

LESSONS IN FRENCH.

SECTION I.

THE LETTERS.

THE French alphabet contains twenty-five letters, as follows, with their names in italics:—A, *ah*; B, *bay*; C, *say*; D, *day*; E, *eh*; F, *eff*; G, *zhay*; H, *ash*; I, *ee*; J, *zhée*; K, *kah*; L, *ell*; M, *emm*; N, *enn*; O, *o*; P, *pay*; Q, *ku*; R, *err*; S, *ess*; T, *tay*; U, *u*; V, *vay*; X, *eer*; Y, *ee gree*; Z, *zed*.

W, called in French *double V*, might be added, as many foreign words which have that letter have been adopted into the French language.

The alphabet is divided into *vowels* and *consonants*.

THE VOWELS.—The vowels are *six* in number, namely:—

a e i o u y.

THE CONSONANTS.—The remaining letters of the alphabet, *nineteen* in number, are called *consonants*, namely:—

b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v x z,
which are divided into labials, dentals, gutturals, and liquids.

There are:—Four labials, viz., two sonant, *b, v*; two surd, *p, f*;—Five dentals, viz., two sonant, *d, z*; two surd, *t, s*; one sometimes surd, sometimes sonant, viz., *x*;—Five simple gutturals, viz., two sonant, *g, j*; three surd, viz., *c, k, g*;—One compound surd guttural, *ch*;—One guttural, sometimes aspirate, sometimes mute, *h*;—Four liquids, viz., *l, m, n, r*.

THE COMPOUND VOWELS.—There are eighteen compound vowels, namely:—*ai, ay, ei, ey, er, ez, ed, et, es, au, eau, eu, æu, oi, oy, ôé, œé, ou*.

They are thus called because they are sounded by one omission of the voice.

In the three following, *éi, éau, éu*, the *é* must be sounded by itself, and separately from the other letters.

THE DIPHTHONGS.—There are *six* diphthongs, namely:—

ia ié io ua ué ui.

They are thus called because, though pronounced as one syllable, the sound of both vowels is distinctly heard.

The following *eight* combinations of *three successive vowels* are also called diphthongs, namely:—

iai iau ieu oua oué oui uai ucu.

These diphthongs are thus divided into syllables:—

i-ai i-au i-eu ou-a ou-é ou-i u-ai u-eu.

THE NASAL VOWEL SOUNDS.—There are certain sounds,