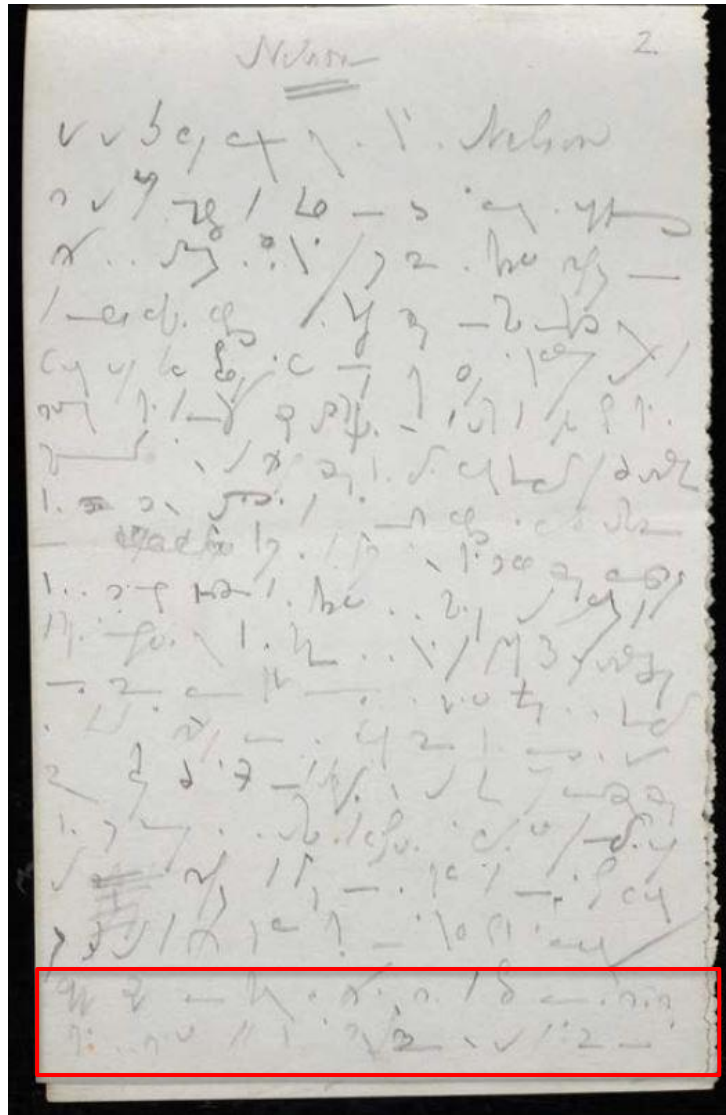


'Nelson' part II transcription

Our #SolveItDickens challenge for April 2022 once again came from the notebooks of Dickens's shorthand pupil, Arthur Stone, at the [Free Library of Philadelphia](#). It consisted of the final sentence of page one and the whole of page two.



The undeciphered portion of page 1

Figure 1: A shorthand exercise titled 'Nelson'.
Image © The Free Library of Philadelphia [ref: cdc5890009]

