

FIRST EDITION



THE ABBE DE L'EPEE  
AND  
OTHER EARLY TEACHERS  
OF THE DEAF

ILLUSTRATED



PRICE, 75 CENTS



COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY  
EDWIN ISAAC HOLYCROSS  
COLUMBUS, O. U. S. A.





# *The Abbe De l'Epee*

(CHARLES-MICHEL DE L'EPEE)

*Founder of the Manual Instruction  
of the Deaf,*

AND

*Other Early Teachers  
of the Deaf*



COMPILED BY  
EDWIN ISAAC HOLYCROSS



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EDWIN ISAAC HOLYCROSS



## Preface

IN the preparation of this volume, it has been the purpose of the publisher, first, to compile and publish a book that would prove interesting and instructive to the deaf and their friends and to the public; and, second, to enlist in a special way the interest of those who are unacquainted with the rise and progress of the manual instruction of the deaf from its inception more than two centuries ago.

This work is not intended to be a full history of the education of the deaf, but it gives the leading facts and illustrations from *The Annals of the Deaf* and other sources. It is hoped that this, probably the first and most completely-illustrated book of its kind, may show the good results of the Combined System of educating the deaf, and also show that the "sign language will never be a dead language," and, in the words of a recent writer, "spoken language may come and go, but the sign language will go on forever."

Edwin Isaac Holyoake.

## Introduction.

THE recent bi-centenary of the Abbe de l'Epee, celebrated by an international gathering of the deaf in Paris, August, 1912, at which educated deaf representatives from England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, America, and even Turkey, stood up as one man and enthusiastically commended and endorsed the work of De l'Epee and his method of educating the deaf, has awakened renewed interest in his life and work, and created a demand for an authentic account of his life and methods of educating the deaf.

The spectacle at the Paris Congress was a stupendous object lesson as to the utter futility of the pure oral method which is opposed to the method of the good Abbe de l'Epee.

There were gathered there more than a thousand deaf persons who had been taught, from youth up, in a score of different languages, that the universal language of signs, as elaborated by the good Abbe and Gallaudet, was to be detested, shunned as an evil thing. Yet there they were, each and every one, using that same sign language in social intercourse and in speeches and in denouncing the pure oral method!

And, strangest of all, hearing men stood up before them upholding the pure oral method, but to reach the deaf they had to depend upon interpreters who used the very sign language that they so vehemently decried! For there was not ONE in that vast assembly of orally, or speech-taught, deaf who could read the lips of the speakers, and without the sign interpreter they would have spoken to the empty air! Yet these hearing men were too obtuse, too self-satisfied, too blind to see what consummate fools they were making of themselves and what a death-dealing blow they were giving to their own theories in the eyes of the deaf all over the world.

To-day a statue of the good Abbe stands in front of the school he founded in Paris, with his back to it. His methods

of instruction of the deaf are discredited by hearing instructors of the deaf all over the world. He is described as "a back number," as "a misguided philanthropist," one "that did more harm to the deaf than good," and those who introduced his method into this country, the Gallaudets, as having "set back the education of the deaf of America one hundred years" and done them incalculable harm, etc., etc.

Yet, in the face of all this, we see the deaf from all over the civilized world gathering in Paris, in the year 1912, to do homage to the good Abbe.

Why this devotion?

Why this enthusiasm?

The answer is very simple.

The deaf k-n-o-w.

All others think they know—theorize.

"By their fruits shall ye know them."

The deaf know that the fruits of the pure oral method, as exemplified in *their own* lives, are as Apples of Sodom—fair to the eye of theory, but crumbling to ashes at the touch of the hard practical experiences of real life, causing, to the great majority, only bitterness, disappointment, ruined hopes and lives.

This is the verdict of the educated deaf all over the civilized world.

And they know, they KNOW.

Nobody is authorized to speak for them. They insist on speaking for themselves.

And they have spoken.

Speech to the deaf is the dead twig on the living tree of the hearing.

The good Abbe, in France, and the Gallaudets, in this country, built upon a rock foundation signs and finger-spelling; signs that reach the innermost recesses of the souls of the deaf; signs that afford amusement, entertainment, instruction. Nothing on earth can convince the deaf to the contrary. This might as well be admitted now as later on it must be.

The great majority of the orally, or speech-taught, deaf, two or three years after leaving school, utterly discard speech and resort to signs, finger-spelling and writing.

What a magnificent, what an astounding waste of time, money and energy; ten, twelve or fifteen years spent in giving the deaf the glittering pearl of speech only to have it thrown away as an utterly useless bauble!

The ascendancy of the pure oral method has been attained by methods that the deaf as honest, law-abiding citizens abhor, detest, despise, abominate.

What do honest people think of the man who goes through a car-load of wheat with a sieve and selects a few hundred of the largest and best developed grains and exhibits them as samples of the whole?

Or of one who selects a few of the finest nuggets from the output of a poor mine and exhibits them as its average product?

Yet this is being done every day of the year by unscrupulous oral teachers of the deaf.

They push to the front, exhibit and exploit the semi-mute, the semi-deaf and the exceptionally brilliant born deaf, in the school room and on the platform, as samples of their **WHOLE** output, and they resort to other ways that are dark to create an artificial demand for the speech method. And the unthinking, unknowing public exclaims, "A miracle! a miracle!!" And the average deaf—the great majority—sink into oblivion, unnoticed and unseen, and are kicked into the bargain, branded as idiots or degenerates because they cannot profit by oral methods.

Must not that be false which requires for its support so much imposture, so much trickery, so much coercion; which belittles, or utterly ignores, the opinions of its own output?

The deaf know, they **KNOW** that the good Abbe and Gallaudet, through the sign language and finger-spelling, reached **ALL** the deaf—not the few only, hence their almost idolatrous worship of these great and good men increases year by year.

The deaf of England have their Braidwoods, the deaf of Germany their Heinickes, the deaf of Italy, Austria and other countries have had their pioneers and workers in the cause of education, but they were all oralists and we do **NOT** find the deaf of these countries falling over themselves to do homage or show their gratitude to them. Instead we find them, having no patron saints of their own, flocking to Paris to worship at the shrine of

the Abbe de l'Epee as their universal Savior, and in our own country the Gallaudets hold the first place in our affections with the good Abbe a close second.

In the war of methods the verdict of the educated deaf of the whole world over is this:

The oral method benefits the FEW.

The Combined System benefits ALL the deaf.

Anyone who upholds the oral method, as an exclusive method, is their enemy.

Anyone who upholds the Combined System is their friend.

On this platform the deaf stand shoulder to shoulder in solid ranks the world over.

It has been truly said: "In the most useful reforms there is danger. In the noblest campaigns may lurk menace. The zeal of the enthusiast for good may be almost as murderous in its results as the malignancy of the evil-doer." The zeal of the ultra oralist is indeed murderous beyond compute, as is evinced in the lives of thousands of his victims. The deaf KNOW it, though others do not, or willfully shut their eyes and refuse to see, hence their love, devotion, honor and reverence for De l'Epee and Gallaudet, whom they recognize as their true friends, their Savors.

That, in their dire need at the present day, there may be raised up to them other De l'Epees, other Gallaudets, the deaf pray, but if this is denied them, they will go down smothered into intellectual death by pure oralism forever blessing these men who understood their needs and lived and died for them.

*Robert P. MacGregor*



L'ABBE DE L'EPEE

THE ABOVE IS COPIED FROM A FRENCH BOOK PRINTED IN 1852.



## The Abbe De l'Epee

By LUZERNE RAE, in *The Annals of the Deaf*, January, 1848.

**C**HARLES-MICHEL DE L'EPEE was born at Versailles on the 24th of November, 1712. His father, an architect in the service of the king, was equally distinguished for talent and piety, and it was his constant study to impress upon his children from their earliest years moderation of desire, the fear of God and the love of man. This parental instruction was not lost upon the young Charles-Michel. The habit of virtue was developed in him to such a remarkable degree, that, if we



THE ABBE DE L'EPEE  
(EARLIEST PICTURE)

BORN AT VERSAILLES, FRANCE,  
NOVEMBER 24, 1712  
DIED DECEMBER 23, 1789

may trust his eulogist, the very thought of evil became foreign to his nature. Indeed, so pleasant and easy did goodness seem to him, that in after life he was often troubled because he could remember so few struggles with sinful inclinations; and he was sometimes even led so far as to doubt the reality of a virtue that had cost him so little. When the time came at which the choice of a profession for life was to be made, all his thoughts and desires turned toward the ministry of the Gospel; and, after some opposition on the

part of his parents, it was finally decided that he should enter upon a course of study in theology. But he was not to be allowed to occupy without obstruction the field of labor for which his heart panted. When he applied to the proper ecclesiastical authorities for admission into the lowest order of the priesthood, he was required to sign a certain formula of doctrine against which both his intellect and his conscience protested; and his re-

fusal to do this seemed to shut the door of the priesthood forever against him. (SEE NOTE.) Reluctantly, sadly, he was compelled to turn away from the ministry of the altar, to find elsewhere a theatre for the active benevolence of his heart. After some hesitation, he at last determined to devote himself to the law, and, passing rapidly through the usual course of study, he was admitted to the bar, and entered at once upon the duties of his new profession. But he very soon found himself in an atmosphere wholly uncongenial to his nature. His gentle and upright spirit was shocked and disgusted by the chicanery and tergiversation too often seen in the neighborhood of the courts of law, and he turned again with longing looks toward the altar from which he had once been driven. The great wish of his heart was soon to be gratified.

His piety and zeal had attracted the attention of a worthy prelate, a nephew of the famous Bossuet, and from him he received the offer of a small canonry in the diocese over which he presided. By the same excellent man he was admitted to the priesthood, and he now entered upon the discharge of its duties with an ardor all the more intense from having so long burned without an object. But his happiness was destined to be short. M. de Bossuet died, and deprived thus of his protector, his enemies succeeded in procuring against him an interdiction, by which he was forbidden to exercise any more the functions of a priest. It was not long after this, when the ruling passion of his heart (the desire, namely, of doing good to his fellow-men) seemed to meet with obstacles wherever it sought for development, that his first step was taken in that path of usefulness, along which he was thenceforth to walk until death released him from his labors.

He happened one day to enter a house where he found

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NOTE.—The reason for this seems to be he had adopted the views of Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, in the Netherlands. "The Jansenists composed quite a numerous party of the Roman Catholic Church at that time. They taught and exemplified the inner divine life of love and faith as constituting the reality of religion and devoted themselves to education and the composition of books of instruction in all departments of learning. They produced practical and devotional works of the most admirable character, and they sought to persuade the world that God had sanctioned their cause and doctrines by miracles in their behalf. A severe and systematic persecution of them, instigated by the Jesuits, then in the ascendancy in France, ending in the complete destruction of their headquarters at Port Royal (1679), broke up the order. A number of them took refuge in Holland and established an independent church, in separation from the Roman obedience, which still exists with the seat of its Episcopate at Utrecht."—(*History of All Religions.*)

two young females engaged in needlework which seemed to occupy their whole attention. He addressed them, but received no answer. Somewhat surprised at this, he repeated his question; but still there was no reply; they did not even lift their eyes from the work before them. In the midst of the Abbe's wonder at this apparent rudeness, their mother entered the room and the mystery was at once explained. With tears she informed him that her daughters were deaf and dumb; that they had received, by means of pictures, a little instruction from a benevolent priest in the neighborhood, but that this good friend was now dead, and her poor children were left without any one to aid their intellectual progress. "Believing," said the Abbe, "that these two unfortunates would live and die in ignorance of religion, if I made no effort to instruct them, my heart was filled with compassion, and I promised that if they were committed to my charge I would do all for them that I was able." Behold De l'Epee now entering upon the great work of his life!

The foundation stone, if we may so speak, of the system of instruction which he was about to build had been laid in his mind several years before, and nothing remained for him to do but to go on and raise the superstructure as rapidly as possible. At the age of sixteen he had received from his tutor this principle, which he now recalled and made the basis of his procedure; namely, that there is no more natural and necessary connection between abstract ideas and the articulate sounds which strike the ear, than there is between the same ideas and the written characters that address themselves to the eye. Familiar as this truth seems to us at the present day, it was almost universally regarded at that period as a philosophical heresy; the strange doctrine being held by the learned that speech was indispensable to thought. Confident however of the soundness of his principle, and fully believing that written language might be made the instrument of thought to the deaf and dumb, the Abbe now turned to the practical questions: How shall they be taught this language? How shall they be made to understand the significance of written and printed words? What shall be the interpreter of these words to the

mind of the ignorant deaf-mute ? De l'Epee was not long in reaching the conclusion that their own natural language of signs was the only fit instrument for such a service to the deaf and dumb, and he immediately applied himself to the task of becoming familiar with the signs already in use among them, and of correcting, enlarging and methodizing this language, till it should become as perfect an organ of communication as the nature of the case would allow. Great success attended his efforts in this direction. The interest of the public was excited by the novelty of his method, and he soon found himself at the head of a little company of deaf-mutes ; leading them with a skillful and tender hand out of their natural darkness into the great light of intellectual and moral truth. To De l'Epee unquestionably belongs the merit of originality in all this procedure. He was wholly unaware that substantially the same method with his own had already been suggested by Cardan the Italian, Wallis the Englishman, and Dalgarno the Scotchman.

The school of De l'Epee was conducted entirely at his own expense, and, as his fortune was not large, he was compelled to practice the most careful economy. Still, he was unwilling to receive pecuniary aid, or to admit to his instructions the deaf and dumb children of wealthy parents. "It is not to the rich," he said, "that I have devoted myself ; it is to the poor only. Had it not been for these I should never have attempted the education of the deaf and dumb." The fear of being charged with mercenary motives doubtless led him to refuse the aid of the wealthy, for the bare suspicion of being actuated by such motives was exceedingly painful to his sensitive mind. One or two anecdotes, introduced at this point, will serve to show how little liable he was to be dazzled by opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

In 1780 the ambassador of the Empress of Russia paid him a visit, to congratulate him upon the success which had followed his exertions, and to offer him valuable presents in the name of that sovereign. "Mr. Ambassador," said the Abbe, "I never receive money, but have the goodness to say to her Majesty that if my labors have seemed to her worthy of any

consideration I ask as an especial favor that she will send to me from her dominions some ignorant deaf and dumb child, that I may instruct him."

When Joseph, Emperor of Austria, was in Paris, he sought out De l'Epee, and expressing his astonishment that a man so useful as he should be straitened in his operations by the lack of pecuniary means, he offered to bestow upon him the revenues of one of his estates in Austria. To this generous offer the Abbe replied: "I am now an old man. If your Majesty desires to confer any gift upon the deaf and dumb, it is not my head, already bent toward the grave, that should receive it, but the good work itself. It is worthy of a great prince to preserve whatever is useful to mankind." The Emperor easily divined his wishes, and on his return to Austria dispatched one of his ecclesiastics to Paris, who, after a course of lectures from De l'Epee, established at Vienna the first national institution for the deaf and dumb.

During the severe winter of 1788 the Abbe, already beginning to feel the infirmities of age, denied himself the comfort of a fire in his apartment, and refused to purchase fuel for this purpose, that he might not exceed the moderate sum which he had fixed upon as the extreme limit of the annual expenditure of his establishment. All the remonstrances of his friends, who were anxious lest this deprivation might injuriously affect his health, were unavailing. His pupils cast themselves at his feet, and with weeping eyes and beseeching hands earnestly urged him to grant himself this indulgence, if not for his own sake, at least for theirs. He finally yielded to their tears and importunities, but not without great reluctance, and for a long time afterward he did not cease to reproach himself for his compliance with their wishes. As he looked around upon his little family, he would often mournfully repeat: "My poor children, I have wronged you of a hundred crowns." Such facts as these demonstrate his self-denying devotion to the cause which he had espoused.

