY, BUT WITH A CONVICTION THAT EVERY CLAIM AND ARGUMENT ADVANCED IS SAME, 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

such persons as may hereafter become associated with them, into a corporation for the objects and purposes and under the agreement and stipulations following, to wit:

ARTICLE I. The name of this corporation shall be the "INTERIOR SETTING COMPANY" and under such name it shall have and enjoy corporate existence and successions for a period of ninety-nine years from the date of this act, with full power and for the purposes of this business as hereinafter defined to contract, sue and to be sued, to acquire, lease, use, hold, alienate, mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber any property, movable or immovable, in or out of the State of Louisiana; to issue its bonds, or other evidence of indebtedness, and to secure same by pledge, mortgage, or otherwise, and to purchase or otherwise acquire the stocks and bonds of other corporations; to appoint or elect such directors, officers, managers, agents or other employees as the interest or convenience of its business may require; to make, amend, or repeal, at pleasure, such by-laws, rules and regulations, touching the management of the affairs of business or the exercise of the powers of this corporation, as may be necessary or convenient, to increase or diminish the capital stock; to adopt a corporate seal, and the same to make, or amend, or repeal, at pleasure, and to use the same in and to the ends aforesaid; and to do all such other things as may be necessary or convenient for the purposes and objects of its business to exercise all rights and powers permitted by law to corporations.

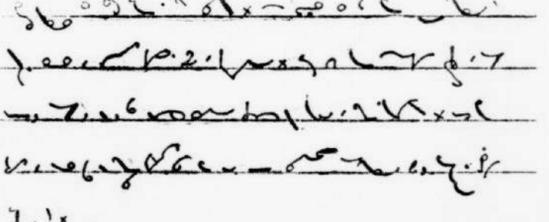
ARTICLE II. The domicile of this corporation shall be in the city of New Orleans, in this State, and all citation or other legal processes shall be served upon the president, and in his absence the secretary-treasurer of said corporation.

ARTICLE III. The objects and purposes for which this corporation is established and the nature of the business to be carried on by it are hereby declared to be: The operation and conducting of general marble and stone cutting and setting business, the buying and selling of all kinds of marble, stone, and other building material, the construction of buildings and other works, in whole or in part, in Louisiana and other States, use storage of stone of all kinds, and generally the doing and performing of all acts incidental or necessary to any and all of the objects herein expressed.

ARTICLE IV. The capital stock of this corporation is hereby fixed at the sum of Three Thousand Dollars, to be represented by thirty shares

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 "afra!" 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," "afar," 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 "d" and a little "n"—hook—still the "d," created by the shortening of the "r" is read after the "n"—hook. Here, then, are the consonant signs guiding the experienced eye in reading "concerned"—"consrnd." "I" is the "tick" on top of the "v," and "v" 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 to show that there is a "t" or "d" sound somewhere concealed about its person, and the "p" is begun with an "r" hook, although the "r" is read after the "p." Literally, we have "rpt (or d) spelling "particular." Another word-sign: "Hb" (vowel sounds to be guessed) "hobby." In a sentence of eleven words, thus, we have seven word-signs.

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 have 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 rust. 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 speed. 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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