

moment he wants to use it, or of being puzzled when he attempts to read it. The best reporters of the present day disapprove of contracted outlines, except in the case of words of very frequent recurrence, and favor full outlines, which are generally easier to write and are always easier to read than contractions. If the phonographer is employed by a business firm as corresponding clerk, he will find certain technical words peculiar to the business constantly recurring. He can very easily, if he so desire, make contracted outlines for these words, but for anyone to attempt to memorize such outlines for the technical terms of every business, trade and profession, is to attempt more than the ordinary human intellect is capable of accomplishing.

My experience with text-books taught me another valuable lesson. I found that little "ticks" and "curls" were used to represent such words as "of," "or," "on," "we," "you," etc. These words are of the most frequent occurrence. They, also, enter into the composition of numberless words and phrases, and are extensively used in the interrogatories of the lawyer examining a witness. Almost any one will admit that he who writes a free, flowing hand will write with much greater ease and speed than he who writes in a stiff, contracted manner. I found that the effect of these microscopic signs was to actually retard the free movement of the hand. They gave the writing a cramped and spotted appearance; could not be made with such unerring accuracy as to be always of the proper size; were, consequently, a source of confusion; and could not be employed in numbers of oft repeated phrases because they would not combine with other signs. To the ordinary observer a minute scratch or curl is a very excellent sign for a word; it has quite a pretty appearance in a printed reading lesson; and can, apparently, be written with great ease and speed. When, however, one is writing at the rate of one hundred and fifty words per minute, and the hand has instantly and frequently to curtail its movement to make the aforesaid scratch or curl, it will be found that a longer or more flowing sign can be made with greater ease, and, on the average, strange as it may appear, with equal speed. Unless the brief sign expresses more than one word, its brevity of form does not compensate for the difficulty of making it accurately, a difficulty that increases in proportion to the degree of speed at which

you are writing. With regard to these signs, therefore, I adopted the method of a system that does not use scratches and curls, but gives the full alphabetical sign for such a word, for instance, as "ought." When the sign is written half its proper length it expresses "ought it," and thus, by indicating an additional word, it compensates for the actual, though not always apparent curtailment of the movement of the hand in writing it. It is very difficult to find two phonographers who use the scratches and curls who can read each other's writing, but the writer has been one of six working in the same office who did not use them, and who could transcribe each other's notes with the utmost readiness. Indeed four of us did little else than transcribe the notes of the other two, who were regularly employed in court, and who never, except in an emergency, transcribed their own notes at all.

Phonography recognizes three "positions" in which a word can be written, depending upon the accented vowel in the word being a "first"- "second"- or "third-place" vowel. These "positions" are: above the line, on the line, and through or below the line. When one writes a word in Phonography the outline is first flashed through the mind. If "position" has not to be considered, the word will be written on the line, and the mind is instantaneously relieved, so far as the word is concerned, from any further effort. If, however, "position" has to be considered, it will be seen that the mind has to make two efforts, one to create the outline and the other to determine its "position." In the majority of cases the latter effort is wholly superfluous and unnecessary. Except in comparatively a few instances a word with more than two consonant signs in its outline will be read with ease if written on the line, although its accented vowel would, if the usual rule were followed, cause it to be written above or below the line. I question if any of the advocates of strict adherence to "position" have become, after years of practice, so expert as to write every word in the "position" demanded by the rule; and if they have become so elaborately exact they have given themselves a vast amount of unessential labor. I found that after the mind had formed the outline of the word, the effort necessary to determine the "position" was a source of hesitation, and I discovered that some of the best verbatim reporters paid but little attention to the subject except in certain special instances.