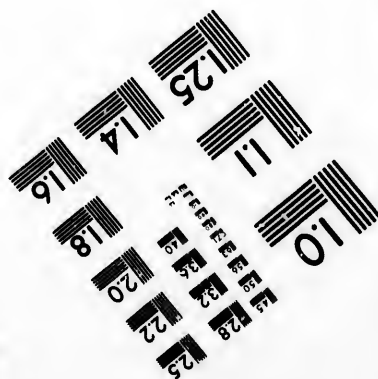
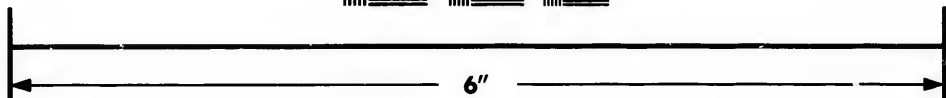
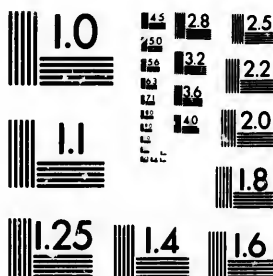


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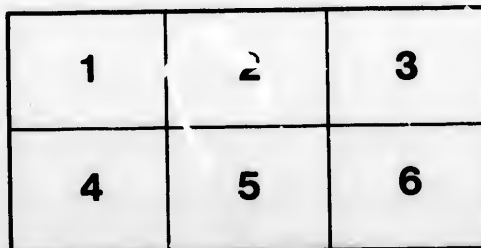
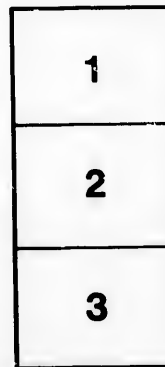
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**THE KEY**  
TO  
**French Sounds.**

A SCIENTIFIC METHOD OF ACQUIRING  
AN EXACT PRONUNCIATION OF ALL THE  
VOWEL AND CONSONANTAL SOUNDS  
OF FRENCH SPEECH,  
BEING BASED ON CAREFUL PHONOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS MADE  
ON A NUMBER OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH PERSONS.

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BY  
**CHARLES THÉOPHILE DE BRISAY, B.A.**

*(Author of the "Analytical French Method," the "Analytical  
Latin Method," etc.)*

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**FIRST EDITION.**

**ACADÉMIE DE BRISAY,  
TORONTO, CANADA.**

**1899.**

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## 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 modair 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



of our acquaintance, who, though living in France for over twenty years, have not yet outgrown their English accent.

Persons learning a foreign language are rarely aware that their pronunciation is defective. When the Frenchman hears the English *the*, it sounds to his ear like *de*, because *d* is the only sound in his language which approaches the English *th*. When an English person hears pronounced a French *t*, *d*, or *n*, etc., he imagines he hears the same sounds as when these consonants are pronounced in English, and consequently all words in which these letters occur will be mispronounced by him. The French *r* is another letter which is seldom pronounced correctly by English people. Indeed, there is not a consonant nor a vowel that is pronounced alike in English and French, although the difference for some letters may be but slight. (1)

The ear of the adult is easily deceived, because it is accustomed to certain sounds only, and these it identifies with certain foreign sounds which are at most only *somewhat similar* to the former. For the adult, the "*manière par laquelle le child learns ses modair tongue*" is altogether insufficient. It suffices for the child, because the latter has no bad habits to unlearn. It is a simple matter to teach the infant child to speak. The adult stammerer, however, needs more care and attention. Every English person who takes up the study of French is, as regards that language, a stammerer, and will likely continue to stammer, until he is shown his faults and the means of correcting them.

Any method for the teaching of a language must be more or less *natural*, but it need not be *primitive*. A little science will improve it wonderfully. In five minutes any Frenchman can be made to pronounce the sound *th*, by being shown where to place his tongue, how the sound is produced, and how it differs from the French *d*, etc. And any English person can be shown just as easily how to pronounce the French *t*, *d*, *n*, etc. In fact, all the sounds of the French alphabet can be learned in a very short time, so that there is no reason why persons of English nationality cannot learn to pronounce French as perfectly as native Frenchmen.

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(1) The text-books and dictionaries used in English schools serve to confirm the student in his delusion. For instance, we may learn from mostly any French-English dictionary that the most of the French consonants sound as in English.

There are hundreds of French people who speak the English language quite correctly as far as its grammar is concerned, and who can express themselves in English almost as readily as in French, but who never in all their lives pronounced an English vowel or consonant. Such persons are understood without difficulty, and many Englishmen even like to hear their language spoken with a French "accent," as they term it, but this does not alter the fact, that those who speak with this accent never utter a single English sound; for all their vowels and consonants are French. Similarly, we find many English persons who can express themselves in French quite readily, but who never pronounce a single French word correctly—and for the simple reason that all their vowels and consonants are English. The moment an English person opens his mouth and utters the simplest French word, he is recognized by French people as a foreigner to the French language; and while some English people may prefer English with a French "accent," no Frenchman was ever known to be delighted by French with an English accent; for the flat English vowels and the feebly-articulated consonants are to a Frenchman almost unbearable—at least when applied to his language.

Most students of French would be somewhat surprised to be told that they could not pronounce a single French sound, and would doubtless refer us to their dictionary or French grammar to show us their authority for pronouncing the "short French *i*" like the English *i* in *mill*, and the "short French *ou*" like the English *u* in *full*. And yet the fact remains that if a Frenchman ignorant of English tried to pronounce *full mill*, the nearest he could get to these sounds would be something resembling *fool meal*. The sound of *i* in *mill*, and the sound of *u* in *full*, are altogether foreign to French—as, indeed, they doubtless were to Latin—and teachers who represent these sounds as French entirely mislead their students. In learning a dead language like Latin, we can afford to be somewhat indifferent regarding its exact pronunciation, but for a living spoken language approximate values are of little practical use.

The fact is, we cannot represent to an English person the real values of the French vowels and consonants by any signs, how-

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.

## PART I.

### CHAPTER I.

#### VOICE, SPEECH, WHISPER, ETC.

WHAT we call voice is a sound produced by the vibration of two membranes (vocal cords) situated in a part of the windpipe called the larynx, or voice-box. These membranes, fastened one on either side of the larynx, are movable, and in ordinary breathing there is a space between them through which the breath passes without impediment. When, however, these two membranes are approximated so as to block completely the passage for the breath, the latter, forcing its way upward, causes the membranes to vibrate, and escapes, not in a continuous stream, but in very minute puffs, so that when we place the hand before the mouth and sound a vowel we can feel the heat of the breath, but not its force.

The vocal ligaments are elastic, and may be stretched like rubber bands. When lax, they vibrate slowly, so that the result is a *low* musical note; when they are stretched, they vibrate quickly, so that the result is a *high* note. Musical pitch, however, has nothing to do with the production of vowel sounds, and hence does not concern us in our present study.

Just above the larynx (or voice-box), and connecting with it, is a cavity into which the mouth and nose open, called the pharynx.<sup>(1)</sup> This cavity, together with the mouth, serves as a chamber of resonance for the sounds originated in the larynx. By means of the tongue and certain muscles, the space in the mouth and pharynx can be altered in various ways, and thus modify in as many ways the sounds from the larynx. The different sounds thus produced are termed *vowels* (*a, e, i, o, etc.*).

The nasal cavities form a separate resonance chamber by themselves, and are generally shut off from the breath when we utter

(1) The pharynx can be seen by looking into the mouth.

most of the vowel sounds. In pronouncing certain words, however, such as *song, sang, sung*, etc., the passages leading to the nose open, and receive part of the vocalized breath. Many persons, too, in pronouncing the ordinary vowels, *a, e, i, o*, etc., neglect to close completely the nasal resonance chamber, and consequently speak with what is commonly known as a *nasal twang*.

*Whisper.*—That the different vowel sounds are not produced in the same manner as musical notes is quite apparent when we whisper. In the whisper the vocal cords are closer together than in ordinary breathing, but they do not vibrate, and consequently give forth no sound. The sounds which we hear in whispering the vowels *a, e, i, o, ou*, are produced by the breath flowing through the larynx, pharynx and mouth. The vocal cords are quite silent, and yet we distinguish plainly the *a* from the *e*, the *i* from the *o*, etc. These different sounds, then, are produced by changing the size and shape of the mouth and pharynx. In the French language there are vowel sounds which are not heard in English, but since an English mouth is constructed just like a French mouth, it follows that it will produce exactly the same sounds as the latter under like conditions.

In ordinary speech there are two classes of sounds—vowels and consonants. The former we have already explained; the latter are whispered sounds, being produced by obstructing in various ways the breath as it reaches the mouth. In articulating certain consonants, such as *r, z*, etc., there may also be heard a slight rumbling in the larynx, but this sound is not of sufficient strength to obscure the sound which is produced in the mouth, although it may modify slightly its character.

The sound of every vowel and consonant is different in French to what it is in English, and the only certain way to master the French sounds is by learning the positions which the tongue and lips assume in pronouncing them.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE VOWELS.

Before proceeding to study the vowel sounds, a word or two concerning the mouth and pharynx is necessary. If the student will open his mouth and move his tongue forward, he will be able to see (with the aid of a looking-glass) most of the parts of the mouth and pharynx which he will require to be familiar with in his present study. He will observe that the back of the mouth terminates in a fleshy curtain (called the *velum*) whose two sides are attached at the bottom to the base of the tongue (and which consequently may be drawn forward with this organ). In the centre of the upper part of this curtain, which hangs down from the palate, is a prolongation called the *uvula*. The cavity which is seen behind the curtain is the pharynx, into which the nasal cavities as well as the passage leading from the larynx (called the *glottis*) open. The openings of the nasal cavities are situated in the upper part of the pharynx, behind the velum or palatal curtain, so that when the latter is moved backward and upward, the communication between the nose and pharynx is shut off. When we breathe through the nose or pronounce a nasal vowel, the palatal curtain hangs down loosely, but the moment we attempt to pronounce any of the vowels *a, é, i* (*ah, ay, ee*), etc., the velum with its uvula presses backward against the roof of the pharynx, and thus prevents the breath from entering the nasal cavities.

Connected with the base of the tongue is a sort of lid-like process called the *epiglottis*, which serves as a covering to the glottis (the passage leading to the larynx) during the act of swallowing, but which moves forward, leaving the glottis open, during the act of breathing. Although it is impossible to observe very accurately the position of the epiglottis during speech, it is evident from the various movements of the base of the tongue, that it plays an important part in the production of vocal sounds, and that its position varies considerably for each vowel. Persons have been known to pronounce quite perfectly the vowel sounds, whose tongues had been cut off close to the root, which fact goes to show that the

front portion of the tongue, however indispensable for the articulation of the consonants, has not a great deal to do with the production of vowel sounds. The tongue is, however, an *indicator* of the conditions of the pharynx, and for that reason we require to watch it closely in our present study.

For the vowels *è* (as in *yes*), *é* (ay), *i* (as in *machine*), the tongue bends upwards some distance from its base, while for *a* (as in *father*), *o* (as in *or*) *ó* (as in *old*), *ou* (as in *group*), the very root of the tongue rises, its central part remaining level.

The two sides of the pharynx are lined with muscular membranes which, though quite lax during the act of natural breathing, tighten considerably when a vowel sound is uttered. This the student may observe for himself, by opening his mouth widely and pronouncing the vowel *a* (*ah*). As we will see presently, these membranes are much tighter for the French vowel sounds than for those of the English, and on that account the French vowels are always more sonorous and guttural than the corresponding English ones.

#### WIDE VOWELS.

##### *e* (uh).

This sound is heard in the English *the* (thuh), *her*, etc. Of all the vowel sounds this is the one which is produced with the least effort, the tongue and mouth keeping almost the positions for natural breathing. We frequently, in breathing through the mouth, allow the vocal cords to come together for a brief moment before each expiration, so that each puff of breath is accompanied by an indistinct sound from the larynx. This sound is *e* (uh), its obscure and elementary character being no doubt due to the natural condition of the pharynx, which condition is unfavorable to the production of a pure vocal sound. The English language abounds in this obscure *e*, which is often written *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, as in *ballad*, *fertile*, *air*, *pilot*, *up*, etc.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH *e*.—If the student will pronounce *e* (*uh*), first in his accustomed way, and then with his tongue protruding out of his mouth, he will perceive that the second sound, while practically the same as the first, is

much more hollow and guttural. The first sound seems as though it originated in the mouth, whereas the second seems to come from the bottom of the throat. As a matter of fact, both sounds originate in the same place—the larynx—but the second sound has evidently a more perfect resonance chamber than the first. The difference between the two sounds will be better appreciated, if while they are being pronounced, the hands be placed to the ears. The deep hollow nature of the second sound will then be unmistakably felt. The first sound is English, while the second is French. All English vowels are distinguished by their flat, non-resonant character, whereas all French vowels are remarkable for their deep, guttural, sonorous ring.

THE REASON FOR THE DIFFERENCE. When the tongue is moved forward, it draws with it the two sides of the palatal curtain, and this increases the tension of the membranes of the pharynx, besides leaving a larger chamber for the sound ; whereas if the tongue be allowed to slide back into the throat, the pharynx becomes lax and flabby, and consequently less fit to echo the sound. (1) In pronouncing the French vowels, the tongue does not, of course, protrude out of the mouth, but it comes as far forward as the teeth. It necessarily occupies a much higher position than usual when thus pressed forward, and hence we are compelled to keep the jaws a certain distance apart in speaking French, if we would avoid biting the tongue.

(1) In pronouncing the French vowels the palatal curtain with its uvula also presses back against the roof of the pharynx much more firmly than it does for the English vowels, and to this fact is partly due the greater tension of the French throat. So careless and feeble is the backward movement of the velum for the English vowels that it often fails to completely close the openings of the nasal cavities, and hence the frequency of the nasal twang.

It would also seem that the larynx lowers slightly more for the French vowels than for the English ones, and no doubt this has something to do with the difference between the French and English vowel sounds. Whatever be the exact explanation of the difference, it is certain that when the tongue is kept forward, the vowel sound will have a tendency to be guttural, and to be accompanied by a tension in the pharynx and by strong vibrations in the chest, whereas, when the tongue recedes, the sound of the vowel is apt to be flat, and the tension in the pharynx and the vibrations of the chest correspondingly feeble.



It is possible to speak English quite distinctly with the jaws completely closed, because the tongue for the English sounds is drawn back into the mouth, becoming quite flat. If the student will observe the position of his tongue as he pronounces the English *e* (uh) or *a* (ah), he will see that it falls slightly below the lower teeth (becoming concave instead of convex) and receding a little. One of the first things which every Frenchman who desires to speak English with an English accent requires to do, is to attempt to pronounce the vowel sounds with the jaws entirely closed, for to be successful in this attempt the tongue must recede and flatten, and that is the key to the pronunciation of English. *The key to French sounds* is, as we have seen, the very opposite to this; the tongue must always be kept well forward, and slightly raised, in such a way that the jaws cannot close beyond a certain point.

We have used with great success a little instrument which fastens on to one of the lower front teeth and which serves as a kind of prop to prevent the jaws from closing beyond a certain limit. By the use of this instrument or prop, English persons can readily cure themselves of a habit which is fatal to the proper pronunciation of French. The chief point to be attended to, however, in pronouncing French vowels is the position of the tongue, for if this organ is kept well forward, the jaws must separate. Let the student, therefore, in pronouncing *me* (muh), *fe*, *ve*, *pe*, rest the tip of the tongue on the lower front teeth, so that its sides will overspread the lower grinders. If the French *e* is correctly pronounced, a stronger tension will be felt in the pharynx than for the English *e* (uh) and the sound will be more guttural than that of the English vowel

è

This character (which, note well, bears the mark `) represents an altogether different sound to that of *e*. It is heard in the English *net*, *men*, *fell*, *yes*, etc. To produce it the tongue rises convexly near its base, a little higher than its natural position (or that for *e*).

The English *è* is pronounced with the jaws quite close together,

and yet there is as much space between the tongue and palate for the English *è* as there is for the French *è*. This follows from the natural high position of the French tongue. If we pronounced the French *è* with the jaws as close together as for the English *è*, the tongue would touch the palate. Let the student measure the distance between the tongue and palate for the English *è* (as in *yes*); let him now advance and raise his tongue so that its tip will rest on the lower front teeth and its sides overspread the lower grinders, and he will find that he will have to lower the jaw (open the mouth) considerably, in order to have the distance between the tongue and palate the same as before. Pronounce *fève, ère*, first as in English, then as in French, in order to notice the guttural quality of the French *è*. The tension in the throat should be felt as before.