The humble establishment of De l'Epee was situated on the heights of Montmartre in the outskirts of Paris. There, in the midst of his children, as he affectionately named them, and

with his whole soul absorbed in plans for their improvement and happiness, he seemed to dwell in an atmosphere of joy which his own benevolence had created. The relation which he sustained to his pupils had more of the father in it than of master or teacher, and the love which he never ceased to manifest for them in all his actions drew out in return from their young hearts the warmest expressions of veneration and affection for himself. These feelings were occasionally manifested in the most striking manner. In the midst of one of his familiar discourses with his children, the Abbe happened to let fall one day some remark which implied that his own death might be near at hand. The possibility of such a misfortune had never before occurred to their minds, and a sudden cry of anguish testified to the shock which the bare thought had given to their affectionate hearts. They at once pressed around him, as if to guard his person from the blow of death, and with sobs and cries laid hold of his garments, as if they might thus detain him from his last, long journey. Deeply affected by these tokens of their love for him, and with his own tears mingling with theirs, the Abbe succeeded at last in calming the violence of their grief; and, taking advantage of an opportunity so favorable to serious remark, he proceeded to speak to them of death and the retributions of the world to come. He reminded them of the duty of resignation to the will of God. He taught them that the separation which death makes between friends is not of necessity eternal; that he should go before them to a better life, there to await their coming, and that this reunion in the world above would never be broken. Softened and subdued by such reflections, their stormy grief sunk into a quiet sadness, and some of them formed the resolution at that moment of living better lives, that they might thus become more worthy of meeting him hereafter in the home of the blessed.

The limits to which this brief sketch of the Abbe de l'Epee is necessarily confined allow us to add but one more incident from his life, to illustrate how completely he identified himself with the interests of the deaf and dumb. The story given below has a certain air of romance about it, but it is nev-

ertheless nothing more than sober, historic truth. A deaf and dumb boy was found one day wandering in the streets of Paris and immediately taken to De l'Epee, who received him as the gift of heaven and named him Theodore.\*

There was something in the appearance of this lad which awakened an unusual interest in the Abbe's mind. His clothes were old and ragged, but his manners were polished, and his personal habits were those of one who had occupied a place in the highest class of society. The thoughts of the good Abbe were busily at work about his protege. Perhaps in this forsaken child he saw the rightful heir of some great fortune; perhaps the outcast scion of some illustrious family. But whatever his suspicions might be, there was evidently no present method of ascertaining the truth in respect to him. Ignorant of all language, the youth was unable of course, except in the most imperfect manner, to throw any light upon his early history. Years passed on however, and the mind of the young Theodore became more and more developed under the instruction of his master, until he could communicate freely with him in relation to the events of his boyish life. All his recollections tended to confirm the Abbe in his first surmise, and with a generous indignation at the wrongs of his Theodore he determined to spare no effort to restore him to his rightful position. But how was this to be accomplished? The young man was ignorant of the name of his birthplace; he was ignorant even of his own name. He could only say that he had been brought from some distant city; that his rich garments had been taken from him, and that, in the rags of a beggar, he had been left alone in the streets of Paris. In these circumstances of doubt and perplexity, the Abbe adopted a resolution which, to less ardent minds than his own, must have seemed completely quixotic in its benevolence. Age and infirmity prevented him from going in person, as he gladly would have done, on a pilgrimage after the home of his pupil, but he committed him to the charge of his steward and a well-instructed deaf-mute named Didier, with orders to visit

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\* For the sake of those who are not familiar with the ancient languages, it may be well to explain that the name Theodore is compounded of two Greek words which signify, when taken together, "The Gift of God."

every city in France, and not to cease from their search until they had gained their object. We cannot follow the three wayfarers in their various wanderings. Enough to say that when all hope of success was nearly gone, they arrived in the environs of the city of Toulouse. Here, the rapidity of Theodore's signs and the emotions displayed upon his countenance gave proof that he began to recognize the scenes of his childhood. They entered the city, and were passing slowly along the principal streets, when a sudden cry from the deaf and dumb youth, who had stopped in front of a splendid mansion, announced that his home was found. It was the palace of the Count de Solar. Inquiries were immediately but cautiously made in respect to the Solar family, and they were told that the heir to the title and estate, a deaf and dumb boy, had died some years before at Paris. This was enough to satisfy them, and they returned in haste to report their success. In due time the case was brought before the proper tribunal by the Abbe de l'Epee and the Duke de Penthievre, in behalf of the rightful heir, and a judgment was rendered restoring to Theodore the title and the property. But the affair was destined to afford a new illustration of the "law's delay." An appeal was made by the other party to the Parliament of Paris; the judgment was suspended and the case remained for several years undecided, until, upon the death of the Abbe and the Duke, the influence of the party in possession prevailed, and the deaf and dumb claimant was pronounced an impostor. The hopes of Theodore thus blasted, life became a burden to him. Anxious only to close it with honor, he joined a regiment of cuirassiers in active service, and in his first battle, charging the enemy with reckless valor, he fell dead upon the field.

The Abbe de l'Epee died on the twenty-third of December, 1789, at the advanced age of seventy-seven years. His funeral was attended by a deputation from the National Assembly, the Mayor of Paris, and all the representatives of the Commune. Two years after his death, the school which he had established and which was so dear to his heart was adopted by the National Government. It continues to this day, known and honored throughout the civilized world as the Royal Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Paris.





### The De l'Epee Monument at Versailles

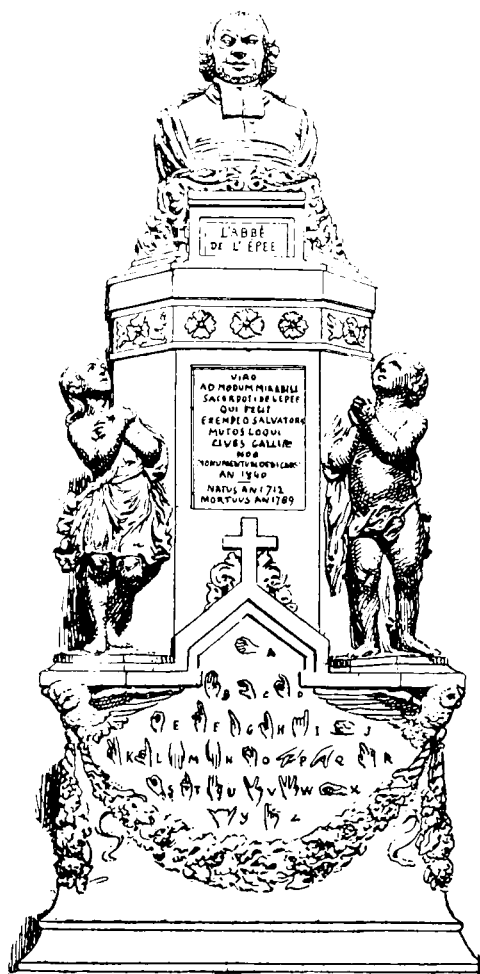
Many years ago an American visited the above magnificent monument, and here is what he wrote :

“France, in its gratitude for so great a benefit, has erected a monument to the memory of De l'Epee in Versailles, his native city. It was completed on the third of September, 1842. Upon a pedestal, the principal face of which bears the name of the im-

mortal instructor and that of his birthplace, together with the date of his birth and death, stands the statue in ecclesiastical costume. In his left hand he holds a tablet, inscribed with the name of God, in dactylologic, and also in the ordinary alphabetic characters. The right hand represents *D* (*Dieu*—God) of the manual alphabet. The eyes are lifted toward heaven, the source of light; toward the Giver of every perfect gift as if to express his gratitude for the skill and intelligence which, during his life upon the earth, he had obtained through divine grace."

At the foot of his monument the body of the beloved Abbe is buried in the Chapel St. Nicholas, in St. Roch's Church, where he daily celebrated the mass for thirty years, "always assisted by a deaf-mute." Miss Pitrois, a brilliant young deaf authoress, residing at Le Mans (Sartle), France, has kindly sent us the accompanying illustration of the De l'Epee tomb, with the following description:

"This monument consists of a bust of bronze of the good Abbe; he bends down with a kindly smile towards two young deaf children, in bronze, who lift up to him their grateful hands. On the stone pedestal is engraved the one handed alphabet invented by the Abbe. Around the tomb are disposed floral tributes, marble tablets, thank offerings of all sorts from the deaf of the whole world."



## The De l'Epee Statue at Paris

THE accompanying cut is that of the Abbe de l'Epee statue in bronze, located in front of the National Institution, and is a

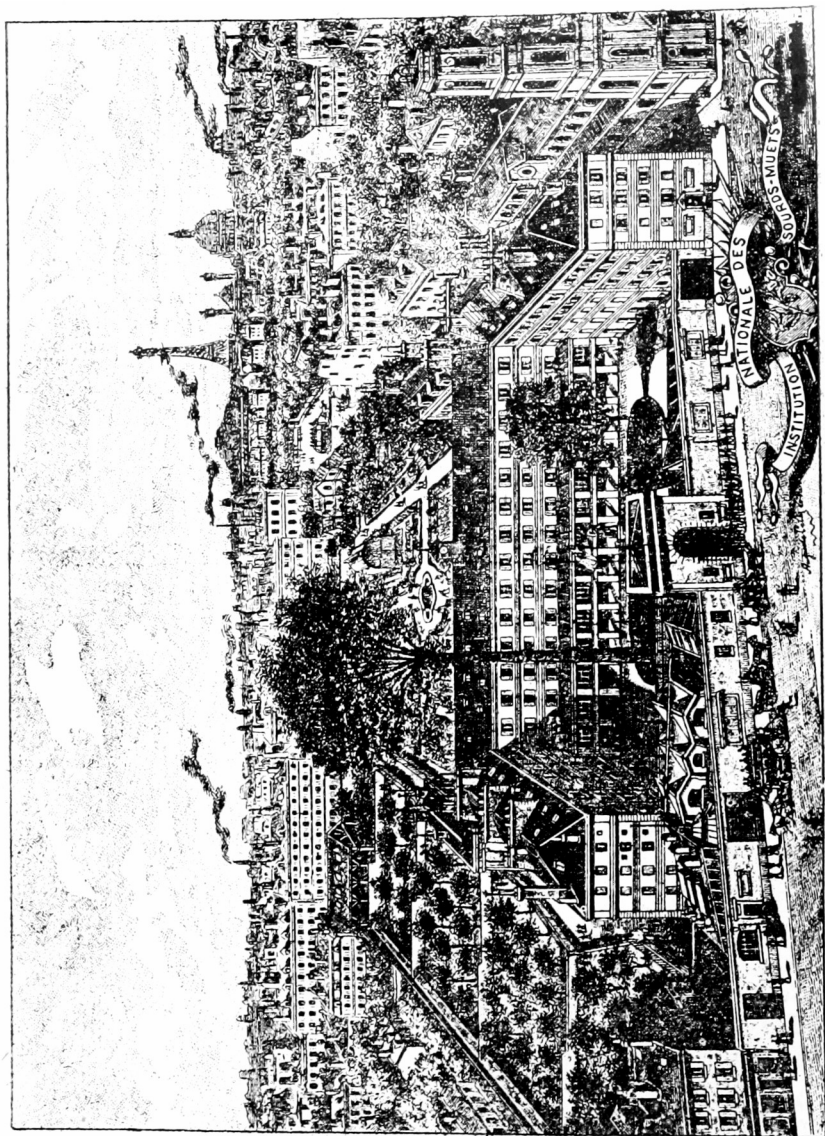
gift from the deaf and their friends.

The following is a description of the imposing monument written by an American teacher, in the *Annals of the Deaf*, after his visit there some years ago:

"The statue is the work of the deaf-mute sculptor, Felix Martin, who received the cross of the Legion of Honor as a recompense. It represents the famous Abbe — probably after the most authentic portraits — as an amiable-looking man, rather round and jolly, in fact, and not at all of the

pensive, retiring cast. He is quite a human-looking person, in whom it is not hard to see the practical talent for managing man which made his philanthropic labors so useful. He is looking down upon a deaf boy, pointing with his right hand to his left, forming the gesture which, according to his system, means *Dieu—God.*"





THE NATIONAL INSTITUTION AT PARIS, FRANCE

The French government, selecting the staff for the school, paid for it, and in July, 1791, converted the private school, started by the Abbe de l'Epee, into the Royal Institution for the Deaf and Dumb of France. Later the name was changed to "The National Institution."

## The National Institution As It Is Now

WE are pleased to be able to reproduce in this book the description of the location of the institution, from the pen of Miss Pitrois, as follows:

"The National Institution occupies a very large area. It is situated on the left side of the River Seine, on the top of St. Genevieve's Hill, having on the north the Rue de l'Abbe de l'Epee, to the east the Rue Saint Jacques, to the south private properties, and to the west the Rue Denfert Rochereau and the Boulevard Saint Michel.

"As my readers will easily see when they have looked at the views (see page 22), nothing has been left undone in improving and enlarging the old Seminary of St. Magloire, so as to make the institution worthy of the nation which patronizes it. These large buildings possess class-rooms, work-shops, dormitories, halls, etc. The acreage is some twenty thousand square metres. Here all the sounds of the outer world change to a deep silence that astonishes hearing people in the midst of a gay, bright, noisy town. There are four galleries, shaded by huge trees for the use of the children. A remarkably beautiful garden, adorned with flowers of every description, and large hot-houses and conservatories, is kept by the apprentice gardeners. The chief entrance is No. 254, Rue Saint Jacques."

The museum is especially interesting, as it contains reproductions of many of works of famous deaf French artists and sculptors.



## The Relics of The Abbe de l'Epee

THE archives at the Paris institution contain a quantity of letters, documents, priceless manuscripts relating to the general history of the deaf, and especially those of the school, thus enabling one to follow the progress of the institution from the day of its foundation to the present.

Many are the exalted personages of all countries whose autographs are carefully kept in the archives. There is a heavy bundle of letters sent to the Abbe de l'Epee by Kings, Princes, Archbishops and Ministers from every country in the world, either sending him new pupils or praising him for the

College Librarian  
Gallaudet College  
Washington, D.C.

marvelous success he had obtained with such cases as were patronized by them.

There are also plenty of letters from the Abbe de l'Epee himself. One of them shows the kindness of his great heart. It is addressed to an intimate friend of his, and in it he speaks of his own work among his deaf and dumb scholars; then he explains his great desire to find a deaf, dumb and blind child, whom he eagerly wanted to teach and develop by his own methods. He had this intense longing at heart during all the latter years of his life, and he tried all he could to find one of those unfortunate ones whom he might rescue from darkness and silence.



### The Last Dying Hours of De l'Epee

THE year 1789 -- the first of the Revolution -- was the last one on earth of the Abbe de l'Epee. He was seventy-seven. The 23rd of December, the day before Christmas eve, he piously received the last sacraments. He had asked that the door of his bed-room remain wide open. So, at every moment, deaf and dumb men and women of every age, of every condition, their eyes filled with tears, entered and, in silent grief, came to kneel down around the dying man's bed. The good Abbe had not a single thought for himself. As much as his weakness permitted, he comforted the desolate deaf-mutes.