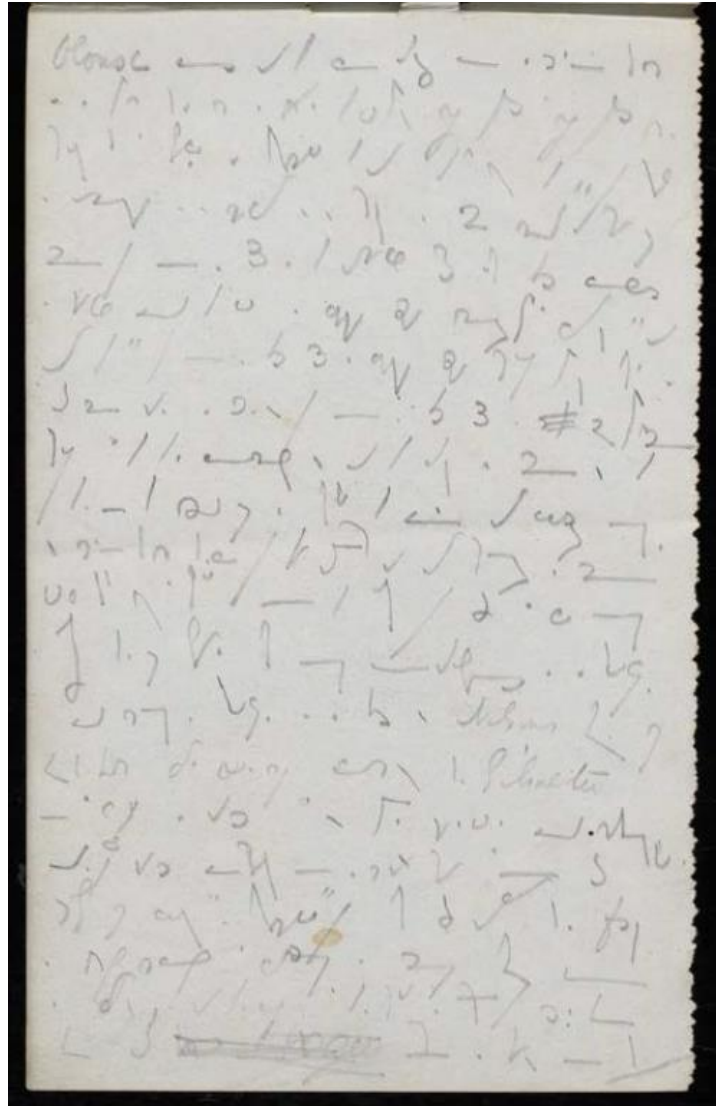


Figure 2: The second page of a shorthand exercise titled 'Nelson'.
Image © The Free Library of Philadelphia [ref: cdc5890009]

The Dickens Decoders have once again come up trumps! Not only have their resourceful efforts produced a near complete transcription (only a few words are missing), but an amazing 54 shorthand symbols have been transcribed for the first time. Our ['Roll of Honour'](#) celebrates these new discoveries. Many thanks to *everyone* who took part – this mystery could not have been solved without you.

We can now put 'Nelson' part I and part II together for the first time:¹

'Nelson'

There are some circumstances connected with the death of Nelson / which are always interesting as having in them a kind of alternative / picture of the events of the day. Thus when the Admiral persists in / his usual courtly custom of

¹ The oblique </ > marks the end of lines in the original shorthand text.

dressing himself in full uniform with / gold lace, silk stockings and God knows what orders and decorations, he is / warned by his officer(s) most emphatically that his life is particularly sought by the / French and that he exposes himself to very great danger. It is represented / to him that the enemy has a new custom of carrying riflemen / in the tops of his ships and that by making himself conspicuous / to the meanest observation as the Admiral of the Fleet, he hazards his / safety and, necessarily with it, the fortune of the day. Apart from these representations / no man can better know the real extent of the danger / of such a practice than the great man to whom they were / made because it is a fact in his history that he had always opposed himself / to this use of the rifle as cowardly and cruel. Nevertheless / he persists, is shot in the back and is / After he has been taken below in a dying state the/an old / quarter master on board the Victory who is standing on the poop / by the wheel says to a midshipman that there is a man in a [end of page 1]


