SERMO MIRABILIS: OR THE SILENT LANGUAGE.

WHEREBY

One may learn perfectly in the space of six hours, how to impart his mind to his friend in any language, English, Latin, French, Dutch, &c. tho' never to deep and dangerous a secret, without the least noise, word or voice; and without the knowledge of any in company.

BEING

A wonderful art kept secret for several ages, in Padua, and now published only to the wise and prudent, who will not expose it, as a prostitute, to every foolish and ignorant fellow.

By Monseur La Fin, once Secretary to his Eminence, the Cardinal of Richelieu.

Hug. Grot. Secrecy is the curtain of policy.

Verulam. The best things abused become the basest.

Licensed and entered according to order.

LONDON,
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Sermo Mirabilis, or the Silent Language

As after the vulgar way of communication, men speak their minds by word and voice, so by this unknown and unusual way, men declare their minds by motions, depending on a natural alphabet, as followeth.

The vowels A, E, I, O, U, Y, are signified by the thumb and fingers, of the left hand; A the thumb, E the first finger, I the second finger, O the third finger, U the fourth or little finger. And because there is no place for Y among the fingers, it is set in the plain of Mars or hollow of the hand, as in the following figure appeareth.

The Consonants.

B — Brow
C — Cheek
D — Deaf Ear
F — Forehead
G — Gullet
H — Hair
I — Eye
K — Knuckle
Sermo Mirabilis, or

L — Lip  
M — Mouth  
N — Nose  
P — Pap  
Q — Quick Motion with any Finger  
R — Rib  
S — Shoulder  
T — Temples  
V — Vein in the Arm  
W — Wrist  
X — Two first Fingers a cross  
Y — Z — Breast, lower part

Now it is here to be observed that in this Alphabet, to make it the more natural and easy, every place of the body here mention'd beginneth with that Letter which it signifieth or representeth. As Brow beginneth with B, Cheek with C, &c. But there being no visible place of the Face and Body beginning with D, Q, X and Z; I have borrow'd the Representation of D from the incident Quality or rather Defect of the Ear, Deafness, which beginneth with D. Q from the Quick Motion of the Finger or Hand. X from its Similitude, or any two Fingers a cross. Z is represented by the lower part of the Breast. Which all, by frequent use, will become as easy and ready as any other of the Letters represented more naturally.
Thus the 24 Letters are represented by twenty four parts of the Body and Face. And, as words are spoke with the Mouth, after the common way of expressing, so is the Mind here declared by Motions, as by pointing the first Finger of the right hand to that part or place, which representeth the Letter aimed at. Thus the silent Speaker must spell every word alphabetically, to him or her who hath learned and knoweth the same, as well as himself, and after every word, for distinction sake, make a Sign, as by snapping with the middle Finger and Thumb of the right hand, or by some silent motion, as the stretching out of the right hand, or any other observable Sign which both know and have agreed upon.

As if you were to call one Rogue, without the Knowledge of any in Company: First you must move your Finger to your Ribs, which representeth R. Then to the ring Finger of your left hand, which representeth O. Then to your Gullet, which representeth G. Then to your little Finger, which representeth U. Then to your first Finger, which representeth E. Then, after the Sign given, all these Letters or Motions being observed, kept in Memory, and put together, by him to whom the Discourse is directed, make up ROGUE.
It was my business lately to teach the Latin Language to a Merchant’s Son at his Father’s House in London, where a young Gentleman came frequently to visit my Scholar, but intended to court the young Daughter, over whom the Parents kept so watchful an Eye, that the young Spark could find no opportunity to make his Address; but being one day at Table, and observing her to speak to me, without opening her mouth, he pry’d further in the Art, and became my Scholar, for one day; in which time, I taught him how to speak to her without the help of his Tongue, and to impart his Mind without the knowledge of her Parents. Thus,

First he moved his Finger
Then to his Mouth —— M
Then to his Thumb —— A
Then to his Ear —— D
Then to his Thumb —— M
Then gave the Sign to signify that the word was ended, all which the Lady observing, knew that the word was Madam.

Then to his Eye —— I
Then gave the Sign
Then to his Lip —— L
Then to his Ring Finger —— O
Then to the Vein of his Arm —— V
Then to his first Finger —— E

Then gave the Sign.
Then to his Thumb —— A
Then to his Nose —— D
Then to his Ear —— D
Then gave the Sign.
Then to his Thumb —— A
Then to his Ear —— D
Then to his Ring Finger —— O
Then to his Ribs —— E
Then to his first Finger —— E
Then gave the Sign.
Then to the hollow of his hand — Y
Then to his Ring Finger —— O
Then to his Little Finger —— U

All which observed and put together, make up, Madam, I love, admire, and adore you.