## é

This vowel corresponds to the English *e* in *eh, they, prey, eight*, etc., or to the English *a* in *frustrate, Friday, lave*, etc. In producing this sound, the tongue bends upwards near its base, a little higher than for *è*. (2) The mouth must, of course, be more open for the French sound than for that of the English, as we have already explained (see *è*). Let the student pronounce *bébé*, first as in English and then as in French, holding his hands to his ears for both sounds. The French sound should be much more guttural than the English one.

## i

This vowel corresponds to the English *i* in *machine, clique*, or to the English *e* in *maybe, be*, etc. In pronouncing this vowel, the tongue bends upward near its base, a little more than for *é*, the lower jaw also rising with it, so that the sides of the tongue come into contact with the palate, leaving only a narrow space for the breath. For the English *i* (or *e*) the jaws nearly close, only a small space intervening between the two rows of teeth. For the French

(2) The lower jaw also rises slightly, so that the mouth is less open for *é* than for *è*. The former is sometimes called the close *e* and the latter the open *e*. If the student will notice that the mark ' makes with its vowel a close or acute angle, and that the mark ` makes an open or obtuse angle, he will not be liable to confound the two characters.

*i* there must be room for the tongue between the two rows of teeth, and also as much space between the tongue and palate as in English. This will require the jaws to remain at a fair distance apart, although they may approach each other more for this vowel than for any other. If there is not sufficient space between the tongue and palate, the sound will be confused instead of clear and sonorous. When the French *i* is sounded loudly, it causes the whole chest to vibrate violently. In pronouncing the English *i*, the vibrations may also be felt, but they are very feeble. Pronounce *mi*, *vive*. See that the tongue is well forward, overspreading the lower teeth. The sound should be, as in the case of the other vowels, guttural and sonorous.

We have now had all of the first series of vowel sounds, the first of this series being *e* and the last *i*. Before going any further, the student should familiarize himself with the successive positions which the tongue assumes in pronouncing these vowels. These successive positions may be represented thus :

i  
é  
è  
e

The tongue, in rising to each of these positions, broadens gradually, so that for *i*, its sides project outside the grinders. The broadening of the tongue is accompanied by a widening of the throat, the lips also having a tendency to spread at the corners. On account of this widening of the tongue, throat, and lips, we may term the above series of sounds *wide vowels*. (3)

#### NARROW VOWELS.

The sounds represented by the signs *a*, *o*, *ó*, *ou*, may be called narrow vowels, because in pronouncing these sounds the tongue narrows more or less. This narrowing of the tongue is accompanied by a similar narrowing of the throat, and the cheeks and lips also press together in sympathy with this movement.

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(3) The spreading of the lips has little to do with the sound of the vowels, the movement being merely sympathetic. For the first sound, *e*, the lips have perhaps a slight tendency to advance.

## a

The first of this series of narrow vowels is *a*. This vowel corresponds to the English *a* in *father, far, half, chance, ask, past*, etc., but *not* to the English *a* in *at, man, tarry*, etc., as is generally stated in dictionaries and other works on pronunciation. (3) The English *a* in *at, man*, etc., is a *wide vowel*; that is to say, in pronouncing it, the tongue rises and broadens slightly, the lips also receding a little. In America, this *a* is made even wider than in England, so that it sounds almost like the French *è*. When an American tries to say *la* (the), he says *lè* (milk). To pronounce the French *a* the tongue should narrow a little, and the cheeks or corners of the lips approach each other slightly, as if indicative of a similar narrowing of the throat. Care must be taken, however, not to narrow the tongue and lips too much, for if that is done, the sound will be that of the English *a* in *all, awe*, etc., which is not an *a* at all, but an *o* (as in *or*). The tongue must be kept forward as in the case of the other vowels. If correctly pronounced, the tension in the throat will be felt, and the sound will be more guttural and sonorous than the English *a*. Let the mouth open to its full capacity.

## o

This sound corresponds to the English *o* in *obstruct, rob, or*, etc. To produce it, the tongue, lips, and throat narrow considerably more than for *a*: the tongue also rises slightly at the base.

English persons in pronouncing *o* find it very difficult to keep the tongue forward, because for the corresponding sound in English the tongue moves away from the front teeth, its front portion sinking to the bottom of the mouth away below the teeth. The tongue narrows very little for the English sound, and the lips show not the least tension in the throat. To pronounce the French *o*, the student should first see that his jaws are well separated. It is even advisable at first to use a prop of some kind to keep them apart. He should then see that the tip of his tongue comes well forward, and that the whole body of the tongue rises above the level of the lower teeth. (4) When the effort is made to narrow the tongue, the cheeks should sink in, and their two extremities,

(3) Many persons say "fawther" for "father," but, of course, quite incorrectly.

which constitute the two corners of the mouth, should approach each other, thus giving the mouth an oval shape. The sound should be much more guttural than that of the English *o* in *rob*.

ó

This vowel corresponds to the English *o* in *piano, pose*, etc. To produce it, the tongue rises at the base a little higher than for *o*, at the same time *narrowing*. The student will require to use the same care in pronouncing this vowel as with the previous one. The jaws must not be allowed to come together, nor the tongue to recede and sink, as in the case of the English *ó*. The lips will advance slightly more than for *o*, so that the oval aperture will be smaller. (5) The sound will be distinguishable from that of the English *ó* by its guttural quality.

ou

This vowel corresponds to the English *ou* in *group*, or to the English *oo* in *soon, foolish*, etc. The tongue rises at the base for this vowel a little higher than for *ó*, narrowing as before.

The directions given for *o* and *o'* apply equally to this vowel. Let the jaws be kept well apart, and the tip of the tongue rest against the lower front teeth; then move forward the lips (without closing the jaws), so that the oval aperture may be a little smaller than for *o'*. The sound will be much more guttural than that of the English *ou*, and if forced, will be very similar to the sound of a fog-horn. The vibration in the throat for *ou*, like that for *i*, is very strong.

We have now had the second series of vowel sounds, the first of this series being *a* and the last *ou*. The successive positions which the tongue assumes in pronouncing these vowels may be represented thus :

ou  
ó  
o  
a

(4) For all the narrow vowels the tip of the tongue has a tendency rather to press against the lower teeth than to rest on their edges, and hence to occupy a slightly lower position. It must, however, never be allowed to recede.

(5) Hence this vowel is sometimes called the "close" *o*, while the previous vowel is termed the "open" *o*.

It is often stated in dictionaries and other works on pronunciation that the lips protrude for the English vowels *o*, *ó*, *ou*. It would be much nearer the truth to say that the great majority of English persons scarcely move their lips at all in pronouncing these vowels. The protruding of the lips in French is quite involuntary, these organs being moved by the same muscles that are used in narrowing the tongue. Not merely the lips, but the cheeks move when the tongue is narrowed. The lips have very little tendency to protrude when the jaws are nearly closed and the tongue drawn back into the mouth.

The secret to the proper pronunciation of the foregoing vowels is the same as that for the first series,—the tongue must be kept forward and raised above the level of the lower teeth, and the jaws kept well apart.

#### WIDE LABIAL VOWELS.

There are two French vowels which in one sense belong to the first series of vowels, inasmuch as the tongue must be broad in order to pronounce them, and yet, which might be regarded as belonging rather to the second series, inasmuch as they are pronounced with the lips pressed forward. These vowels, which are written *eu* and *u* respectively, are not heard in English, and hence generally give some difficulty to English persons.

#### eu

The English sound which comes nearest to this one is that of *e* in *err* or *u* in *urge*, which is a little more guttural than the ordinary English *e* (uh). Nine out of ten English persons on hearing for the first time the French *peu* or *feu*, imagine they hear an *r* at the end of these words, and in attempting to repeat them, say *pur* and *fur*. The student would, therefore, not obtain a much better idea of the sound than is here given if he were to hear it pronounced. If, however, he were to merely try to imitate the above sound, without learning how the French *eu* is produced, he would never succeed in getting the latter correct, for the methods of producing the two sounds are quite different.

Pronounce first the French *e* (uh'), remembering to keep the tongue well forward and the jaws fairly well apart ; then press the lips forward as if to pronounce *ou*, without, however, allowing the tongue to rise or to become narrow. The word *monsieur*, which is pronounced *me-sieu*, contains both the sound of *e* and that of *eu*. In pronouncing the second sound a very strong tension should be felt in the throat.

u

This sound, like the previous one, is not heard in English. Writers on French pronunciation generally relieve themselves of the responsibility of explaining the sound by saying that it is exactly like the German *ü*, while writers on German pronunciation adopt the same course, and say that the latter vowel is exactly like the French *u*. To the ordinary English person this seems like explaining the obscure by the more obscure. If possible, the student should consult either a German or a Frenchman for this sound. The German *ü* is not the French *u*, but it is probably as near to it as the student would get by simply trying to imitate in the ordinary way the corresponding French sound. Nearly all English persons who speak French pronounce the German *ü* in place of the French *u*, and never suspect that their pronunciation is faulty in this respect.

There is, however, the same difference between the German *ü* and the French *u* as there is between the English *ou* and the French *ou*, or between the English *u, é, i* and the French *u, é, i*. For the German *ü*, the tongue does not come forward, its tip falling below the level of the lower teeth. If the student will advance and raise the tongue, so that its tip may rest on the lower teeth, and then attempt to produce the German *ü*, he will find that the sound of the vowel will be more guttural and shriller than usual, and that the tension in the throat will be stronger. In other words, the vowel will be French, not German or English.

Here is the best method of arriving at the French *u* : Pronounce first the French *i* (being very careful to keep the tongue forward), and then, without lowering the base of the tongue from its high *i* position, or narrowing it in the least degree, press the lips forward,

making the oval aperture smaller than for *ou*. A tension should be felt in the throat similar to that for *eu*. It is quite probable that the student will fail to get the proper sound on the first attempt, for his tongue will have a tendency to fall to the *ou* position and to narrow, so that the sound will be simply *ou*. The French *u* is a wide vowel, and although the lips press together, they do not draw the cheeks as much forward as for *ou*. We are often told that to pronounce *u*, the lips must "protrude as for whistling;" this direction is not of the slightest value in itself, for, as we have already stated, vowel sounds are not produced by the lips. If the student will attend to his tongue, his lips will look after themselves.

Any person who can pronounce the French *eu* should have little difficulty with the French *u*, for the same muscles are used in pronouncing both vowels. For *eu*, however, the base of the tongue occupies a low position, while for *u* it rises nearly to the palate. (6) Pronounce successively *feu*, *fu*, *peu*, *pu*.

#### NASAL VOWELS.

There are four nasal vowels in French, i.e., four vowels which are pronounced with the nasal cavities open. These vowels are represented by the signs *eun*, *eu* (or *in*), *an*, *un*.

#### **eun** or **un**.

This sound is simply the French *eu* pronounced with the velum lowered, so that the vocalized breath enters the nasal cavities. In pronouncing it the student should take care that his tongue does not move from the *eu* position. It will have a great tendency to rise at the base, so that the sound will be that of the English *ung*. There is no *u* or *ng* to the French vowel, and if an *u* is written, it is only meant to represent the nasal quality of the vowel. If the student will pronounce the English *hung*, he will see that his tongue rises gradually at the *base* and that the velum *gradually* lowers as the vowel is being pronounced. Now, this is quite wrong for the French sound. The velum must not gradually lower, but

(6) The *i* and *u* are closely related: both sounds are accompanied by very strong vibrations of the throat.



must be lowered before the sound begins, otherwise the vowel will not be completely nasal. The tongue and lips must keep the *eu* position from the beginning to the end of the sound. If one hand be applied to the throat and the other to the bridge of the nose, the vibration of the vocal chords as well as that of the nasal membranes will be felt. Although the velum lowers for the nasal vowels, it does not shut off the mouth from the pharynx; hence, while part of the breath escapes by way of the nose, a certain quantity also passes out through the mouth. Let the student not forget to keep his tongue forward as for the vowel *eu*. Pronounce *jeun, brun*.

#### **èn (or in).**

This sound is a nasalized *è*, and hence is heard approximately in the English *sung*; for the English *a* in this word approaches the French *è*, and is moreover partially nasalized. Here is the best method of getting at the sound: Pronounce first *è*, and then, without changing the position of the tongue, repeat the sound (as nearly as possible) with the velum lowered. Let it be remembered that to pronounce *è*, the mouth should be fairly well opened and the tongue kept forward.

There is another sound which is very like *èn*, and which is produced by sounding *i* with the velum lowered. This sound is heard in place of the above in some parts of France, and is also very common in French Canada. If the student will pronounce *èn*, first with the tongue in the *è* position and then with the tongue in the *i* position, he will see that the second sound is much more nasal than the first. It is probable that at one time both sounds were heard in Parisian French, but to-day *vin* is pronounced *vèn*, *lin*, *lè*, etc.; that is to say, the *in* sound has disappeared, though the *in* is still written.

#### **an**

This sound is a nasalized *a*, and hence is approximately heard in the English *ant* (not *ant*, nor yet *out*). To produce it, sound first the French *a*, and then, without disturbing the position of the tongue, repeat (as far as possible) the same sound with the velum

lowered. Keep the tongue well forward and open the mouth to its full capacity. If the tip of the tongue be allowed to slip away from the front teeth, the sound will not be French. Pronounce *fanfan, can-can, ma-man*.

### on

This sound is a nasalized *o*, and hence is approximated in the English *song*. To produce it, pronounce first the French *o* (not *o'*) and then, without disturbing the position of the tongue, lower the velum and repeat (as far as possible) the same sound. Keep the tongue forward as usual. Pronounce *bon, mon*.

The above nasal vowels are generally a source of considerable difficulty to English persons, who seem to imagine that an *n* must be articulated after these vowels. To articulate a *dental n*, the tip of the tongue rises to the upper teeth (or the palate), and to articulate a *guttural n* (written *ng*), the *base* of the tongue rises to the palate; but to pronounce any of the vowel sounds *un, en (in), an, on*, the tongue must remain perfectly quiet and in the respective positions for *eu, è, a, o*. Those English persons who do succeed in pronouncing nasal vowels make them very weak in nasal quality, for the simple reason that they allow the tongue to slip back into the mouth (and the jaws to close). *An* or *on* pronounced with the tongue forward are beautiful sonorous vowels, but the same vowels pronounced with the tongue withdrawn are exceedingly flat.

It will be evident that *un* and *en (in)* are wide vowels, corresponding to *eu* and *è*, and that *an* and *on* are narrow vowels, corresponding to *a* and *o*. (7)

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(7) The student, in pronouncing these four nasal vowels, must not neglect the directions given for the vowels *eu, è, a, o*.

## CHAPTER III.

## THIN AND FULL VOWELS.

WE have now had all the French vowel sounds, and English persons should have no great difficulty in reproducing them, although they will require to use great care in following the directions given. The secret to the proper pronunciation of these sounds is, as we have so often repeated, to keep the tongue forward. The student, in speaking of these vowels, should give each sound its proper name, instead of nicknaming it, as is done in English. Nothing can be gained by calling *i*, "eye," *a*, "ay," *u*, "yew," etc.

Each of these vowel sounds may be pronounced carelessly and quickly or else may be prolonged and exaggerated in quality. The *e* sound in the English *upon* is practically the same as that in the English *up*, but is not so substantial in the first word as in the second. The same slight difference exists between the *i* (*e*) in *may be* and that in *bee*, between the *o*' in *piano* and that in *pose*, between the *é* in *Friday* and that in *day*, and he who would disregard this difference in speaking English would certainly be looked upon as a foreigner, and perhaps often fail to be understood. The first sound of these vowels may be called *thin*, since it is somewhat *meagre* in quality, while the second may be termed "full," since it is of a more substantial nature. The full vowel requires a more careful adjustment of the vocal organs than the thin one, and hence is generally longer in duration of sound than the latter. The Romans, being a very musical people, were very much impressed by this fact and made the length of vowel sounds the basis of their metre in poetry. To the Roman ear, the only difference between the thin *é* (as in *Friday*) and the full *é* (as in *day*) was that the first sound was short, while the second was long. In French and English we pay little attention to the length of vowel sounds, and although the terms "long" and "short" are much used, they apply rather to the *quality* of the sound than to its quantity (length). To avoid all ambiguity, we will make use of the terms *thin* and *full* in speaking of the quality of vowel sounds. It is also worth while to

remark that a thin vowel may be prolonged, without necessarily becoming full, although it will have a tendency to do so.

e thin and e full.