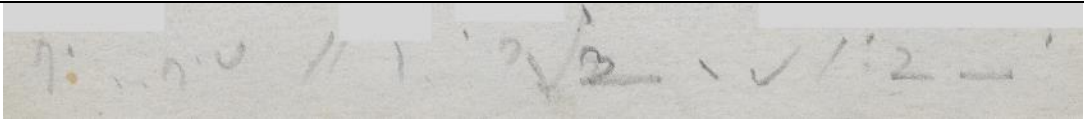

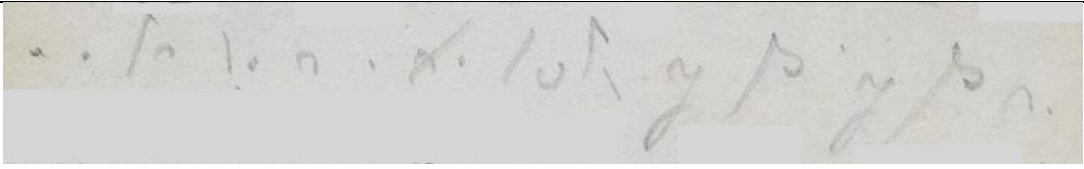
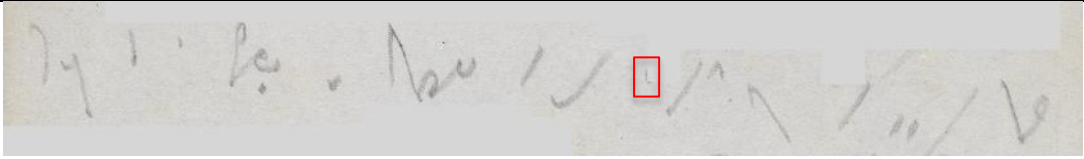
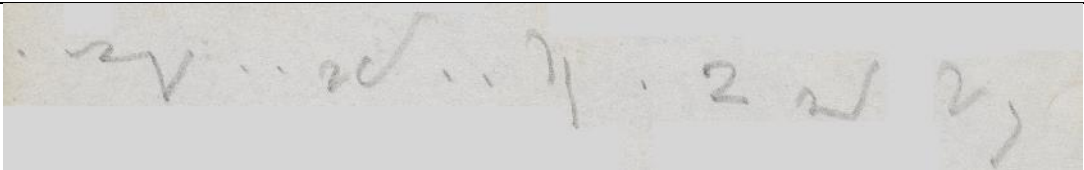
blouse whom he has seen hiding on the main top / of the ship to which the Victory is lashed yard arm to yard arm who / fired at and struck (down) the Admiral as he saw with his eyes. During / the remainder of the progress of the fight the two (men) watch for this / man. In the moment of his emerging from behind some concealment / of rigging or sail the quarter master points up and cries out "There / he is". In the same moment the quarter master falls shot by the / same man through the mouth. In the same moment the midshipman / fires and is so convinced that he has hit the man that as / soon as possible after the battle is over he climbs onto/into / that main top to see. Sure enough there he finds a/the man / lying dead with a ball in his heart. It is a circumstance not / belonging to this story but not un... of the delicacy / or want of delicacy of the time that Nelson's body was / said to have been very conveyed to Gibraltar / in a cask of rum and that any really or pretendedly / choice rum offered in/on the market for a long time / afterwards was called "The Admiral". But it is easier to transmit / the weaknesses and grimness of men's bodies than / the worth of their souls and so fiction may have / had some foundation of truth in it. [end of page 2]

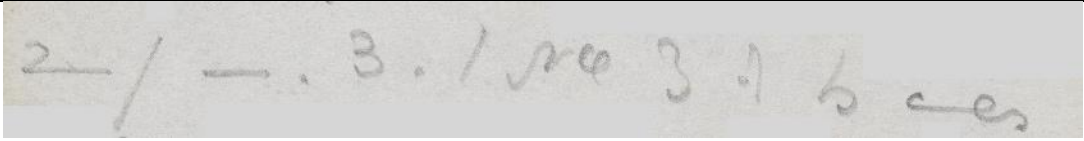
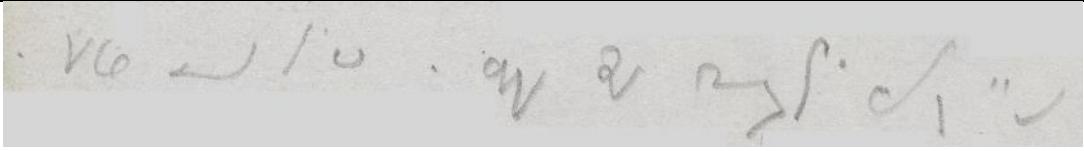
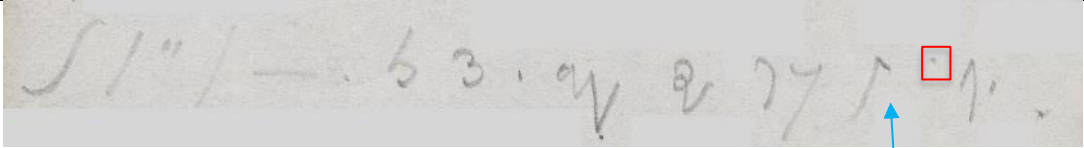