The Lady’s silent answer was modest, and accompanied with a Smile and Blush. But the young Gentleman, under pretence of perfecting him in his new Language, made bold sometimes to confer with the Lady, and at last had the Liberty of a more frequent Converse, by the Parents Permission; till at last
he obtain'd her Affection, which did conclude in a happy Marriage.

I lately made a Wager with a Gentleman to tell him his Thought; he was resolute in the adventure and laid ten to one; therefore to prevent all ground of jealousy and suspicion, I desired him to go to the next Room and tell my Friend his Thought, which he did without hesitation. My Friend, by the help of this silent Language, imparted to me the Secret; which I, after a small pause, revealed publicly, at which the Gentleman being amazed, thinking that I had known the Secrets of his heart, professed any reward whatsoever, for the knowledge of so deep a mystery, wherein he is now a good proficient.

I was sometime ago at a Tavern in London, with a Gentleman my intimate acquaintance, whom one in company intended to arrest; and to that intent, having acquainted me, sent a Porter for a Serjeant to the Countergate: but I, to save my Friend from trouble, desired him to be gone or go to Prison; whereupon he immediately took his leave, notwithstanding his Creditor pressed him to stay and drink the other Bottle, never suspecting me to have given him any caution to prevent the imminent danger. But all the old Usurer got by it was the Serjeants company, to drink a Bottle of Wine, and the paying 5 Shillings. But

But tho this Art, in it self, be both lawful and profitable, yet is there none more liable to abuse, by being perverted to bad and sinister Ends; as cheating at Cards, and other Games, betraying and trapping men for private ends, sowing Discontent among Friends, &c.

I knew a witty and courageous Captain in Flanders, but of a vindictive Spirit, pretend great friendship to his Lieutenant, whom he mortally hated, and in token of his pretended respect, caused me to teach him this silent way of speaking; pretending thereby to entertain the more close and frequent correspondence with him, till at last he brought him to that height of Confidence, that at all times he spoke his mind of other Officers, without Fear or Discretion. The Captain finding the Spark so flexible, accused him to the Collo- nel as an abusive Fellow, that deserved not to keep company with civil Persons; much less to bear Commission among such worthy Gentlemen: And to prove his assertion sent for the Lieutenant, and (having obtained Liberty of the Collo- nel, to whom he had taught this silent Language) to induce the Spark, and free him from all distrust, spoke very carelessly of the Officers, and especially of the Collo- nel. The Lieutenant thinking all was safe, as under the covert of an unknown Tongue,
Sermon Mirabilis, or
Tongue, spoke so disgracefully of the Collo-
nel, that notwithstanding his conniving then,
he sent him in a short time to Prison, took
from him his Commission, and sent him
home in Rags to his own Country.

Of Contractions and Abbreviations.

As in English print, one Character repre-
senteth a Word of one Syllable, as and is
figured by &, and as two Letters stand for a
word of several Syllables, as Dr. for Doctor,
Mr. for Master, &c. So may the same Me-
thod be used by motions in this silent Lan-
guage, in all words that more frequently oc-
cur. Thus,

For and join both your hands together.
For yes, shut your right hand.
For no, shut your left hand.
For Mr. move first to your mouth, then
to your ribs.

For Dr., move first to your Ear, then to
your Ribs; and be mindful to give the Sign
of Distinction after every word, whither con-
tracted or spoke at length.

Thus this silent Language admittest no less
of Contractions and Abbreviations, by Mo-
tions, than any other doth by Letters and Char-
acters, as the Speaker thinketh fit.

Of Numeration.

There is one way of Numeration used am-
ong the Grecians which doth not exceed the
Number

Number of 24, conform to the 24 Letters of
their Alphabet, Alpha representing 1. Beta
2, &c. Which may be here used in this
dumb Language: as the Thumb, the Brow
2, &c. But this cometh far short to the true
measure of Numeration; therefore do repre-
sent the nine digit Figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
9, and the Cypher 0, by the Thumbs and
Fingers of the Right and Left hands: As
when I would mention 1, I demonstrate the
Thumb of the Right hand, 2 the first Finger,
3 the middle Finger, 4 the Ring Finger, 5
the little Finger, 6 the Thumb of the Left
hand, &c.

Now suppose you were to mention this
present year 1692. First you must demon-
strate, point out, or move the right

Thumb to the left Arm ——— 1
Then the left Thumb to the right Arm 6
Then the Ring Finger of the left hand 9
Then the first Finger of the right hand 2
Which, in all, make up 1692.

But if you be to express a Number bearing
two or more Figures of one sort, as 11, 22,
33, &c. Then you must either demonstrate,
or move the same Finger to the opposite Arm
twice, or as oft as there are Figures to be ex-
pressed.