The thin sound of this vowel corresponds to the English *e* sound in *upon*, while the full sound corresponds to the English *e* in *up*. In this key we will write *e* for the thin sound, and *œ* for the full sound. Distinguish these two sounds in *cela* and *me (mœ)*. For the thin *e*, the lips have a slight tendency to advance and hence the sound verges on to that of *eu* thin.

è thin and è full.

The thin *è* corresponds to the English *è* in *yes*, while the full *è* (written *ê*) may often be heard in the American pronunciation of this same word. The American *u* in *ut*, *man*, etc., is also much nearer the French *è* than it is to the French *u*. Distinguish between the *è* in *fève* and the *ê* in *même*. Open the mouth a little more for the second vowel.

é thin and é full.

The thin sound corresponds to the English *é* in *Friday*, *frustrate*, while the full sound (written *ée*) corresponds to the English *é* in *day*, *eight*, etc. The difference between the two sounds is quite noticeable when English persons say *eight-eh* for *été*.

Many English persons in pronouncing *'ay*, *lave*, *eight*, etc., begin the vowel sound in these words with the tongue in the *é* position, and then raise it to nearly the *i* position, so that the sound is a kind of diphthong, *dai-e*, *lai-ève*, etc. This custom is perhaps more common in England than in America, but at all events the student must be careful to avoid it in pronouncing the French vowels. The tongue should keep the one position for the whole sound. Pronounce *épée*, *fée*, *vénéré*.

i thin and i full.

The English *beetle*, or *may be*, contains the thin sound of *i*, while the full sound (written *î*) is heard in the English *beet*, *bee*, *machine*, etc. The English *i* in *il*, *is*, etc., is not heard in French. Pronounce *il*, *île*, *abîme*.

**a** thin and **a** full.

The thin *a* corresponds to the English *a* in *chance, ask, half, past*, etc., as heard in good society in England, while the full *a* (written *â*) corresponds to the English *a* in *futher, ure, further*, etc. Or we may take the American *a* in *are* (not in *at*) to represent the French thin *a*, and the slightly broader and fuller sound which is heard in the English *are* to represent the French *â* (*a* full). The cockney gives the broad English *a* the sound of *o*, pronouncing *are* as *or*, *ass* as *os*, etc. So, many French people pronounce *âne* as "on," and *mâle* as "maul," etc. This error should be avoided as well as that—so common among English people—of pronouncing the French thin *a* like the English *a* in *at*. Let it be remembered that between the thin and full sounds of French vowels, there is but a mere shade of a difference. Pronounce : *Anne, âne, malle, mâle*. Open the mouth a little more for the *â* than for the *a*.

**o** thin and **o** full.

The thin *o* is heard in the English *obstruct*, and the full *o* in the English *rob, or*, etc. Many persons pronounce *obstruct* as *u'struct*, making the thin *o* into a full *e* (*æ*). The French thin *o* has also a tendency to become *æ*, so that most English persons on hearing the French words *mode, robe, bonne*, etc., imagine they hear the sounds *mud, rub, bun*, etc. It must be said the difference between the sound of *o* thin and that of *æ* is not very great ; and yet the student should make the difference plainly felt in his pronunciation. For *o* thin, the tongue and lips narrow, while for *æ* they do not. The full *o*, though quite common in English, is rare in French, being only heard in words ending in *or*, as *encore, port (t silent)*, etc., and hence we hardly require a mark to distinguish this sound from that of the thin *o*.

**ó** thin and **ó** full.

The word *piano* furnishes an example of the thin *ó*, while *dome* contains the *ó* full (written *ô*). Pronounce : *dôme, zéro'*.

**ou** thin and **ou** full.

The thin *ou* is heard in the English *foolscap* and the full *ou* (written *ô*) in the English *fool*, *group*, etc. Pronounce *fou*, *voûte*.

**eu** and **eû**, **u** and **û**.

As these vowels are not heard in English, it is impossible to give examples of their thin and full sounds. The full sounds are, as in the case of the other vowels, simply exaggerations of the thin ones. Pronounce: *du*, *dû*, *su*, *sû*.

## THE THIN AND FULL NASALS.

As a rule, the nasal vowels should be given their full sound. At the end of certain words, however, they are somewhat thinner than usual, although most persons would not notice the fact.

It will be evident to the student that between the thin and full sounds of a vowel the difference is but slight. It is safe to say that nine out of ten English persons never notice this difference in their own language, although they unconsciously make it felt in their *speech*. The great fault with all French-English dictionaries and books on French pronunciation is that they make too great a distinction between the thin and full sounds of vowels, even introducing sounds foreign to French speech in order to illustrate the subject. Thus the English *i* in *mill* is often given as "short" sound of the French *i*, and the English *u* in *full* is made to represent the French "short" *ou*. If the student would like to see for himself how very far the two above English sounds are from being French, he has only to ask a Frenchman ignorant of English to pronounce *full mill*. We are confident that the latter will answer *fool meal*, and that it will be difficult to persuade him that his pronunciation is wrong.

## TABLE OF FRENCH VOWEL SOUNDS.

Wide Vowels.	Eng. key-words.	French key-words.
e	upon	cela
œ	up	me
è	yes	fève
ê	yes (American)	même
é	Friday	été
ée	day	fée
i	may be	il
î	bee, machine.	île
eu	—	feu
eû	—	jeûne
u	—	sur
û	—	sûr
Narrow Vowels.		
a	past	Anne
â	father, far	âne
o	obstruct	robe
o (full)	rob, or	or, encore
ó	piano	piano' (1)
ô	dome	dôme
ou	foolscap	fou
ôû	fool	voûte
Wide Nasals.		
eun	—	brun, jeun
èn (in)	—	examen, vin
Narrow Nasals.		
an	—	plan
on	—	mon

(1) In ordinary writing the sound *ó* is represented by the same character as the *o* sound (open *o*).

## CHAPTER IV.

## DIPHTHONGS.

A DIPHTHONG is a prolonged vocal sound, in uttering which the tongue first assumes one vowel position and then moves almost immediately to another. A simple vowel sound is produced with the tongue at rest.

The English pronoun *I* is a diphthong, for to produce this sound the tongue first assumes the position for *a* (a very low position), and then rises until it reaches the *i* position (the highest possible vowel position), the vocal chords continuing to vibrate during the passage of the tongue between these two extreme positions. If it were possible to analyze minutely the sound of the pronoun *I*, it would probably be found to contain the sounds *a, è, é, i*, but to the ear (unassisted by any acoustic instruments) the first and last elements of the sound are alone plainly distinguishable, the intermediate element being very obscure and vanishing.

The word *diphthong* is derived from the Greek *dis*, twice, and *phthongos*, sound, and means, therefore, a *double sound*. Two vowels pronounced in quick succession do not form a diphthong if the vocal chords cease to vibrate during the passage of the tongue from the one vowel position to the other. Thus, in the words *po-ét que, thé-âtre, ru-ade, ha-ïr*, etc., there is no diphthong, but two distinct and separate vowel sounds.

The French diphthongs, beginning with the *i* sound, are represented as follows :

iè :	<i>pièce, fièvre, siècle</i>
ié :	<i>piéton, tièdeur</i>
ia :	<i>piastre, diable, piétre</i>
io :	<i>pioche, fi-le, violon</i>
iou :	<i>chiourme</i>
ieu :	<i>Dieu, lieu</i>
ièn (nasal) :	<i>bièn rièn, mièn (written bien, mien, etc.)</i>
ian : „	<i>viande, diantre</i>
ion : „	<i>pion, passion, avions</i>



To pronounce the above sounds the tongue first assumes the position for *i* and without lingering there, falls to the position for *u*, *è*, *é*, *o*, *ou*, etc. During this movement of the tongue the vocal chords never cease to vibrate, for if they did, the sound of the diphthong would be ruined. English persons frequently pronounce *pièce*, *avions*, as *pi-è-see*, *avi-ons*, etc., because they silence the larynx during the movement of the tongue. There is no great objection to allowing the tongue to linger in its first position before lowering it—at least by so doing, we do not necessarily ruin the sound of the diphthong. This is however not usually done, the first element in all the above sounds being very brief and almost equivalent to the consonant *y*. The second element is on the other hand, quite long. (1) In pronouncing the above diphthongs, let it not be forgotten that the tongue must be kept forward, and the sounds made guttural and sonorous, as in the case of the simple vowels. *Pioche*, *fiolé*, etc., must not be pronounced *pio'che*, *fi'o'le*, etc. The *o* is open not close.

Diphthongs beginning with the sound *ou* :

<i>ouè</i> :	<i>ouest, alouette</i>
<i>oui</i> :	<i>oui, louis</i>
<i>oua</i> :	<i>douane</i>
<i>ouèn</i> (ouin)	<i>marsonin, baragonin</i>
<i>ouan</i> :	<i>rouin</i>

Here, again, the first element, *ou*, is very brief, so that it is often mistaken for a *u*. In fact, many French-English dictionaries give *urè*, *wi*, *wa*, etc., as the pronunciation of the above diphthongs. Even in the *Grand Dictionnaire du XIXe Siècle*, by *Pierre Larousse*, we find it stated that the first element in the above sounds corre-

(1) To pronounce a *y* the tongue comes into closer contact with the palate than for *i* (as the student may see for himself by pronouncing the English  $y^e = y^i$ ), so that even if the consonant were prolonged, no clear vocal sound would result. The first element of the diphthongs *iu*, *ié*, *iou*, etc., is usually too brief for an *i* sound, but when prolonged the *i* is clearly heard, showing that the tongue assumes the *i* position rather than the *y* position. It must be said, however, that most English persons in pronouncing words like "yes," "you," etc., raise the tongue only to the *i* position, and that a real *y* is heard in English only when followed by *i* sound, as "ye," "year," etc. The *u* in English often represents the diphthong *iou*, as in "mule" (mioule).

sponds exactly to the English *w*. To us, it is difficult to see how any careful observer could confound the two sounds. Nothing is more certain than the fact that when an English person says *we* for *oui*, he discloses his nationality to every Frenchman who may hear him pronounce this word.

The English consonant *w* differs from the first element of the above sounds just as the consonant *y* differs from the first element of the diphthong *iu* or *ié*. It is produced by forcing the breath through a narrow aperture formed by partially closing the lips. An indistinct murmur is also heard in the larynx, but this murmur is by no means an *ou*, but merely that indistinct sound which accompanies the articulation of *v*, *z*, etc. If *w* were merely a short *ou*, there could be no difference between *wou* and *ouou*. To pronounce the French *oui*, *ouè*, etc., the tongue and mouth must be adjusted for *ou* and not for *w*. The student is advised to pronounce the foregoing diphthongs quite slowly at first, prolonging the *ou* sound in order to pronounce it more perfectly.

The English name *Louis* contains no diphthong, but two distinct vowel sounds. The first vowel is also long, and the second short. The French *Louis* contains a diphthong, the first element of which is short and the second *long*.

Diphthongs beginning with the sound *o'* (close) are represented as follows :

<i>oè</i> :	<i>moelle</i>
<i>oê</i> :	<i>poêle</i>
<i>oa</i> (written <i>oi</i> ) :	<i>loi, moi, toi, soir</i>
<i>oâ</i> ( „ <i>oi</i> ) :	<i>croître, cloître</i>
<i>oèn</i> ( <i>oin</i> ) :	<i>loin, pointe, coin</i>

The first element of the above diphthongs is very brief, so that English persons mistake it, as before, for a *w*. The student should at first pronounce these diphthongs slowly, prolonging more than usual their first element. (2) Special care should be taken with

(2) It will be remembered that this element is *o'* (close), not *o* (open). It has not been thought necessary to mark the *o* close in the above diphthongs. An open *o* never forms the first element of a diphthong in French, though it does in English, e.g., "oil."

the diphthong *oa* (written *oi*). English persons, besides making the first element of this diphthong *u*, make the second *o* (open); that is to say, they make *bonsoir*, *rev'ir*, etc., rhyme with *or* or *war* instead of with *ure*.

There is an etymological reason only for writing this diphthong *oi*, for there is no *i* sound to it at all. In old French, *oi* was pronounced like *è* or *é*, though sometimes it was made diphthongal. i.e., like *è* or *oé*, so that to-day we find a few words with a double orthography and pronunciation, as *avoine* and *poêle*, more often written and pronounced *avoine* and *poile*. In the country districts of France (and Canada) the ancient pronunciation of this diphthong may still be heard in words like *soif*, *soir*, etc. (*soéf*, *soêr*). In other districts the diphthong *oé* may be heard, *moi*, *toi*, *soir* being pronounced *moé*, *toé*, *soér*. This pronunciation is also quite common in Canada, but must not be imitated. The student will notice that the diphthong *oé* is not included in the list above given. The *oé* in *poétique* should therefore be pronounced as two distinct vowels.

Diphthongs beginning with the sound *u*:

<i>uè</i> :	<i>écuelle</i> , <i>équestre</i>
<i>ui</i> :	<i>suite</i> , <i>lui</i> , <i>cuite</i>
<i>uèn</i> (uin) :	<i>juin</i> , <i>suinté</i>

Of the above diphthongs, *ui* is the only one which occurs frequently, the others being only found in a few words. The student must again be careful not to say *sweet*, *lwee*, etc., for *suite*, *lui*, etc., as most English persons do. The *u* sound, while very brief, is nevertheless *u*, and the tongue must assume the *u* position in order to pronounce it. It is, however, perhaps preferable to begin this diphthong with a *w* than with an *ou*, for there is quite a distinction between *ui* and *oui*, as, for example, in the words *lui* and *Louis*. Equal care must be taken not to convert the diphthong into a dissyllable (*su-ite*).

DIPHTHONGS IN WHICH THE FIRST ELEMENT IS PROLONGED.

—In all the diphthongs which have been so far considered, the first element is very brief, while the closing sound of these diph-

thongs may be prolonged indefinitely. We now come to a class of diphthongs whose first element is prolonged and whose closing sound is very brief and vanishing. Of such a nature is also the English *I* (ai). To pronounce this sound, the tongue lingers a little in the bottom of the mouth and then rises, but as soon as it approaches the palate the vocal chords cease to vibrate. Of course we can prolong the closing sound if we please, but this is not generally done. All diphthongs of this class end with the *i* sound, viz. :

âi (written <i>ail</i> ) :	<i>travail, éventail, portail</i>
èi ( „ <i>eil</i> ) :	<i>soleil, pareil</i>
œi ( <i>œil, œuil</i> ) :	<i>œil, seuil, deuil</i>
oui (written <i>ouil</i> ) :	<i>fenouil</i>

These diphthongs are always followed in writing by *l* (which, however, must be kept silent), and consequently may easily be distinguished from the sounds before considered. The student should be careful to always prolong the first element of these diphthongs, and to make the second element very brief. The diphthong *ai* is generally written *ail*, but, as we will see later, *æ* is also written *eu* in many other cases. The diphthong *oui* is a little difficult for English persons, who make it *ouil*, i.e., with the last syllable prolonged instead of the first. The tongue should rise gradually, not with a jerk, just as for *ai*. The closing element of *ouil* should be exactly like that of *ail* or *èil*.

## TRIPHTHONGS.

A triphthong (*tris*, three times, *phthongos*, sound) is a prolonged vocal sound, in uttering which the tongue moves through three different vowel positions, lingering for a very brief moment in each. Such a sound may be heard in the Frenchman's pronunciation of the English word *wide* (*ouaid*), the *w* being pronounced as a brief *ou* and joined in pronunciation with the diphthong *i* (ai). To utter this sound the tongue first assumes the position for *ou*, next moves to the *a* position and lastly rises to the position for *i*. During this movement of the tongue, the vocal chords never cease to vibrate, for if they did there could be no triphthong.

The French word *vieil* (*vièi*) contains a triphthong, but there are only a few words of this class in French, the triphthong being almost confined to words like *loyal*, *royal*, etc., in which a *y* is written between two vowels. The pronunciation of these two latter words is *loai-yal* and *roai-yal*, that is to say, during a single vocal utterance, the tongue starting with the *ó* (close) position, next assumes the *a* position and finally rises to the *i* position, the vocal sound being here almost immediately interrupted by the tongue rising still higher and coming into contact with the palate for the consonant *y*.

