

## OUR DICTIONARY OF PHRASES.

Allez vous coucher, (*Fr.*), go to bed.  
 Allegro, (*It.*), merry, cheerful. *In music*, denoting a brisk movement.  
 Allegretto, (*It.*), diminutive of *allegro*. *In music* not so quick as *allegro*.  
 Allocatur, (*Lat.*), (*law term*), a certificate of allowance of costs.  
 A l'improviste, (*Fr.*), suddenly, unawares.  
 Alma mater, (*Lat.*), (*Lit.*) a benign mother; (commonly), the University at which one has studied.  
 Alternis horis, (*Lat.*), every other hour.  
 Altissima flumina minimo sono labuntur, (*Lat.*), the deepest rivers flow with the least sound; (commonly) smooth waters run deep.  
 A merveille, (*Fr.*), admirably well, marvellously.  
 Amende honorable, (*Fr.*), an honourable recompense, an apology.  
 Amicus humani generis, (*Lat.*), a friend of the human race.  
 Amicus certus in re incerta, (*Lat.*), a friend in need is a friend indeed.  
 Amicus curiæ, (*Lat.*), (*law term*), a friend of the court.  
 Amor patriæ, (*Lat.*), love of country.  
 Amoto quæramus serm ludo, (*Lat.*), setting jesting aside, let us now attend to serious matters.  
 Anglice, (*Lat.*), in English.  
 Anguis in herbâ, (*Lat.*), a snake in the grass.  
 Animo furandi, (*Lat.*), (*law term*), with the intention of stealing.  
 Animus novitate tenebo, (*Lat.*), I will enchain their minds with novelty.  
 Anno Domini, (*A.D.*), (*Lat.*), in the year of our Lord.  
 Anno Mundi, (*A.M.*), (*Lat.*), in the year of the world.  
 Annus mirabilis, (*Lat.*), a year of wonders.  
 Ante Christum, (*A.C.*), (*Lat.*), before Christ; (used in chronology.)  
 Ante hos sex menses, (*Lat.*), six months ago.  
 A priori, (*Lat.*), from the cause to the effect. (*law term*).  
 A posteriori, (*Lat.*), from the effect to the cause. (*law term*).  
 Après demain, (*Fr.*), the day after to-morrow.  
 A propos, (*Fr.*), to the purpose, opportunely.  
 A quelque chose malheur est bon, (*Fr.*), misfortune is good for something, (commonly) it is an ill wind that blows nobody good.  
 Arcades ambo, (*Lat.*), Greeks both; (*vulgo*), two rogues together.  
 Arcana imperii, (*Lat.*), State secrets.  
 Arcanum, (*Lat.*), a secret.  
 Ardientia verba, (*Lat.*), glowing words.  
 Argent comptant, (*Fr.*), ready money.  
 Argumentum ad hominem, (*Lat.*), an argument strong from personal application, hence a *fiat argument*.  
 Arma verumque cano, (*Virgil*) (*Lat.*), arms and the man I sing!  
 Ars est celare artem, (*Lat.*), it is art to conceal art.  
 Assumpsit, (*Lat.*), (*law term*), an action on a verbal process.  
 Au commencement, (*Fr.*), in the beginning.  
 Audentes fortuna juvat, (*Lat.*), fortune favours the brave.  
 Audi alteram partem, (*Lat.*), hear the other party; that is, hear both sides of a question.  
 Audita querela, (*Lat.*), the complaint being heard.  
 Au fond, (*Fr.*), to the bottom.  
 Aune, (*Fr.*), a measure in Switzerland equal to 1½ yard English.  
 Au pis aller, (*Fr.*), at the worst.  
 Aura popularis, (*Lat.*), the gale of popular favour.  
 Aurea mediocritas, (*Lat.*), the golden mean.  
 Aura sacra fames, (*Lat.*), the accursed thirst for gold.  
 Aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait, (*Fr.*), no sooner said than done.  
 Autant de têtes, autant d'opinions, (*Fr.*), so many men, so many opinions.  
 Aut Cæsar aut nullus, (*Lat.*), he will either be Cæsar or nobody.  
 Auto da fé, (*Sp.*), an act of faith; the burning of a heretic.

## GESTURE-LANGUAGE.

It is only the deaf-mute to whom pantomime comes as fluently as a mother-tongue. Many persons have a notion that gesture-language and the finger-alphabet are almost synonymous terms, but this is far from being the case; the latter is an art learned from a teacher; the former is an independent process, originating in the mind of the deaf-mute, and developing itself as his knowledge and power of reasoning expand under instruction. There is an admirable chapter upon this matter in Mr. Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, introduced therein in connection with the origin of language, but which has great interest in itself, independent of the larger subject. "It is not enough to say," writes he, "that the two things [natural gesture-language and the finger-alphabet] are distinct; they have nothing whatever to do with one another, and have no more resemblance than a picture has to a written description of it." The mother-tongue of the deaf and dumb is the faculty of drawing in the air the shape of objects suggested to their mind, or of indicating its character, use, or origin, by movements of the body. "It is not I," says the Abbé Sicard, one of the first who gave his attention to ameliorating the condition of the deaf and dumb, "who am to invent these signs. I have only to set forth the theory of them under the dictation of their true inventors, those whose language consists of these signs." And speaking of his deaf and dumb pupil, Massieu, he says: "Thus, by a happy exchange, as I taught him the written signs of our language, Massieu taught me the mimic signs of his."