As for the number 11, you must move the
right Thumb to the left Arm twice, for 22
you
you must move the first Finger of the right hand to the left Arm twice, if the Number contain three figures of one sort as 333, then move the middle Finger of the right hand thrice, and so of all the Numbers of this kind.

Now to make merry one may desire any in Company to think on a Number, and tell it to his Friend; lest he forget or prevaricate, which he may wager to tell, without his information; he only to whom the Number is imparted giving a few private signs, according to the Rule above mentioned.

But if by frequent use, this way of speaking should turn common, and not safe to declare one's mind by; then let any two Letters of the Alphabet, especially the Vowels, or any two of the digit Figures be changed to other Motions; and that will secure the Speaker from the lash of a dangerous hearer or informer. As by changing A to the Arm, E to the Elbow, &c. And as for the Figures, they may be changed without trouble as the Speaker pleaseth. And if this way of Numeration prove difficult, let the Number be spell'd at length by Letters, and that is the surer way.

Of the Latin Language.

As the same Letters which write or print English, will also write or print French, Dutch, or Latin. So by the preceding Alphabet, you
you may express your mind whatever be the Language. But that they who are Masters of the Latin Tongue may have the advantage of those who are unlearned. I shall here set down an Alphabet, which dependeth only on Latin words, thus.

The Vowels A E I O U are the same with the English.

B ———— Brachium
C ———— Cubitus
D ———— Dentes
E ———— Frons
F ———— Gena
G ———— Humers
H ———— Oculus dexter
I ———— Labium
J ———— Mentum
K ———— Nasus
L ———— Pectus
M ———— Digiti motus celer
N ———— Reduvia
O ———— Superictum sinister
P ———— Tempora
Q ———— Venter
R ———— Indices transvers

Thus are the Latin Letters represented and (as in the English) you must move the first Finger of your right hand, to that place which representeth the Letter which doth fit, your purpose. As for Example, put case you were
Sermo Mirabilis, or were at the Tavern, and had no Money about you, and intended to borrow a Crown or Noble of your Friend, without the knowledge of any in Company, in these words, Accommoda mihi Aureum.

Move the first Finger of your right hand to the Thumb of the left hand—A
Then to your Elbow—C Cubitus
Then to your Elbow again—C Cubitus
Then to your Ring Finger—O
Then to your Chin—M Mentum
Then to your Ring Finger—O
Then to your Teeth—D Dentes
Then to your Thumb—A
Then give the sign and the word is Accommoda.

Then to your Chin—M Mentum
Then to your Middle Finger—I
Then to your Shoulder—H Humerus
Then to your Middle Finger—I
Then give the sign and the word is mihi.

Then to your Thumb—A
Then to your little Finger—U
To the skin over your Nail—R Reduvia
Then to your first Finger—E
Then to your little Finger—E
Then to your Chin—M Mentum

And the Word is Aureum. Which all together make up Accommoda mihi Aureum or or, lend me a Crown. And by this Means, one may save his credit, and put his Friends kindness to a Tryal.

As for Diphthongs, they are little necessary to those who are Masters of the Latin Tongue, but the moving of two Fingers of the right hand to any two Vowels of the left maketh a Diphthong. As the Thumb and first Finger make Æ
The Ring and first Finger make — OE
The Thumb and little Finger make — AU
The first and little Finger make — EU
The first and middle Finger make — EI

So that if you point once, these two Vowels or Fingers of your left hand, with the first and second Fingers of your Right, you signify two Vowels; and the Conjunction of two Vowels make a Diphthong.

Lately, being in Company, I laid a Wager with a Gentleman, to tell him any Word or Sentence he did impart to my Friend in Latin, without his Information, and my Friends Word or Writing. The Gentleman did conjecture, that I could know by Signs, something of his meaning; but could not know the individual Word: Therefore, being confident in his own Judgment, laid a wager of six bottles of Canary. The Vintner himself holding stakes. And so my Friend
Sermo Mirabilis, or

First moved his Finger to his
Teeth. ——— D Dentes
Then moved the first, and sec-
cond Fingers of his right hand, to
the Thumb and first Finger of
his left. ——— A E
Then to his Chin. ——— M Mentum
Then to the ring Finger of his
left hand. ——— O
Then to his Nose. ——— N Nafus

Which all put together, make up the word
DAEMON, by which the young Spark swore,
when he lost the Wager, which the Vintner,
who held Stakes, was not backwards in
bringing in.

POSTSCRIPT.

Thus have I said all that, at present, I intend on
this Subject. I hope it will prove acceptable,
especially to the more knowing and courteous, if not,
shall be very sorry. However the price is small, and
the time of running but short, and so both expense
and los will be but inconsiderable. I have laid a Foun-
dation, where on a more ingenious may build; and as
first my intention only was
Stamina prima iugo imponere, atque ut altera Virtus
Inferas in medio Radiis sub tegmen acutis.

FINIS.