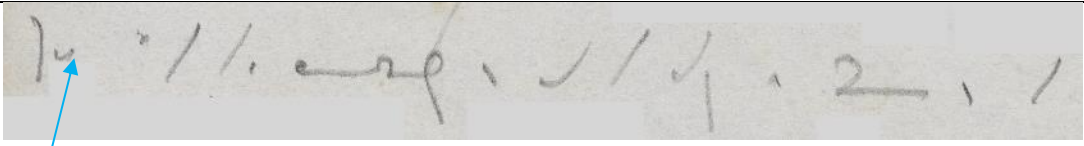
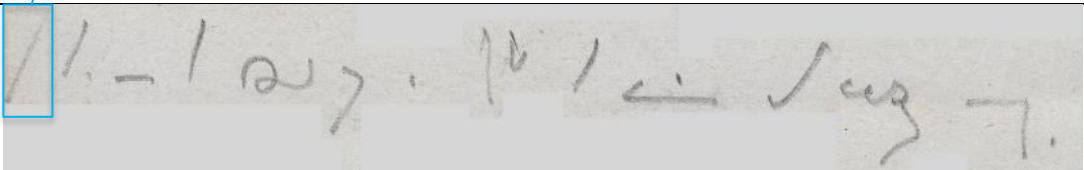
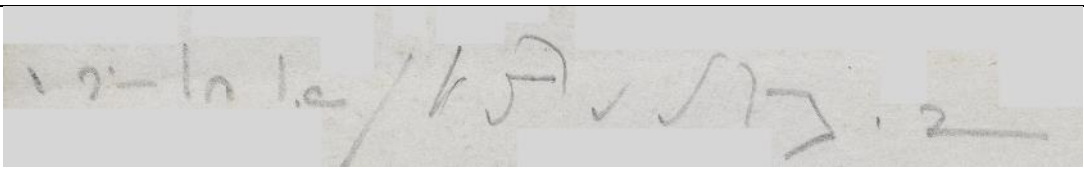
Overleaf you can find a line-by-line transcription.

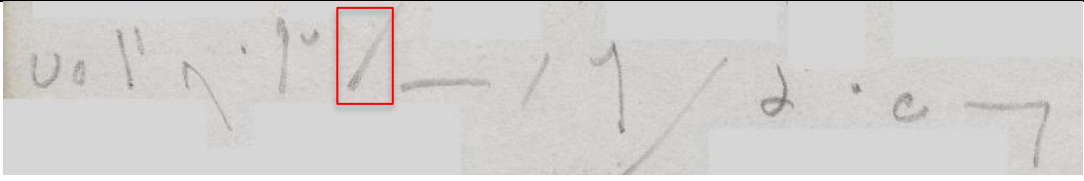

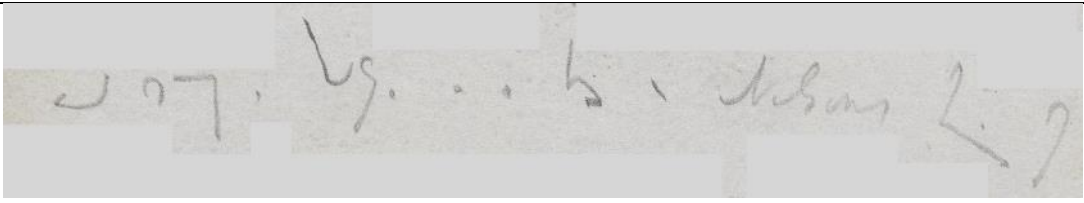
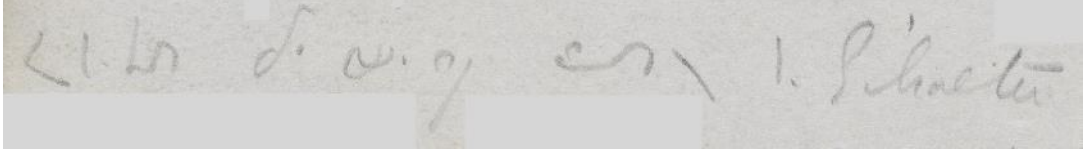
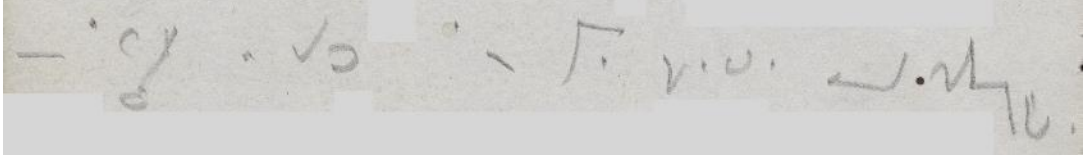