The above words (and others like them) are sometimes pronounced in such a way that the *y* following the triphthong is not heard, the tongue failing to touch the palate and interrupt the vocal utterance. In such a case, the sound (which we may write *ouia*) might be termed a "tetraphthong" (*tetrakis* four times, *phthongos*, sound), but it is hardly worth while to coin a new word for the sake of naming a sound which is not good French. In most dictionaries the pronunciation of the above words is usually given as *loa-ial* (or *lwa-yal*), *roa-ial*, etc. If the hyphen means anything here, it must mean that there is a break between the *a* and *i*; but nothing is more certain than that these words are never pronounced in that way: there must be no pause or break in the vocal utterance until the *i* sound is heard. In the English *loyal* and *royal* there is the diphthong *oi* merely, followed by *a* in the next syllable, the *y* not being heard at all, thus, *roi-al*. The pronunciation *roi-yal* is however, also occasionally heard. (3)

Here are further examples of words containing triphthongs: *royez* (*voui-yé*), *royons* (*voui-yon*), *royant* (*voui-yan*), *moyen* (*moai-yèn*), *citoyen* (*sitocai-yèn*).

It is always the middle element of a triphthong that is prolonged, e.g., *vieil*, *loai-yal* (*loyal*)

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The *o* sound in the English "loyal" is open, that in the French "loyal" and other similar words is "close."

## CHAPTER V.

## THE CONSONANTS.

Since the tongue is drawn back into the mouth for the English vowels, it is quite easy to understand that it should do the same for the English consonants. Accordingly we find that most of the consonants are articulated further back in the English mouth than they are in the French mouth.

Since vowels and consonants are pronounced in rapid succession, it would be very unnatural for the tongue to come forward for the former and then withdraw for the latter, or *vice versa*. Hence, if the student has acquired the habit of pronouncing the vowels with the tongue well forward, he will have little difficulty in still keeping it forward as it rises to articulate the consonants, as for example in *at, ad, anne, al*, etc. In fact, he will find that he cannot withdraw the tongue for the consonants without ruining the sound of the vowels. We have also seen that the mouth must be more open—or rather the jaws further apart—for the French vowels than for the English vowels. We will see presently that this is also essential to the proper articulation of the French consonants.

To keep the tongue always forward, and the jaws a certain distance apart, seems a very simple matter, and yet it will require some patience and perseverance to overcome a habit very different to this one, which all English persons acquire in their childhood, and hence the absolute necessity of speaking constantly before a mirror and watching with the greatest care the tongue and mouth. Our little "prop" for the jaws, to which we have already made allusion, can be used very advantageously in practising the consonants.

CLASSIFICATION OF CONSONANTS:—If the student will hold his hand before his mouth as he pronounces successively *p, b* (*puh, buh*), he will find that for the first consonant the breath will strike his hand with considerable force, whereas in the second case he will barely be able to feel the breath. The first consonant (*p*) may

therefore be called *strong* and the second (b) *weak*. If he will now place his hands to his ears as he articulates these same two letters, he will find that the articulation of the *b* is accompanied by a slight murmur in the larynx, while for *p* the vocal chords are quite silent, that is to say, the strong consonant (*p*) is a *surd*, while the weak one (*b*) is a *sonant*.

If we experiment with the other pairs of consonants (*f* and *v*, *t* and *d*, *s* and *z*, *k* and *g*), we will find that the result will be always the same—that for the strong consonant the larynx will be silent, while for the weak consonant it will give forth an indistinct sound. It is easy to explain why the sonant consonant is weak. In order for a consonant to be sonant, the vocal chords must come together: this impedes the breath, so that the small quantity which escapes through the vibrating vocal membranes makes but a feeble articulation. When the vocal membranes are separated, a much larger volume of breath may come into the mouth and though the articulation which follows will be surd, it will also be *strong*.

The character *z* is very little used in English or French, the *s* representing both the strong (surd) and weak (sonant, sibilant, e.g., *sis*, *his* *hiz*). The English *th* likewise represents both a surd and a sonant, the surd being heard in *thin* and the sonant in *then* (1). We might also dispense with separate characters for the weak or sonant sounds of *p*, *f*, *t*, *ch*, *k*, as is frequently done in writing stenography, but little would be gained by so doing.

The difference between the surds and sonants is more marked in French than in English, for many of the English sonants are in reality not very *sonant*.

Consonants, we have seen, are formed by obstructing the breath in the mouth and then suddenly removing the obstruction and allowing the breath to escape in a single puff. For some consonants, such as *p*, *t*, *k*, the stoppage of the breath is complete, so that the whole energy of the consonant is contained in the single puff which is heard on removing the barrier to the breath, while for other consonants such as *f*, *s*, *l*, *m*, there is considerable leakage of the breath before the barrier is removed, and the final puff is conse-

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(1) The surd *w* is, however, written *wʰ*.

quently very feeble. The sound of the former is therefore very brief, while that of the latter is of much longer duration : we may call the former *explosives* and the latter *fluents*.

The above classifications apply merely to the sound of the consonants. It is also convenient to name these sounds according to the organs used in articulating them. For the consonants *p, b, v, f, m*, the breath is obstructed by the lips, while the *tongue* serves as the barrier in the case of the other consonants. Accordingly we may speak of *labials* (lip letters) and *linguals* (tongue letters). In articulating some of the linguals (*t, d, l, n*), the tongue is brought in contact with the teeth, while the others (*s, z, ch, j, k, g, gn, y*), require the tongue to come into contact with the palate. The former are therefore *dento-linguals*, and the latter *palato-linguals*. In English the only dento-lingual is the *th*, for the tongue in articulating the English *t, d, n, l*, falls considerably short of the teeth. This is not at all surprising, since the English vowels also require the tongue to recede.

### THE LABIALS.

There are five labial consonants in French, two strong and surd, three weak and sonant.

(Strong and surd)

(Weak and sonant)

**p** (explosive)..... **b** (explosive)

**f** (fluent) ..... **v** (fluent)

**m** (fluent)

These letters are called labials because they are articulated with the lips. With the tongue cut out we could still articulate these consonants. The teeth are, however, also necessary for *v* and *f* and the nose for *m*. (2)

**P** and **b**.—These two consonants are formed by first closing the lips as the breath is forced outward by the lungs, and then suddenly opening the lips and allowing the breath to escape in a single puff. *P* is surd while *b* is sonant.

When an English person pronounces *p* or *b*, his lips do not

(2) The student should speak of a *me*, a *pe*, a *fe*, etc., not of an *emni*, an *eff*, a *pi*, etc.



require to stretch very much in order to meet and close the mouth, for the jaws being close together, the distance between the two lips is not very great. The lower lip alone rises to meet the upper one, the latter remaining quite motionless and devoid of expression. To pronounce a *p* or *b* in French, both lips must stretch in order to meet, for the tongue being kept forward, the jaws cannot come together as in English. It has often been remarked that French people make good use of their lips in speaking, and English persons are often exhorted to imitate them, just as though it were natural to stretch the lips when the jaws are nearly closed. In pronouncing the English *p* or *b*, the lips separate almost before the breath has time to press against them, whereas for the French *p* or *b*, the lips are held together until the breath bursts them open, as it were. At any rate, for the English *p* or *b*, the lips stick closely to the teeth, while for the French *p* or *b*, both the lips and cheeks bulge out before the breath escapes. The difference is especially noticeable in the case of *b*, for this consonant becomes much more sonant when the lips are not opened too soon. A distinct murmur should precede the articulation of the *b*, just like that which is heard for *e* or *z*. Pronounce *bé-bé*, *pi-pe*, *bun b-m*.

**M.** This sound is made by first closing the lips as for *b* and forcing the vocalized breath through the nasal passages, and then suddenly opening the lips and allowing the remainder of the breath to escape from the mouth in a single puff.

The *m* is, like *b*, a sonant and differs only in its organic formation from the latter consonant in that it is produced with the velum or palatal curtain lowered, so that the nasal cavities serve as a resonance chamber to re-echo the murmur from the larynx. *M* when properly pronounced is a *fluent*, for part of the breath escapes through the nose before the lips open. It is, however, possible by blocking the nostrils, to produce an *explosive m*, or in other words a nasal *b*. This is the kind of *m* we are apt to pronounce when we are troubled with a cold in the head, and in cases when the nasal resonance chamber is completely obstructed by catarrh, the attempt to pronounce a *m* results only in pronouncing an ordinary *b*.

The English *m* differs from the French *m*, much in the same way as the English *b* differs from the French *b*, that is to say, the lips open much sooner for the English labial, so that its sonant element is much briefer than that of the French *m*. The nasal vibrations heard in the French word *mam m* begin before the lips open for the first *m*, and continue almost without a break until after the second *m* has been articulated. How different sounds the English *ma-mu*, in which a feeble nasal sound is heard just as the lips open for each *m*! Let the student not neglect to keep his tongue forward in pronouncing the *m*, in order to prevent the jaws from closing too much, for the lips must stretch and slightly protrude for *m*, just as they do for *p* or *b*. Pronounce *mène, mappé*.

**F and v.**—These two consonants are produced by pressing the lower lip against the upper teeth, and thus *partially* obstructing the flow of the breath, and then suddenly lowering the lip and allowing the remainder of the breath to issue in a single puff. The *v* differs from the *f* in being weak and sonant.

The jaws being always close together for the English consonants, the lower lip has not far to rise in order to meet the upper teeth, and when it does meet them, it merely touches them and falls again almost immediately. The result is a *f* or *v* very weak in fricative sound, the *v* being also very weak in sonant quality. For the French *f* or *v*, the lower lip has farther to rise, owing to the greater separation of the jaws, and when it meets the teeth, it presses against them quite firmly, falling only after a fairly long contact. The result is a consonant very long in fricative sound, and in the case of *v*, long in sonant quality. Pronounce *fè-ve, vi-ve*.

The lips should protrude slightly as in the case of the other labials.

**RECAPITULATION.**—We have now finished our study of the French labials and it will be evident that they differ from the corresponding English consonants, not in a multitude of small details, but in one or two broad principles: (1) The contact of the lips for the French labials is firm and of long duration, the sonants being therefore more sonant than in English. (2) The jaws being kept well apart, the lips require to stretch more in order to meet, and,

in the case of *f* and *v*, for the lower lip to touch the teeth. (3) The lips protrude for the French labials, instead of sticking close to the teeth as in English. The forward position of the tongue favors this latter movement, for it will be found that if the tongue recedes the lips will also flatten, as for the English labials.

### THE LINGUALS.

The linguals, we have seen, may be divided into two classes—(1) those which are articulated by pressing the tongue against the teeth (dento-linguals), and (2) those which are articulated by pressing the tongue against the palate (palato-linguals).

#### DENTO-LINGUALS.

(Strong and surd)	(Weak and sonant)
(explosive)	(explosive)
	n (fluent)
	l (fluent)

**T** and **d**.—These two letters are formed by applying the point of the tongue against the upper front teeth in such a manner as to obstruct completely the flow of the breath through the mouth, and then suddenly dropping the tongue and allowing the breath to escape in a sudden puff. The *d* differs from the *t* in being weak and sonant.

If the student will pronounce *tu* and *du* in his accustomed way he will find that the body of the tongue remains flat in the bottom of the mouth, its tip rising to touch the *palate* a short distance back of the teeth. If he will now pronounce the above sounds a second time, making the tip of the tongue come in contact with the teeth instead of with the palate, he will imitate a Frenchman's pronunciation of *tu*, *du*, more or less exactly. It is probable that he will be tempted to merely raise the tip of the tongue and to leave the rest of the organ flat. For the sounds to be perfectly French, the whole body of the tongue should rise: the little trick of bending the tip of the tongue upward and leaving the body of the tongue flat is English, not French. (†)

(†) We see, therefore, why so few French persons ever learn to pronounce the English *th*. To produce this sound, only the tip of the tongue should rise to the teeth; the

This fact is very important, as it holds true, not only for the *t* and *d*, but also for all linguals which are articulated in the front part of the mouth. It is quite in accordance with what we might expect, for, as we have already seen, the English vowels require a flat or low position of the tongue, while the French vowels require a raised position of this organ. It need hardly be said that the French dento-linguals also require the jaws more apart than for the corresponding English consonants.

In pronouncing the French *t* and *d*, the breath is obstructed longer than for the English *t*, *d*, and hence the French *d* will be more sonant than that of the English. Pronounce *da-te*, *ma-da-me*.

When *t* or *d* is followed immediately by *i* or *u* as in *ti*, *tu*, *di*, *du*, the final puff of these consonants is apt to become a light *hiss*, resembling very much the sound of *s* or *z*. Many French people say *midzi* for *mi-di* and *tsu* for *tu*, etc. This is because the *i* and *u* are pronounced with the jaws only slightly more apart than for *d* to *t*, and the tongue, being kept forward for both vowel and consonant, leaves but a very narrow space for the puff of the *t* or *d* to issue forth.

English persons in pronouncing *tu* and *du* keep the *t* and *d* dry, because in articulating these consonants they merely raise the tip of the tongue to the *palate*, so that when it falls plenty of space is left for the final puff. A slight *hiss* in the case above mentioned is not objectionable, since it is very natural and very French, but the full *s* or *z* sound, which is often heard, should be avoided. This can be done by opening the mouth a little more for the *i* or *u*.

N.—This sound is produced by raising the tongue to the upper teeth, as for *t* or *d*, and forcing a vocalized stream of breath through the nasal cavities, and then suddenly lowering the tongue and allowing the remaining breath to escape in a sudden puff.

*N* is, like *d*, a sonant, differing in its organic formation from the

body of the tongue must remain flat in order that there may be a free passage for the breath to the teeth. When an attempt is made to pronounce *th* with the body of the tongue raised, a hissing sound appears like that of *s* or *z*, hence the Frenchman's *dee* for *the*. Sometimes the tongue is pressed firmly against the teeth, so as to obstruct the breath completely; and in that case, the attempt to pronounce *th* results only in producing a French *d*.

latter consonant only in that it is produced with the velum lowered, so that the nasal cavities serve as a resonant chamber to re-echo the murmur from the larynx. It frequently happens that persons troubled with nasal catarrh utter a *a* in attempting to pronounce a *n*. When the consonant is properly pronounced, however, it is like *m* a fluent. The *n* also resembles *m* in respect to its nasal quality, and hence we are as justified in representing the nasal vowels by *am*, *om*, etc., as in writing them *an*, *on*, etc.

To articulate the English *n*, the tip of the tongue rises to the palate, the body of the tongue remaining lowered, as in the case of the English *t* or *d*; whereas for the French *n* the whole body of the tongue rises until its tip or point comes into contact with the *teeth*. The tongue is held in this position for some time before being lowered, instead of falling immediately after the contact as it does in English. The result is that the French *n* is much more sonant than the English *n*.

Pronounce *not too done*, first as in English (i.e., with the tongue striking the palate for *n*, *t*, *d*) and then as in French. The French "accent" will be quite apparent in the second case. Then try the French words *ni*, *nappe*, *nous*.

**L**—This sound is produced by pressing the point of the tongue firmly against the upper teeth in such a manner that, while the passage for the breath is obstructed in front, an opening is left on either side of the tongue between the grinders for the breath to flow out. The tongue then falls from the teeth and the remaining breath escapes in a single puff. The *l* is like the *n*—a *fluent* and a *sonant*.

To articulate the English *l*, the tip of the tongue bends upward until it touches the palate, and then falls almost immediately, so that the sonant element of the consonant is very brief. This is especially noticeable when we pronounce alternately the French and English *la*. The murmur in the larynx preceding the French articulation is quite prolonged, that preceding the English articulation, very brief.

