

INTRODUCTION

ALWAYS there is a genesis, a seed by the wayside, a word, a nod, a hint to fire the heart of the dreamer, and inspire that divine enthusiasm which leads on and on to the final triumphant goal.

What it was that turned Emma B. Dearborn to the study and teaching of many different systems of shorthand writing, we do not know. What we do know is that the seeds of shorthand fell upon fertile soil; that Miss Dearborn was eminently successful in teaching the different systems of which she made herself the master; and that from the knowledge and experience so gained she developed a systematic brief method of writing the English language with the ordinary alphabetic characters that is far in advance of any similar attempts by shorthand authors who have preceded her.

As early as 1857 Andrew J. Graham devised and advocated three styles of Brief Longhand. Of the more advanced, or Third Style, he wrote as follows: "In the Third Style of Brief Longhand, there is no settled list of word-signs in addition to those of the Second Style. Contractions, however, in accordance with the established principles of abbreviation, are employed to the utmost extent consistent with legibility; and the majority of vowels and silent consonants are omitted; and the writer may resort to any labor-saving device which his experience and invention may suggest. The Third Style is designed for use on all occasions where speed of writing is of primary importance, as in copying letters, making abstracts of, and quotations from, books read,—taking notes of lectures, sermons, discussions, testimony, charges, etc.,—and in rough-sketching articles for the press, or of any kind whatever." This was many years prior to the invention of the first practical typewriter. In fact it would not have been possible to write Graham's system on a typewriter, as it was necessary to elevate the letters which represented the prefixes and suffixes.

Speedwriting—the very name has a fascinating lure—possesses a double advantage because it may