

The foregoing paper was read before the Anthropological Society of Washington. In the discussion which ensued the following remarks were made by Rev. J. Owen Dorsey:

Several weeks ago Mr. Hewitt requested me to examine the assertions of Duponceau and others which have been criticised to-night, in order to ascertain whether those statements agreed with what I had found in the languages of the Siouan and Athapascan families. In consequence of this examination I have been forced to the conclusion that the assertions of Duponceau and others respecting the structure of Indian languages should be modified, so far as the Siouan and Athapascan languages are concerned. A few examples, out of many that I can furnish, must suffice at present, but I think that they will show the justice of my conclusion.

On page 117 of Duponceau's *Mémoire* it is said:

"Chacun fait un mot à sa manière, qu'il accompagne de signes, et qu'on entend en partie par intuition."

I have yet to find an Indian tribe to which this applies. It is not true that among the Siouan tribes, for instance, spoken language is invariably accompanied by gestures, though signs are made now and then, just as they are made by Frenchmen or Italians in their conversation. Many a time has an Indian crier gone around the village on a dark night, when no gestures could be seen, and yet his words have been understood by the people. No Siouan Indian could "make a word in his own way;" he had to conform to fixed laws, else his speech could not be understood.

On page 118 the same writer observes:

"Ont ils voulu, par exemple, donner un nom à un certain arbre, ils n'ont pas pensé à le désigner simplement par le fruit, ou par quelque autre apparence unique; mais ils ont dit; *l'arbre portant tel fruit et dont les feuilles ressemblent à telle chose.*"

No Siouan Indian speaks thus of any of the flora of his land. Of specific tree names in the Biloxi language I have recorded over two dozen, and only in three does the word for tree appear as part of the name, and in each of these three the compound ends with *udi*, trunk or stock. This last word has its equivalent in the tree names of the other Siouan languages. In Dakota, choke-cherries are *chanpa*, and choke-cherry bushes *chanpa-hu*. A plum tree is *kanta-hu* in Dakota (from *kanta*, plum, and *hu*, trunk or stock), and *kande-hi* (from *kande*, plum, and *hi*, trunk or stock), in Dhegiha