

THE KEY TO FRENCH SOUNDS.

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INTRODUCTION.

It is usually thought that to acquire a correct pronunciation of a language, it suffices to hear that language spoken by persons who speak it correctly. Why this theory should be so generally accepted, it is difficult to explain. No one would maintain for a moment that the average German or Frenchman who has lived for five, or even ten years, among English people speaks English with anything like a correct pronunciation. That few Frenchmen ever learn even to pronounce the English *the* and *that*, although they hear these words correctly pronounced every day, is an undeniable fact. The following will serve as an example of the kind of English which a French person (and a teacher) will speak after five or six years' sojourn in an English country :

I weel geeve you, mademoiselle, de pairfect Parisian accent. I teach by de naturelle maitode—de maitode by ooech de child learns es moduir tongue.

There are many persons in this world who never reason, and who would only see in the above strange pronunciation of their teacher an evidence of his ability to acquaint them with the pronunciation of the French language. To them, nothing is more logical than to learn French from a teacher who cannot speak any language but French. If these persons were a little more thoughtful, they would ask themselves how this "*naturelle maitode*," which has utterly failed to acquaint their teacher with the elements of English pronunciation, is going to prove so efficacious a means of teaching them the pronunciation of French. Is it at all probable that they, after five or six years' study with their teacher, will pronounce French any more correctly than the latter pronounces English? Perhaps these persons may be much more clever than their teacher, and perhaps also more clever than certain persons