In articulating the English *l*, the tongue is sometimes kept pressed against the palate for a considerable time before its fall,

and in that case the sonant element of the *l* is quite as prolonged as in French ; but the consonant is not on that account more French than usual, for the spaces between the sides of the tongue and the grinders (through which the breath flows) are so wide that the sonant element becomes too distinct, and, in fact, equivalent to the vowel *e* (uh). Thus, if in attempting to pronounce the English *la*, we allowed the tip of the tongue to remain for any considerable time in contact with the palate, we would obtain the sound *e la* (uh-la). This, indeed, is what happens when the English *l* is final, the words *Paul*, *sole*, etc., being often pronounced *Pau-ul* and *so-ul*, etc., and words like *table* and *maple*, always as *tab-ul*, *map-ul*, etc. This could never happen in French, for however prolonged the sonant element of a French consonant may be, it is always too much in the nature of a murmur to be equivalent to a vowel. The student will therefore be careful in pronouncing the French *ta-ble*, *mi-sé-ra-ble*, not to say *tab-ul*, *misera-bul*, etc. The space between the tongue and grinders is so narrow for the French *l* that the breath in escaping causes the sides of the tongue to vibrate quite violently. This vibration is not noticeable when the English *l* is pronounced, because the passage for the breath is too wide.

RECAPITULATION.—In pronouncing the French dento-linguals the main facts to be kept in mind are : (1) That the point of the tongue must come in contact with the upper teeth, not with the palate as in English. (2) That the whole tongue must rise, not merely the tip. (3) That the contact of tongue and teeth must be firm and of longer duration than in English.

THE PALATO LINGUALS.

(Surd)	(Sonant)
<b>s</b> (fluent)	<b>z</b> (fluent)
<b>ch</b> (fluent)	<b>j</b> (fluent)
	<b>r</b> (fluent)
	<b>y</b> (fluent)
<b>k</b> (explosive)	<b>g</b> (explosive)
	<b>gn</b> (fluent)

**S and z.**—These two consonants are produced by raising the tongue until it comes into contact with the palate immediately back of the front teeth, (and in such a way that a small grooved passage is left to allow the breath to flow out), and then suddenly lowering the tongue and allowing the breath to escape in a single puff. The *z* differs from the *s* in being weak and sonant.

The tongue touches the palate in about the same place for the French and English *s* (or *z*). In the English articulation, however, merely the tip of the tongue rises, the rest of the organ occupying a low position in the mouth. For the French *s* or *z*, the body of the tongue must rise until its upper surface (at some distance from the tip) touches the palate. The tip of the tongue bends downward slightly, in order not to come in contact with the upper teeth (for the organ occupies its usual forward position), and thus produce a *t* or a *lisp*. We can pronounce a good French *s* or *z* with the tip of the tongue touching the edges of the lower front teeth.

Pronounce *si*, *sa*, *salle*, *zéro*, *pósa* (*póza*). Let the contact of the tongue and palate be quite firm, so that the *z* will be more sonant than in English. The character *z* is rarely used in French, though the sound which this character represents is quite common.

**Ch and j.**—The sound represented by the French *ch* is generally written *sh* in English, but the English words *machine*, *charade*, and a few others contain the French digraph with its approximate sound. The *j* is simply a sonant *ch*, and might therefore be written in English *zh*. It is heard approximately in the English *azure* (*azhure*), *pleasure* (*zhure*), as well as in the English *massage*, *rouge*, etc.

To pronounce a French *ch* or *j*, the upper surface of the tongue comes into partial contact with the palate a little above the upper gums (and hence a little further back than for *s* or *z*), in such a manner that sufficient space is left between the tongue and palate for the breath to gush out. The tongue is then lowered, and the remaining breath escapes in a single puff. The *ch* is, therefore, a species of *s*, and the *j* a species of *z*. The *s* and *z* may be described as *hissing* sounds, and the *ch* and *j* as *gushing* sounds.

The French *ch* and *j* differ from the corresponding English sounds just in the same manner as the French *s* and *z* differ from the English *s* and *z*. For the former, the body of the tongue rises to the palate, its tip bending slightly downward. The contact of tongue and palate is also firmer and of longer duration for the French sounds than for the corresponding English ones, the sonant element of the French *j* being, therefore, more marked than that of the English *zh*.

The English character *ch* is often pronounced *tch*, and the English *j*, *dch*. The student must be careful never to lend these sounds to French words. Pronounce : *je chante, jou-jou, bonjour*. Let the tongue be raised, and come as far forward as possible.

**R.**—This sound is formed by forcing a strong blast of breath through the mouth and offering to it no resistance save the tip of the tongue, which, bouncing up and striking the palate just above the upper teeth (in the *s* position), is pushed back and made to vibrate by the outgoing breath. The tongue then falls, and the remaining breath escapes in a single puff.

The *r* resembles the *l* very much, both in regard to its sound and in regard to the manner in which it is formed. Both are fluent and sonant, but in the case of the latter, the breath escapes over the sides of the tongue (causing them to vibrate), while for the former the breath flows over the tip of the tongue. The Chinese have no *r* in their speech, and hence in speaking English or French generally pronounce *l* in place of *r*.

The English *r* is a very feeble consonant, and is too *open* to be *trilled*. When followed by a vowel sound, it is too quickly articulated to be very sonant, but when final it is very slowly articulated, and is so *open* that its sonant element is equivalent to the vowel *e* (see also *l*). Thus, *here, fire, fair* are pronounced *hee-er, fi-er, fai-er*. Londoners scarcely raise the tongue at all for the final *r*, and hence only the sound *e* is heard, as in "he that hath *ea-uh's* to *hea-uh*, let him *hea-uh*." This *r* is not recognized as *r* at all in France : the American final *r* (which is a little more consonantal, but not trilled) is looked upon as a feeble *er*. The Scotch *r* is much nearer that of the French because it



is strong and trilled, being articulated by raising the tip of the tongue very near to the palate. The main difference between the Scotch *r* and the French *r* is this : For the former, the body of the tongue occupies a low position, its tip alone rising and touching the palate as far back as the *ch* position ; whereas for the latter, the whole tongue rises, its tip bending upward but slightly, and coming into contact with the palate immediately back of the teeth, or in the *s* position. Pronounce *pè-re, mè-re, pi-re*. There is no difference between a final *r* and an initial *r* in French. The student should first pronounce the final *e* in the above words, in order to get the *r* correct, and then try the words a second time, with the *e* silent.

When *r* is preceded by another consonant, as in *frè-re, très, près*, it is very apt to be weakened by English persons. The final *tr, vr, dr*, etc., is especially difficult, as in *nô-tre, ca-dre, ha-vre*, pronounced *nôtr, cadr, havr*, not *nôter, cader, haver*.(3)

Most Parisians make the *r* very guttural, i.e., instead of obstructing the breath with the tip of the tongue, raise the tongue at the root just as for *k* and *g*. This guttural *r* robs French speech of a great deal of its beauty and clearness, and is not permitted at the *Opéra* or at the *Théâtre Français*.

Elocutionists are unanimous in condemning the *grassement*—as the guttural pronunciation of the *r* is called,—and at the *Conservatoire de Déclamation*, in Paris, special pains are taken to correct those who have this defect in their speech.

**Y.**—This consonant is formed by raising the tongue near its base until it comes into contact with the posterior part of the palate, in such a way as to partially obstruct the breath, (but leaving, nevertheless, a narrow space for it to escape), and then suddenly lowering the tongue and allowing the remaining breath to escape in a single puff.

The *y* is sonant and fluent, but less fluent in French than in English, because the tongue presses more firmly against the palate in the French articulation, and consequently leaves a

(3) In English, *centre, metre*, etc., are pronounced *center, meter*, etc., just as *maple* and *table* are pronounced *ma-ful, ta-bul*. See p. 41.

much narrower space for the *fluent* breath. When an English person pronounces *ye, year*, etc., he barely touches his palate with his tongue, whereas a Frenchman in pronouncing these words almost makes the *y* an explosive, so firmly does the tongue press against the palate. (4) The contact with the palate is also further back in French than it is in English. Of course, the tip of the tongue must remain forward, as for the French *i*. Pronounce *voyez* (*voai-yé*), *loyal* (*loai-yal*), *royal*. Be careful not to say *voai-é* and *loai-ál*, as most English persons are apt to do.

**K and g.**—To pronounce these two consonants, the root of the tongue rises until it comes in contact with the upper part of the velum, or palatal curtain, thus completely obstructing the breath and confining it in the pharynx. The tongue is then suddenly lowered, and the breath escapes in a single puff. The *k* is surd, the *g* sonant.

On account of the contact of the tongue and palate being so far back in the mouth for *k* and *g*, these consonants are often called gutturals (throat letters). They are, of course, explosives, the peculiar nature of the explosion being due to the fact that it takes place at the buccal entrance of the pharynx, instead of in the mouth proper.

In order that the root of the tongue may come in contact with the velum, the tongue must bend upward at a point more or less near its centre. In the case of the English *k* or *g*, this bend is pretty well forward, so that it is impossible to see very far into the mouth, whereas in the case of the French *k* or *g*, the tongue, occupying a forward position, must bend at a point further back; for otherwise the passage between the root of the tongue and velum would not be completely closed. When the French *k* or *g* is being articulated, the view is clear right to the back of the mouth.

The contact of the tongue and velum is also firmer and of longer duration in French than in English, so that the French

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(4) An explosive *y* is sometimes actually heard in French, especially among uneducated people. To the English ear, it sounds like *gi*.

gutturals are stronger than the corresponding English sounds, the French *y* being also more sonant than the English *y*.

Pronounce *en y*, first as in English, and then as in French. In the second case, keep the tip of the tongue against the lower front teeth for the *k* and *y*.

The character *k* is not Roman, and is little used in French, the *c* and *q* representing the same sound. Unfortunately, however, the *c* sometimes represents the sound of *s*, and *q* the sound of *j*, as we will see later. Pronounce *quelle côte* (*kèl kôte*), *qu'on y ôte*.

As the character *x* represents the two consonants *ks* (or *cs*), its formation will differ in English and French, just as the two consonants *k* and *s* respectively differ in these languages. Pronounce *taxe*, *exprès* (*taks*, *èk-spré*). When *ex* is followed by a vowel, the *x* becomes sonant, i.e., it becomes *yz*: *exemple*, *exalté* (*eg-zan-ple*, *eg-zal-té*).

**Gn.**—This digraph represents a sound which is not heard in English, but which may be described as a nasal *y*. To produce it, the tongue rises to the *y* position, the velum at the same time lowering. The connection between the mouth and pharynx is thus completely shut off, but the nasal passages, being open, afford an issue to the breath, as well as a resonance chamber to the murmur from the larynx. The tongue then suddenly lowers, and the velum flies back to close the nasal passages, so that the remaining breath escapes in a sudden puff through the mouth, producing the closing sound of the consonant *y*.

A careful reading of the above description of the *gn* will show that by a nasal *y* we mean a sound very different from the ordinary *n* followed by a *y*. To pronounce a dental *n*, the tongue does not "rise to the *y* position." The French *gn* is approximately heard in the English *song*. The tongue for the *ny* in this word rises to the *y* position, but remains there until all the breath has escaped through the nose, instead of falling and allowing the final puff to escape through the mouth. The sound is the French *gn* begun, but not finished. Similarly, the English *n* in *man* is a dental *n* begun but not finished, for it lacks the final puff which is heard in the *n* of *ne*. Instead of calling the *gn* a nasal *y*, it would perhaps

be better to call it a guttural *u*, in contradistinction to the dental *u*, which is articulated by raising the tongue to the upper teeth. The *y* sound which completes the *gu* answers to the final puff of the dental *u*.

In the English word *anger*, a guttural *u* is also heard, but it is followed immediately by the sound of *y*, so that it has no more final puff than has the *u* of *sang*. (5)

Pronounce : *si-gual*, *si-gue*, *i-guo-ré*, *cham-pu-gue*, *Bou-lo-gue*, *ma-gni-fi-que*.

Care must be taken not to split the *gu* in two and make of it two distinct sounds. Thus, *si-gual* must not be pronounced *sing-gual*, because there is no break in the *gu*. The pause or break should occur after the *i*; that is to say, pronounced *si*, then let the vowel utterance cease while the tongue rises to the *y* position. The sonant element of the *gu* must not be spoiled by letting the tongue drop too soon after reaching the palate: the contact should be firm and prolonged, as in the case of the other French consonants. Let the tip of the tongue be kept against the lower front teeth, as for *y*, and the raised surface of the tongue touch the palate as far back as possible.

Some very extraordinary statements are sometimes made concerning the French *gu*. Most writers say it is like the English *u* in *onion* (un-yun), just as though the *u* in this word were not like any ordinary dental *u*. Other writers imagine they have found the sound in the English word *cañon* (can-yon), which they call a liquid *u*, but which is precisely like the *u* in *candy*. The fact that a *u* sound appears in the second syllable of *cañon* does not in the least change the nature of the *u* in the first syllable *can*. Indeed the student must distinguish the sounds *pa-nier*, *pa-nion* which contain the dental *u* from the sounds *pa-gué* and *pa-guon* which contain a guttural *u*.

#### THE ASPIRATE.

The *h* is not a consonant, but simply an unobstructed emission of breath, or in other words "a breathing." It is heard in French

(5) In the sound *sang* there is no *g*, for, as we have seen, a *g* is pronounced by pressing the root of the tongue against the velum, which is not lowered, but drawn back to cover the nasal passages.

in *ho!* *ha!* *hé!* and in one or two other words expressing deep emotion, as *haine*, *honte*, etc. In all other cases when the *h* is written, it must not be pronounced. In words like *homme*, *habit*, etc., the *h* probably never was pronounced, at least, not since these words ceased to be Latin and became French; for, from the earliest times, *le homme* was pronounced *l'omme* and *le habit*, *l'abit*, the elision of the *e* in *le* showing that no *h* separated the two vowels. On the other hand, it seems beyond doubt that the *h* was heard until quite recently in *hache*, *héros*, etc., for the vowel of *le* and *la* instead of suffering elision, when coming before these words, remains. We say *la ache* and *le éros* (written *la hache* and *le héros*), that is to say, though the *h* is gone its effect is still felt. In many of the rural districts of France the aspirate can be faintly heard, as indeed it also can among French-Canadians.

RECAPITULATION.—It will be evident that the palato-linguals may be divided into two groups: those which are articulated by bringing the tongue in contact with the anterior part of the palate (*s*, *z*, *ch*, *j*, *r*) forming the first group, and those which are articulated by bringing the tongue in contact with the posterior part of the palate (*y*, *k*, *g*, *gn*) constituting the second group.

In articulating the first group, the tongue must as usual occupy a high position, and come more forward than it would for the corresponding English consonants. The contact with the palate must in every case be firm and prolonged. In articulating the second group, the same points are to be observed, but the tip of the tongue should also rest on the lower front teeth, and the tongue bend upward further back than for the corresponding English sounds.

## CHAPTER VI.

## RETRENCHMENT OF CONSONANTS, SYLLABICATION, ETC.

WE have already seen that every consonant may be divided into two elements, the first of which is formed by obstructing (completely or partially) the breath, and the second by removing the obstruction and allowing the breath to escape in a single puff.

In the case of the fluents, the first element is strong, and the second weak. The explosives, on the other hand, are weak in the first element and strong in the second. It is only when a vowel or a fluent consonant precedes an explosive (as in *at*, *ad*, *ast*, *aft*) that the latter can be recognized by its first element alone.

At the beginning and end of words, consonants are generally fully pronounced ; that is to say, both their initial and final elements are heard ; as, for instance, in the English words *hot*, *pot*, *cook*, *rap*, etc., or in the French words *bal*, *lune*, *Rome*, *cor*, *bis*, *vis*, etc. When a surd explosive is not well pronounced at the end of a word, it is apt to sound like its corresponding sonant. The final puff of a sonant is, however, naturally weak, and in English it is apt to be neglected altogether at the end of words ; as, for instance, in *rag*, *bad*, *babe*. Perhaps the puff of the *g*, *d*, *b* is never entirely suppressed when these consonants are final, but it is, at least, made very weak by most English persons. In the case of the sonant fluents (*l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, *v*, *z*, etc.), it is safe to say that the puff is never heard when these consonants are final in English, as, for instance, in *am*, *ale*, *an*, *car*, *have*, *has* (has), etc. Special care must, therefore, be taken to pronounce these consonants in full when they end French words. A final *g* is not heard at all in English, and the final English *r* is little more than a vowel sound. (See p. 43.)

Pronounce *car*, *bal*, *âme*, *âne*, *fère*, *fret*, *guz*, *vis*, *fille* (fy).

