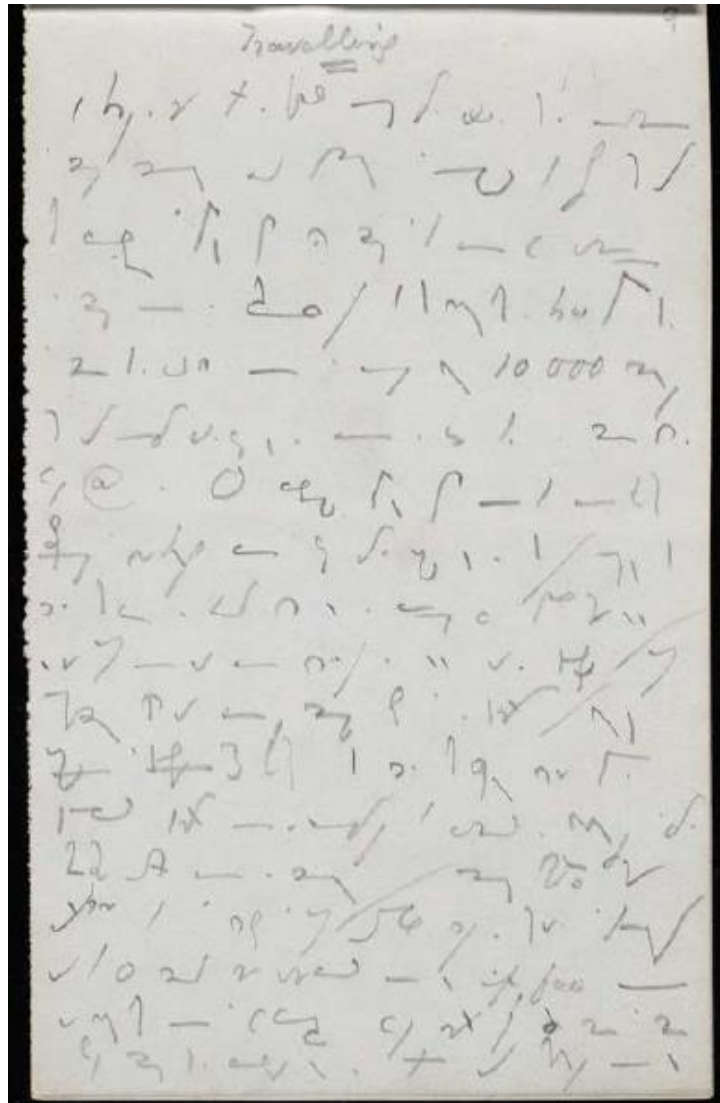


# 'Travelling' part I transcript

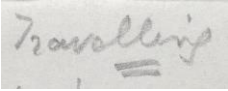
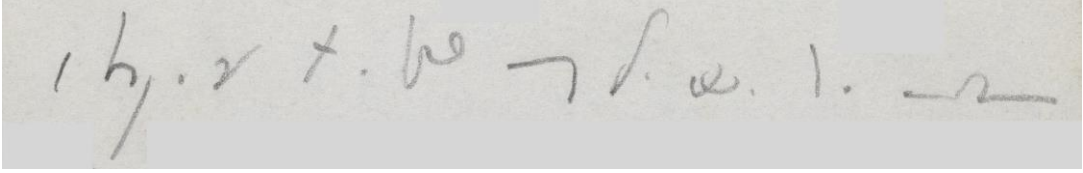
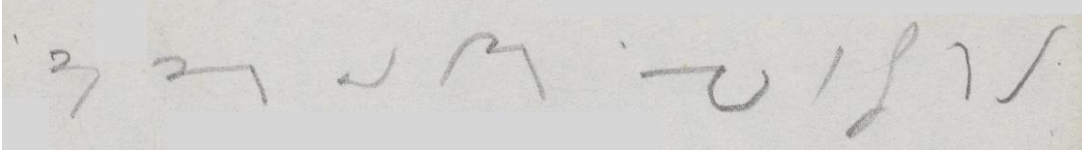
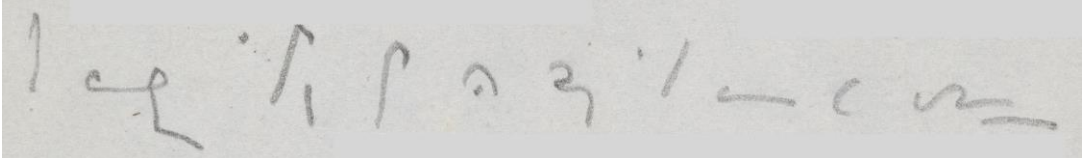
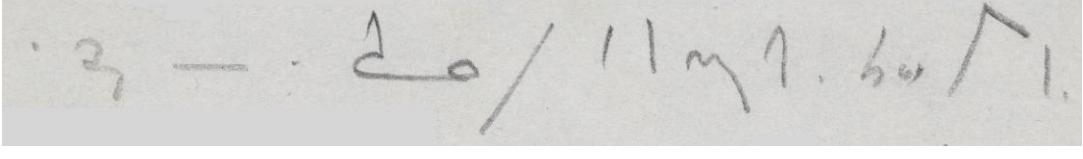

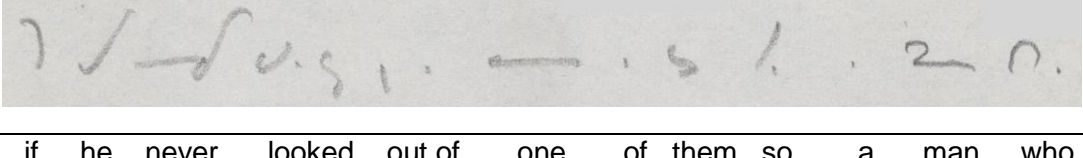
Our #SolveItDickens challenge for August 2022 was the first part of 'Travelling': a shorthand dictation exercise from the notebooks of Dickens's shorthand pupil, Arthur Stone, at the [Free Library of Philadelphia](#).



