The Tavistock letter

A copy, in shorthand, of a letter sent to the editor of *The Times*, J. T. Delane in May 1859
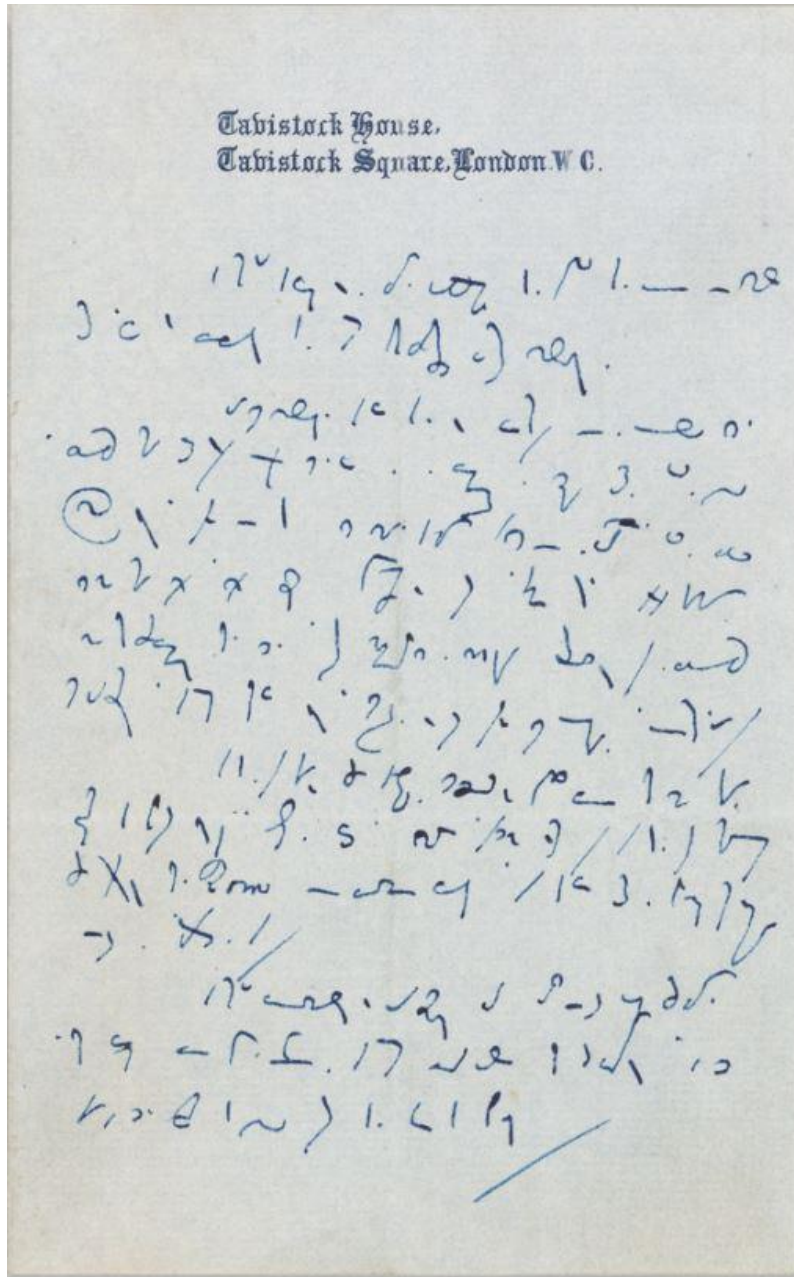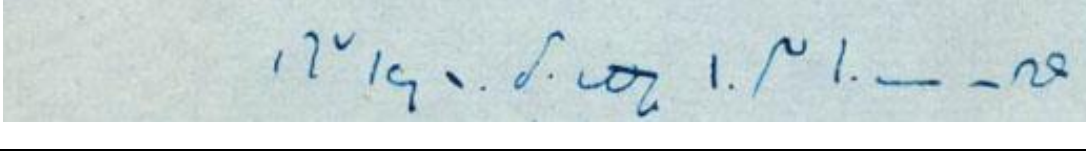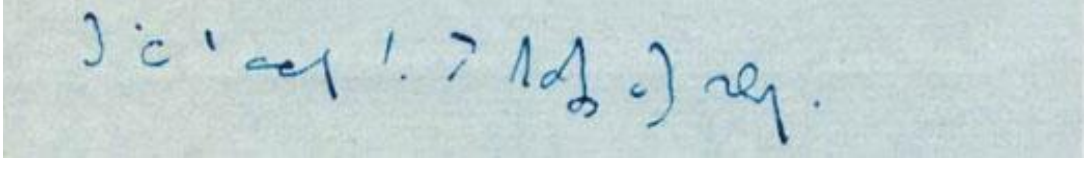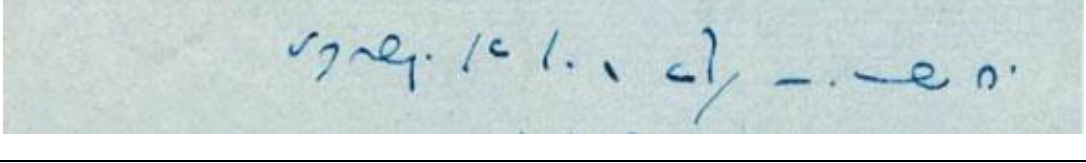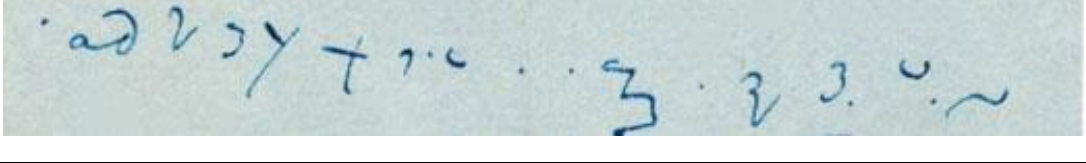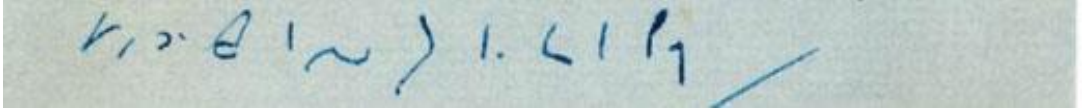