WHEN THE FINAL PUFF MUST BE SUPPRESSED.—When one consonant is followed immediately by another, as in *al-mit*, *al-most*, the final puff of the first consonant is completely sup-

pressed. If this were not so, an awkward gap would intervene between the two consonants. As it is, a slight pause is felt before the second consonant is articulated, and this pause serves to divide the word into two distinct sounds or syllables. It is possible, however, to pronounce two consonants together without making any pause between them, when the first consonant is a fluent and the second an explosive, as in *mast-er*, *part-ing*, *aft-er*, etc. In the above words, the puff of both consonants is suppressed, and the break occurs between the second consonant and the vowel. This happens very frequently in English, but is much rarer in French. Frenchmen are apt to pronounce the above words as *mas-ter*, *par-ting*, *af-ter*, giving the second consonant its full puff.

Pronounce *ar-mée*, *al-té-ré*, *par-tir*.

The law regarding the suppression of the final puff holds good not only when the two consonants occur in the same word, but also when they occur in two different words pronounced in quick succession, as *at me*, *look now*. Speech would be very broken if we were obliged to pause and emit a puff of breath between words like the above. The brief pause which intervenes between the two words *look now* is identical with that which divides the syllables of the word *lucknow*. The *k* of *look* cannot here be treated as a final consonant. So, although we would pronounce fully the *k* (or *c*) in *sac* when this word stands alone, we would retrench the final element of the consonant in *sac de farine*.

When a consonant is followed by a vowel, its final puff is sometimes suppressed. This happens in French only when the vowel belongs to a word following the consonant, as *cet arbre*, *tel ami*, *pour ami*, *les (lèz) oranges*. The full pronunciation of the consonant would in such cases cause it to run on to the vowel of the second word, ruin the syllabication, and cause great confusion in the sounds. *Tel ami* sounds as different from *tè lumi* as *till eight* does from *tea late*; and *cet arbre* is just as distinguishable from *cè tarbre* as *get all* is from *gè tall*. So, we must not say *lè zami*, but *lèz ami*. It is true that it is often stated that the consonant of the first word is run onto the vowel of the second word, but such is clearly not the fact. There being no pause between the consonant and the vowel, the two sounds are bound to be more or less

united (and the suppression of the final puff is not as complete as when two consonants are pronounced in succession), but the consonant lacks that energy which it always possesses when pronounced on a vowel.

Particular care should be paid to the pronunciation of the nasal vowels when followed by a vowel in another word. In *un ami*, *ou a*; *bien armé*, the nasal vowels are heard as usual, but before the sound of these vowels dies away the tongue rises to the teeth, so that the initial element of *n* is heard. There is, however, no final puff to this *n*. It is an error to suppose, as most authorities do, that *un ami* is pronounced *un nami*, *ou. a*, *ou na*, and *bien armé*, *bien narmé*. Some lexicographers would have us pronounce these expressions as *u nami*, *o na*, *biè narmé*, claiming that the nasal vowel disappears before the vowel of the next word. This pronunciation totally violates the phonetic principles we have enunciated, and is, moreover, seldom heard. If there are French persons who say *o na* for *ou a*, they are no more to be imitated than those English persons who say *cè tout* for *get out*.

In English, the final puff is often suppressed before a vowel, even when the latter is in the same word as the consonant, as, for instance, in *Can-a-da*, *av-al*, *up-er* (upper), *mast-er*, *part-ing*, etc. The final puff of the *p* is no more heard in *uper* (upper) than it is in *up or down*. There may be persons who say *par-ting* and *mas-ter*, but the usual and correct pronunciation of these words is undoubtedly *part-ing* and *mast-er*. The object of suppressing the final puff of a consonant is to separate it from the following vowel and to join it with the preceding one. For some reason or other, the *p* in *up-er* (upper) is made to belong to the *u* instead of to the *er*, just as though the word were made up of two separate words, *up* and *er*; whereas in *upon* the *p* is detached from the *u* and joined to the *on*, as though the word were made up of two separate sounds, *u* and *pon*.

In French the final puff of a consonant is never suppressed before a vowel when the latter falls in the same word as the consonant. The sound *can* is not heard in the French word *Canada*, because this word is pronounced *ca-na-da*. So *laurier* (*laurel*) is not pronounced *lor-i-é*, but *lo'-rié*.



The gliding of a vowel onto a consonant is effected by obstructing the breath before the vowel sound has ceased, thus cutting the vowel short, as it were. When the vowel is not glided onto the consonant, the vowel sound ceases just before the obstruction of the breath takes place, making a very brief but yet perceptible pause or break between the vowel and consonant. The sounds *too late* may be decomposed into the two sounds *too late* or *tool ate*, according as we pronounce the consonant *l* on the *oo* or on the *a*.

Pronounce *mi-sé-ra-b e*, *dé-fi-ni-ti-ve*, *i-gno-ran-te*, *a-che-ré*. (1)

The consonants *r* and *l* partake somewhat of the nature of the vowels, inasmuch as they are readily pronounced after another consonant without any pause or break. We pronounce and syllable *table*, *tablier*, *répli-qué*, *sucré*, *sucré*, *livre*, etc., as *ta-ble*, *ta-bli-é*, *ré-pli-qué*, *su cré*, *su cre*, *li-vre*, not as *tab-le*, *tab-li-é*, *ré-pli-qué*, *suc-ré*, etc. Nothing could be more simple or more natural than the French method of syllabication, and nothing much more difficult and more exasperating than the method used in English.

It is worth while remarking that we rarely pronounce more than two consonants in succession in French. Such sounds as *worlds*, *twelfths*, *postscripts*, etc., containing as many as four successive consonants, are quite natural for English organs—because the consonants are feebly and imperfectly articulated in English—but for French people they are exceedingly difficult.

DUPLICATION OF CONSONANTS.—We sometimes articulate two consonants of the same kind in succession, as in the English words *soulless*, *unnatural*, and in the French words *annales*, *illégal*, etc. In such case, the first consonant is retrenched as usual and pronounced on the vowel preceding it, a slight pause occurring before the second consonant is articulated. We pronounce and syllable these words, *an-na-les*, *il-lé-gal*, etc.

It was quite a common thing in Latin to articulate two consonants of the same kind in succession as above, but this is rather exceptional in French and English, for, although two such consonants are frequently written, the first is generally silent, as in *abbé*, *affaire*, *commerce*, etc., pronounced *a-bé*, *a-fê-rr*, *co-mèrce*, etc.

(1) The digraph *gn* or *ch* must not be mistaken for two separate consonants.

## CHAPTER VII.

## TONIC ACCENT.

BEFORE proceeding to study the nature of French tonic accent, it is well to have a clear understanding of what is meant by tonic accent in English. The subject is a difficult one, and much that has been written concerning it is of questionable value. Mr. Alexander J. Ellis, the well-known English scholar, states in his work, *The Quantitative Pronunciation of Latin*, that he is "unable to come to any definite conclusion upon the nature of what is usually called accent even in French and English." Webster understands by accent a "stress or effort of voice upon certain syllables of words, which distinguishes them from others by a greater distinctness and loudness of pronunciation;" and this theory seems to correspond to the popular idea on the subject. We think it can be shown, however, that the underlying principle of English tonic accent is altogether independent of *stress* or *force of voice*.

The accent on the English word *sav-ing* is said to be on the first syllable, and yet, except when a special emphasis is given to this word, its first syllable is not pronounced any louder or stronger than the second. When we say, "He is *sav*ing his money, not *spend*ing it," then indeed the syllables *sav* and *spend* are forcibly uttered. The stress or emphasis which is noticeable here has to do with what is known as *oratorical accent*, and may vary with each individual. It is evident that the word *mon-ey* has also the accent on the first syllable, and yet, if we stressed this syllable in the above sentence along with the other two syllables, we would not be speaking English at all. A single line of English pronounced with a stress or force on every accented syllable would be exceedingly shocking to the ear. While it is true, therefore, that when a word is stressed or emphasized, that stress is always placed on the accented or tonic syllable, it is quite incorrect to suppose that every tonic syllable is stressed. French is spoken with more changes in the pitch of the voice than is English, and whenever

the voice is raised on a word, it is always in pronouncing a tonic syllable, but it is quite incorrect to suppose, as most French writers do, that tonic accent in French means the *elevation* of the voice on the tonic syllable of every word. If we raised the voice on every tonic syllable in French, there would be little beauty to French speech.

No matter how gently we pronounce the first syllable of the English word *mon-ey*, it still retains that peculiar feature which we call *tonic accent*. What, then, is it that gives the syllable *mon*, in *money*, a prominence over the syllable *ey*? The simple fact that it is a longer syllable—that is to say, that it occupies a longer time in its pronunciation. Instead of being hurried over, it is prolonged, and in order to facilitate its prolongation the consonant *n* is drawn onto it, instead of going with the following syllable, as it otherwise would. If the student will say *mo-ney* instead of *mon-ey*, he will find that, in order to retain the accent on the first syllable, he will have to prolong somewhat unnaturally the sound of the vowel *o*. The reason for the syllabication in *Can-o-da*, *ov-al*, *up-er* (upper), *must-er*, etc., will now be clearly seen. English persons in pronouncing Latin use the English method of syllabication, because it aids them in prolonging the sound of certain syllables and of curtailing the sound of others, and hence of placing the accent in the right place. Thus, *pater* and *later*, etc., are pronounced by English persons *pat-er* and *lat-er*, that is to say, the *t's* in both words are attached to the first syllable in order to lengthen it or make it *tonic*. What the Romans meant by tonic accent was, however, quite a different thing from prolonging a syllable.

If all syllables were of the same length there could be no tonic accent,—at least, no English tonic accent. Thus, if we pronounce the two words *good* and *man* in succession, giving each word its natural and full sound, the one sound will be as prominent as the other. If, however, we lengthen the first word more than usual, it will immediately become *tonic*, that is to say, it will have more prominence than the second word. The same result, however, can be obtained by shortening the sound of the second word, and giving the first its usual sound. This is, indeed, the method usu-

ally employed in English. Thus, in the word *Goodman*, the syllable *good* is not unusually prolonged, but the second syllable is made very short, its vowel sound almost disappearing. In fact, *goodman* represents the sound of the word better than *goodman*.

The difference in the length of syllables in English is very great, and hence English is said to have a strong tonic accent. The *atonic* syllables are all so quickly pronounced that the brief vowel sound which they contain is nearly always that of *e*. In many cases, no vowel sound is heard at all, but merely the murmur of sonant consonants, as in *part-e-mut*, *miz-re-bl*, etc.

In most English words there is but one long (or accented) syllable, but in some words we find two or even three long syllables, as, for instance, in *su-i-cide*, *rid-i-cule*, *in-com-pre-hens-i-bil-i-ty*. In such case, however, there is always one tonic syllable which is more prolonged than the others, and hence this syllable is said to have the *principal accent*, while the other tonic syllables are said to have a *secondary accent*. In *su-i-cide*, the first syllable is long, the second short, and the third also long. If we now also prolong the second syllable, we will have a word all of whose syllables are long. If these three syllables are all of the same length, the word will be without accent: if, on the other hand, we make one syllable a little longer than the others, then this prolonged syllable will be slightly more prominent than the others, or, in other words, it will be slightly accented.

In French words all the syllables are of nearly equal length, the final syllable being, however, slightly more prolonged than the others. It follows, therefore, that the tonic accent is very light in French, and that it is always on the last syllable. The English words *pre-vail* and *re-duce* are accented on the last syllable, but this accent is very marked because of the short nature of the first syllables in those words. If the first syllable of *prevail* and *reduce* be lengthened, as is frequently done by persons who speak deliberately, the accent will not be nearly so marked. The pronunciation *pree-vail* and *ree-duce* is American, not English, but it is also French as far as the tonic accent is concerned.

The difference between the long and short syllables in French is so slight that many writers have maintained that there was no such

thing as tonic accent in this language. It is quite true that in French poetry one syllable is looked upon as equivalent to another, the long and short feet of English or Latin verse not being recognized; but it is equally true that if in ordinary speech all syllables were made equal in length such speech would lack character and expression. The student, therefore, while being careful never to glide over syllables as he is accustomed to do in English, should also be careful to dwell a little on the last syllable of every French word. (1) The last syllable is the soul of the word, and receives the stress, when stress is to be given; and when we raise the voice on a word, we do so on the last syllable. Usually, the last syllable is only slightly prolonged, as in *vé-ri-té*, but it is always permissible to exaggerate its length for oratorical effect, just as we may do in English, e.g., *to pre-rai-ail*. The prolongation of a final syllable is quite noticeable before a pause in a sentence, for in that case only can a syllable be really final.

When several monosyllabic words are pronounced in succession, as *Je ne sais pas*, the last only is prolonged, unless, of course, there is some special reason for emphasizing some other word. (2) Many English persons, in rendering *I do not know* in French, say, *Je ne sais pas*. This prolongation or accentuation of the word *sais* is here quite meaningless, and sounds very odd. The phrase should be treated as a word of four syllables (*je-ne-sé-pâ*), and the final syllable given a slight prolongation or accent.

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(1) The final *e* (as in *notre, veste*, etc.) is usually silent in French, and hence does not make a separate syllable with the consonant preceding it, but when it is pronounced it is never prolonged, and hence the syllable preceding it receives the accent. This must be borne in mind in reading the above rule. Pronounce *ta-ble, li-bre*, as *tabl, libr*.

(2) By the last we mean, of course, the one immediately preceding the pause. This pause need not necessarily be the end of a sentence.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE SUPPRESSION OF THE FINAL E.

IN reading French poetry the final *e* is nearly always pronounced, and forms with the consonant preceding it a separate syllable, the only exception being when the *e* is followed by another vowel or comes at the end of a line, e.g. :

Mais où | va ma | dou-leur | cher-cher | u-ne | vic-time ?

It will be seen that the *e* in *une* is pronounced (so that this word has two syllables), but that the *e* in *victime* is silent. In ordinary speech, however, the final *e* is generally silent and the consonant preceding it is pronounced on the preceding vowel, thus making the word a syllable shorter. The same thing may happen to an *e* in the body of a word. Thus *sou-ve-nir*, *sa-me-di*, *pro-me-nade* become in ordinary speech *souc-nir*, *sam di*, *prom-nade*. It is no effort to pronounce two consonants in succession when they come between two vowels, for one consonant can go with either vowel. It is more difficult, however (and sometimes impossible), to pronounce three consonants in succession, and for this reason *par-ve-nir*, *par-le-ment*, *jus-te-ment*, *ar-me-ment*, etc., do not become *parv-nir*, *parl-ment*, *arm-ment*, etc. (1)

The last word would be especially mutilated by dropping from it the *e*, on account of the two *n*'s coming together. Even if this word contained no *r* (*unement*) the *e* could not be suppressed. (2) It will be evident also that we cannot suppress the *e* in *notre journal*, *double plaisir*, *votre fils*, etc., and say *notr journal*, *doubl plaisir*, *votr fils*, etc., for too many consonants would come together. (3) Similarly, it is much easier and more elegant—to

(1) The *i* in the diphthongs *ia*, *ie*, etc., is so nearly a *y*, that it has the effect of a consonant on the *e*. Hence words like *aimeriez*, *refuseriez*, etc., are not pronounced *aim-riez*, *re-fus-riez*, etc. For the same reason the *e* remains in the words *atelier*, *batelier*, *chapelier*, *coutelier*, and a few other words ending in *lier*.

(2) The student will, however, be careful not to mistake the *n* or *m*, which is written after the nasal vowel, for a consonant. We can drop the *e* in *fondement* just as easily as we can in *fondement*, for the *ou* is only a nasal vowel.

(3) Uneducated people very unwillingly restore the *e* to words like the above, but

say *exis-te pas, mar-che bien, par-le pen, sor-te pas*, etc., than to say *exist pas, march bien*, etc., although the latter pronunciation is quite commonly heard. Of course, whenever the final *e* is followed by a vowel in the next word, or when a pause follows, then the *e* must be suppressed, e.g., *notre ami, marche avant*, pronounced *notr ami, march avant*.

The *e* in the little words *ne, de, que, ce, le, me, te, et* is usually quite distinctly pronounced, but when these words are preceded immediately by a vowel (as in *a le*) their consonants are drawn on to the latter, and the final *e* becomes silent as before. Thus *si le fou* is pronounced *sîle fou*, and *eau de vie, aude vie*, the final *e* disappearing just as it does in *une, âme*, etc. In early French *à le* (to the) actually became *al*, which again later became *au*, by a softening of the *l* into *u*.