"My dear little children," he said, with trembling hands, "don't cry! Be of good cheer! I leave you, but God remains with you. He will never leave you. He will care for you when I am gone."

At the moment a little group of strangers entered the room; before them walked a dignified-looking man. These were delegates sent by the National Assembly preceded by the Keeper of Seals. This great man bent down respectfully before the Abbe de l'Epee's bed.

"Monsieur l'Abbe," he said with emotion, "you can die in peace; the French Nation adopts your children."

The face of the Apostle of the Deaf lightened with heavenly joy; his only anxiety in this world had disappeared. His lips moved for a silent thanksgiving, in a supreme and loving look

with his children pressed around him, he raised his hands to bless them for the last time, then fell back gently on his pillows.

The soul of the Abbe de l'Epee had gone to join, in the "many mansions" above, the souls of the deaf he had already led there.—*From Miss Pitrois's Book.*



### A Beautiful Christian

"THE story of Mademoiselle Marie Jeanne Meunier is," writes Miss Pitrois, "among the most touching of all. Found in the streets as a child in 1806, then pupil, afterwards sewing mistress at the Paris Institution, she imposed upon herself a life of severe economy and constant deprivation. It was only after her death in 1877 that it was understood why she had lived so abstemiously. All that she had saved throughout her life—a few thousand francs—she left by her will to the school where she had found a home, in order that other poor homeless children might also find a home there. This humble and sweet Christian woman, model of all the virtues, has left a moving remembrance to the institution where she spent her hidden, silent life."



THIS cut is copied from a souvenir stamp used among the French deaf during the memorable year 1912—the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Abbe de l'Epee.



THE book of Miss Pitrois closes with the following beautiful and touching words:

"Our good thoughts, our good deeds, and our loving acts are as much like gentle flowers that we can offer to the glory of the Abbe de l'Epee. Let us honor him in every act of our lives. Let us be kind, charitable, merciful, tolerant, as he was himself. Let us open our hearts wide to the love and compassion of those he has loved so much—our brothers and sisters, the deaf and dumb all the world round, whatever their creed or their race. And then it could be said in truth that the deaf are worthy of the Abbe de l'Epee, their immortal Redeemer."

## The Manual (Finger) Alphabet

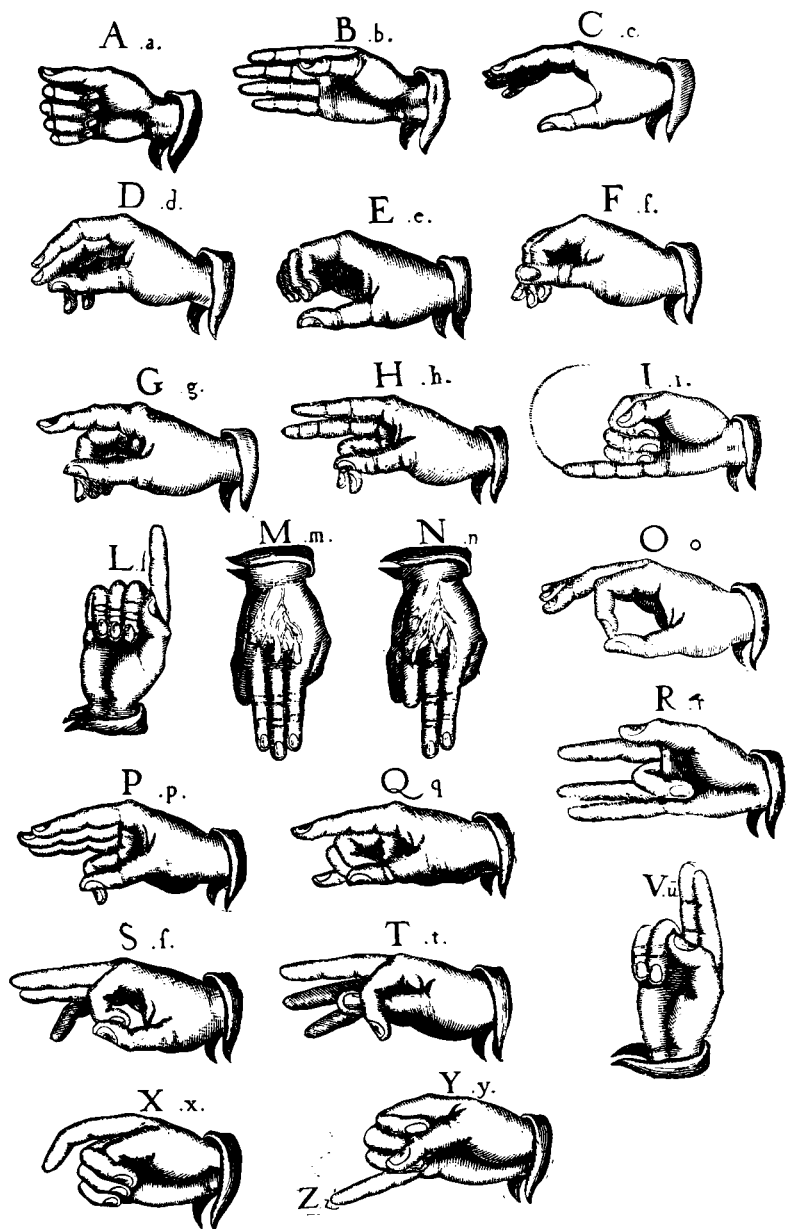
THE finger-spelling or manual alphabets, as used by the educated deaf of the whole world, are illustrated in the following pages. They have nothing to do with "signs" or "the sign language." As a means of intercourse with the deaf, they are preferable to writing, being more rapid and convenient. The manual alphabet is simply letters of the alphabet indicated by positions of the hand. The American alphabet is the easiest and cleanest of all—thanks to the good and great Abbe de l'Epee.

The origin of that alphabet is unknown, but, according to the statement of a learned teacher, "evidences of its existence have been traced from the Assyrian antiquities down to the fifteenth century upon monuments of art. The venerable Bede, 'the wise Saxon,' described finger-spelling more than a thousand years ago."

The first finger alphabet adopted in teaching spoken and written language to the deaf is believed to be the Spanish one-hand alphabet (1520-1584). But it is generally conceded that the originator was Juan Paulo Bonet, a monk, who published (1620) at Madrid, Spain, a rare and valuable book—a curious and delicate specimen of engraving (see page 27). After a considerable correspondence, we succeeded in getting a copy of it. After the death of Bonet it fell into disuse till about 150 years later, when it was resurrected by the Abbe de l'Epee, who was presented with a copy of Bonet's book by an admirer. The Abbe read it with wonder and delight, and at once adopted the Spanish manual alphabet with slight changes. In 1815 it was brought to America by Gallaudet and Clerc.

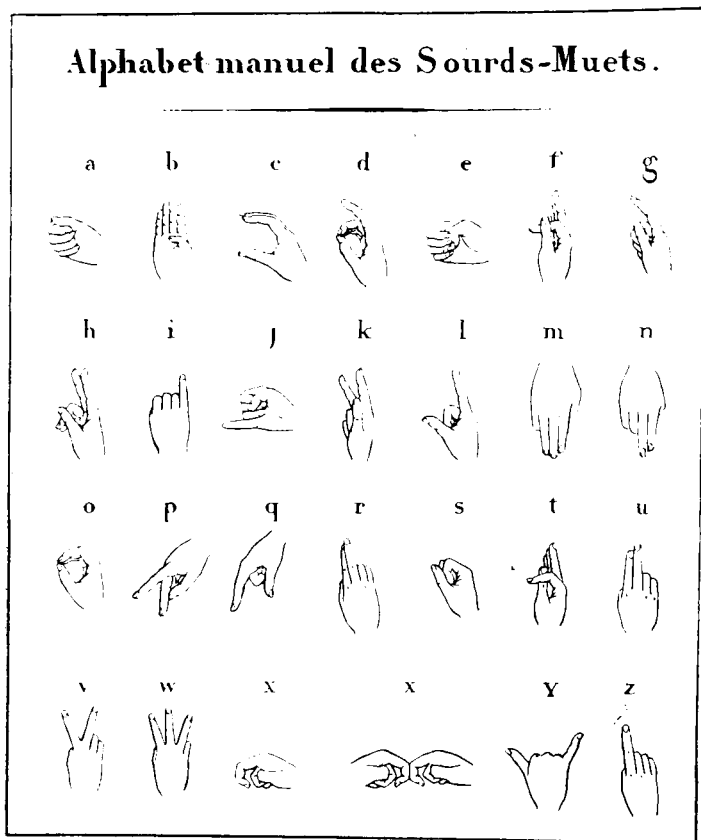
The modern French alphabet is used in most of the countries of Europe. A friend from Germany writes us: "The finger alphabet on this card (see page 32) is Austrian, Hungarian, German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Russian, Turkish, French, Belgian, Dutch — so that the finger alphabet is nearly the same in most countries of Europe with the exception of England, Italy, Spain and Portugal."





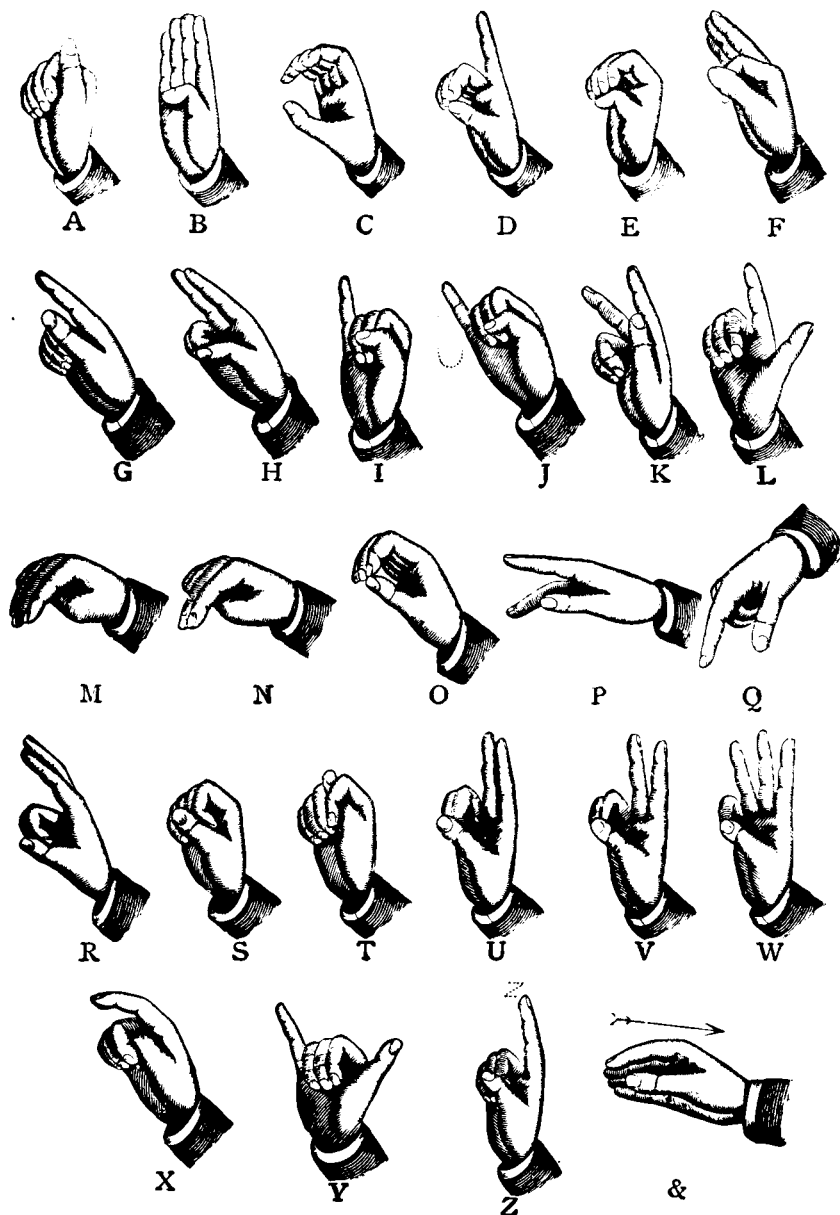
BONET'S SPANISH MANUAL ALPHABET, 1620

This is believed to be the original of the present French alphabet.



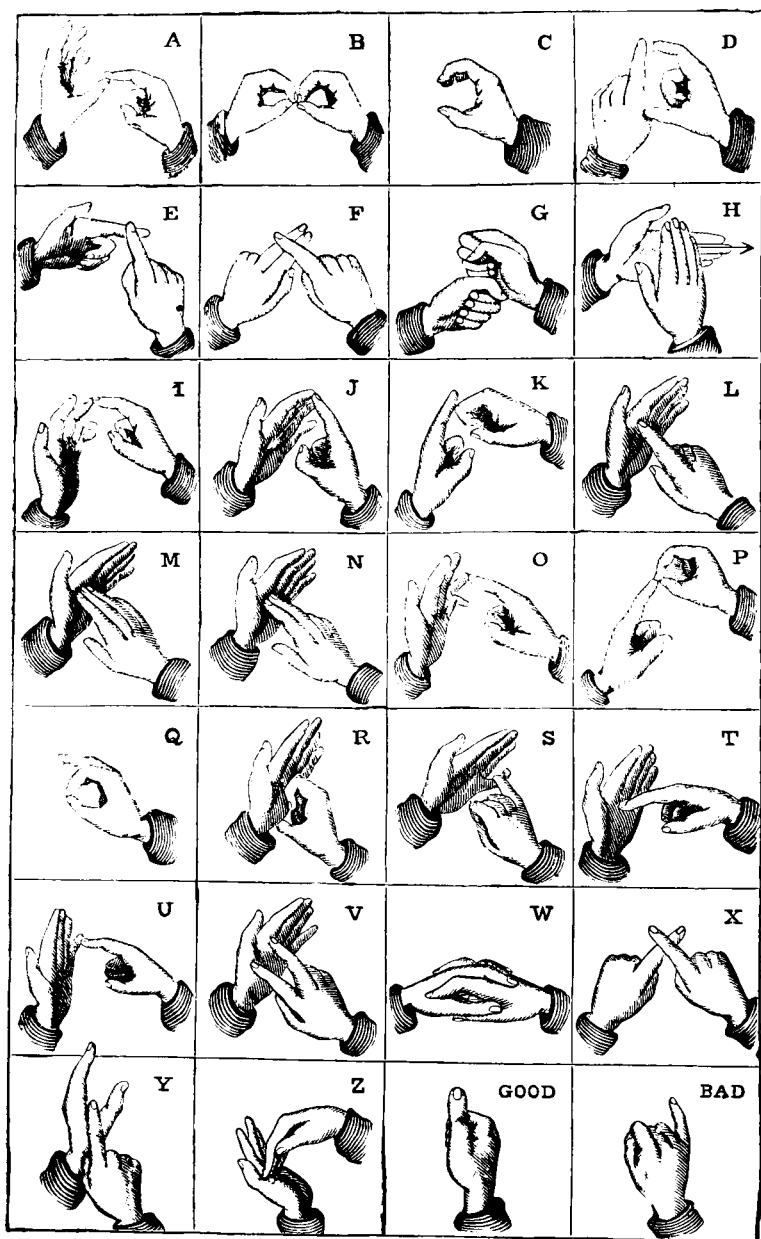
THE FRENCH ALPHABET

THE above is copied from the book of "The Life and Works of L'Abbe de l'Epee," published in the year 1852. It will be seen that the characters of the letters are nearly the same as the American alphabet. The date as indicated on the book shows that the alphabet was undoubtedly the same as used by the good Abbe, or perhaps improved later by the Abbe Sicard.