Mr. Tylor himself made a list of about five hundred of these natural signs current in the Berlin Deaf and Dumb Institution, taking them down from a teacher, himself deaf and dumb. But no less than five thousand are said to be in use at that establishment. "To express the pronouns 'I, thou, he,' I push my forefinger against the pit of my stomach for 'I,' push it towards the person addressed for 'thou,' and point with my thumb over my right shoulder for 'he.' Holding the right hand flat, with the palm down at the level of the wrist, and raising it towards the level of the shoulder, signifies 'great' depressing it signifies 'little.' The sign 'man' is indicated by the motion of taking off the hat; 'woman' by laying the closed hand upon the heart; 'child,' by dandling the right elbow upon the left hand. The first two fingers held apart like the letter V, and darted from the eyes, signifies 'to see.' To touch the ear with the forefinger is to hear; the tongue, to taste. The outline of the shape of roof and walls done in the air with both hands is 'house;' with a flat roof it is 'room.' To smell as at a flower, and then to make a horizontal circle before one, is 'garden.' To pull up a piece of flesh from the back of the hand is 'meat;' and when steam is made curling up from it with the forefinger, it is 'roast meat.'"

"None of my teachers here, who can speak," said the director of the Berlin Institution, "are very strong in the gesture-language. It is difficult for an educated speaking man to get the proficiency in it which a deaf and dumb child attains to almost without effort. It is true that I can use it perfectly, but I have been here forty years. To be able to speak, is an impediment. The habit of thinking in words, and translating those words into signs, is most difficult to shake off; but until this is done, it is almost impossible to place the signs in the logical sequence in which they arrange themselves in the mind of the deaf-mute." That which the deaf and dumb considers most important in what he is about to state, is always placed first in his sentence; and that which seems to him superfluous, he leaves out. For instance, to say: "My father gave me an apple," he makes the sign for "apple," then that for "father," and that for "I," without adding that for "gave." Going upon one occasion into a deaf and dumb school, and setting a boy to write words upon the black-board, our author drew in the air the outline of a tent, and touched the inner part of

his under-lip to indicate red, and the boy wrote accordingly "a red tent;" whereupon the teacher justly remarked, that Mr. Tylor could not be a beginner in the gesture-language, or he would have translated his thought *verbatim*, and put the "red" first. A pupil to whom Abbé Sicard one day put the question: "Who made God?" replied: "God made nothing;" and the abbé was left in no doubt as to this kind of inversion when he went on to ask: "Who made the shoe?" and received for answer: "The shoe made the shoemaker."

A look of inquiry converts an assertion into a question, and fully serves to make the difference between "The master is come" and "Is the master come?" but it is difficult for a deaf-mute to render abstract remarks in symbol. Thus, such a common question as, "What is the matter with you?" would be put: "You crying? You been beaten?" He does not ask: "What did you have for dinner?" but, "Did you have soup? Did you have porridge?" It is only the certainty, says Professor Steintal, "which speech gives to a man's mind in holding fast ideas in all their relations, which brings him to the shorter course of expressing only the positive side of the idea, and dropping the negative."

At all deaf and dumb institutions, there are a number of signs in use, which, although quite natural, would not be understood beyond the limits of the circle in which they are used. Thus at Berlin, the royal residence at Charlottenburg was named by taking up the left knee and nursing it, in allusion to the late king having been laid up with gout there. England and Englishmen were aptly alluded to by the action of rowing a boat; while the signs of chopping off a head and strangling were used to describe France and Russia in allusion to the deaths of Louis XVI. and the Emperor Paul. A great deal of the gesture-language, however, is universal, and common to all who have a difficulty in expressing themselves in words, whether they be mutes or savages, and it is this portion of the subject which is doubtless the most interesting. Thus, the Indians use the self-same sign for expressing "to see" which is in vogue with the deaf and dumb at Berlin: thrusting the hand under the clothing of the left breast is "to hide" or "keep secret;" "fear" is typified by putting the hands to the lower ribs, and shewing how the heart flutters; and "book" by holding the palms together close to the face, and opening and reading. "Fire," too, is represented by North American savages exactly as by German mutes—namely, by imitating flames with the fingers: and "rain" by bringing the tip of the fingers of the partly-closed hand downwards. The sign for "a stag," too, is common to both—the thumbs to the temples, and the fingers spread widely out—but to indicate "the dog," the Indians have a very remarkable symbol: they trail the two first fingers of the right hand as if they were poles dragged on the ground; the reason being, that before they had horses, the dogs were trained to drag the lodge-poles on the march in that way; and even where this trailing is done now by horses, the old sign for "the dog" is still retained.

The true meaning of the few gesture-signs which still remain in use among ourselves is well worthy of examination. For example, "the sign of snapping one's fingers," says Mr. Tylor, "is not very intelligible, as we generally see it; but when we notice that the same sign, made quite gently, as if rolling some tiny object away with the thumb-nail and forefinger, are usual and well-understood deaf-and-dumb gestures, denoting anything tiny, insignificant, and contemptible, it seems as though we had exaggerated and conventionalised a perfectly natural action so as to lose sight of its original meaning. There is a curious mention of this gesture by Strabo. At Anchiale, he writes, 'Aristobulus says there is a monument to Sardanapalus, and a stone statue of him as if snapping his fingers, and this inscription, in Assyrian letters: 'Sardanapalus, the son of Anacyndaraxes, built in one day Anchiale and Tarsus. Eat, drink, play: the rest is not worth that!'" Shaking hands is not a universal sign of good-will. The Fijians, for example, smell and sniff at one another by way of salutation. The North American Indians rub each