Line-by-line transcription


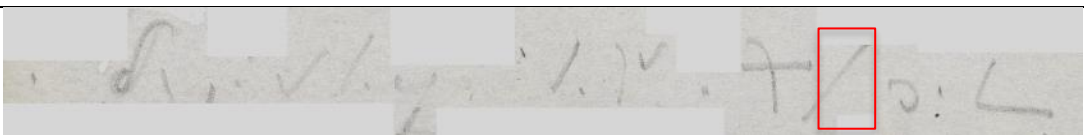
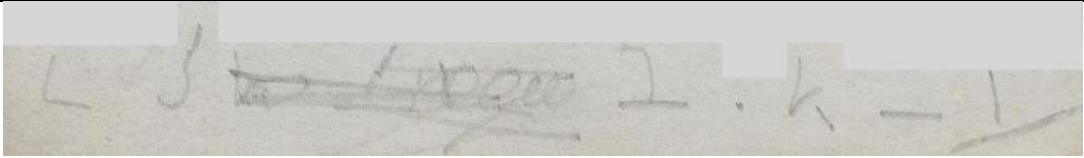
Please note:

- In the annotatable transcript provided, the symbols in red boxes should have been whited out; apologies for that.
- The symbols in blue boxes are in the wrong line; the arrows show where they should be.

Line no.	
p.1, line 18	
	quarter master on board the Victory who is standing on the poop
p.1, line 19	
	by the wheel says to a midshipman that there is a man in a
p.2, line 1	
	blouse whom he has seen hiding on the main top
p.2, line 2	
	of the ship to which the Victory is lashed yard arm to yard arm who
p.2, line 3	
	fired at and struck the Admiral as he saw with his eyes. During (down)
p.2, line 4	
	the remainder of the progress of the fight the two watch for this men

p.2, line 5	
	man. In the moment of his emerging from behind some concealment
p.2, line 6	
	of rigging or sail the quarter master points up and cries out "There
p.2, line 7	 1
	he is ". In the same moment the quarter master falls shot by the
p.2, line 8	 1
	same man through the mouth . In the same moment the midshipman
p.2, line 9	 1
	fires and is so convinced that he has hit the man that as
p.2, line 10	 1
	soon as possible after the battle is over he climbs onto/into
p.2, line 11	
	that main top to see. Sure enough there he finds a/the man

p.2, line 12	
	lying dead with a ball in his heart. It is a circumstance not
p.2, line 13	
	belonging to this story but not un_____ of the delicacy
p.2, line 14	
	or want of delicacy of the time that Nelson's body was
p.2, line 15	
	said to have been very ?????? conveyed to Gibraltar
p.2, line 16	
	in a cask of rum and that any really or pretendedly
p.2, line 17	
	choice rum offered in/on the market for a long time
p.2, line 18	

	afterwards was called " The Admiral " . But it is easier to transmit
p.2, line 19	
	the ?????? weaknesses and grimness of men's bodies than
p.2, line 20	
	the worth of their souls and so ?????? fiction may have
p.2, line 21	
	had some foundation of truth in it .

Notes on the transcription

- p.2, line 2 repeated symbols *yard arm to yard arm*; letter <y> stands for *yard*
- p.2, line.3 *struck down* - dot underneath symbol stands for *down*
- p.2, line 4 symbol stands either for *the men* or *the two* (i.e. quarter master + midshipman)
- p.2 line 5 symbol = /m/ + <ment> = *moment*
- p.2 line 6 the vertical line (usually letter /t/) under the symbol for *cries* stands for *out*
- p.2 line 8 *same* is Prof. Bowles' "stretched" interpretation of an inaccurately written symbol
- p.2 line 12 c symbol interpreted as *circumstance*, as in Nelson part I
- p.2 line 13 *belonging* is another stretched interpretation of a symbol that looks like /b/ + <ng>; the first part of the missing transcription (the initial horizontal line) stands for the prefix <un> - see *unfair* in the Tavistock letter
- p.2, line 16 *really* or *freely* both seem technically correct, but *really* is a better semantic fit because of the contrast (*or*) with *pretendedly*
- p.2 line 20 *worth* - stretched interpretation of symbols for <ver> + symbol for /th/, though it should be noted that *worth* in the *Sydney Smith* transcript is written differently
- p.2 line 20 two plausible suggestions for the gap – "a tale of" and "far the"



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Updates to this version 2 of this document (16 May 2022):

- ❑ Originally p.2 referred to 55 symbols being transcribed for the first time. Because there is now a question mark about “tale” (line-by-line transcription of ‘Nelson’ p.2, line 20), this has been revised to 54 symbols.
- ❑ On p.3, the text “a tale of” has been removed from the final sentence.
- ❑ On p.7, the words “a tale of” are removed from the line-by-line transcript (‘Nelson’ p.2, line 20) and replaced with question marks. A note is added to the ‘Notes on the transcription’, highlighting two likely solutions.