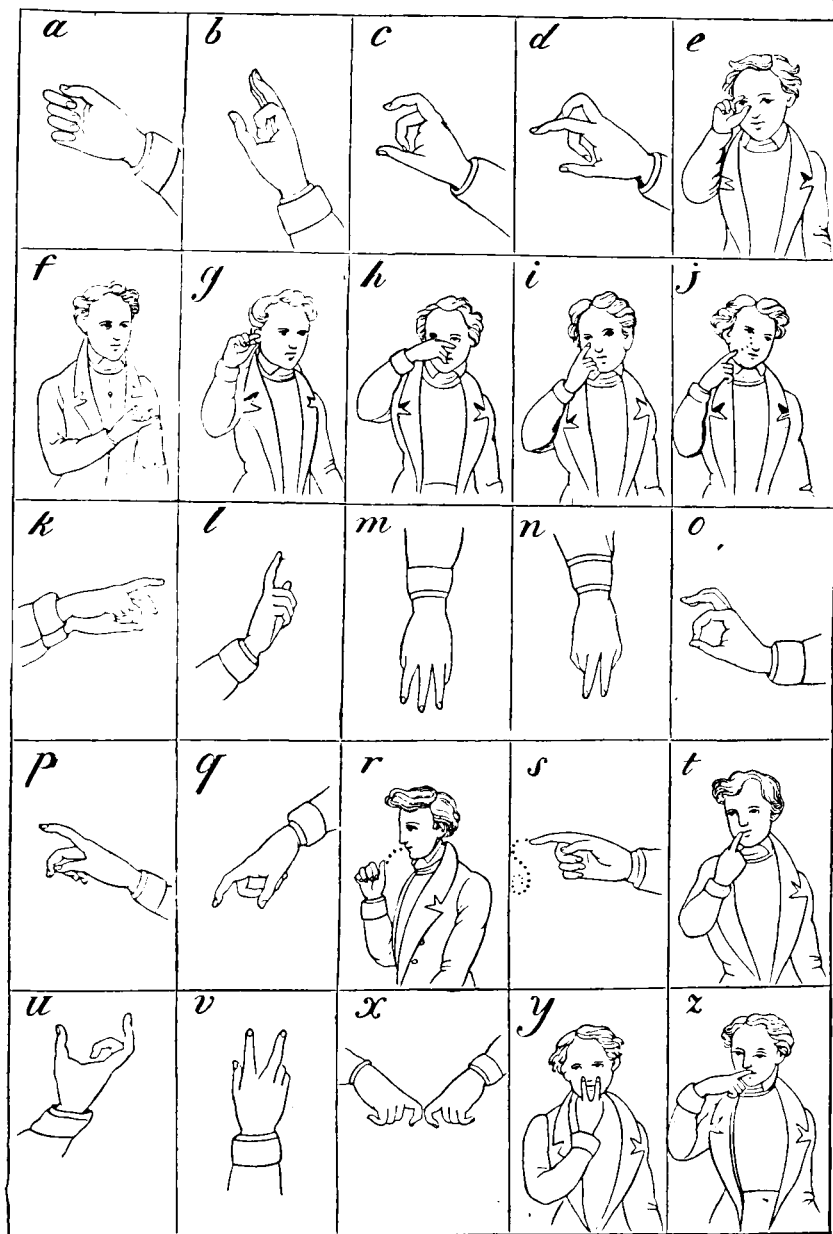
THE AMERICAN ALPHABET

This is the alphabet used universally by the American deaf. It is also being used to some extent in other countries.



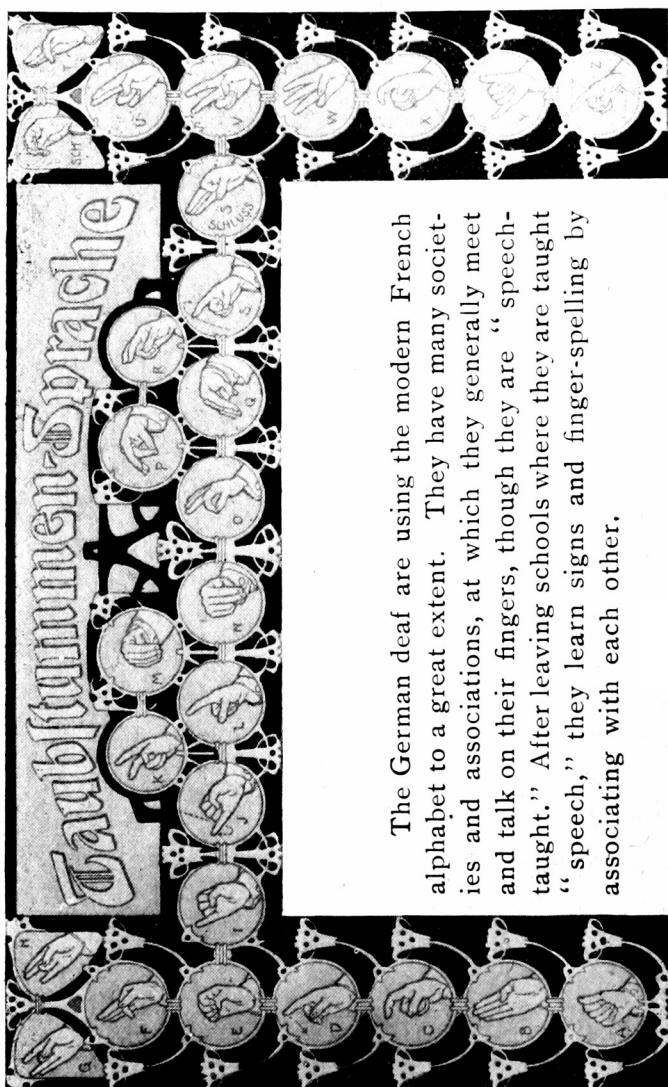
THE ENGLISH DOUBLE-HAND ALPHABET

This alphabet is used almost exclusively by the English deaf, but it is used to some extent in this country and Canada.



THE ITALIAN ALPHABET

This alphabet is obsolete. It is understood the Italians use to some extent the modern French alphabet.



The German deaf are using the modern French alphabet to a great extent. They have many societies and associations, at which they generally meet and talk on their fingers, though they are "speech-taught." After leaving schools where they are taught "speech," they learn signs and finger-spelling by associating with each other.

THE GERMAN ALPHABET

## Teaching in Korea

In far - off Korea the American alphabet is being taught among the deaf natives. This picture shows Mr. Ki, a native teacher, teaching his pupils.

It was introduced into Korea by missionaries who happened to take an interest in the uneducated deaf natives. The result of their labor is that a school has been founded at Pyeng.



MR. KI TEACHING THE BOYS

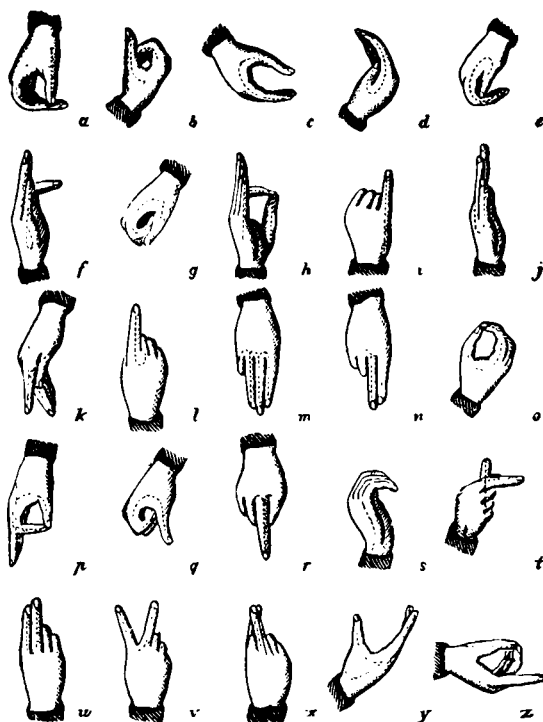


AN ANIMATED CONVERSATION

It is understood that schools for the deaf have been started in China and Japan, where such alphabet is being used.

What a wonderful growth of the manual alphabet from the time of the Abbe de l'Epee two hundred years — around the world!

(These illustrations are copied from *The Silent Worker*, published at Trenton, N. J.)



DE DOFSTUMMAS  
HAND ALPHABET  
Sweden, Norway  
and Finland

During the Chicago world's fair we came across this most unique alphabet, but we don't think it is used to any great extent at present, as the American alphabet is said to be gaining in favor in these countries, chiefly through the efforts of the delegates to the great World's Congress of the Deaf, held at Chicago in 1893.



### A Power of Sign Language

The universality of the natural language of signs is manifested in the striking fact that the instructors of the deaf and dumb, who have become familiar, by their habitual and long continued intercourse with their pupils, with this language in all its varieties and peculiarities, find it easy, as they meet in different parts of the country with the uneducated deaf and dumb, to converse with them on a considerable range of common subject. The writer of this article some years ago was requested, with a fellow-laborer of his at the time in the American Asylum, to visit a deaf-mute in a neighboring town, about eighty years of age, possessed of some property, and desirous of making a will. He could not read nor write, nor use the manual alphabet. He had no way of communicating his ideas but by natural signs. By means of such signs, exhibiting a great deal of ingenuity on the part of the old man, myself and companion were able to understand definitely the disposition which he wished to make of his property among his relatives and friends, and thus to enable him to carry his views into effect under the sanction of the law.—*Dr. T. H. Gallaudet.*



## The Great Peril of Sicard

UPON the death of the Abbe de l'Epee, his place was immediately taken up by the Abbe Sicard, who continued to teach the deaf children two years when the government erected the Royal Institution and appointed him as head master. In 1792 the French Revolution broke out at Paris and there were dark days for the Abbe and his pupils during the massacre. The story of the Abbe's arrest, imprisonment and narrow escape from massacre is thrilling.

The whole history of the Abbe is intimately connected with that of the deaf and dumb, and we think it proper therefore to present in this book a simple condensation of the principal facts. This is the man who welcomed Gallaudet to his school, taught him the language of signs and sent him on his way rejoicing to carry salvation to the deaf of America.

Herewith is presented a graphic story of Sicard's terrible experiences, from the pen of Luzerne Rae, in the *Annals of the Deaf*, October, 1847:



THE ABBE SICARD

Born at Fousseret, near Toulouse, France.

September 20, 1742.

Died at Paris January 10, 1822.

WHOEVER has read any one of the numerous histories of the French Revolution will not fail to recollect the famous September massacre, the most horrible scene perhaps that was enacted during the whole Reign of Terror. As a suf-

ferer in that scene, the Abbe Sicard, the celebrated director of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Paris, bore a prominent part; although, by a series of happy accidents, or, to speak more truly, of Providential interpositions, he finally escaped with his life. Sicard was a Roman Catholic priest, and in common with a multitude of his brethren, he was seized and thrown into prison, because he had refused, through scruples of conscience, to take one of the oaths required of the priesthood by the National Assembly.

On the twenty-sixth of August, 1792, while the Abbe was engaged in his benevolent labors among the deaf and dumb, a municipal officer, followed by sixty men armed with muskets, swords and pikes, entered his establishment and arrested him in the name of the Republic. He was first taken to the Committee of the Section to which he belonged, (that of the Arsenal), and thence, after a brief delay, a guard of soldiers conducted him to Hotel Mairie. A large hall in this building was made his temporary prison, where he was compelled to pass the night in company with a crowd of men of all classes, who were shut up there, he says, without any knowledge of the crimes which had been charged upon them. In the meantime the deaf and dumb pupils of Sicard were filled with the deepest distress by the sudden calamity which had overtaken their beloved teacher. Early in the morning of the next day they went in a body to the place of his confinement, and besought him to allow them to appear at the bar of the National Assembly with a petition for his release. This petition, which was prepared by Massieu, the favorite pupil of Sicard, we will translate with literal exactness, endeavoring to preserve, as far as possible, the simplicity of expression by which it is characterized. It begins somewhat abruptly :

“MR. PRESIDENT: They have taken from the deaf and dumb their instructor, their guardian and their father. They have shut him up in prison, like a thief, a murderer. But he has killed no one; he has stolen nothing. He is not a bad citizen. His whole time is spent in teaching us to love virtue and our country. He is good, just, pure. We ask of you his liberty. Restore him to his children, for we are his. He loves us with a father's fondness.

He has taught us all we know. Without him, we should be like the beasts. Since he was taken away, we have been full of sorrow and distress. Return him to us, and you will make us happy."

This paper, taken by Massieu to the Assembly, was read in the hearing of that body by one of its secretaries, and received with loud applause. An order was immediately issued, directing the Minister of the Interior to render to the Assembly the reasons of Sicard's arrest; but among the confusions of the time this order was either forgotten or neglected, and the Abbe derived no benefit from the prompt and generous interference of his pupils. Days passed away, and he still remained shut up in the prison with his doomed companions.

At last the second of September came, when the storm of wrath which had long been gathering was just ready to burst. At two o'clock on that day, a band of soldiers suddenly rushed into the hall where Sicard and his fellow-sufferers were confined, and roughly forced them into the court below, saying that they had received orders to transfer them all to the prison of the Abbaye. Six carriages were provided to convey the prisoners, who were twenty-four in number. In the first of these carriages Sicard took his place along with four others. The drivers were commanded upon pain of death to proceed slowly, and the miserable victims were told by the soldiers who surrounded them that they would never reach the Abbaye alive; that the people were determined to massacre them all on their way. It soon became evident that these threats and warnings had a meaning in them. A crowd of men, full of rage and fury, gathered around the carriages and prevented their progress, save at the slowest possible pace. As some protection against the insults that were hurled upon them, the prisoners attempted to close the doors of their vehicles, but this the rabble would not suffer. They compelled their victims to remain exposed to the blows which now began to fall upon them. One of the companions of Sicard received the stroke of a sabre on his shoulder; another was wounded on the cheek; another beneath the nose; but his own position in the carriage happened to be such that he escaped without injury.