Figure 1: The Tavistock letter. Image courtesy of The Morgan Library & Museum, MA 107.43. Photography by Janny Chiu.

Line-by-line transcription

Thank you to everyone who entered the 'Decoding Dickens' competition. Every submission helped to bring us closer to the full transcription of the mysterious Tavistock letter, while the decoding of key phrases helped us to understand the letter's place in Dickens's life and career. You can find out more about the context of the letter [here](#). Be sure to check out our ['Roll of Honour'](#) too, which credits the first transcribers of particular symbols.

Line no.	
1	
	I feel obliged, though very reluctant(ly), to appeal to you in person
2	
	___ a ___ that _____ ___ ___ advertisement ___ _____ .
3	
	___ ___ _____ ____ ___ ___ _____ in the usual way
4	
	the advertisement for 3 days next week of the contents of number 3 of All The Year

5	
	Round with a particular in it which ___ __ ____ ___ __ __ ____ ___ ____
6	
	__ _ for ___ __ ___ ____ announcing that after Ascension Day Household Words
7	
	will be discontinued by me and its partnership of proprietors dissolved . The advertisement
8	
	was refused and sent back with a message that this particular was untrue and unfair .
9	
	As to its truth , it is ____ly impossible that something can be more true

10	
	because ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ a plain and simple fact . As to its fairness ,
11	
	it is signed by Romilly in open court and is taken from the short hand writer's
12	
	notes of a judgement of his .
13	
	I feel convinced that he himself ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
14	
	___ ___ ___ on any ground of sense or reason ___ ___ ___ and I am

| 15 | |
| | sure I may ___ __ _____ ____ to have it restored . |