

ceivable idiosyncrasy. Some mutter their words; others jump part way through a sentence, and never finish it; others lead along through a labyrinth of words until they are lost; then wind up with something that sounds well, and satisfies their audience, forgetting or caring not for the entanglement which the stenographer has to unravel and make intelligible for print. Then how many ungrammatical sentences—how many that are doubled up until when winnowed one-half, there is yet one-half too much. It is a marvel to the hardest-worked of the profession, when the announcement is made of a stenographer becoming insane, that the one is not augmented to a dozen.

Adequate compensation for services is an interesting subject to every practical worker in the stenographic field. How shall we be properly paid? And how shall the income be made continuous? First, if we work for the public, the community ought to be informed of the difficult nature of our calling. That can be done best through the press. A few minutes' conversation with the editors of the promising periodicals of the community will sometimes accomplish the result. It will be more certainly accomplished if a readable and interesting article is written on the subject by the stenographer himself, and its publication secured. Where the press are enlightened, and favorably moved, the public are also. Three points can be profitably impressed: (1) the saving of time and money to the ratepayers; (2) the importance of every man coming into court having justice done him by a full and accurate record of what takes place; (3) rapidity with which the business can be disposed of. There can be more uniformity of rates throughout the United States by careful and thorough organization on the part of the competent followers of the profession, with a just standard for membership, and actual test on the three points laid down by this Association before entering, and no waiving of any of them. It would not injure the profession to add a fourth qualification—a good moral character; for our families are sometimes reached by our fellowships in the stenographic art as well as we. Further than this, the experience and wisdom resulting from a thorough organization would enable the members to go, step by step, until all that should be justly and equitably sought had been accomplished. Much more might be said on this branch, but to cover the ground would require a separate address, if not two or three.

The number of stenographers in the United States and Canada is given at nearly sixteen hundred by the publisher of one of our widest circulated phonographic periodicals. The number is continually and rapidly increasing. How many of these are competent for actual work, no one seems to have ventured a declaration; but the editor and publisher, who fixes the total number at nearly sixteen hundred, added in the same conversation that he did not believe of the whole number there were more than

twenty-five who could do every description of miscellaneous verbatim reporting in a strictly first-class manner. Is he right, or is he wrong? If right, is it not time that a higher plane were sought by the great mass of the profession? If wrong, who will attempt at this time,—and make the attempt good,—to prove that there are a greater number than twenty-five entirely competent for any kind of verbatim work that may be desired or required at the hands of a stenographic shorthand writer?

But it is time for the conclusion. To raise our standard among men we should all put forth every effort to be as perfect in our work as it is possible for human being to be; if any errors are our own, we should be frank and honest enough to confess them. We ought to remember that errors can occur, but to work as though we had no right or excuse to make them. Our work should not only be well, but neatly done; little things as well as large are to be watched. We have no express commission to be more forward or egotistical than other people; but we have the right to be placed as high up in the scale of avocations and professions as any on the face of the earth. Our calling is as honorable as that of any other, and with true dignity and manhood we should maintain what we are entitled to. It does not injure us to be always polite and courteous to high and low, and to bear our trials good-naturedly. While giving to those who are incompetent and unprofessional their true places, we can act toward them in such a way as not to be little ourselves in the eyes of those who do not understand the business, or those who are incompetent and unprofessional. But before deciding as to either of the latter, prejudice and injustice may be averted by remembering there are two sides to be heard, and in many instances the last heard are found to be nearest right, if not entirely so. Kind and considerate treatment of everybody, as far as possible, will win in the end. Can we not hasten the dawning of that desirable day, at least in the minds of all who require our services?

Finally, our position in the estimation of our fellow-men is what we make it ourselves. Aiming high for honorable professional attainments, and to meet the wants in our spheres of action, we will be surer to reach a higher plane than if we aim not at all, or only for the luck that the diligent following of our profession yields.

The Secretary of the London Shorthand Writers' Association, Mr. Pocknell, is about to publish a new system of shorthand, which he claims will possess great advantages as to legibility and simplicity. A new system that will combine the two qualities Mr. Pocknell claims for his system will certainly be hailed with delight, for we must admit there is abundant room for improvement in all the styles now in use.