

ever ingenious. We can, however, exercise more care than is usually done, in the selection of our *approximate values*, and, what is more important, we can give in addition to this, accurate directions for arriving at the exact French sounds. The ordinary French teacher, even though his pronunciation be rigorously correct, is utterly unable to make his pupils imitate him, however hard he may try, and for the simple reason that he has not the slightest knowledge of how the sounds which he utters are produced, or of what constitutes the difference between his own pronunciation and that of his pupils. He is, therefore, only a little more valuable to his pupils than the ordinary text-book on pronunciation.

Now, there is a very simple key to the pronunciation of the French vowels and consonants, just as there is a key to the pronunciation of the English vowels and consonants. A person may hear French spoken for years without discovering this key, and when he does discover it, he will be quite unconscious of the fact, although he may use it constantly ever after. Yet this key is so simple, that any person can be shown how to use it in less than half an hour. It may take some weeks for one to become dexterous in its use—for old habits are hard to overcome—but most persons will be able, after the first or second attempt, to pronounce the easier French sounds so perfectly, so that no one hearing these persons pronounce would suspect them of being anything but French. The main purpose of this little book is to explain this key, but it has also been thought advisable, while doing this, to deal with the general subject of French pronunciation ; for a *key* is of little value without the *lock* on which to use it.

If the student should be fortunate enough to be able to obtain assistance from any French person whose pronunciation can be relied upon, so much the better ; but this should be no reason for being less careful in following out the directions here given. It is easy for him to deceive himself into imagining that he is pronouncing like his teacher, but if his tongue strikes his palate when it should strike his teeth, or if his lips remain flat when they should be protruded, nothing is more certain than that the sounds which he utters are not French, but English. To the adult English person learning to pronounce French, a small looking-glass is perhaps more essential than a teacher.