At last the carriages reached the court of the Abbaye, where

a dense crowd of murderers, with passions raised to the pitch of madness, was waiting to receive them. One of Sicard's companions, hoping to escape their fury, sprang from the door of the vehicle, but he fell dead at once, pierced through and through by the pikes of the assassins. A second made the attempt with no better success, and a third followed, only to fall in the same way. The carriage now moved on toward the Hall of the Committee, when the fourth of its occupants darted out, and, with better fortune than his companions, escaped into the building, with only one wound from a sabre. The mob, now supposing that the first carriage was empty, turned to the others to carry on among them their bloody work. Seizing the favorable moment, Sicard sprang from his hiding place, and, rushing into the Hall of the Committee, appealed for succor to the members who were gathered there. At first his prayer was rejected, but as soon as he had made known his name and occupation they promised to shield him as long as they were able. He had scarcely time to congratulate himself upon his temporary escape, before the assassins, who had slain all the other prisoners, began to thunder at the door of the Hall. It soon yielded to their fury, and the room was filled in a moment with bloody hands and savage faces. Sicard was recognized as he stood among the members of the Committee. The crowd sprang upon him, and already the murderous pikes were within a foot of his breast, when a clockmaker, named Monnot, threw himself before him, exclaiming, "It is the Abbe Sicard, one of the most useful men in the country, and the father of the deaf and dumb. Your weapons shall pass through my body before they reach him." The fury of the mob was checked for a moment, and availing himself of the opportunity thus afforded, the Abbe sprang into an open window and besought permission to be heard. His speech was short, but displayed much presence of mind, as well as knowledge of human nature. Said he: "I am the Abbe Sicard. I teach the deaf and dumb, and, since the number of these unfortunates is always greater among the poor than among the rich, I am of more use to you than to them." He was interrupted by a voice from the crowd, "We must spare Sicard. He is too valuable a man to die. His whole life is filled with benevolent labors. He has no

time to be a conspirator;" and with a mercy almost as wild as their wrath had been, the whole mass of murderers shouted, "He must be saved, he must be saved." In a moment he was seized and drawn into the midst of the rabble, who embraced him with the utmost ardor and insisted upon carrying him away in triumph. But with something of the spirit of the Apostles in the prison of Philippi, Sicard refused to receive his liberty, unless it came to him in a legal way. Finding him not to be moved from this position, the rabble left him in the Hall of the Committee to prosecute their murderous work without the walls of the Abbaye and in other quarters of the city. The members of the Committee now reassembled, and proceeded with the ordinary routine of official business with the utmost coolness and unconcern in the midst of the horrid scenes which were enacting all around them. The night was considerably advanced, and Sicard besought permission to retire. They were at some loss to know what disposition to make of him, as none of the prisons were considered secure from the assaults of the mob. At last it was decided to place him in a small room, which was close by the side of the Hall of the Committee. We will now begin to translate in full from Sicard's own account of his experiences in that eventful time, for the narrative is of too intense an interest to suffer condensation :

"What a night was that which I spent in that prison! What murders were committed beneath my window! The cries of the victims—the sabre-blows which fell upon innocent heads—the yells of the assassins—the shouts of the spectators of this horrible scene—all are even yet ringing in my ears. I could distinguish the voices of my companions in confinement at the Mairie. I could hear the questions that were put to them, and also their replies. They were asked if they had taken the oath; no one had done so; they could all escape death by a single falsehood, but they all chose rather to die. They said, 'We submit to your laws; we die faithful to your constitution; we make no exceptions save those which conscience demands.' They were immediately struck down by a thousand blows, in the midst of the most horrible cries and shouts of 'Long Live the Nation.'

"About three o'clock in the morning, when no one was left to be slaughtered, the murderers, recollecting that there were a few prisoners in the small room, rushed to the gate which opened into the court and set themselves at work to break it down. Every blow was like the signal of death to us. We regarded ourselves as inevitably lost. I knocked gently at the door which communicated with the Hall of the Committee, but in doing so I trembled lest I should be heard by the assassins. The only reply of the brutal commissioners to my supplications for aid was that they had lost the key of the door at which I was knocking.

"There were three of us in this prison. My two companions thought that they perceived over our heads a platform, which might possibly afford us the means of escape. But we soon found that only one of us could reach it by climbing upon the shoulders of the two others. Which should it be? My fellow-prisoners said to me, 'You are a more useful man than we are. It is you who must be saved. With our bodies we will make a ladder for you, upon which you can climb to the platform.' 'Not so,' I replied, 'I will not avail myself of any means of escape in which you cannot share. If you cannot be saved along with myself, we will all die together.' This generous strife continued for some moments. They reminded me of the poor deaf and dumb who, by my death, would be rendered orphans. They magnified the benefits which these unfortunates received from my hands, and forced me, as it were, to profit by the innocent stratagem which their noble hearts had devised. At length I yielded to their earnest solicitations, and consented to owe them my life without having it in my power to do any thing for them in return. I threw myself into the arms of my two saviors; never was there a scene more touching. They were about to meet inevitable death, and they compelled me to survive them. After this farewell, I climbed upon the shoulders of the first, then upon those of the second, and finally upon the platform, giving utterance all the time to the emotions of a soul burdened with grief, affection and gratitude.

"But Heaven was unwilling that my life should be re-

deemed at the price of those of my deliverers. I was not to be so unhappy. At the very moment when the gate began to yield to the attacks of the assassins, and I was waiting to see my friends sink beneath their blows, the old cry of 'Long Live the Nation' and the song of the Carmagnole was heard in the court of the Abbaye. Two more priests had been torn from their beds in the middle of the night, and dragged to this court to die. The assassins were recalled from the small room by this signal of a new murder. Every one of them was anxious to have some share in the death of each of the victims, and so our prison was forgotten. I now descended from the platform to mingle once more my fears and hopes with those of my generous companions. Oh! how long appeared to us that fearful night, which saw the shedding of so much innocent blood!"

At this point we must cease to follow, line by line, the narrative of Sicard. He relates with painful particularity the murder of the two priests. When required to take the obnoxious oath, they replied, with the utmost courage and calmness, that it was against conscience and they could not do it. The only favor they demanded was that, before they were put to death, they might have the privilege of confessing to one another. In an unusual mood of mercy, the rabble granted this prayer, and in the meantime busied themselves in removing the corpses with which the court was covered, and in cleansing it, as far as possible, from its horrid stains. It was now ten o'clock and the two priests announced that they were ready to die. All the proceedings hitherto had been directly under the eyes of Sicard, who was standing at the window of his prison, but when the fatal moment came, with a very natural feeling of horror, he turned away, unable to bear the sight of the murder that was about to be committed. They died as the others had done, faithful to their religious vows. During the whole of this day and the night following similar scenes were constantly repeated. Wherever a priest could be found, he was immediately seized and required to take the oath, certain death in every case awaiting his refusal. Sicard and his companions were still imprisoned, and long-continued terror had at length unsettled the reason of the two last, and to the questions of Sicard they now began to return the wildest

answers. One of them opened his knife and besought the Abbe to put an end to his agony by plunging it into his heart; the other made an unsuccessful attempt to hang himself with his handkerchief and garters.

Tuesday morning came, and new prisoners were brought to the prison and shut up with the three already there. The anxieties of Sicard, which had begun in some degree to subside, were excited anew by the reports which they brought from without. The assassins, wearied with their work, had retired to rest and refresh themselves for a while, but they had agreed together to return at four o'clock in the afternoon and sacrifice Sicard. The new comers had heard his name repeated, with the appointed hour of his death, as they were led through the court below. After so many miraculous escapes it seemed that the greatest danger of all was still to be surmounted. One of the most intimate friends of Sicard was an influential member of the National Assembly, and in this extremity the Abbe's thoughts were turned to him, with some hope that this body might be induced to interpose for his deliverance. Accordingly he addressed him a letter, setting forth the imminent danger in which he stood, and urging him in the most earnest manner to lay his case before the Assembly. The letter was taken at once to its destination, but only parts of it were read, and not even these by the timid friend to whom it was sent, who put it into the hands of one of his colleagues, requesting him as a particular favor to read it in his stead. As soon as the perilous situation of Sicard was known to the National Assembly, an order was immediately issued that he should be set at liberty; but, as before, no effectual measures were taken to see that this order was executed. It is probable that, in the midst of these fearful scenes, the power of the Assembly itself was partially paralyzed. The madness of the mob ruled the hour.

It was now three o'clock, and at four Sicard was to die. He had heard nothing concerning the result of his application to the Assembly; he did not even know whether or not his petition had been presented; but unwilling tamely to surrender his life, while a possibility of saving it remained, he sent off three notes—one directed to Herault de Sechelles, the president of the



Assembly, another to M. Lafont-Ladebat, and a third to a lady whose two daughters he had educated. The Assembly was not in session. Sechelles was engaged in the Committee of Public Instruction. Ladebat could do nothing by himself, but he went immediately to Chabot and earnestly pleaded with him to exert his influence in behalf of his friend. The lady to whom Sicard had written was not at home, but the note was opened by one of her daughters, who ran at once to M. Pastoret, a member of the Assembly, to whom Sicard was known, and put the billet into his hands. Pastoret was also a member of the Committee of Public Instruction, and he immediately betook himself to the Hall of the Committee, where he found Sechelles and Romme, by whom an order was issued, directing the Commune to interfere in favor of Sicard. This order was taken at once to the Commune, and promptly acted upon, but all would have been too late to save the Abbe's life had not a sudden tempest of rain arisen just before four o'clock, and induced the assassins to postpone their intended murder. Doubtless their appetite for blood had become somewhat satiated by the carnage of the last forty-eight hours, and, this being the case, a slight obstacle was sufficient to turn them from their purpose.

The hour of Sicard's deliverance was now come. At seven o'clock the doors of his prison were opened and an official of the National Assembly made his appearance, bringing the welcome news that he was free. Under the safeguard of this officer, and accompanied by Monnot, the generous clockmaker, to whom he was already indebted for his life, he passed through the court which lately had been the theatre of such horrors, and proceeded without delay to the Assembly. Upon his arrival there—but we will give the closing scene in the Abbe's own words:

"I arrived at the National Assembly, where all hearts were waiting for me. Universal acclamations greeted my approach. All the members sprang forward to the bar at which I stood, to embrace me, and tears were streaming from all eyes. Inspired by a feeling which I could not restrain, I gave utterance to my thanks in a speech which has escaped from my memory, since it was the spontaneous expression of a grateful heart. It was reported, however, by the journalists, and printed in a newspaper of that date, and copied also into many other papers."

But little remains to be told. It was thought not prudent

for Sicard to spend the following night in the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, lest the rabble might still seek their victim there. Accordingly he found a temporary refuge at the house of a friend in a distant quarter of the city, where he received the first visit from his beloved pupil, Massieu. This young man, he tells us, had gone without food or sleep during all the days of his imprisonment, and in one day more, he adds, he must have died of grief. In the course of two or three days order was restored in Paris, and Sicard returned to his establishment to prosecute his labors there with the same zeal and success as before.



## How Sicard Became Headmaster

AFTER the death of the Abbe de l'Epee, for some time it seemed that his life work would die with him. Miss Yvonne Pitrois, however, writes :

"The Abbe de l'Epee had taught for nearly ten years a chosen disciple—the Abbe Masse—whom he desired to take his place and continue his work. Unaware of the will of the great philanthropist, the authorities named Sicard as headmaster of the deaf and dumb school.

"The Abbe Sicard was a priest of the parish of Bordeaux, who had come to Paris specially to study the methods of the Abbe de l'Epee, in order to found a similar institution in the great southern town. After his studies he had gone back to Bordeaux, where he had opened a school. When he heard of the death of the Abbe de l'Epee, he immediately offered himself as his successor, and was duly appointed.

"Sicard's career as headmaster was a troublous and a chequered one. First, he found great difficulties in obtaining sufficient money—even enough food—for the pupils ; then there was the terrible time of the Revolution to pass through. At first he was helped and protected by the National Assembly, from which he received the subventions, while a decree said that 'The name of the Abbe de l'Epee was to be placed among those of the citizens who had best deserved from humanity and the nation.

"There Sicard and his pupils remained. Yet the teacher's troubles were not over, for he was obliged to run away from his school for some time. It was only after a long absence that he could come back and stand again at the head of his institution, where he remained till his death in 1822."

## The Sign Language

THE SIGN LANGUAGE used by the deaf of America to-day is the original of the French method, originated by the Abbe de l'Epee and then improved by his successor, the Abbe Sicard. It has been modified and enlarged by the deaf in this country until it has reached its present almost perfect condition. A writer says:

"Signs have their chief value as a means of rapid and expressive communication among the deaf in their social intercourse, in their religious services and for the enjoyment of lectures. Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to their use in the school room, their importance in the above uses cannot be doubted. The sign language is a beautiful and expressive language and in the hands of its masters becomes the veritable 'poetry of motion.' No other means can surpass it in conveying to the deaf humor and pathos and the rhythmical grace of poetry."

IN commenting on the sign language, the late Rev. Thomas Gallaudet, son of the pioneer philanthropist of the deaf, who had spent more than fifty years in teaching and later in missionary work among the deaf, wrote the following excerpt to an English journal while on a visit to Europe some years ago :

"I believe in the general use of signs among deaf-mutes, whether they are trained in articulation and lip-reading or not. Signs are to the deaf what sounds are to the hearing. Signs speak to the soul through the eye, and produce that inner thrill which arouses the various faculties of the heart and the mind. The movement of the lips, the spelling of words and sentences by the manual alphabet, or the writing out of the same, are but feeble substitutes for the sound of the human voice. Those who would throw a flood of light and knowledge into the imprisoned minds of deaf-mutes, those who would give them the full and rich meaning of words and sentences, those who would most thoroughly contribute to their moral and spiritual culture, those who would most clearly make them understand the grand truths which pertain to this life and to that which is to come, those who work for their welfare with some idea of the value of a human soul in view of what God has done for mankind through the redemption of His dearly beloved Son, *must be masters of the sign language.*

"We cannot preach the Gospel to deaf-mutes unless we use their own natural language of signs. Deaf-mutes will congregate in the larger cities for employment. They will come together socially. They will

form societies for their own pleasure and profit. They will follow the natural ways of mankind, and enter into matrimony. Attempts to coerce them in any arbitrary manner will take from them their self-respect, and do more harm than good."

Here is another short but pointed paragraph from the pen of Dr. E. M. Gallaudet, another son, who has been in touch with all classes of deaf for more than two score of years :

"There are teachers of the deaf in the United States who have urged within the last few years that the language of signs ought not to be used in teaching deaf-mutes, and in a few schools attempts have been made to carry out this idea. It is indeed possible to teach deaf children without the use of the language of signs in the classroom or the public assembly.

"But the testimony of great numbers who have been so taught is that their intellectual development has been narrowed and retarded by the refusal on the part of their teachers to make use of that language which is theirs by nature. My experience with the deaf, and my life-long familiarity with their peculiar language lead me to accept this testimony as a statement of a general truth, and to express the hope that the day is not distant when the natural language of the deaf will have its proper place in every school."

The *Catholic Deaf-Mute*, a monthly paper for the Catholic deaf, is authority for the statement of a "pure-oral" graduate's experiences, as follows :

"A significant remark made by Mr. Nuboer, an American and a former pupil of the Lexington Ave. School for the Deaf, at the recent Congress in Paris, was that he had changed his mind as to the value of the oral method of instruction. Mr. Nuboer said that experience had taught him that the Combined System of instruction was the best. He was at the Congress held in Paris about twenty years ago and was then a rabid oralist. He is now strongly opposed to it as a means of instruction for all the deaf. The strange thing about the whole assertion is that Mr. Nuboer has almost wholly regained his hearing and is no longer to be classed as a deaf-mute. The value of his remarks is in the fact that Mr. Nuboer in his association with the deaf has been able to compare their artificial speech with those of hearing people, and he has discovered that the speech of the deaf is of little use to them, and as for the much touted claims for lip-reading, it has very decided limitations. His idea is—give the best education possible by the quickest and easiest method adapted to the pupil. This will serve to make the boy or girl self-supporting and independent in the world, which is, after all, the main object of education."

