it, making a very high and confused sea; but the ship was making 16 knots, and, though the spray was flying fore and aft, she had not up to this time taken a drop of solid water on board.

At 4.40 A.M., latitude 50° 50′ north, longitude 27° 8′ west, the officer of the watch noticed a heavy-breaking sea coming from the north-west: he ordered the officer at the engine-telegraphs to reduce to 'half speed,' but, before this could be done, the top of this sea came on board, but did no damage. The ship rose quickly to it; but, as this wave passed under the stern, she plunged heavily, and, dipping her bows into the second wave,—not breaking, or, as the officer of the watch expresses it, 'dead water,'—scooped up a mass of water, which, running aft over the break of the forecastle, fell upon No. 2 companion-hatch, breaking it to pieces, also breaking the short bridge between the fore-end of the promenade deck and the break of the forecastle. The look-out bridge between the lighthouses was twisted, and five iron stanchions and 20 feet of the iron rails on it broken, and four brass stanchions on the port side of the upper main bridge were bent. The middle part of the top-gallant forecastle deck for 40 feet in a fore-and-aft line was sent down two inches by the weight of the water passing over it. Some water got down No. 2 hatchway and frightened a few passengers.

The second officer is certain that the first sea did no damage, as only the top of it broke over the ship; but he describes the plunge the ship took, as this wave passed astern, as very heavy, and that she went bows into the solid water of the second wave, which he is quite certain was not breaking, but 'coming smoothly along.' This made the ship "stagger, and the sensation was as if she had struck something hard." After the sea came on board, the speed was reduced to 10 knots, and was not increased till noon.

The canvas screen on the port side of the upper main bridge was spread, and the spray striking this bent the brass stanchions. The lower bridge escaped, through there being no canvas screen spread.

Although the wind was three points on the starboard bow, with a heavy sea from the same direction, it seems, from the brass stanchions on the upper main bridge having been bent aft and to starboard, and from certain marks on the forecastle deck, that the second officer's statement, as to the damage being done by the second wave (probably due to the west-south-west sea, which was still running high and fast), is correct; and on more than one occasion, serious damage has been done by a sea coming up on the lee bow and breaking on board hours after the wind had been blowing three or four points on the other bow.

If we take into consideration a long and heavy sea from west-south-west, a north-west gale, and heavy sea from the same quarter, we shall have an ugly, confused sea. If a very powerful ship with very fine lines is driven at the rate of 16 knots through this confused sea, there is not the least occasion to call in the aid of tidal or earthquake waves to account for any damage the ship would receive.

In the engine-room there was no shock felt, and the sailors and firemen say they did not notice any thing unusual, save only some passengers making a noise.

The masthead light was extinguished through the chimney being unshipped and falling across the wick.

THE SHORTHAND CONGRESS.

THE first international shorthand congress ever held was inaugurated in London, Monday evening, Sept. 26, under the presidency of the Earl of Rosebery. We condense the report of the proceedings from an article in *The Athenæum* of Oct. 1. Though held in commemoration of events in the history of English shorthand, its interest is by no means confined to the English-speaking race, and several leading representatives of continental systems were present; while others, though not able to attend in person, sent papers on the theory and practice of the art as used in their respective countries. It is, indeed, acknowledged by common consent that England was the mother-country of modern shorthand, and that the tercentenary of English shorthand is the tercentenary of the shorthand of the world. Very little value can be assigned to the invention of Dr. Timothy Bright, which is nominally the event commemorated. It seems to be far inferior in every respect to the Tironian notes of the time of Cicero; but it is the earliest English work on shorthand known to bibliographers, and it was followed, at an interval of only some fifteen years, by a series of publications (beginning with that of John Willis, 1602) based in the main on the same principles as are now generally employed.

France began with adaptations of the well-known English system of Taylor, but the more recent French systems follow generally a plan peculiarly their own. Their alphabet of consonants contains letters of two different lengths, but of one thickness, and their vowels consist of loops and hooks which are written in with the consonants, the finer distinctions of vowel-sound being indicated, when necessary, by detached accents. These accents are seldom or never used in fast writing: the French reporting style may therefore be described as employing a few very simple vowel-signs written in with the consonants.

The German systems are still more characteristic, being what are called 'script' systems; that is, systems which employ, instead of straight lines and circular arcs, characters requiring the same movements of the hand as the letters of common writing. The vowels are very fully expressed, sometimes by characters of their own (which are usually either upstrokes or horizontal strokes), but more frequently by modifications of the form or thickness of the consonants. It will be easily understood that these forms, not being geometrical, lend themselves with special readiness to varieties of modification, just as the Gothic style of architecture is more adaptable than the Grecian. The indication thus given is often a mere general indication of the presence of a vowel without showing what the vowel is.

