

The length of time necessary to become a good stenographer differs. Many of the most skillful in the United States and England have become such only after not less than five years' study, practice and application. Occasionally the announcement is made of a person becoming entirely proficient in less than a year. Like meteors the latter class flash across the stenographic sky; but in a short time, like meteors, too, they are nowhere to be found; while the stars of the growth of half a decade shine on as quietly, steadily and brilliantly as before. It is the conviction of the one now addressing you, that what are recognized as leading phonographic publications do themselves and the profession great injury by advertising such sudden stenographic growths, luring many into wasting their time, and leading the public to the belief that stenographers are worth much less as a class than they really are. Men are rightly admitted to practice at the bar only after they have passed proper examination; physicians of good standing in communities begin practice only after certain essential acquirements, and the following of the stenographic art ought not to be permitted, especially in our courts of justice, until after a certain proficiency has been attained, and a prescribed amount of actual court reporting done under instructions. Unless this, or some thing of a protective character is reached, for both the public and the profession, we need not be surprised to find stenography degenerating rather than finding increased favor in fields where such services are now most sought.


As the introduction of good and satisfactory work opens the way for an increased number of the profession, the question arises, What constitutes good and satisfactory work? It is not strictly verbatim reporting, though the skill to do it is undoubtedly of marked importance. The less verbatim the transcription, with some speakers, the better for the reputation of both reporter and speaker. In some work, very little changing is required. The most readily acquired branch of the profession is amanuensis work,—and that in its order runs about as follows: (1) Writing from dictation of court reporters; (2) from dictation of business men; (3) dictation of reporters on miscellaneous subjects; (4) of lawyers; (5) of theologians; (6) of scientific men. The next most readily reached branch, with a fair knowledge of the law, is court reporting; then verbatim reports of political meetings; then court reporting, (with little or no knowledge of law or law forms;) then conventions of a miscellaneous character, as on municipal government or agriculture; then legislative bodies; after them, say, medical societies, where few medical terms are used outside the papers read; then follow scientific bodies of all descriptions; then debates and deliberations where foreign languages or the classics are used frequently in terms, or by quotations; then bodies where they are used altogether,—as French, German and Latin.

As before intimated, however skilled in the verbatim employment, it is sometimes necessary, and often better work, to make changes from the original notes. There are times when the greater part can be made much more satisfactory by going over and sifting the whole, as in some extemporaneous speeches. To do this satisfactorily frequently necessitates severe mental strain, and much hard labor; yes, more, a careful study of the speaker, his true sentiments, (if he has any), and a keen regard for the avoidance of any sweeping from his precise views. Some such it is almost impossible to please the first trial; with some half a dozen trials are absolutely necessary, if the chances are offered; and others never express pleasure to the one who has really made their speeches presentable.

Doubtless every practical stenographer has found that position of outline, when following a fluent speaker, is exceedingly difficult,—and perhaps here is one place where we may look for improvement in the near future. Though we may in learning, and at first in business pay due regard to position, after a while the characters will be observed to be not elevated enough, or too low, and in occasional spurts all the characters will be above the line or nearly on it. The only remedy I can suggest is to write every word unlike every other word, each word having its only one distinctive outline, and that outline readily made.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

LAWYERS AND LAW REPORTING.

E give below some extracts from an interesting communication with the above title which appeared in the *Globe* a few weeks since. It was written by Mr. E. E. Horton, one of the most accomplished and experienced reporters in Canada:—

"Will you permit me to draw attention to some of the obstacles to the making of a correct record of the evidence which many of the counsel practising in our courts are in the habit of putting in the way of stenographers.

The evidence in common law cases is required to be written out in narrative form; but to take down testimony in narrative form with full assurance of doing so correctly is a thing which I maintain no reporter can do. One who attempts to record testimony in narrative form must do so in a large measure constructively, and if a stenographer attempts to do that, besides sacrificing one of the chief advantages of a stenographic report, viz: the preservation of the exact words of witnesses, there is a risk of his misinterpreting, in the haste with which he must do it, the tenor of question and answer taken together.

Admitting, then, that in whatever form it may afterwards be written out, testimony should in the first instance be taken down question and answer, it is incumbent on counsel when examining witnesses to see that they do not violate