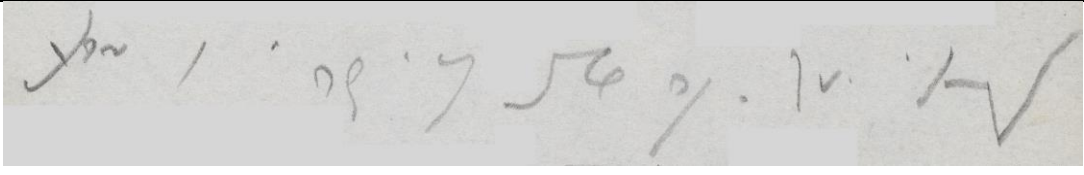
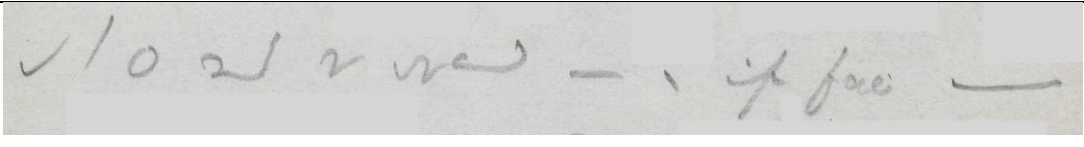
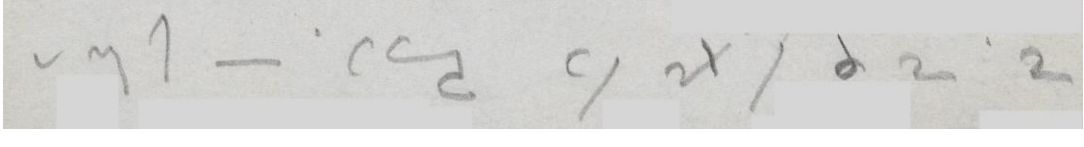

*Figure 1: Detail from the first page of a shorthand exercise titled 'Travelling'.  
Image © The Free Library of Philadelphia [ref: cdc5890009]*

Many thanks and congratulations to our dedicated Dickens Decoders, who produced an almost complete solution for this page, transcribing **39 new words** for the first time in the process! 'Travelling' part I also gives us some helpful context for how this shorthand dictation exercise might continue – which is the subject of our [current #SolveItDickens challenge](#) for September.

# 'Travelling' part I transcript

Line no.	
1	
	I suppose the mere act of travelling (is) not very likely to open
2	
	a man's mind or amend and enlarge his spirit if he
3	
	be conceited and shut up within himself and his own good opinion
4	
	of himself in the beginning. As it would be of small advantage to
5	
	a man to live in a house with 10.000 windows
6	
	if he never looked out of one of them, so a man who

7	
	goes around the world constantly shut up in his own self-
8	
	satisfactions and prejudices can get very little out of it. Indeed it
9	
	may be said of such people that they cannot see anything for themselves.
10	
	They are always in their own way. They themselves are the obstacle always
11	
	interposed between their own mental state and the sub/object. Without
12	
	reflection and abstraction from self it may be questioned whether any
13	
	tangible sub/object in the universe is capable of producing a very
14	
	beneficial effect on the mind. Mount Vesuvio for

15	
	example is a vast and always changing mass of fire and cinders .
16	
	There is nothing much more remarkable in that ipso facto than
17	
	there would be in a gigantic gas works . It is when a man
18	
	_____ himself to consider that an action he beholds in that

### Professor Bowles's notes on the transcription

- I.1 The verb 'is' does not seem to be marked in the shorthand.
- I.5 Congratulations to those of you who got '10,000 windows'. I was 100% convinced it was '10,000 pounds' and that the whole sentence was a parable about 'There is no point living as a rich person unless...' So I really struggled with line 6 after that misread!
- '10,000 windows' is such an unusual collocation that I suspect you only understand 'windows' once you have read 'looked out of one of them' in the next line. This was a lesson to me about reading the whole sentence before you start transcribing any part of it.
- I.7 'self' is a very difficult read. You have to see it as joined to 'satisfaction' in the next line, which is hard to see.
- I.11 and 13 I am not sure whether it is 'subject' or 'object'; tangible 'object' sounds better but the arbitrary character for <ob-> is a vertical line

with a short horizontal line attached to the right about halfway down (as in 'obstacle' in line 10). But here we don't have an attached horizontal line. In l.11 the line is vertical (like a <t>) and in line 13 it is slanted like an <s>. So rather than using the arbitrary character for <sub>, he might be trying to spell it out: <s> + space + <b> = <sub>.

- l.14 I am lost in admiration for those of you who managed to transcribe 'Mount Vesuvio'. This is on a par with the incredible deciphering of 'Ascension Day' in the Tavistock letter. I think proper nouns are the hardest things to transcribe because they are so unexpected. It's interesting that it's written as "Vesuvio", like in Italian, not 'Vesuvius'; the tiny circle might be a shorthand <s>, but I have never seen the <s> circle on its own at the end of a word so I read it as a Roman letter.
- l.15 'cinders' is very difficult unless you get 'Mount Vesuvio' first!
- l.16 <ip fac> is Roman script for 'ipso facto'; like some of you, for a long time I thought it was shorthand, not Roman script!
- l.17 'gas works' was another very difficult collocation to decipher but it fits nicely into the semantic field of 'Vesuvius', 'fire', 'cinders' etc.