The founder of the German method was Gabelsberger, whose first publication is dated 1834, and his system is still the most widely used of all. Its most prominent representatives at the congress were Dr. Zeibig, professor of the Royal Stenographic Institute, Dresden, well known for his historical publications; and the Rev. J. Alteneder, domvicar of Passau, in Bavaria. It is used for reporting the debates in the Houses of Parliament of Austro-Hungary, Saxony, and Scandinavia. Next in order, both of time and of present popularity, comes the system of Stolze, first published in 1841, but since largely modified. It is used in reporting the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament at Berlin, and was ably represented at the congress by some of its leading professors and practitioners, notably by Dr. Max Bäckler, parliamentary shorthand-writer, Berlin. Two other systems, those of Arends and Roller, have also an established position, but were not, so far as we are aware, represented at the congress. The total number of shorthand societies using these four systems is given as about 1,000, and the number of adherents about 25,000.

The French systems were represented by four parliamentary reporters from Paris; and the chief stenographer, M. Guenin, though not able to attend in person, sent a paper which was read in the congress.

In America the systems mostly used are modifications of Isaac Pitman's, one of them bearing the name of his brother Benn Pitman, while two others, which aim at a higher degree of abbreviation, are known as Graham's and Munson's. Graham's was represented by Prof. W. D. Bridge of Chautauqua University, who is an expert writer, and well informed upon the state of shorthand in America. He was, so far as we know, the only member who crossed the Atlantic to attend the congress.

The first day of papers and discussions brought out several points of interest. A well-devised list of questions on parliamentary reporting had been sent to foreign countries as well as to English colonies; and the replies, which were both numerous and full, had been ably condensed into a *précis* by Mr. Gurney-Salter, the shorthand-writer to the Houses of Parliament. A lively debate ensued, in which some of the leading men from the gallery (notably Mr. Storr of the *Times*) took part, as well as some of the foreign representatives, Dr. Max Bäckler especially distinguishing himself by his ready command of the English language. The inadequacy of the accommodation provided for reporters in the Houses of Parliament, especially as regards difficulty of hearing, was made painfully prominent, while in other countries they are for the most part placed in the body of the house, in the best situations possible.

It is the practice in the French Senate to employ always two official shorthand-writers at the same time to check one another,

and the same practice prevails at Berlin and elsewhere. There was some discussion as to the advantages of this practice. The chief advantage claimed for it by Dr. Bäckler was that it afforded better facilities for hearing, as some orators speak from the tribune, and others from their seats. One of the two writers remains in his official place in front of the tribune, and the other places himself near the speaker for the time being. In America a complete verbatim report of all debates is printed at the public expense. It is even more complete than the debates themselves, as it frequently contains speeches which are not actually delivered, but only taken as delivered (if we may use the expression), owing to lack of time.

The congress, if it serves no other purpose, will at least serve to show the general public of England that there are other systems doing good work in the world besides the one with which they are best acquainted. Mr. Gurney-Salter read a paper giving valuable information as to the official and non-official reporting performed by the staff who work under his direction. Each 'shorthand-writer' has his own 'shorthand clerk,' to whom his notes are carried every half-hour, and who reads them aloud to two longhand clerks at once, the shorthand-writer all the time never leaving his place, but writing on continuously for two, three, or more hours. When his 'turn' of writing is over, he begins to revise the longhand transcript, which is read over to him while he follows it in his own notes. This is the process pursued in taking the evidence at parliamentary committees, and about 2,800 words of manuscript are produced per hour. All the 'shorthand-writers' but one use the Gurney system, and this one is a phonographer.

Mr. Gurney-Salter also gave some interesting information as to changes which have gradually been introduced in the mode of writing certain words. Comparing the present mode of writing with that in use at the beginning of this century, he described the changes as including a briefer writing of certain words, but as consisting chiefly in two things; namely, the writing of every word separately, and a fuller insertion of vowels — not initial vowels, for they were always inserted, but vowels in the middle of words. These medial vowels are inserted by lifting the pen and writing the remainder of the word in position.

AFGHAN LIFE IN AFGHAN SONGS.

IN *The Contemporary Review* for October, 1887, is an article by James Darmesteter on Afghan life in Afghan songs. Mr. Darmesteter has much to say on the political relations of Afghan to the British Empire of India, but introduces his article with some account of the native folk-songs. On the night of the 7th of April, 1886 (Wednesday, 11 P.M.), as he was sitting in the garden of his bungalow at Peshawer, gazing at the stars and the silver moon, etc., Mr. Darmesteter heard his Afghan *chaukidar* (life and property not being very safe at Peshawer, it is usual to keep an armed watchman, called *chaukidar*), old Piro, of the Khalil tribe, muttering in a broken voice fragments of a song that sounded like a love-song. He asked him to repeat the song to him. This he modestly declined to do for a long time, but at last he gave way, and began, —

> "My love is gone to Dekhan, and has left me alone;
> I have gone to him to entreat him.
> 'What is it to me that thou shouldst become a Raja at Azrabad?'[1]
> I seized him by the skirt of his garment and said, 'Look at me!'"

