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**PRACTICAL STENOGRAPHY.**

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MAN is largely what he makes himself; a stenographer almost entirely so. Some people have success thrust upon them; stenographers have to win theirs. The road to eminence, in some professions, may be travelled by bunglers; there are no bungling stenographers who can travel it long. They either drop out of their own volition, or are thrown over the fence. If they come back into the road again, (to bungler), their final exit is only a question of time. There are resting places in most pursuits, and localities for refreshment and invigoration, and the final goal. The stenographer finds his goal in the grave.

"The evil that men do, lives after them."  
The good is oft interred with their bones."

The evil that stenographers do lives with them; the good is oft-nigh well spent for their fellow-men ere their bones are interred. From the commencement to the close of the career of a practical business stenographer's life, he is either progressing or retrograding. No man requires greater qualifications to commence with, whether natural or acquired. No one needs a greater diversity of talent through life than he. This has reference particularly to the shorthand reporter who does miscellaneous work. To-day in a law court; to-morrow in the presence of theologians, the day after recording the intricacies of medical science; then following and placing in permanent form the advancements of chemistry; from that to metallurgy; then perhaps geology or botany, or drugs, or banking, or agriculture,—whatever the subject may be. Sometimes varying every day in a week, sometimes a week or a month in one channel; but every day some new forms of outline, and new perplexities for transcription. It does not require many years' experience to arrive at the knowledge that unless the stenographer is somewhat conversant with, or has an abstract knowledge of what he is called upon to report, he cannot give entire satisfaction to those who employ him. This

carries us back to the very beginning of the stenographer's life; to where he should see the necessity for a solid foundation to build upon. Quickness of perception; a clear head, and nimble fingers; physical and mental organisms that are able to endure long and severe taxation; a pertinacity of purpose and concentration above the medium of our race; an absence of brazen familiarity; courteousness, with an obliging disposition that can reach a positive tension; book knowledge that ought to extend somewhat into the classics; practical knowledge that should combine all the leading topics of the day and age; an honorable record for punctuality and business integrity; and, finally, a determination of purpose that will win and command success is needed.

There are so many works published on the subject of acquiring the stenographic art, that perhaps it will not be wise to consider the subject at length. The intention of this article is mainly for those who have entered upon practical work. Yet it may not be amiss to note several essentials beyond what have already been given. First, to avoid too contracted a system, although there are some contractions very useful, and very much more desirable than if written out at length. A very lengthened system also has its objections, as sometimes it becomes necessary to write so rapidly that the outlines are far from the printed patterns, and utterly unobviable by rigid rule. The "happy medium," like that of mortal life, is perhaps the best, generally speaking. If too contracted, with very rapid speakers, or temporary spurts of eloquence, the contractions are apt to be so hurriedly made as to be unreliable. If too lengthened, there is a waste of force, a tendency to scrawl, and sometimes a sporadic pen and ink effusion beyond all transcribable comprehension. Another fact: with the writing too lengthened, there is finally a peculiar throwing of the vowels where they ought not to be, when uncommon words requiring vocalization are suddenly encountered. But some persons who write very contracted forms have had marvelously good success in their shorthand career. So, too, with some who write astonishingly lengthened outlines.