

THE PHONOGRAPHIC WORLD.

TYPEWRITING AND TELEGRAPHY.

"Mr. Sholes, the chief inventor of the typewriter, has called my attention to an article in your number for July last, which, in my hasty reading, I had previously overlooked, the article headed 'A Boon to Telegraphers.' In the article occurs the following paragraph:

Mr. Butler informed us that he was the first operator to adopt this method of receiving from the telegraph direct on the typewriter and said that it came from a suggestion made by Mr. Erasmus Wiman, one of the proprietors of the Mercantile Agency, and well-known in commercial and telegraph circles. It was in 1875, when the machine was in its infancy, that this experiment was made by Mr. Butler. He said:

'At first it looked futile. The noise of the sender, and the tinnabulation of the (then) imperfect typewriter, when combined was well calculated to frighten the average telegrapher, at even an attempt to produce an intelligent result. Yet it was one of the old original machines that until lately has been in daily use at this office for many years, and it did not take long to assert, even in its imperfect shape, that it was much more practicable than the wearisome pen. The large amount of business transacted daily at this office, in answering in part the requirements of hundreds of subscribers, the ability to serve with the present efficiency is largely due to the typewriter adoption in receiving. The present perfected and comparatively noiseless Remington No. 4, simply defies the speed of abbreviated telegraphy, and while it may be impossible to reduce the number of characters in the letters of the Morse telegraph, it calls for the invention of some shorthand form of sound-transmission, in order to keep pace with the speed and ease of the telegraph-typewriter manipulator. The typewriter offers to and should be to the telegraph fraternity, with its advantages and ease, speed, and general comfort, what is enjoyed by stenographers.'

The pith of the foregoing quotation is, aside from its tribute to the great value of the typewriter, that R. G. Dun & Co., besides a certain department of the Western Union General office, is using the typewriter to copy messages received by ear from the telegraphic sounder, and that the manager, Mr. Butler, claims to be the first operator to do that feat.

A year ago, or thereabouts, the newspapers were full of the story of an Elmira telegraphic operator who claimed for himself the honor and glory of being the first to use the typewriter to copy messages from the telegraph sounder.

With all these stories you cannot say half enough in praise of the merits of the typewriter; but for the sake of the "truth of the history," I must dispel these illusions, and tell who *was* the first to copy with the typewriter messages received by ear from the telegraph sounder.

Mr. E. Payson Porter, who Gen. Anson Stager once said was the finest, quickest, and most accurate reader from the telegraph sounder of any operator he ever knew, carried on a telegraphic college from 1868 and before, up to 1872, and perhaps after. Like myself, he became enamored of the typewriter, when he first learned of the conception of the idea, and before the machine was born. He bought and paid the expense of making several of the first crude attempts at machines, and gave us his cordial and enthusiastic sympathy and help in all ways. In the autumn of 1872, I got up for him one of our then latest experimental machines, and as soon as it was done, I sent for him to come over to Milwaukee and examine it. He came, and, as was his custom, he was exuberant in the overflow of his appreciation and gratification at the progress made.

"Now, Porter," said I, "if you will take that machine into Gen. Stager's office and get him and the Western Union folks to say it is a success, I will make you a present of the best typewriter that money can hire made, when we get into regular manufacture."

"I'll win that machine, as sure as you live," was his instantaneous reply.

He took the experimental machine home with him. He practised with it some two or three weeks or more, to become entirely familiar with the key-board. (It is proper to observe here that in getting up our experimental machines of which we made nearer

fifty than half that number, we never made two alike, and never put the same key-board on two successive experiments. Hence, every time he got a new one, he had to learn a new key-board).

After he had practised till he felt sure of his familiarity with the new key-board, he went into Gen. Stager's office one day and said he wanted to bring over the typewriter, and have the general examine and test its merit.

"Very well," said the general, "bring it over at once."

The machine was brought over immediately. The general's office was then in a room directly under the upper and great operating floor of the Western Union building in Chicago, and in it there were arranged two tables, one at each end, with a telegraph instrument on each, and a coil of many miles of wire between. Porter, with the typewriter, sat down at one table, and the general at the other. In his youth the general had been a first-class operator, but he was then no longer young, and had been out of any but amateur practice for many years, but he took a newspaper and prepared himself to "send" a paragraph to Porter. Porter attached the "sounder" to the typewriter, and cried out:

"Ready, General!"

The general began to "send" very slowly, as if sure that Porter would be unable to "receive" unless he did so; but before the first line was written, Porter called out:

"Faster, General!"

The general then sent faster, but immediately Porter again cried out:

"Faster, General!"

The general then "put in his best ticks," but Porter directly again cried out:

"Faster, General!"

Then the general stopped, and struck his page-bell. When the page appeared, the general said to him:

"Send Smith down here."

Smith was an expert telegrapher of the operating room above. The boy departed, and directly Smith ushered himself in, and, Stager said to him:

"Smith, sit down here and 'send' for Porter."

Smith sat down, and began "sending" in a common way; but almost directly, Porter called out:

"A little faster, Smith."

Then Smith began to make his best exertions; but directly Porter called out again:

"A little faster!"

Whereupon Smith did the very best he could; but Porter directly called out:

"A little faster!"

Then Stager again struck the page-bell, and when the page appeared again, the general said,

"Send Jones down here."

Jones came, and was directed to "send" for Porter as Smith had been doing. Jones obeyed; but Porter, as usual, soon cried out:

"Faster, Jones!"

Jones increased his speed but directly Porter again called out:

"Faster!"

Then Jones "sent" with his utmost speed; but Porter again cried:

"Faster!"

Then Gen. Stager said:

"That is enough. Porter, I know about that machine just as well as if I had tried it a year. It's a success!"

Thus, Porter had won the machine; and since the No. 2 has been developed into its present condition of progress, the promise has been cheerfully redeemed.

Shortly after the test, Stager employed Porter to come over and take press dispatches with the typewriter for the Chicago Tribune. Porter notified us of this fact, and Mr. Sholes and I immediately