Here old Piro stopped, and neither for love nor for money could he prevail upon him to go on: his *repertoire* was exhausted. But Mr. Darmesteter's interest had been awakened, and from that night he resolved to collect what he could of the Afghan popular poetry. The field was new and unexplored. English people in India care little for Indian songs.

He had gone to the border to study the Afghan language and literature, but had soon to recognize that the so-called Afghan literature is hardly worth the trouble of a journey from Paris to Peshawer. It consists mainly of imitations and translations from the Persian, Arabic, and Hindustani. For a time, under the Moguls, an original and free spirit permeated those imitations, and Mirza Ansari, the mystical poet, or Khushhal Khan, prince of the Khatak tribe, would be accounted a true poet in any nation and any literature. But these are rare exceptions, and the theological lucubrations of the much-revered Akhun Darveza, that narrow, foul-mouthed, rancorous, and truly pious exponent of Afghan orthodoxy, the endless *rifacimenti* of Hatim Tai, the most liberal of Arabs, of Ali Hamza and the companions of the Prophet, or the ever-retold edifying story of Joseph and Zuleikha, — all seem as if they had been written or copied by mediæval monks or unimaginative children.

[1] Hyderabad, a favorite place of resort for Afghan adventurers and *soldats de fortune*.

The popular, unwritten poetry, though despised and ignored by the reading-classes, is of quite a different character. It is the work of illiterate poets: but it represents *their* feelings; it has life in it, — the life of the people; it is simple, because the natural range of ideas of an Afghan is simple and limited; it is true to nature, because it represents those ideas without any moral bias or literary after-thought. Sometimes, therefore, it is powerful and beautiful, because it renders simply and truly powerful passions or beautiful feelings.

During a few months' stay on the border, Mr. Darmesteter collected about one hundred and twenty songs (to be published, with text, translation, and commentary, in the *Bibliothèque Orientale* of the French Asiatic Society) of every description, — love-songs, folk-lore, hymns, romantic songs, and political ballads. If we want to know what an Afghan is, let us put all books aside and receive his own unconscious confession from the lips of his favorite poets. The confession, it is to be feared, would not be much to their honor on the whole, but it will be the more sincere. This is the value of the wild, unpremeditated accents of these people: a poor thing it is, but it expresses their nature.

The Afghans (*Afghan* is their Persian name; their Indian name is *Pathan;* their national name, *Pukhtun* or *Pushtun*) are divided into three independent groups: —

1. The Afghans under British rule, or what we may call the Queen's Afghans, who inhabit the border districts along the Indus, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat, Peshawer, and Hazara. They were conquered in 1849, with the Sikhs, their then masters.

2. The Afghans of Afghanistan proper, or the Emir's Afghans, — the only part of the race that forms something like an organized power.

3. The Afghans of Yaghistan, "the rebel or independent country," that is to say, those Afghans who do not belong either to the British Raj or to the Emir, but live in the native national anarchy in the western basin of the upper Indus, — Svat, Buner, Panjkora, Dher, etc. The Afghan of Yaghistan is the true, unsophisticated Afghan.

The songs were collected in the British districts of Peshawer and Hazara, but most of them express, nevertheless, the general views of the Afghans to whatever part they belong: for though there is no real nationality amongst the Afghans, yet there is a strongly marked national character; and though nothing is more offensive to an Afghan than another Afghan, still there is nothing so much like an Afghan as another. Moreover, many of these songs come from Yaghistan, or Afghanistan. Songs travel quickly. The thousands of *Powindas* that every year pass twice across the Suleiman range, bringing the wealth of Central Asia and carrying back the wealth of India, bring also and carry back all the treasures of the Afghan Muse on both sides the mountain; and a new song freshly flown at Naushehra, from the lips of Mohammed the Oil-Presser, will very soon be heard upon the mountains of Buner, or down the valley of the Helmend.

There are two sorts of poets, — the *Sha-ir* and the *Dum*. With the *Sha-ir* we have nothing to do: he is the literary poet, who can read, who knows Hafiz and Saadi, who writes Afghan Ghazals on the Persian model, who has composed a Divan. Every educated man is a *Sha-ir*, though, if he be a man of good taste, he will not assume the title. Writing Ghazal was one of the accomplishments of the old Afghan chiefs. Hafiz Rahmat, the great Rohilla captain, and Ahmed Shah, the founder of the Durani empire, had written Divans, were 'Divan people,' — *Ahli Divan*, as the expression runs. The *Sha-ir* may be a clever writer, he may be a fine writer; but he has nothing to teach us about his people. We may safely dismiss him with honor and due respect.

The *Dum* is the popular singer and poet, for he combines the two qualities, like our *Jongleur* of the middle ages. The *Dums* form a caste: the profession is hereditary. The *Dum* is despised