

A COLLECTION OF GESTURE-SIGNS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,
BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY,
Washington, D. C., July 31, 1880.

TO THE COLLABORATORS WITH THE BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY IN THE STUDY OF
SIGN LANGUAGE:

GENTLEMEN:

This paper contains the descriptions of the gesture-signs of the North American Indians which at the above date have been obtained by this Bureau. It will not be used for publication in its present shape, and will be distributed only to those correspondents who have contributed to its contents, and to others whose expected co-operation, the results of which are not yet received, is relied upon to add value to the final work. No discussion is now introduced. The descriptions alone, in a tentative arrangement, are presented for the purpose of the verification of observations, for verbal corrections of every kind, and for the study of all collaborators, as well as that of the editor, to secure accurate classification and comparison. Only such notes of resemblance or discordance between several of the Indian signs, and between some of them and those of deaf mutes, foreign tribes of men, and ideographic characters, are now printed as have already been attached to the same signs in the compilation for preliminary treatises already produced. It is convenient to retain those in the same connection. Many others of the same kind, remaining in MS. memoranda, are omitted, because their insertion will be more correctly made after the proper arrangement has been accomplished. Any such, occurring to collaborators, will, it is hoped, be suggested by them in the margin of the present paper where they may seem to be most appropriate.

The primary object of this paper is that every contributor to it may be enabled to revise his own contribution, which for the present is divided and arranged according to a scheme of linguistic families and subordinate languages or tribes, as set forth in the LIST OF AUTHORITIES AND COLLABORATORS, which also serves as an index to

182144