The attraction of the *de, me, ce*, etc., into the vowel of a preceding word is a fact which is too often overlooked by teachers of French, and this is one of the chief reasons why English persons find French speech so difficult to understand. Most English persons will understand the meaning of the three words *eau de vie* when each of these words is pronounced distinctly and separately, but it is almost as certain that these same persons would be bewildered by the usual French pronunciation of the above words, and would ask for an explanation of the word *aude*, little doubting that this sound represented two words. Here are further examples for practice :

Peu de feu	pronounced	peude feu
Tu me parle	"	tume parle
Je ne parle pas	"	jœne parle pâ
On le parle	"	onle parle
Loin de là	"	loènde la
On me parle	"	onme parle (4)

When a word ending in a consonant precedes *de, me, le*, etc., of course the latter cannot be joined to it, but will always form a

being unable to pronounce all the consonants without a vowel, drop the *r* or *l*, and say *not journal, doub plaisir*, etc.

(4) Make the final *e* silent in all these examples.

separate syllable, as *il me parle*. In the last three examples above given the *n* must not be mistaken for a consonant, for it is only written to show that the vowel is nasal. *Onme* is meant to represent a nasal *o* followed by a *m*. (See also obs. 2.)

We may pronounce *bon de le voir* either as *bonde le voir* or as *bon de le voir*, that is to say, we may join the *de* to the *bon*, or the *le* to the *de*. The latter is perhaps the more usual way, the little words, *de, le, me*, etc., having an affinity for one another. Sometimes, however, the first method is preferable, as in *bonde le livre* (not *bon de le livre*). Here it is evident that it is better to pronounce the *e* in *le* in order to prevent two *l's* from coming together. A *s* should also be separated when possible from a *ch* or a *j*, for the two consonants are nearly alike. Hence we must not say *dæce chapitre* and *dæce jeu*, but *de ce chapitre* and *de ce jeu*.

It sometimes happens that three little words like *de, ne, le*, etc., succeed one another, and in such case we generally run the first two together, and pronounce the third separately, as in *je ne le parle pas* ('*je ne le parle pas*'). If four such words occur in succession, they may be taken in pairs, as in *que je te le dise* (*kwæ tale dise*). Euphony, however, sometimes requires some other method of pronunciation. The *que* is less liable to disappear than the other words of its kind: the *ne*, on the other hand, is got rid of whenever possible.

There are a number of French words whose first syllables end in the vowel *e*, such as *re-voir, ve-nir, che-val, pe-tite, re-fuse*, etc. This *e* should usually be distinctly pronounced, but if its consonant is immediately preceded by the vowel of a preceding word (as *au revoir*), the consonant will be drawn on to the latter, and the *e* will disappear as before. Thus *au re-voir* becomes in rapid speech *avre-voir*, *de ve-nir* becomes *deve-nir*, *la pe-tite*, *lape-tite*, *je re-fuse*, *joere-juse*, *mon che-val*, *monch-val*, etc. The euphonic principle here involved is the same as before. If *re-ve-nir* becomes *reve-nir* (two syllables), it is easy to understand why *de ve-nir* should become *deve-nir* (two syllables), for there is no more pause between two words closely connected than between two syllables of the same word. Of course, *la pre-mière* could never become



*lapre-mière*, on account of the three consonants *p, r, m*, coming together (see p. 57).

We have already seen that an *e* will disappear before another vowel—that *notre ami* becomes *notr ami*, and *marche avant*, *march avant*, etc. We have also seen that the consonant which precedes the *e* is in such case retrenched, in order not to run on to the vowel of the next word (p. 50), that we must not say *no-tra-mi*, *mar-cha-vant*, etc. The consonants in the little words, *de, ne, le*, etc., however, must violate this rule, because they have no vowel preceding them to which they can be joined. We therefore say *lumi* for *le ami* and *dâne* for *de âne* (though we write these sounds *l'ami* and *d'âne* in order to show that the *l* and *d* are really separate words).

An *e* may also disappear under another euphonic principle. We know how readily the consonant *s* will glide on certain other consonants, as in *sl, sq, sm, su*, etc. Hence we can understand how *cel e* (*sela*) is apt to become in rapid speech *sla*, and how *ce qui, ce que, ce n'est*, etc., may similarly become *squi* (*ski*) *sqe, sué*, etc. The *j* being a species of *s* partakes of this peculiarity of the latter consonant, hence *je ne parle* and *je le parle* instead of becoming *jœne parle* and *jœle parle* as before stated, may become *jne parle* and *jle parle*, which is at least as justifiable on euphonic grounds as the Irishman's *shnore when I shleep*. *De* when followed by *l* (as in *de la*) is also apt to become *dl*, as *dla fumée* for *de la fumée*.

#### THE EFFECT OF SILENT CONSONANTS.

We have seen (p. 48) that the letter *h* is generally silent, and must be treated as non-existent. Hence we say *l'homme* and *l'habit* just as if the words *homme* and *habit* began with a vowel. There are also in French many words in which the final consonants are silent. Thus, the *p* in *trop* and *beaucoup* must not be pronounced: we say *tro'* and *bôcon*. In such case, the law relating to the suppression of the *e* holds good, for if these words do not end with a vowel in writing, they do in speech, and the ear and tongue knows nothing of consonants that are not pronounced. We therefore pronounce *trop de feu* as *trôd feu* and *beaucoup de feu* as *bôcoud feu*. Here are further examples:

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Pas de sucre	=	pâd sucr
Tout le monde	=	toul mond
Dans le café	=	danl café
Sans me dire	=	sanm dir
Je veux te voir	-	je veut voir
Tout ce café	=	tous café (5)

---

(5) Be sure and make the vowels nasal in *danl, sanm*. Keep the tip of the tongue on the lower front teeth for the nasals *an, on*, etc. If it rises to the upper teeth the sound of *n* will be produced. In *danl*, the tongue must rise to the upper teeth for *l*, but only after the *an* sound has been heard.

## PART II.

## CHAPTER I.

## FRENCH ORTHOGRAPHY.

So far we have occupied ourselves with the study of French sounds alone, without inquiring very minutely how these sounds are represented in writing. We have merely seen that French makes use of the Roman characters with certain signs of her own for the vowels, and that the Latin alphabet being too limited to represent all the sounds of French speech, it had been necessary in certain cases to combine two characters to represent a single sound, as in the digraphs *eu*, *ou* (which are not diphthongs) and *gu*, *ch*. We must not forget that the pronunciation of French words has changed very much since the language was first reduced to writing, and that, although French orthography has undergone to some extent corresponding changes, it has not kept pace with the pronunciation, and that consequently the present orthography represents very often, not what is now the correct pronunciation, but what was considered correct in ancient times. It is for the sake of tradition merely that we write *veine* instead of *vène*, *plaire* for *plêre*, *loi* for *l·a*, and *beau* for *bo'*. (1)

(1) **Ei** in early French was pronounced **éi** (diphthong): in the 16th century it had become **êi** (as in *soleil*), and later flattened into the single sound **è** (except when followed by *l*; see p. 31).

**Ai** was formerly always diphthongal as in *travail*: it later became **êi**, and still later flattened into **è**, its present sound.

**Oi** once represented the sound of the English diphthong *oi* (*oil*): it was subsequently pronounced **oê**, and in many words, **oè**. This **oê** sound was frequently flattened into **è**, as in the words *anglois*, *francois* (pronounced *anglè*, *françè*). Voltaire substituted *ai* for *oi* when the latter was pronounced **è**, hence the present orthography, *anglais*, *français*, etc. In words like *moi*, *toi*, *soir*, *voir*, etc., the diphthong **oê** remained, but in popular speech it tended towards the more open sounds **oè**, until finally the present sound *oa* was reached. For a long time, however, the literary class held to the pronunciation **oè**, and ridiculed the more ignorant people who said *oa*. The stage only abandoned the **oè** sound in the present century. In Canada such words as *moi*, *toi*, *soir*, etc., may still be heard pronounced *moè*, *toè*, *soèr*—the aristocratic pronunciation of a few years ago.

Were the orthography of French made perfectly phonetic to-day, it is certain that before another century had elapsed, many further changes would be necessary in order to keep it phonetic. The tendency of the present time is to make the pronunciation conform to the orthography. This is especially true in regard to the pronunciation of the final consonants. Not many years ago, everybody pronounced *filz*, *sens*, *judis*, etc., without sounding the final *s*, whereas it is now considered correct to pronounce the *s* in these words.

While the orthography of French is not phonetic, it is very nearly consistent, and does not present the difficulties which are to be met with in English. There are certain rules by which we can determine the phonetic values of the written letters in French, and these rules we will now consider.

## E

I.—When ending a syllable this letter has its proper sound : *re-voir*, *ve-nir*, *le-vé*, *me*, *te*, *de*. In such case, it is generally thin and may become silent altogether under certain conditions (see p. 57). But if it is preceded by *br* or *bl* (or any other consonant similarly joined with *r* and *l*), it has its full sound : *Bre-tagne*, *cre-vé*, *pre-mière*, *gre-lot*, *dia-ble-rie*, *dou-ble-ment*, etc. This full *e* is written *æ* in this key. • The *æ* is used in French in the words *œil*, *œillet* (where it has its true sound), and in a few learned words such as *fœtus*, *œsophage*, etc., but in this last case it represents the sound of *é*. (2)

II.—When *e* is written after another vowel, as in *vue*, *rie*, *joie*, *fée*, it is always silent (even in poetry), but signifies that the vowel is full. Pronounce *vue*, *rie*, *joie*, etc., as *vû*, *rî*, *joâ*, etc.

III.—E, written after *g* when this consonant comes before *a* or *u*, is a mere orthographical sign to show that the *g* has the sound of *j* : *manjea*, *pigeon*, *geôle*, pronounced *manja*, *pijon*, *jôle*. E was once similarly written after *c* when this consonant was pronounced

(2) In the little words *me*, *te*, *de*, etc., the *e* is often full, the pronunciation of these words depending, as we have seen, on the words preceding and following them.

s before *a*, *o*, or *u*, as in *maceon*, *lancea*, *receu*, but we now use another sign—the cedilla—for this purpose : *lança*, *maçon*, *reçu*.

IV.—In the endings *er* and *ez*, the *e* is pronounced *é*, the *r* and *z* being silent : *parler*, *aller*, *laurier*, *avez*, *marchez*. Also in the words *piéd*, *sied* (including compounds *assied*, *mésied*), and *clef*. Pronounce *pié*, *sié*, *clé*.

V.—Except in the cases just mentioned, when *e* is followed by a consonant in the same syllable, it represents the vowel *è* : *bel*, *cet*, *ves-te*, *ver-sé*, *ex-cep-té*, *per-dre*, *ex-i-lé* (*èg-zi-le*), *ex-er-cé* (*èg-zèr-sé*), pronounced *bèl*, *cèt*, *vès-te*, etc. The rule holds good in case of double consonants, even when the first of such consonants is silent : *bel-lâ-tre*, *dres-sé*, *ef-forcé*, *net-te*, *det-te*, pronounced *bè-la-tre*, *drè-sé*, *è-fôr-cé*, *nè-te*, *dè-te* (or *nèt*, *dèt*). When a final *t* is silent, the rule still holds : *va-let*, *cor-set*, *ca-bi-net*, pronounced *va-lè*, *cor-sè*, *ca-bi-nè*. Before a final *s*, however, *e* represents its natural sound, and of course may become silent : *portes*, *fortes*, *dettes*, pronounced like *porte*, *forte*, *dette*. (3)

VI.—E represents *é* before a final articulated *r* or *rre* : *ver*, *hiver*, *fer*, *enfer*, *fier*, *hier*, *mer*, *amer*, *cher*, *cancer*, *cuiller*, *belvédér*, *Jupiter*, *éther*, *revolver*, *terre*, *guerre*. (4). Pronounce *vêr*, *hivêr*, etc. This rule holds good when the *r* is followed by a silent *t*, *d*, or *s* : *vert*, *vers*, *univers*, *perd*, pronounced *vêr*, *pêr*, etc.

VII. — *E* has the sound of *a* in *femme*, *sole quel*, *hennir*, *indemniser*. Pronounce *fame*, *ha-nir*, *so-la-nèl*, *en-da-ni-zé*. In adverbs formed from adjectives ending in *ent*, as *ardemment* (from *ardent*), *prudemment* (from *prudent*), the *em* has also the sound of *a*. (5)

### È

I.—This letter has usually its proper sound : *re-mè-de*, *es-pè-ce*. *nè-gre*, *sys-tè-me*, *lè-vre*.

(3) The *e* in the little words *es*, *ces*, *des*, *les*, *mes*, *tes*, *ses* is, however, pronounced *è*. In conversation it may be pronounced *é*.

(4) The ending *er* of most words is pronounced *é*, the *r* being silent. The words given above are exceptions. See IV.

(5) *Ent* is pronounced *an* (nasal), and hence when followed by *ment* it easily loses its nasal quality and becomes simply *a*.

II.—It represents *é* in the ending *ère* : *mi-sè-re, chi-mè-re, chè-re*.

III.—It represents *é* in the ending *ès* (*s* being silent) : *près, après, procès, décès*, pronounced *pré, pro-cé*, etc.

## É

I.—This letter has usually its proper sound : *ce-lé-bré, té-mé-ri-té, été, cré-é*.

II.—When followed by *e* it is full : *jour-né, or-mée, val-lée*.

## I

I.—This letter usually represents its proper sound : *i, a-mi, ma-ri, pli*.

II.—When followed by *e*, it represents *î* : *amie, jolie, vie*.

III.—It represents *î* in the ending *ise* : *prise, mise, église*.

## A

I.—This letter usually represents its true sound : *papa, pape, éternel, jour-nal, du-me*.

II.—It represents *â* before *se* (*ze*) or *sion* : *vase, phrase, gaze, évasion* (*e vâ-zion*), *passion* (*pâ-sion*), *nation* (*nâ-sion*), *roc-tion, rélation*. (6)

III.—It is equivalent to *â* before a final *s* (which is generally silent) : *lus, bas, matelas; pas, tas*, pronounced *lâ, bâ*, etc.

IV.—It is equivalent to *â* before the ending *ble* : *ta-ble, sa-ble, ad-mi-ra-ble, fa-ble, dia-ble*.

V.—It is equivalent to *â* before *bre* or *dre* : also before *re* or *vre* : *su-bre, ca-dre, es-ca-dre, ma-re, a-va-re, ra-re, bar-re, a-mar-re*.

VI.—It is equivalent to *â* in a few other words, the following being some of the most important : *gramme, flamme, damner* (*dâ-né*), *gagner, espace*.

VII.—When *a* comes before *y* it is pronounced like the diphthong *èi* (p. 31) : *payé, essayer* (*pèi-yé, è-sèi-yé*).

VIII.—The word *pays* is pronounced *pèi-yi*.

(6) *S* between two vowels = *s*. In the ending *tion* of nouns *t* = *s*, hence we include words like *nation, station*, etc., in the above rule. Before *ss*, *a* is generally thin, but it is full in the adjectives *grasse, lasse, basse*, in the nouns *passe, tasse, classe, masse*, and in the verbs *passer, casser, classer, amasser*, and a few others.

## O

I.—This letter represents two very different vowel sounds—the open *o* and the close *o*. The open sound is by far the most common. This open *o* is nearly always thin : *olive, poste, notre, votre, bonne, basse, comme, forte, note, robe, Rome, mo-d-e, homme, nob'e, sa'bre*, etc.

II.—It represents the full open *o* in the ending *or* (or *or* followed by a silent letter) : *essor, décor, encore, abord, nord, port, tort, sort, alors, mort, effort, fort*. (7)

III.—It represents the thin close *o* (*ô* of this Key, but which is not used elsewhere) when it ends a word : *iano, bravo, zéro, cotot* (*t* silent), *not, abricot, haricot, paletot, pot* (*t* silent in all these words), *repos, vos, gros, nos, dos* (*s* silent in these words), *trop, sirop* (*p* silent in these words).

IV.—It represents *ô* before the endings *se* and *tion* : *chose, pose, rose, dose, prose, repose, glôse, alose, émotion (émô-sion), dévotion, notion*.

V.—It represents *ô* in the different forms of the verb *poser* (including its compounds *proposer, composer*, etc.), and of the verb *oser*.

