

shorthand books have become so difficult to meet with. It can't be that, in a literal sense, they have become "scarce." Books of which tens of thousands have been printed, as I have shown was the case with many of the early shorthand systems, can hardly become obliterated. Many are stowed away amongst the forgotten books in libraries; unbound, unlettered, and from their small proportions in many cases unnoticed. It very rarely occurs I have reason to believe, that any old law library is dismantled, in which there are not discovered one or two early shorthand books. On the other hand, it must be admitted that there is a great wear and tear, an absolute though involuntary destruction of books, in certain cases. I have given some consideration to this problem. The solution I have to offer applies with peculiar force to books on shorthand, arithmetical books, dictionaries, and other minor educational works. These are purchased largely by students. Was there ever—within the last three centuries at least—a real student who did not almost instinctively divine that shorthand would be of great service to him during his student career or later? A very large proportion of students do acquire the art of shorthand, in a greater or less degree of perfection, and they almost necessarily learn from books. The book itself, if a small one, is carried in the pocket till practically worn out. Many of the early shorthand books I have purchased have been dogs-eared, within the eighth of an inch of their lives. If they survive the student period, they are too often utterly discarded when their owner enters upon the serious business of life. Few men take any interest in their schoolbooks; they generally loathe the very sight of them; and hence the neglect they share—a neglect which means annihilation. The manner in which books once famous do utterly disappear from sight, is very marvelous, and could be illustrated by many instances; one will suffice:—Thomas, printer to the University of Cambridge, England, published in 1580 a dictionary which speedily became famous. It passed through five impressions in eight years; and in all—according to the editor of Stevens's Latin Thesaurus—there were fourteen editions. These early editions became very scarce; especially the first, so much so that Ainsworth says, in the preface to the first edition of his dictionary, that he had not been able to procure a sight of it.

Some of the early editions of the 17th century shorthand systems have become scarce in a like degree; but they do turn up, and my belief is, will continue to do so, just in proportion as there is manifested a growing interest in the subject. We may all aid each other's collections by indicating to the bookseller those who are seeking such works, and stimulate the trade in that manner.