

MY AMANUENSIS.

Inscribed to Miss Lizzie Hand, by S. B. Sumner.

A handsome maiden here at my right hand,
A sonnet for her album doth command,
She's trebly handsome;—for, you understand,
She writes, and has, and is a handsome Hand.
To phrase it handsome: handsome little "Liz."
Not only handsome does, but handsome is.

SYSTEM IN OFFICE WORK.

BY W. O. WYCKOFF.

Uhat system is preferable to a lack of system requires no argument. "System in office work"—stenographic office work,—is no exception to the rule.

The stenographer who has little or nothing to do may get along well enough without regard to system or method of any sort; and so, too, without great inconvenience, he may, and often does, dispense with an office even.

In an office from which, and in which, is transacted the reporting business of an entire judicial district, in addition to such miscellaneous work as may from time to time present itself, system must be invoked or confusion is inevitable.

Perhaps the work of no professional is so easily and so readily systematized as that of the stenographer.

In order to have anything like a perfect system in an extensive shorthand business, some conveniences are necessary. The work that may be done in an office comprising a single room seven by nine may be systematized, undoubtedly, but the consideration of so limited a subject would scarcely be worth the time. As a rule the proprietors of such offices are those who insist that the way of their Grand-fathers—the good old way—is the best. To such the introduction of "System in office work" would probably be a hindrance rather than a help.

The office of the stenographer of to-day, who is keeping pace with the times, consists ordinarily of two good sized rooms, and generally of three. In an office of this character properly furnished, a systematical way of doing things follows almost naturally. At least one convenient desk with pigeon holes and places for necessary books, &c., will be found in the principal business room of such an office. The transcribing room, if one is dedicated to that purpose, should contain suitable cases for note books, which should be numbered and placed in such order therein that any number may be referred to instantly. If books are not used in taking notes, shelves for holding numbered boxes with close covers will answer the purpose. Where books are used, a sufficient space should be allotted to blanks, where a supply should always be found ready for any emergency. In fact no matter what sort of stationery is used it should be purchased by wholesale and kept on hand ready for use.

The Topeka (Kansas) Stenographers' Association have introduced a bill making their tariff \$10 per day, 10c. a folio.

THE ART OF CONDENSING; OR, MR. BEECHER ON REPORTING.

BEFORE preaching upon this occasion Mr. Beecher advanced to the front of the platform and said.

I wish to say a word or two on the subject of the reports made of my sermons from week to week. Twice within a year the land has rung with excitement, furious anger and criticism on account of reports of my sermons that were grossly wrong—what may be called "the bread and water sermon" for one, and what may be called "the abolition of hell" sermon for another.

I do not believe any one ever intentionally misrepresents. The gentlemen who serve as reporters here are—so far as I have had the pleasure of their acquaintance—gentlemen; and I am under obligations to them, as is the Christian community, in very many respects. Some of them I know and I esteem very highly their acquaintance. Nevertheless there have been several instances in which, if they had designed to misrepresent totally, they could not more successfully have done it. Allow me to say that my sermons that are worth any criticism at large are selected by the editor of the *Christian Union* and generally printed without any revision and generally without my knowing which of the two on Sunday is to be printed. I have not time to revise or consider them, and if I should set out to do it I should simply try to write a better one all the time. I leave them, therefore, to the reporters and the managing editors, and I don't know, from one week to another, which sermon is to be printed. The cases are very rare in which I think it necessary to look over a sermon.

Now, an ordinary sermon upon some moral or ethical question may be reported in outline or condensed very successfully, because the reporters are gentlemen not merely of education but in many instances college men, and, therefore, within their own realm of familiar thinking and reading and observation, competent. But when sermons involve a large amount of doctrinal discussion or of nice distinction, where they cover a large ground with intricate details, the training of the gentlemen that report has not been such as to make them adequate to this work of condensing an hour's sermon into a compass which may be read in five or ten minutes. *Condensing is in itself the weightiest of literary tasks*, but to condense fairly what has been spoken in the intense enthusiasm of the hour is a still more difficult task, and to condense that which is still more in substance dependent for its accuracy upon the very phrase or the very collocation, is simply impossible under the circumstances. It may be taken down *verbatim*, but to be taken down here and there with signs and sketches and condensed by an outside person is a task which the most adventurous might fear to undertake. Some of the gentlemen who report here pick out certain sentences only. They stick in their