## A FEW OF THE AMERICAN SIGNS

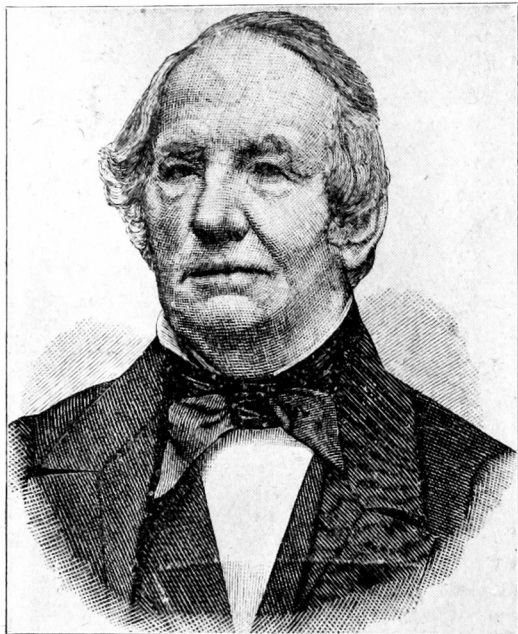


1--Bread. 2--Come in. 3--Money. 4--Hard. 5--I Know. 6--Smell. 7--Can or Able. 8--In. 9--Out. 10--Wise. 11--Don't Know. 12--Father. 13--Think. 14--Railroad. 15--Ride. 16--Soldier. 17--Deceive. 18--Forgive. 19--Mother. 20--Governor. 21--To-morrow. 22--Run. 23--Ship. 24--Fun. 25--Yesterday. 26--Selfish.

## Laurent Clerc

**T**HIS is a magic name among the American deaf to-day. He left his native country, France, and kindred to engage in the great work of educating the deaf in America. The first of his active work was at the historical Hartford school on his

arrival. He taught the sign language and its use in silent education to many men who became great in the profession, such as Gallaudet, Weld, Peet, Keep, Turner, Bartlett, Rae, and others. A writer says: "All to-day who are fighting the battle in defence of this language realize the value of his labors. Let the deaf keep the name of Clerc alongside that of Gallaudet." Yale College conferred on him the degree of Master of Arts, an honor never before conferred on a



LAURENT CLERC

deaf man. Mr. Clerc was the son of the mayor of La Balme, France. Losing his hearing at twelve years of age, he was placed in the school founded by the good Abbe de l'Epee at Paris. He was skillfully taught by the Abbe Sicard by means of the sign language, and after graduation, was first tutor, then teacher.

Below is a condensation of the eloquent eulogy delivered in signs by the late James Denison, M. A., of Washington, D. C.,

at the dedication of the Clerc Memorial at Hartford, Conn., Sept. 16, 1874, an event of much interest to the deaf of this country at that time :

### THE MEMORY OF LAURENT CLERC

"Gratitude is the remembrance of kindness received, the memory of a heart penetrated with a sense of profound respect and affection, and with measureless devotion."

Thus wrote Laurent Clerc on the 3d of July, 1815, when asked, "What is gratitude?" An audience composed of individuals of the highest standing in the social and political circles of England had assembled in London to listen to a lecture of the Abbe Sicard in exposition and illustration of the new French system of imparting instruction to the deaf and dumb. This system, originating with the Abbe de l'Epee, had been elaborated and improved by his successor, Sicard, in whose hands it had produced results, especially in the case of his now celebrated pupils, Massieu and Clerc, that excited the wonder and admiration of Europe

Inspired by the occasion, by the presence of an assembly so distinguished for rank, beauty, and intelligence, and more than all by the sight of his beloved instructor and benefactor, whose sad, patient eye, pale cheek, and slender form spoke of toil, suffering, and self-sacrifice, for which the decorations that shone on his breast—gifts from the crowned heads of France, of Russia, and of Sweden—could be but a slight and feeble acknowledgment, Laurent Clerc looked into the depths of his soul, analyzed the sentiments and emotions that took shape and being at the thought of Sicard, and gave to the world his beautiful definition of "Gratitude."

Until the last day of his life he continued to regard the Abbe Sicard with this reverence and devotion. We of this country and generation, with our educational advantages and opportunities, cannot perhaps fairly estimate the difficulties which De l'Epee and Sicard had to overcome in their endeavors to enlighten the deaf-mute mind. The facilities at their disposal were utterly inadequate to the work. To gain pupils, they had to combat the distrust and prejudice of the poor; to acquire indispensable means, they had to contend with the scepticism and indifference of the rich. In order that the cause of their hearts might live and

triumph they denied themselves the necessities of life, and refused tempting offers of wealth and distinction.

In his twelfth year Laurent Clerc was transferred from the paternal domicile on the banks of the Rhone to the institution under the charge of Sicard. It was in the year 1797. Napoleon had just fought and won the marvelous campaign of Italy. France, whose prophetic eyes beheld in him the hero of the future, hastened to place her welfare and her destinies at his feet. She allowed him to transform her fair domains into a military camp, with Paris for headquarters. Henceforth the sword and the musket were the sole passports to power and distinction. The pure flame of religion and the beneficent light of human progress paled in the lurid blaze of military glory. But Sicard, who had not been dismayed by the persecution of the Reign of Terror, was not cast down when he saw that the ruler of France ignored his existence and looked coldly upon his cause. In the eighteen years that Laurent Clerc was associated with Sicard — during which period the star of Napoleon had risen above the horizon, attained its zenith, and set forever behind the lonely rock of St. Helena—he beheld his beloved teacher and friend ever at his post, applying himself, undisturbed by outside influences, to the sacred work of cultivating the minds and hearts of the neglected children of silence.

In this work, during the last eight years of Laurent Clerc's connection with the Paris Institution, he was Sicard's most earnest and successful co-laborer. In 1816, however, his life in France drew to a close. Thomas H. Gallaudet—revered be his memory!—repulsed from the institutions of Watson and Braidwood, that, as he sorrowfully expressed it, they might retain a "sad monopoly of the resources of charity," turned his face towards Paris. "Here, in the splendid metropolis of his ancestors," to use his own words, "the light of hope began to dawn on his path. For here, thanks to the ready kindness of the illustrious Sicard, he was furnished with every facility for obtaining the knowledge which he sought. And here, too, he was enabled to make such arrangements as to surprise his friends and supporters at home by an unexpected return with a colleague, whose peculiar condition and striking talents and attainments



gave a new impulse to the enterprise" of educating the American deaf-mute.

It would appear at this distance of time to have been the most trying, as it was the most momentous, act of Mr. Clerc's life to decide to accompany Mr. Gallaudet to America. He must bid farewell to home, friends, and relations; to aged parents on the verge of the grave; he must leave forever the vine-clad hills and lovely vales of France; he must abandon Paris, with its palaces and gardens and fountains, its libraries and art museums, its unrivalled resources for æsthetic and intellectual enjoyment, so dear to the heart of the true Frenchman; he must prepare to see buried beneath the dust of disuse and oblivion his precious French, his only written language, mastered with the heavy tax of time and effort laid upon the deaf-mute; he must tear himself from his beloved teacher and friend, Sicard, the tendrils of whose nature clung to the young protege and assistant, loth to let him go—even on a mission of beneficence to which he himself had pointed the way by precept and by example.

Yet, from all we can learn, Mr. Clerc did not hesitate in making his decision. He won the reluctant consent of his parents; he overcame the objections of Sicard one by one; he took prompt leave of his friends and the scene of his labors and triumphs, and on the 18th of June he embarked for America with Mr. Gallaudet.

It was a great step to take; one from which most men under similar circumstances would have shrunk. Allowing something to the persuasive pleading of Mr. Gallaudet, and to the contagion of his enthusiasm, and something also to the influence wrought upon Mr. Clerc's nature in breathing for so many years at atmosphere so pervaded with the fragrance of self-consecration and generous deeds, the fact remains that had not Laurent Clerc been a man of more than ordinary decision and benevolence of character, he would never have thus bidden farewell to France and come a voluntary exile to a foreign land.

The record of Mr. Clerc's life from the date of his arrival in America until his death, fifty-three years afterwards, is a familiar one to every educated mute. With the exception of a few months at three different times spent in visiting his native country, forty-

one of these years were passed in the faithful and successful performance of duty as an instructor in the American Asylum. In the annual reports of that institution, where Mr. Clerc's name from first to last heads the list of the corps of instructors, repeated and honorable mention is made of his assistance in soliciting funds, of his valuable aid in training teachers for the Hartford, as well as other schools, of the high estimate in which his labors and counsels were held by the board of directors. The board at various times gave evidence of their sense of his important services by the bestowment of special favors and appropriations; and in 1858, when, in his 73d year, he closed his active connection with the school, he retired in the receipt of a pension for life from its funds.

From this time he spent his days in peaceful enjoyment of the rest he had so well earned. "Happy in his domestic and social relations," writes Rev. Mr. Turner in the *American Annals*, "he might be seen in the streets, in the post-office, and the reading rooms of Hartford, almost every day, meeting his friends with a pleasant smile and graceful salutation, and expressing a deep interest in public events relating to the welfare of the country, and especially to the prosperity of the Asylum."

In June, 1864, Mr. Clerc, then in his 79th year, in spite of his many infirmities and the length and fatigue of a journey that would have deterred a younger man, travelled from his Hartford home to Washington, the capital of our country, in order to be present at the inauguration of the National Deaf-Mute College. He delivered a thoughtful and interesting address, closing with the earnest hope that "in his great work, his dear young friend, Edward M. Gallaudet, might be blessed and prospered, and receive for his efforts in behalf of the deaf and dumb such proofs of its benefits as would reward him for the glorious undertaking." Thus was Mr. Clerc permitted in his last days to behold the highest and grandest point reached in the cause of deaf-mute education.

In his 84th year Laurent Clerc, on the 18th of July, 1869, finished his earthly life, passing away in the hope of the Christian's immortality.

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Mr. Clerc was married to one of his pupils and both lived happily more than fifty years. Two children were born to them.

The graves of Laurent Clerc and his wife are in Spring Garden Cemetery, Hartford, Conn.

## The Clerc Monument

At the top of this imposing monument is the bust of Laurent Clerc in bronze. It stands on the Hartford school grounds, in a position corresponding to that of the Gallaudet monument on the other side of the main entrance. On the south side of the pedestal facing the street are the words :

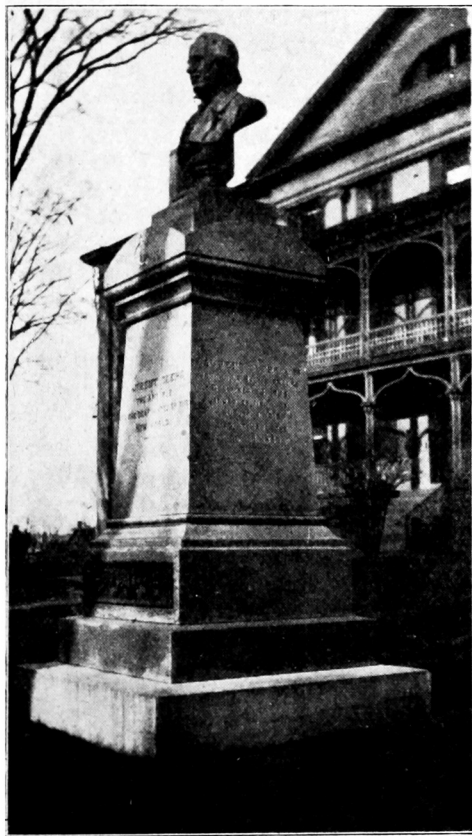
LAURENT CLERC,  
The Apostle  
Of the Deaf-Mutes of the  
New World.

Directly under this is a bas-relief in bronze of the name "Clerc" in the letters of the manual alphabet. On the east side is this inscription :

LAURENT CLERC, A. M.,  
Born in La Balme, France,  
December 26, 1785.  
Landed at New York  
Aug. 9, 1816.  
Died at Hartford,  
July 18, 1869.

And on the west side is the following :

Erected by the Deaf-Mutes of America  
To the Memory of their Benefactor ;  
The Pupil of Sicard ;  
The Associate of Gallaudet ;  
Who left his native land to  
Elevate them by his teaching and  
Encourage them by his example.



## Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet

THE name of "Gallaudet" is familiar to all the educated deaf of America, and in every school for the deaf and in large cities where the deaf have societies or associations, there are annual celebrations, December 10th — Gallaudet Day, in honor of his birth. He graduated from Yale College, and was licensed to

preach, but a little deaf and dumb girl, Alice Cogswell, turned his thoughts and labors into a new channel. A biographer says:

"Dr. Gallaudet became interested in her case. In 1815 he was on his way across the Atlantic to learn the ways of teaching the deaf. In England the oral method was in use, and there was a kind of trust, which kept the art a secret, and made money by teaching the children of the rich. A cold proposition was made to the Doctor to enter into partnership and make a pledge to divulge the art to no one, and to take with him to America one of the English teachers, presumably to see that the pledge was kept. The Doctor was not the kind of a man to accede to the proposition. From England he went to France.

In Paris he called at the school founded in 1755 by the Abbe de l'Epee. The Abbe Sicard was in charge. To the American visitor he gave a cordial welcome and every facility in the pursuit of his object. The sign language was the method in use. At the end of a few months Dr. Gallaudet started on the return voyage in company with Professor Laurent Clerc, one of Sicard's brightest pupils."

Dr. Gallaudet then became the first educator of the deaf in this country, establishing the first special school for their benefit in Hartford, Conn. He married Miss Sophia Fowler, one of his pupils. Eight children were born to them.



Born in Philadelphia, Pa., December 10, 1787.  
Died in Hartford, Conn., September 10, 1851.

The body of our great philanthropist lies in a family lot in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford, Conn.

The following is an appreciation of Dr. Gallaudet by one of his pupils, the late Edmund Booth :

In company with a hearing brother, three hours' ride in a stage coach—for railroads were unknown and unthought of in these days—brought me to Hartford in May, 1828. We entered the Asylum—its corporate but misleading and awkward name—and in a few minutes Thomas H. Gallaudet, the Principal, appeared from his residence a few rods distant. In conversation with him my brother informed him I could speak, and on this hint he—Mr. G.—proceeded to ascertain the extent of my knowledge of words. The only word he selected was "accumulate," a word with which I was wholly unacquainted. Probably he so understood from my look, he being quick enough at reading looks. He then defined the word in signs, as unintelligible to me as the word itself. After some further talk my brother departed and I was in a new home, with the reflections that naturally attend such a change in one's life. The time allowed for education those days was four years, and what would be the end was a question that occurred, as it does with all or nearly all; but the end might answer for itself, and that was the most satisfactory reply that came out from the then dim future.

Mr. Gallaudet, at the time and during his entire immediate connection with the institution, was a teacher and had a class—the first or highest class—under him. He was never of vigorous constitution, and the labor of years was wearing him down. He desired to be released from the duty of the school room and to have general supervision and the work of correspondence only. To this there was objection on the part of two or three of the eight teachers who could not see ahead of their own slow-pacing days. He was a man of quick-temper, never in a passion, and who governed by love, reason and earnest persuasion. He was not born to command but to persuade, and yet to be always in the right.

Mr. Gallaudet was a remarkable man, just the man for the occasion, the man to start the first school for the deaf in this new world. He entered on the duties of the novel profession poor, and, after thirteen years, left it poor. Money making was to him no passion. Genuine and kindly benevolence, active mentality in the perceptive and reflective sense, sincere friendship, and a love of humor where humor was not inappropriate, these were his leading characteristics. He was an evenly-balanced man in the qualities for society and the home circle. What he lacked was the will power. There was nothing passionate or imperious in him. A wrong excited his sorrow but not his anger. The pupils all understood him thoroughly, and loved, respected and obeyed him without hesitation.

