

**DEMENT'S
PITMANIC
SHORTHAND**

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Dement's Pitmanic Shorthand by Isaac S. Dement

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ISAAC S. DEMENT

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By

Isaac S. Dement
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Third Edition

Revised and re-engraved throughout

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Preface.

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Preface.

It must be understood, in the outset, that there are no *laws* in the Art of shorthand; but that it is controlled by *rules*, to the universal application of each of which there are and must, of necessity, be exceptions. While it is true, so far as the average student is concerned, that many of these rules may be treated as laws, the ardent and penetrating student will find in this Art a field of research full of delightful resources in which he may revel unrestrainedly, but the utmost confines of which he may not hope to explore in the years allotted to man in his present state on earth.

The system of Shorthand Writing presented in this book is a modernized adaptation of the one given to the world by Sir Isaac Pitman. Out of that system many *styles* have grown, the conspicuous ones being the Graham, Benn Pitman, Munson, Osgoodby, Longley and Marsh. These gentlemen were all reporters of ability and their books have received deserved recognition.

Some of the *styles* presented by these authors are exceedingly brief, (notably, the Graham,) while others are laboriously full, (notably, the Munson). Pitmanic Shorthand is brief where brevity does not interfere with legibility and full where legibility demands fullness.

The *styles* above alluded to take engraved or carefully executed characters as the basis of legibility, while, in Pitmanic Shorthand, notes made at the greatest rapidity are the test of legibility. And, it is evident, if notes, rapidly and hurriedly made, are absolute in legibility, more carefully executed ones will not lose any of that quality.

With these *styles* the translation of engraved or accurately written characters is one thing, and the translation of characters executed under pressure is quite a different thing. This is true of all these *styles*; for the brief ones depend, to a dangerous degree, upon minute distinctions, which vanish beyond a certain degree of rapidity; while the full ones make an exceedingly rapid movement of the fingers necessary at so low a rate of speed that their ability to write with perfect accuracy is lost when the average rate of speaking is barely passed; for the hand loses its power to make small and accurate characters in exact proportion to its increase in speed. If the capacity of the hand to execute small characters is retained at high speed, the accuracy of *length* and *position* is lost; and, if such accuracy is maintained, the *size* of character is increased. The first is unnatural, as it cramps the muscles of the fingers; the last is natural, as it keeps the muscles free. As speed in walking is increased by lengthening the stride; so the hand increases its speed by lengthening its various motions. And, as enduring speed is lost by too great length of stride, the hand should not be permitted too great latitude in movement; for, if at normal speed the characters are large, the hand will not be able to traverse the increased length of characters, incident upon an increase of speed, at any proportional rise in word-speed.

A system of shorthand that will meet all demands should be so constructed that the enlarging and shattering of outlines, which result when a writer is pushed to his limit of speed, will not destroy the legibility of the notes. Therefore, outlines or phrases which depend *entirely* upon *length*, or *position*, or *careful execution* should be avoided.

Hence, such a system should take as its basis of legibility, notes written at the highest speed of which any writer is capable.

Pitmanic Shorthand is based upon the absolute legibility of notes written at the rate of over six words a second.

Abbreviation should, and in this book does, proceed along the lines

of the general principles of shorthand. No arbitrary rules for it are needed, as the scope of those principles is very broad. It is allowable for the experienced reporter to establish, for his own use, arbitrary "short-cuts," and the principles of Cumulative and Special Phrasing set forth in the Third Grade, furnish ample opportunity for the exercise of individual ingenuity and the satisfying of personal idiosyncrasies. It is, however, not wise for the *student* to depart from general principles. It is a good rule to adhere to the text-book until it is thoroughly mastered; for, when that is accomplished, a solid foundation has been laid for the use of individual judgment.

In Pitmanic Shorthand there are no corresponding, advanced corresponding, reporting, advanced reporting and brief reporting styles. After the author had spent years in acquiring these various styles, he found his speed entirely inadequate to conscientious *verbatim* reporting. When several years had been spent in reducing these various and conflicting styles into an harmonious single style, he found his speed rapidly increasing; but he was yet hampered by the arbitrary and erratic construction of contractions and phrases and by an earnest endeavor to maintain a useful familiarity with the thousands of contractions he had learned. He then devoted himself to a thorough analysis of the frequency of occurrence of the words represented by those contractions, and, as the result of his investigations, discarded thousands of the signs. His mind being thus freed from this burden, his manual speed was still further augmented. And, when he formulated the principles herein shown of Cumulative and Special Phrasing, his speed reached its highest rate.

The point here presented is, that it requires more time for the mind to call up a special picture of an isolated contraction than it requires to apply familiar rules.

Therefore, a general principle should run through the entire theory; similar consonantal groups should be represented by similar phonographic groups; similar word groups should be represented by the application of similar cumulative principles; similar contractions