up by himself or at his dictation. Presumably, it is not intended to report a case with the same precision as a platform speech, and a small portion of the work of transcription may be done between the intervals of note-taking, but not much. It must be remembered that one result hoped for from the new departure is increased rapidity in the disposal of business. At present the time of Judge, counsel, and witnesses is deplorably cut to waste. A counsel puts a question to the witness, which is replied to. He then checks the latter, and a sufficient pause is made to allow his Honour to write down the reply. With a shorthand-writer no such pause will be necessary, the next question will follow immediately, the thread of the examination will not be lost; and it seems reasonable to expect that two cases will often be got through in the time hitherto occupied in hearing one. But this entails double the record-writing, and the question is, will the two shorthand-writers be able to overtake the work? If it is intended that they should record the argument of counsel, it would be manifestly impossible; but probably this would not be attempted, and the Judge would himself, as at present, note down such points and references as he requires. Still, in cases where a great deal of evidence is called, it is doubtful whether two shorthand-writers, relieving each other alternately, could have their notes written up by the termination of the case—that is, if the words of counsel and witnesses—question and answer—were taken as spoken. In civil cases this might not be a matter of much importance. A Judge could reserve his decision, as he often finds it convenient to do at present. But the services of the shorthand-writers would be also utilized in criminal cases, and here the machinery of the Court would be seriously thrown out of gear if the evidence were not ready to the Judge's hand when required. He would be unable to commence his summing-up without it, and jury, counsel, and prisoner would be kept waiting in consequence. In practical details like this serious difficulties may arise with such a slender staff; but they are difficulties which it will be worth while overcoming by some means. They have been successfully overcome in America; but there the expense of the system is much greater than any our Government propose to go to. The idea of a shorthand-writer dictating to two or more amanuenses simultaneously from different places in his notes is better in theory than in practice. Save in the instance of a few peculiarly-qualified men it would be found utterly unworkable. Greater rapidity in writing-up may be obtained by means of type-writers such as are now used by the *Hansard* staff, but there is not much saving of time except to those thoroughly proficient in their use. If two writers only are to be attached to each Court the better plan, to avoid delay, will probably be not to aim at taking too full a record of the proceedings. If a record only a little more elaborate than that at present taken by the Judge is required, then no doubt two men would be equal to the work, even though cases were disposed of in half the time they are at present. However, the Government at present intend merely making a trial of the system; and, if the arrangement at first proposed does not answer, improvements should suggest themselves with experience that will place the matter upon a satisfactory footing. The advantages it is hoped to secure are sufficiently substantial to call for the exercise of some effort and ingenuity.

[From the "Phonographic Monthly," American.]

SIR,— Keokuk, Iowa, 14th January, 1880.

I have your favour requesting my views upon the merits of a Bill now pending in Congress to provide for the appointment of stenographers for the United States Circuit Courts. In reply, I have to say that I regard the passage of such a Bill as very important. In the actual trial of causes in the Circuit Courts, in which witnesses are orally examined, the services of competent stenographers have come to be regarded is indispensable. Even with all possible aids to the rapid despatch of business, the work of the Circuit Courts is generally far behindhand. A thoroughly-qualified stenographer, with fixed compensation, always subject to the call of the Court, would be a great improvement on the present mode of transacting business. If the expense is objected to, perhaps it might be thought advisable to tax a small stenographer's fee as part of the costs in each jury trial, to be collected and turned into the Treasury. I have, &c.,

GEO. W. MCCRARY,
Circuit Judge, Eighth Circuit.

SIR,— Washington, Pennsylvania, 13th January, 1880.

I am indebted to you for your favour informing me that your committee has in charge a Bill providing for the appointment of stenographers in the Circuit and District Courts of the United States.

I earnestly hope the measure may receive the favourable consideration of both branches of Congress. I have long been convinced, by both my professional and judicial experience, of its great value. While the employment of a stenographer relieves both counsel and Court from the laborious drudgery of taking notes of evidence, the public is more largely benefited by the saving of time in the trial of jury causes. It is really, then, a measure of economy, as I am satisfied that the cost of a stenographer will be more than compensated by the reduction of the general expenses of the Courts resulting from the more rapid transaction of business.

There is another consideration which is not without weight. It has happened not infrequently, in my experience, that important testimony of deceased witnesses has been entirely lost, by the failure of recollection of those who heard it, or by the loss or defectiveness of notes taken at the trial in which it was given. All such contingencies are provided for by the stenographer's reports. They are perpetuated by being preserved among the archives of the Courts, and so may be completely available for any proper future use. The only objection I have heard urged against such a measure is that stenographic reports are very often inaccurate. I think the objection may be entirely obviated by the observance of two conditions: first, that only proficient and experienced