In conducting morning and evening service in the chapel, Mr. Gallaudet was always clear, gentle, earnest and wasting no time—the time allowed being only fifteen minutes. He was by nature inclined to the dramatic in representation of and in depicting the grand and sublime in nature.

## The Gallaudet Memorial Monument

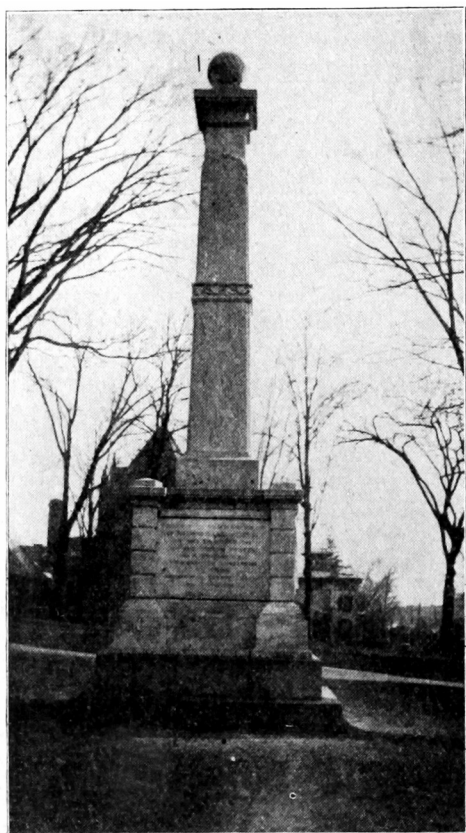
SPEAKING of the memorial monument ceremony, Dr. E. M. Gallaudet says in his biography of his eminent father:

"Hardly had the remains of Dr. Gallaudet been laid in the grave before the children of silence, his grateful pupils, stirred in the matter of a permanent memorial of his philanthropy. An

association was formed with Mr. Clerc as its president. Agents were appointed in the several states of the Union to solicit subscriptions, which were to come only from deaf-mutes.

"The amount needed for the construction of the monument was raised within two years, and in September, 1854, just three years from the date of Dr. Gallaudet's death, the monument was unveiled with appropriate ceremonies, on the grounds of the institution for deaf-mutes in Hartford, in the presence of a large concourse of citizens of Hartford and deaf-mutes from all parts of the United States."

The monument is a work of a deaf-mute artist. It has four panels, one of which is seen an inscription:



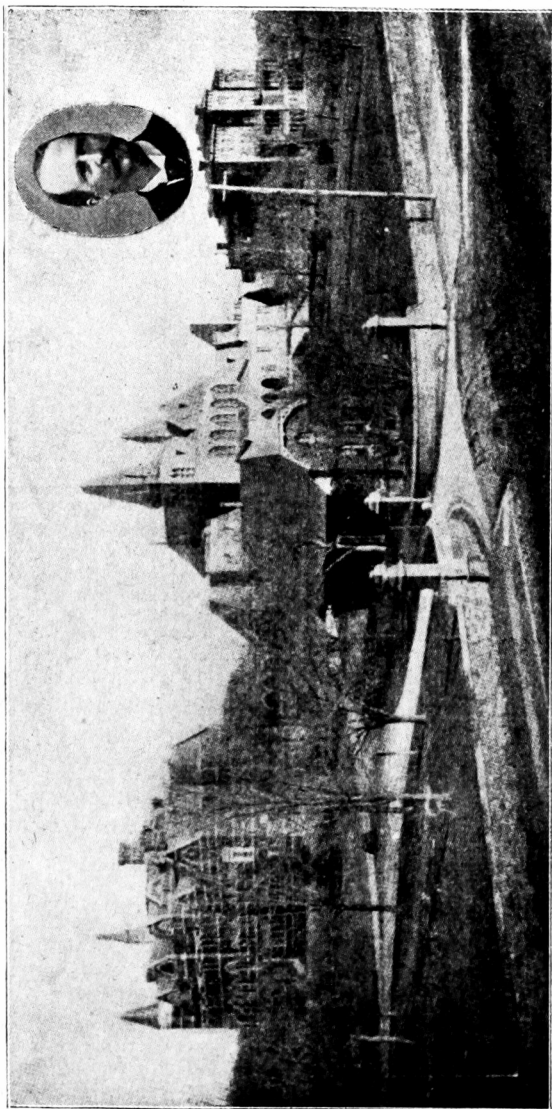
ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF  
REV. THOMAS HOPKINS GALLAUDET, LL.D.  
BY THE DEAF AND DUMB  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
AS A TESTIMONIAL  
OF PROFOUND GRATITUDE  
TO THEIR  
EARLIEST AND BEST FRIEND  
AND BENEFACTOR.



### The Gallaudet Memorial Statue

At Gallaudet College, Washington, D. C., there stands a magnificent bronze statue of rare artistic beauty representing Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet teaching the deaf child, Alice Cogswell. The memorial cost about \$12,000, voluntarily contributed by the deaf of the whole country under the management of the National Association of the Deaf, as a tribute to the founder of deaf-mute education in America. The statue was unveiled and presented to the College on the afternoon of June 26, 1889.

DR. EDWARD M. GALLAUDET



THE BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE GALLAUDET COLLEGE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

This is the only college for the deaf in the world. It was established by Act of Congress in 1864. Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet was the first president. He held the office for forty-five years when he retired, and Dr. Percival Hall succeeded him. Melville Ballard, only recently deceased, was the first student to graduate. The college affords a liberal education to the deaf and boasts many graduates distinguished in all walks of life. It is supported by the United States government.



## Alice Cogswell

SWEET "Little Alice" holds an affectionately place in the minds of all the educated deaf of America—ALICE COGSWELL, now a historic name. It was she, uneducated but full of brightness and happiness, who aroused the sympathies of our great philanthropist, Dr. T. H. Gallaudet, to take up the work of educating the deaf. Alice Cogswell was born on August 31, 1805, one of the daughters of Dr. Mason Cogswell, a prominent physician of Hartford, Conn. The *Annals of the Deaf*, October, 1847, is authority for the following:

"In the autumn of the year 1807 she became deaf by a malignant disease called the spotted fever, when about two years and three months old. Before she was four years of age she had lost the power of articulation. Though her parents and family friends spared no efforts which enlightened kindness could suggest to make the little Alice happy, still it caused them great pain to see the innocent child embarrassed by the want of a free and intelligible medium of communication with others, and gradually falling lower and lower in the scale of general intelligence, as compared with children whose senses were perfect. The exertions they made for her were by no means fruitless; for she had much enjoyment in the society of kind relatives and friends, and there was a constant, though gradual, expansion both of the intellect and the heart under their imperfect culture, quite beyond what commonly attends the efforts of inexperience. But the soil they strove to cultivate was naturally good, and though the blight of a sad misfortune had come over it, many of its best qualities remained. Dr. Cogswell's sympathies for his beloved child were thoroughly awakened. He could not be satisfied with her remaining in the deplorable state of an untaught deaf-mute, or rather in that twilight of intel-



ALICE COGSWELL

This is the only picture in existence.

ligence which the best efforts of himself, his family and benevolent friends of the neighborhood had produced.

"Among the friends referred to was Mr. Thomas H. Gallaudet, a young neighbor of talents, refined education and benevolent impulses, whose attention was originally directed to the child as deaf and dumb while she was amusing herself with other children at his father's house. His compassionate interest in her situation, with a strong desire to alleviate it, was immediate and deep. He at once attempted to converse with and instruct her, and actually succeeded in teaching her the word *hat* before she left the garden where the interview took place. This led to a very intimate intercourse with the child and her father's family during intervals of relaxation from professional studies extending through



DR. MASON COGSWELL

several years, and resulted in her acquiring, chiefly through his agency, so much knowledge of very simple words and sentences as satisfied her friends that she might learn to write and read, and that Mr. Gallaudet, of all in the circle of their acquaintance, was the person best qualified to undertake her instruction. Still he had other and very different views, which could not at once be abandoned. Dr. Cogswell, however, hesitated no longer, but resolved that by the leave of a kind Providence his daughter should be educated."

In 1817, at the age of twelve, Miss Cogswell was enrolled as

one of the first pupils of the first school for the deaf in America—the historic Hartford, and remained there seven years. The records say that she was a very bright and lively pupil. After leaving school she returned to live with her father, to whom she was passionately devoted, until his death, which "proved so much of a shock to her delicately-organized system, that she never recovered from it." She died in 1830. In speaking of her dying hours, a biographer says:

"She passed ten days of shrieks and moans and incoherent cries, and then was released, and laid aside her father in the quiet grave. Those who were with her, and understood her mute language, spoke of the pathos and beauty of some of her ravings. Sometimes she fancied that she was in heaven. 'Is it David's harp I hear?' she would ask, as if the seal were taken from her ear, and she heard the harmonies of heaven. She told them her heart had grown so close to her father's that they could not be separated; and 'Oh!' said she, **when I**

arrive at heaven's gate, how my father will hold out his arms to take me to his bosom !' She seemed to have some short intervals of reason. The last time was a few hours before her death. All the family had tried in vain to catch the attention of her wandering eye. At last her beloved instructor, who had taught her the language of signs, succeeded in obtaining a look of intelligent recognition. He made the sign of the *wounded hand*, by which in that language the Saviour is designated. She made the sign for prayer, and immediately, with the solemn sign of worship, he commended this helpless, dying lamb to the care of that Good Shepherd in whom her spirit sought repose. She followed him through with looks of intelligence and interest, and very soon after she closed her eyes forever, and sunk away so peacefully that they scarcely knew when her spirit had fled."

The following lines from the pen of Mrs. L. H. Sigourney\* were addressed to a sister of Miss Alice Cogswell, not long after her decease, and were accompanied with a letter, from which the following is an extract :

"To know the departed as I know her, in the expansion of her fine intellect, in the first warmth of her ingenuous and ardent affections—to witness her thirst for knowledge and her delight to acquiring it—was sure to lay the foundation of no common attachment. Nevertheless, we 'sorrow not as without hope.' To the gain of those we mourn, our thoughts should strive to rise. In such contemplations may you find solace for your deep afflictions. Will you, dear friend, accept a few lines, suggested by meditating while alone last evening, on what our departed friend might be supposed to say, were she permitted, from the abodes of bliss, to address the objects of her fondest earthly regard."

ALICE.

Sisters ! there's music here ;  
 From countless harps it flows,  
 Throughout this bright celestial sphere,  
 Nor pause nor discord knows.  
 The seal is melted from mine ear,  
 By love divine,  
 And what through life I pined to hear,  
 Is mine, is mine,—  
 The warbling of an ever tuneful choir,  
 And the full, deep response of David's sacred lyre.  
 Did kind earth hide from me,  
 Her broken harmony,  
 That thus the melodies of Heaven might roll  
 And whelm in deeper tides of bliss my wrapt, my wondering soul !

\* Mrs. Sigourney, whose maiden name was Lydia Huntley and a resident of Hartford, was a teacher in her young days. She first taught Alice Cogswell before the latter was sent to school. Mrs. S. was said to be a prolific writer of poetry, and during her last few years she composed some beautiful poems for the press upon subjects related to the deaf. An editor in 1847 wrote: "These lines, in our judgment, for genuine poetic beauty and power, are unsurpassed by any others which have fallen from her popular pen."

Joy ! I am mute no more,  
 My sad and silent years  
 With all their loveliness are o'er,  
 Sweet sister, dry your tears,  
 Listen at hush of eve,—listen at dawn of day,  
 List at the hour of prayer,—can ye not hear my lay ?  
 Untaught, unchecked, it came,  
 As light from chaos beamed,  
 Praising his everlasting name,  
 Whose blood on Calvary streamed,  
 And still it swells that highest strain, the song of the redeemed.

Brother, my only one,  
 Beloved from cradle hours,  
 With whom beneath the vernal sun  
 I wandered when our task was done,  
 And gathered early flowers,  
 I cannot come to thee !  
 Though 'twas so sweet to rest  
 Upon thy gently-guiding arm, thy sympathizing breast,  
 'Tis better to be here.

No disappointments shroud  
 The angel bowers of joy ;  
 Our knowledge hath no cloud,  
 No limit, no alloy ;  
 The fearful word to part  
 Is never breathed above,  
 Heaven hath no broken heart ;  
 Call me not hence, my love !

Oh, Mother, he is here,  
 To whom my soul so grew,  
 That when Death's fatal spear  
 Stretched him upon his bier,  
 I fain must follow too.  
 His smile my infant-griefs restrained—  
 His image in my childish dream,  
 And o'er my young affections reigned,  
 In gratitude, unuttered and supreme.

But yet till these effulgent skies burst forth in radiant glow,  
 I know not half the unmeasured debt a daughter's heart doth owe.  
 Ask ye, if to his soul the same fond thrill is given ?  
 Oh, yes, and filial love remains unchanged in Heaven !

I bend to soothe thy woes—  
 How near thou canst not see ;  
 I watch thy lone repose—  
 May I not comfort thee ?  
 To welcome thee, I wait :—Blest Mother, come to me !

## "The Three Immortals"

By ANGELINE A. FULLER FISCHER

### *The Abbe de l'Epee*

Dear Priest of Him, who from the Burning Bush,  
Centuries ago, declared he made the deaf,  
We who are deaf bless you that when you met  
Two stricken sisters in your sunny France,  
Who could not answer when you spoke to them,  
Could only look at you in wondering awe,  
Simply because not hearing others speak.  
They did not know how to produce the sounds  
Which the world over is called human speech.  
You did not brand them brainless, nor ill-bred,  
But sought a language suited to their need,  
Sought eagerly, persistently, and found  
A language waiting passive in your hands  
Which blessing two; blest thousands for all time.

### *Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet*

Dear Student, in a wonderous world called "New,"

Because so long unknown to other peoples;—  
We bless you, too, that when you saw a child,  
Stricken by sickness deaf to every sound,  
Pity for her dumb, isolated state,  
Moved you to seek a way to reach her mind;  
Seek across treacherous ocean in old lands,—  
Until you found the Abbe's thriving school;  
And proved by careful study one whole year,  
The wisdom of your own inferences,  
That deafness does not stupify the brain  
Nor kill the vocal powers, learned and brought  
home

The motion language, signs to picture thought,  
As hands moved deftly, write upon the air.

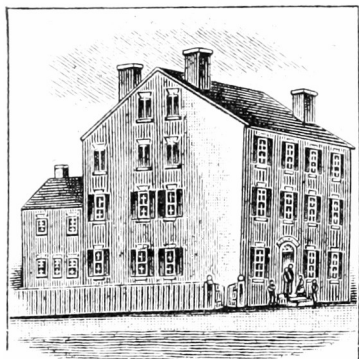


### *Laurent Clerc*

Venerable Brother, who with Christ-like love,  
For suffering humanity, generously came  
From your fair native land, to our "New World,"  
To help disseminate the precious truth;  
God cares for each immortal he creates,  
And has such tender love for burdened ones;  
He sends Great hearts to seek and shelter them;  
To teach them life is vastly worth the living.  
We bless YOU always, proudly, gratefully,  
For the foundation work, you did so well,  
In our prized Mother School; that many schools  
Have grown from one; a national miracle,  
So we count YOU, that Student, and that Priest  
A trio sealed for everlasting fame.

