

regularity and frequency being more important than duration, a little mild reporting may be attempted. But reporting is not the chief advantage of shorthand. Many a beginner gets discouraged on finding that after considerable practice he cannot report even a tolerably slow speaker. I wish therefore to point out what after long experience I have found to be the greatest use of shorthand to the professional man. It is for preparing the original draft of any writing whether essay, lecture, speech, or even letter, and therefore also sermon. Also for copying extracts from books, for quotation or ready reference in a work you have in hand. It saves many a journey to the library to ensure accuracy. In drafting a paper, citing or incorporating authorities, shorthand enables work to be done almost as fast as the ideas can flow. The first draft can then be written and re-written several times, corrections made in almost every sentence, paragraphs and sentences re-arranged and the whole beaten into shape before being transcribed into longhand. The transcription is then made at leisure, and little finishing touches given, and when completed it is in exactly the form wanted and does not need to be disfigured by further corrections. In the transcription it will be an advantage, for those who care to go to the expense, to use a typewriter, which is faster than longhand, and less trying to the sight and nerves.

When shorthand is used for such work as above, it is often convenient to work out many a little incidental point, which bears upon the leading thread of the discourse, but which need not be incorporated with it. Such notes are of frequent use for reference either in some other connection or on some other occasion. I have for several years made a practice of writing in shorthand in a large note-book everything that passes through my hands, whether law pleading, essays or letters; and the advantage of it is very great.

Thus the usefulness of shorthand does not depend on great speed. It is very seldom you want to report a speech. The notes in such case are very rapidly written and are almost valueless unless transcribed or at least carefully read and retouched, immediately. And it is only in rare cases that it will be worth the time or trouble to do this. And to report thus requires great skill and speed, which practice will usually give, but which is not necessary for the most useful work shorthand can do. For the practical work I have described, the great essential is, as I have said, legibility; and this can be acquired by frequent writing and especially by reading as much shorthand as possible.