## The Hartford School

IN speaking of the first school for the deaf in America, the *Annals of the Deaf*, October, 1842, says :



FIRST SCHOOL IN 1817

“The school was opened for the reception of pupils and the course of instruction commenced on the 15th of April, 1817. The little school, which during the first week of its existence numbered seven pupils, and in the course of the first year but thirty-three, was kept in the south part of the building, \* \* where also the family of the school resided. This consisted of the principal, the assistant teachers, the

superintendent of the household, the matron and the pupils. At the commencement of the second year the school was removed to apartments at No. 17 Prospect Street; and these two places continued to be used for the purposes of the institution, till its means permitted the erection of the principal building of the present school.”



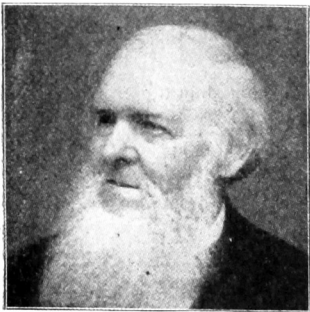
The Gallaudet Monument

The Clerc Monument

THE PRESENT HARTFORD SCHOOL BUILDINGS

## Edmund Booth

THE subject of this sketch, who presided at the organization of the National Association of the Deaf, was born at Springfield, Mass., on the 24th of August, 1810, and died at Anamosa, Iowa, on the 25th of March, 1905. He became deaf when he was eight years of age, and worked on a farm until his seventeenth year, when he was sent to the old Hartford school in 1828. He was a pupil there for four years, and graduated with honors to himself and the school. He was preparing to return



EDMUND BOOTH

home when offered a position as a regular teacher. After due consideration he "accepted the position, so wholly unsought, so unexpectedly tendered, and filled it with increasing satisfaction for the ensuing seven years."

Owing to the hopelessly small pay of that time and a severe lung affliction, Mr. Booth resigned the position. He then emigrated across the continent to Iowa, in Jones County, where he built up the town of Anamosa, a poet-

ical Indian name. While there he was elected county recorder twice, and was also enrolling and engrossing clerk to the Iowa House of Representatives in 1844. In 1849, during the famous "gold-discovery rush," he went overland to California and returned home by way of the Isthmus. Then he started a weekly paper called the *Eureka* in 1856, which is now still in existence. He almost continuously edited the paper up to the time of his death. Here is an interesting part of his married life :

"In 1840 he built a comfortable house—the first frame house built in the county, all others being log cabins of the old type. This house completed and furnished, a wife to make it 'the dearest spot on earth' was the next thing needed. In order to keep up the independent line of action which he had decided upon, in this new house, July, 1840, he was married to Miss Mary Ann Walworth, who had been a pupil in his first class in 1832, and who, with three brothers and a sister, had also emigrated to Iowa.

That he acted wisely in choosing this lady to share his fortunes is evidenced by the fact that she proved a congenial companion, an excellent housekeeper, and so devoted a mother that their three children, a daughter and two sons, fairly idolized her. She died January 25, 1898, mourned by many, and by none more so than by him who had been her constant companion for fifty-seven years."

Soon after Mr. Booth's death a New York paper paid him a tribute editorially, as follows :

"The passing of Edmund Booth, at the ripe age of ninety-five years, removes from the ranks of the deaf of the United States one of the most remarkable characters that has ever risen superior to a life-long affliction. He was totally deaf from early childhood, and the sickness which visited upon him this calamity also utterly destroyed the sight of one eye.

"Yet with him there was the sturdy courage that marked his varied after career and the intellectual brightness which, throughout his long life, exercised so powerful an impetus upon the welfare of the deaf upon the progress of the community wherein was reaped the harvest of his riper years and larger experience.

"To him is accorded the unique distinction of being the first man to preside at a gathering of the representative deaf from all parts of the United States. In a large hall on one of the hill-tops overlooking the city of Cincinnati, in the year 1880, he called to order the meeting that was to organize the present National Association of the Deaf. That was twenty-five years ago, but even then he was called 'the venerable Edmund Booth.' Tall and muscular, with hair and beard as white as drifted snow, he fulfilled the functions of temporary chairman of that first and greatest assemblage of deaf-mutes that up to that time the world had ever known. His step was then strong, his form erect, his intellect alert, and his demeanor one of dignified enthusiasm. He was then in his seventieth year. Over twenty years passed, and at the age of ninety-one we find him delivering a lecture before the deaf of Philadelphia.

"With intellect unclouded to the last, with but five years to complete the span of a full-rounded century, this most wonderful, forceful and helpful man bade farewell to his earthly labors."



## Jean Massieu

[The Annals of the Deaf, October, 1847.]

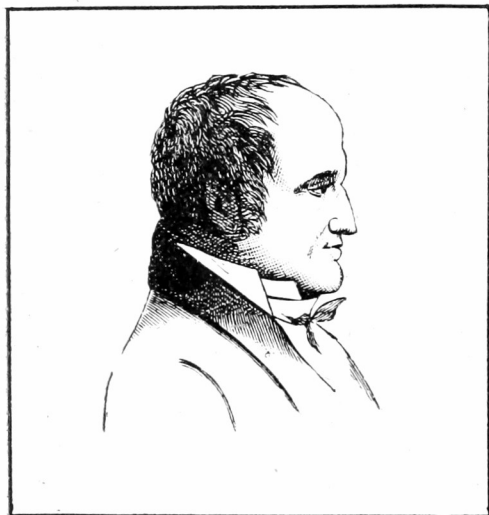
**J**EAN, or rather John, Massieu, deaf and dumb from birth—a name well known throughout Europe, although it is possible but very few may be familiar with the character and history of the man,—was born in 1772 at Semens, a very small village situated at some leagues south of Bordeaux. His parents were poor but honest, the occupation of his father being that of a vine-dresser. They had the misfortune of having in their family as many as six deaf and dumb children—three boys and three girls. Massieu was the second, if not the youngest of the brothers. At the age of thirteen he was admitted into the deaf and dumb school kept at Bordeaux by the Abbe Sicard, who had long before established it, after having received lessons from the Abbe de l'Epee, and before succeeding that immortal benefactor of humanity at Paris.



LAURENT CLERC  
THE AUTHOR

In 1790 or 1791 the Abbe Sicard left Bordeaux, being called to Paris to occupy the place of the Abbe de l'Epee, who had died the preceding year at the age of seventy-seven. Of course, Massieu accompanied his master thither. He was then about eighteen, and two or three years afterwards was appointed one of the tutors in the Paris Institution. He was twenty-five years old in 1797, at which time myself, Laurent Clerc, eleven years old, was brought to Paris by my uncle Laurent Clerc of grateful remembrance. Massieu was, therefore, my first teacher, and I had good opportunity of knowing him thoroughly. He had not only intelligence, but genius; yet there was a striking contrast between some traits of his character and his intellectual faculties; for, cultivated as his mind was, he had during his whole life the carelessness and thoughtlessness of a child. I often saw him hesitate whether he should do the least action or not, for fear of displeasing even the young-

est of his pupils. He consulted them on the most important, as well as on the most trifling matters ; nor was it seldom that he came to communicate to his colleagues his child-like fancies or apprehensions or uneasiness. He had an extreme fondness for watches, books and other small articles ; and when the fancy took hold of him, he was seen to wear two, three, and even four watches. Sometimes he bought books in all the quarters of Paris, and, when possessing these objects so much wished for, he always carried them about him in his pockets, or in his hands.



JEAN MASSIEU

He looked at them without cessation ; he showed them to everybody. By little and little this habit grew weaker, and in a few weeks it passed away, to give place to another gratification. Sometimes he bought at auction dress coats, embroidered waist coats, silk short pantaloons, silk stockings and buckled shoes, after the fashion of Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI, and on certain occasions came dressed in

them into his school room to the great amusement of some, and to excite the ridicule of others. His common dress in the school was a loose grey riding-coat, descending as low as the ankles, furnished with two large deep pockets which he filled with the crayons with which the pupils wrote on the blackboards, and, when school was done, he scarcely ever failed to collect them and to replace them in his pockets, and he carried them constantly about him, except when he had to go out of the Institution. Thus passed the days of his youth between the performance of his duties as a teacher and the gratification of these different tastes which were his predominant passions. He never could subject himself to the usages of the world. It was not for

want of having frequented the best society. He had for more than twenty years seen all who were most distinguished in France; had been introduced to the most august personages, sovereigns and princes; to ladies the most renowned for their grace and intelligence; to the greatest men in science and the arts, and yet he did not improve. His manners were simple. A great vivacity, mixed with a slight roughness of manners, added another feature to his character, without being a fault. His bright imagination shone with advantage in his answers, sometimes incorrect indeed, because he did not slavishly observe the rules, often arbitrary ones, of the French language; but they were always in conformity with sound logic and general grammar. When it happened that he did not know a word, he invented one by following, with the most scrupulous fidelity, the principles of analogy. Those slight errors, in the eyes of a cold purist, who is not much better than our poor Massieu, since he himself neglects, too, the capricious usages of society, are well made up by the originality of his thoughts, the coloring of his fancies, the justness of his comparisons, and the brilliancy of his metaphors, wholly oriental. Those who read him thought they were reading some passages of the Prophets. What is most to be admired is that Massieu wrote his thoughts with great rapidity. His answers were in the form of short discourses, in which he knew how to mix, with art, the description with the definition without the smallest hesitation; so that it was easy to see that he was always ready to answer. So did Mr. Sicard say on this subject, in using a simple but just and expressive comparison, that in order to put a question to Massieu, it was enough to strike the stone with a steel, and immediately the spark would issue. His answers that seemed to flow spontaneously.

I remember many anecdotes about Massieu. I have time to mention two or three, and if I mention them here, it is less to detract from his merits than to show that his oddities did not injure his intellectual faculties. Besides, they are so well known everywhere, that when they were repeated to him at a more advanced age, far from being offended, he heartily joined with others in laughing at them.

One day he had a complaint to make against a man who had

attempted to rob him of his pocket-book. He repaired to one of the Paris police offices, and demanded a sheet of paper and wrote as follows :

"Mr. Judge: I am deaf and dumb. I was looking at something in a broad street with other deaf and dumb persons. This man saw me. He noticed a small pocket-book in the pocket of my coat. He slyly approached me. He was drawing out the pocket-book, when my hip warned me. I turned myself briskly towards this man, who picked it up and returned it to me. I seized the thief by the jacket; I held him fast; he became pale and trembling. I beckoned to a police officer to come. I showed the pocket-book to the officer and expressed to him by signs that the man had stolen my pocket-book. The officer brought the thief thither. I have followed him. I demand justice. I swear before God that he stole this pocket-book from me. He, I dare say, will not deny the fact.

"I beg you, Mr. Judge, not to order him to be beheaded; he has not killed any one, but let him be reprimanded and I will be satisfied."

The thief was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for three months in a jail.

Other incidents are not less amusing. By an urgent invitation, Massieu went to pass one of his autumn vacations in Ostend, a sea town of Belgium, with Mr. Lauwers, father of a deaf and dumb young man, and while there Mr. L. made him a present of a pair of boots. As Massieu had never worn any in his life, he was so much delighted with them that he put them on with eagerness, got up on a table which was standing before a looking glass, and admired his fine boots for half an hour, to the great amusement of all around him and to the great scandal of his poor deaf and dumb pupil, who felt quite disgusted with his conduct, but Massieu did not mind him, and thanked the father as well as he could for his pretty present. He ever afterwards wore both boots and shoes.

Some time after the entrance of the Allied Powers into Paris, two or three English gentlemen came to visit the institution for the deaf and dumb. One of them, much gratified with the performance of Massieu, invited him to come and breakfast with him the next morning. Massieu, who seldom refused an invitation, was punctual to the appointment, and anticipated an excellent breakfast, for he liked nothing else but boiled ham or roasted fowls, veal or mutton cotelets, together with a glass of wine, then

a cup of mocha coffee, and a small glass of liquor. The English gentleman took him to one of those splendid cafes, and ordered hot coffee and milk, buttered toast and eggs, on which Englishmen, in general, like to breakfast, and our ingenious Englishman imagined that what he had just ordered would be very acceptable to Massieu, and even that it would be something that Massieu had never tasted, as he supposed that we poor Frenchmen generally breakfasted on barren bread and pure water; but what was his astonishment when he saw Massieu politely refuse every article he offered him! Taking his pencil, for he could write French very well, he wrote and asked, "What is the matter with you, Monsieur Massieu? Why will you eat nothing?" Massieu answered that he loved neither coffee and eggs, and that kind of food did not suit him at all. "What would you have then, Monsieur Massieu?" "Nothing but ham and wine," answered Massieu. On the spot the gentleman called the waiter and requested him to fetch the articles. Accordingly two large slices of ham on a plate and a bottle of claret wine were brought and set on the table, and Massieu consumed both slices and emptied the whole bottle without even offering one least bit to the gentleman; his notion being that the ham was for himself and the coffee for the gentleman. The gentleman was quite shocked with this singular conduct on the part of Massieu, but said nothing, and they parted as if nothing had occurred. The next day, however, he called on Mr. Sicard and mentioned the circumstances to him, and said that Massieu was not the man he had fancied and heard spoken of so much. Mr. Sicard apologized for Massieu as well as he could, and said that what had happened was but one of the several natural peculiarities of his pupil, which he could not cure, though he had succeeded in making him a man of learning. Massieu knew that his English friend had spoken to his master, but he did not care; on the contrary, he thought there had been nothing improper in what he had done, for, having been invited, he had a right to ask for, at a public eating house, what he liked best, and his motto has ever since been, "Let the Englishman have his coffee, and let me have my ham."

In 1822 the Abbe Sicard died, aged eighty years, and some months afterwards Massieu left the Paris Institution after thirty-

two years of labor. I do not know why ; perhaps it was either on account of his sorrow at the death of his illustrious master, or on account of his being dissatisfied with the changes which took place. He returned to Bordeaux and staid with his friends ; his parents and some of his brothers and sisters had deceased long before. In a year the leader of a small school for the deaf and dumb, located at Rhodéz, Department de l'Aveyron, in the South of France, solicited his assistance, and Massieu went there. He was then fifty-one years old. Soon after his arrival, he was struck with the beauty and loveliness of a young lady of eighteen, who could hear and speak, and who was employed in the establishment, and it was not long before he married her. They had one son when they removed from Rhodéz to Lille, a large city this side the boundaries of France and Belgium, where, with the assistance and contribution of several benevolent citizens, they established a school for the deaf and dumb, of which Massieu was the principal and his wife the matron. They had about thirty pupils when I visited them in 1836. They had lost their son, but had another child, a daughter, whom Mrs. Massieu was nursing at the time of my visit. I can scarcely describe the joy Massieu and myself experienced at seeing each other again after so long a separation. I found Massieu to be a man quite different from what I had known him to be. He was rather old, but polite, social, sensible, and much respected, and as happy as could be. No doubt that he was indebted to his kind wife for his entire alteration. When the moment arrived for me to take leave of him, to return to the United States, with tears in his eyes he clasped me in his arms, and said : "It is long since we were together. It is long since we separated, and I fear it will be long before we meet again. May God bless you ! May He prosper you wherever you are, and send you back on your voyage with a calm sea and a swelling sail ! Adieu, adieu, my dear Clerc. Remember me to our kind friend Mr. Gallaudet." Finally, as time pressed, we parted, both much affected, and I particularly, on many accounts ; for I can never forget that he was my first teacher and constant and faithful teacher. He died in August, 1864, at seventy-five years of age.