VI.—It represents *ô* in the words *rosée, gosier, dossier, fosse, possé, grosse* (and other derivatives of *gros*) ; in *tome, atme, idiome, axiome, arôme, zone, cyclone*, and a few other words. (8)

## OU

This digraph usually has its thin sound, but when followed by *e* it is full : *rue, moue, joue*, pronounced *roué, moué, joué*.

## EU or ŒU (rare).

I. When *eu* (or *œu*) ends a word, it has its true sound : *bleu, feu, jeu, vœu, Dieu* (diphthong). This rule holds good even when a silent consonant follows the vowel : *deux, feux, jeux, fameux*,

(7) Beware of pronouncing the final *t, d, s* in these words. When the *t* or *d* is pronounced, as in *poste, morde*, etc., the *o* is thin : compare *porte* and *fort, aborde* and *abord*. The *o* must not be made *close* in any of these words : *mode* and *robe* sound very different to the English "mode," "robe."

(8) The *ô* in *hôtel* and *hôpital* is thin.

*œufs* (*fs* silent), *bœufs* (*fs* silent), *bleus* (*s* silent), *monsieur* (*me-sieu*).

II.—It has its true sound when it ends a syllable : *Eu-rope*, *eu-phonie*, *eu-nuque*, *jev-di*, *fleu-rir*, *heu-reux*.

III.—It has its full sound before *se* and *tre* : *fameuse*, *creuse*, *pen-reuse*, *heu-reuse*. *feu-tre*, *neu-tre*.

IV.—When it is pronounced on a consonant it has the sound of *œ* : *neuf*, *seul*, *bœuf*, *œuf*, *preuve*, *neuve*, *veuve*, *jeune*, *valeur*, *malheur*, *acteur*, *sœur*, *cœur*, *heure*, *beurre*. (9)

V.—In the diphthong *euil*, the *œ* sound is also heard : *seuil*, *deuil*, *feuil*, *fauteuil*, *veuillez*. See p. 31.

*Eu* is written *ue* in *cueillir*, *recueil*, *cercueil*, and a few other similar words, in order to show that the *e* is hard in these words. If we wrote *cueillir*, *receuil*, etc., the *e* might be pronounced soft before *e*.

VI.—In the different forms of the verb *avoir*, *eu* is pronounced *u* : *j'ai eu*, *nous eûmes*, *j'eusse*.

## U

I.—This letter represents usually its true sound : *sur*, *du*, *lu*, *lune*.

II.—It is full before *re* or *se* : *jure*, *pure*, *dure*, *injure*, *refuse*, *use*, *abuse*. Pronounce *jûre*, *ûse*, etc.

III.—It is full when followed by *e* : *rue*, *rue*.

IV.—U in the digraph *qu* has no value : *qui*, *que*, *quoi*, *quel*, *quene*, pronounced *ki*, *ke*, *kou*, *kèl*, *keû*. So *équerre*, *équité*, *équiroque*, etc., are pronounced *ékèr*, *ékité*, *éki-rok*, etc. However, in a few words, recently taken from Latin, *uu* preceded by *q* is pronounced *oua* (diphthong) : *équatique*, *équateur*, *quadrupede*, pronounced *ékouatic*, *ékouatèr*, etc.

V.—U is written after *q* simply to show that this consonant is to have its hard or proper sound before *e* (including *è* and *é*) and *i* :

(9) In words like *preu-ve*, *neu-ve*, etc., the *eu* theoretically ends the syllable, but practically it does not, for we pronounce these words *preuv*, *neuv*, etc. In words like *valeur*, *acteur*, etc., ending in *r*, the *eu* or *œ* sound is slightly more open than usual.



*guide, guise, guitare, guinée, guinder, guerre, guêtre, gueule, figue, longue.* Pronounce : *ghid, ghâse, ghiulê, ghêr, gœl, fighe* (or *fig*). (10) When *u* is to be pronounced in the ending *gue*, the *e* takes the diaeresis : *aiguë, ambiguë*, pronounced *êgû, an-bi-gû*.

#### THE DIGRAPHS AU (EAU), AI AND EI.

We have already seen that the digraphs *ou* and *eu* represent simple vowel sounds which are different from any of the sounds represented by *e, e, o, u*, etc. These digraphs are therefore indispensable to a French phonetic alphabet. The same cannot be said of the digraphs *ai* or *ei* and *au* which are simply substitutes for the *ó* and *ê* respectively.

#### AU (or EAU).

I.—This digraph has nearly always the sound of *ó* : *au-dace, lau-rier, sau-té, château, nou-veau, chaud* (*d* silent), *beau, beaux* (*x* silent), *aussi*.

II.—Before a single consonant, followed by *e* (not *é* or *ê*), it has the sound of *ô* : *faute, auge, mauve, saure, pau-vre, au-tre* (11).

III.—It has the sound of *ô* before *ss* : *hausse, fausse*.

IV.—It has the sound of *o* (open) in *au-core, restaure*.

#### AI AND EI.

I.—We have already seen that *ai* and *ei* followed by *l* represent diphthongs (p. 31). In all other cases they represent simple sounds—generally that of *è* : *faite, aimer, américaine, graine, aider, aile, baiser, balai, lait* (*t* silent), *fait* (*t* silent), *peine, pei-gner, reine, sei-gneur, haleine*. Pronounce *fêt, è-mé, lè, jèue, rèue*, etc., not *fét, é-mé, lé*, etc.

II.—When *ai* bears a circumflex (over the *i*), it has the sound of *é* : *maître, paraître, fraîche*.

(10) It is to be regretted that *h* is not used for this purpose instead of *u*, which is somewhat misleading. In *aiguille* and its derivatives the *ui* is a diphthong.

(11) For the purpose of the above rule *tr, vr*, etc., may be considered single consonants.

III.—*Ai* has the sound of *ê* before final *r* or *re* : *air*, *paire*, *éclaire*, *faire*.

IV.—It has the sound of *ê* in the endings *aïs* and *aïse* or *aïsse* : *français* (*s* silent), *anglais*, *maïs*, *jamais* (*s* silent in all such words); *française*, *mauvaise*, *chaise*, *laisse*, *graisse*. (12)

V.—*Ai* followed by *e* is full : *raie*.

*Ei* also sounds like *ê* in *reine*, *seize*, *reître*, and a few other words.

VI.—The verb *j'ai* (I have) is pronounced *je*, not *jè*. Hence also the future ending of all verbs (as *je parler-ai*, *je donner-ai*, etc.), being in reality the verb *ai*, is also pronounced *ê*. The ending *ai* of the past definite of all verbs is also pronounced *ê*, to distinguish the tense from the Imperfect : *je parlais* (Imperfect, *I was speaking*) but *je parlai* (Past definite, *I spoke*).

VII.—The words *gai* and *quai*, *je sais*, *je vais* are generally pronounced in conversation as *ghé*, *ké*, *je sé* and *je vé*. In all other cases than those just mentioned, the student should take particular pains to pronounce *ai* as *è* or *ê*. Nothing is more common than to hear English persons say : *je parle l'anglé, mé pas le françé* for *je parle l'anglais, mais pas le français*. In Paris, we may often hear the same thing, it is true, but chiefly among the ignorant, or those who have paid little attention to elocution.

### THE NASAL VOWELS.

There are several ways of writing the nasal vowels :

<b>un</b>	= <b>un</b> : <i>parfum</i> , <i>humble</i> .
<b>on</b>	= <b>on</b> : <i>nom</i> , <i>ombrelle</i> , <i>ombre</i> , <i>pompe</i> .
<b>am, em, or en</b>	= <b>an</b> : <i>ambre</i> , <i>membre</i> , <i>encre</i> , <i>encore</i> .
<b>im, in, ain or ein</b>	= <b>èn</b> : <i>imperte</i> , <i>vin</i> , <i>sain</i> , <i>sein</i> . (13)

NOTE.—*M* is written in place of *n* chiefly before *p* and *b*. Since *ai* and *ei* = *è*, it is easily seen why *ain* and *ein* should = *èn*. The *èn* is itself not written (except in this Key), for in the diphthong

(12) Exceptions : The ending *aïs* of verbs (as *je parlais*) is pronounced *ê* (thin). The *ai* in the different forms of the verb *laisser* is also pronounced *ê*.

*ien* (as *bien*, *mien*, etc.), and in the ending *yen* (*citoyen*, *moyen*) the *e* has no mark over it. (14) When *eu* occurs elsewhere it represents *au* : *entre* and *antre*, *encre* and *ancree*, are pronounced alike. We must except the words *examen* and *Européen*, which are pronounced *eg-za-mèn* and *Europé-èn*. The student will also observe that a nasal vowel is never followed by another vowel. Thus *un* is nasal, but *une* is not ; in *plein*, *vain*, *sain*, and *vin* there are nasal vowels, but not in *pleine*, *vaine*, *saine*, *vi-vaigre*.

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(13) Do not confound *ein* with the diphthong *ien*, p. 27. *Aim* also occurs in a few words, as *faim*, *essaim*. It is, of course, pronounced like *ain*.

(14) The diphthong *ien* in the endings *ient* and *ience* of nouns and adjectives is pronounced *ian* : *patient*, *science*.

CHAPTER II.

THE VALUES OF THE CONSONANTS.

P AND B.

I. These two letters nearly always have their true value. The final *p* is, however, silent : *coup, champ, drap, trop, loup* (pronounced *cou, chau, dru, tro', lou*). We must except *cap, cep, julap, julep*.

II.—The *b* is silent in *plomb* and its derivative *aplomb*.

III.—*P* is also silent in the following words : *baptiser, sept, sculpter, dompter, compter*, and derivatives. The *pt* is silent in *prompt* and *exempt*, the *ps* in *temps, romps* and *corps*.

IV.—*Ph* is pronounced *f* : *phonétique, philosophie*.

V AND F.

I.—These two letters usually have their true value. The *v* is never silent ; the *f* is silent only in *cerf, clef, nef, chef-d'œuvre, bœufs, œufs*.

M

I.—This letter is silent in *automne* and *dâner* (pronounced *autome, dâner*).

NOTE.—It will be remembered that *m*, when final or followed by another consonant, is not articulated, but merely indicates that the vowel preceding it is nasal. When *m* is doubled this rule does not hold, for two *m*'s are treated as one. Hence in *gramme, homme*, etc., there is no nasal vowel (1). In the words *rhum, forum, album, museum, maximum*, and a few other words taken recently from foreign languages, the *m* is articulated, the *um* being in such case pronounced *ome*.

T AND D.

I.—The final *t* and *d* are nearly always silent. The final *d* is pronounced only in *sud* and a few proper names.

II.—Final *t* is pronounced in *brut, chut, dot, fot, fret, est* (east),

*ouest, lest, malt, mat, sept, huit, rit, rapt, yacht, gravit, toast, whisk, zénith, acouit, déficit, ballast rival, abrupt, préterit, apt, Ch ist*; and in the following, ending in *ct*: *contact, correct, strict, district, direct, infect*.

III. In the ending *tion* and *tie* of nouns *t* has the sound of *s* (*nation, condition, démocratie, aristocratie*), except when preceded by *s*, when it has its true value: *question, digestion, modestie, hostie*. (2)

IV.—*T* has the sound of *s* in the endings *tiol, tiel, tieux, tieuse*: *partial, partiel, ambitieux, ambitieuse*.

V.—*P* has the sound of *s* in the endings *tient* and *tie ce* of nouns and adjectives: *patient, patience, patiente*. In such case the diphthong *ien* is pronounced *ian*, not *ièn*.

## N

I.—When this letter is final or followed by a consonant, it simply denotes that the vowel preceding it is nasal: *don, mon, lougeur*, etc. The final *n* is, however, articulated in *amen, hymen, ablomen*, and a few other words lately taken from Latin or Greek. The vowel preceding the *n* in these words is, of course, not nasal.

II.—*N* has no value in the word *monsieur* (*me-sieu*).

III.—In the 3rd Person pl. of verbs *ent* has no phonetic value: *partent, portent, donne t* (pronounced *parte, porte, donne*).

## L

I. This letter has usually its true value: *bal, salle, pile, île, la*.

II. - When *ll* is preceded by *i* it has the value of *y*: *brillant, fillette, billet, fille, f.mille* (pronounced *brî-yau, fi-yèt, fi-ye, fa-mî-ye*). This rule holds good when *i* is the last element of a diphthong: *travaille, brouillard, meilleur, bouteille* (*travâi-yu broui-yar, mèi-er, boutèi-ye*). (3)

(1) In a few words beginning with *emm*, the *em* being a prefix is, however, pronounced nasal (like *au*): *em-mener, em-mancher*.

(2) *T* must never be pronounced *s* in the ending *tions* of verbs: *etions, partions*, etc.

(3) But in the words, *ville, mille, tranquille, imbécille, codicille, distiller*, and one or two others, the *ll* is pronounced *l*. And in words beginning with *ill*, both *l's* are pronounced: *il-legal, il-licite, il-lustre*.

III.—When final *l* is preceded by a diphthong whose last element is *i* (as on p. 31) a light *y* sound may also be heard after the diphthong: *soleil, travail, ail, fenouil* (*solèiy, travâiy, aiy, fenouiy*). (4)

IV.—The final *l* is silent in *bavi, chenil, coutil, fusil, gentil, gril, grésil, nombril, outil, persil, sourcil, fils*. (5)

S AND Z.

II.—Final *s* and *z* are silent. The former is, however, pronounced in the following words: *aloès, as, atlas, hélas, bis, iris, judis, gratis, lis, métis, maïs, tandis, vis, fils, os, mérinos, rhinocéros, ours, mars, mœurs, tous* (pronoun), *sens, laps*, and a few Latin words in *us*: *chorus, virus, omnibus, hiatus, rébus*, etc.

II.—When a single *s* comes between two vowels, it is pronounced *z*: *rose, base, maison*, etc. In compound words, however, the *s* retains its true sound: *entresol, parasol, vraisemblable*, etc.

III.—Double *s* is pronounced *s*: *glisser, baisser*.

(4) The *y* sound is much more marked in words like *brillant, travailla*, etc. [in which a vowel follows the *ll*], than in words like *soleil, travail*, etc. In pronouncing the latter, the tongue should rise as usual to the palate after the diphthong *ai* or *ei* is heard, but on falling, only a faint puff of breath, unaccompanied by any vocal sound, should escape. In words like *fille, famille, travaille*, etc., in which *ll* is followed by *e*, the sound of *e* may accompany the *y*. In poetry, this *ye* [*lle*] would count as a syllable. In ordinary speech, however, the final *e* would be silent in both cases, so that the *y* in *travaille* would be precisely like that in *travail*. Of course, if a consonant follows in the next word, as in *travail dur, travaille pour vous, fille de Monsieur*, the puff of the *y* would be suppressed, according to rule p. 50, which means that the *y* would be completely obliterated. When, therefore, words like *fille, travail, travaille*, etc., stand alone or are followed by vowels, the *l* or *ll* may be pronounced as *y*, but if followed by consonants, the *y*, *l*, or *lle* will be completely silent: *fi de Me-sieu, travail dur, travail pour vous*. In some parts of France the *ll* or final *l* in words like the above is pronounced like the Italian *gl*, and is called *l mouillé*. Littré, in his dictionary, maintains that this *l mouillé*, and not *y*, is the correct sound. While there seems no doubt that *l mouillé* was at one time the usual pronunciation of the *ill, il, it* is now scarcely ever heard in Paris, and seems to be gradually disappearing wherever French is spoken.

(5) Careless speakers also suppress the *l* in *il, ils*. The expression *s'i vous plaît* for *s'il vous plaît* is so common that in conversation it can hardly be considered wrong.

## R

I.—This letter is silent in the ending *er*, also in the word *monsieur* : *downer, parler, laurier, altier*, etc. Exceptions.—*R* is pronounced in the following words ending in *er* : *mer, amer, fer, enfer, cer, hiver, fier, cher, causer, cuiller, éther, Jupiter, belvédér, revolver*. (6)

## CH AND J.

II.—The letter *j* always represents its true sound. *Ch* is pronounced *k* in words taken recently from Greek, Hebrew, and Italian : *orchestre, chaos, chorus, éché, choléra*. When followed by another consonant, it is generally of Greek origin, and must always be pronounced as *e* (or *k*) simply : *Christ, chronologie, technique*.

II.—*Ch* is silent in *almanach*.

## Y

I.—This letter represents sometimes a vowel and sometimes a consonant. When it stands between two consonants, it is equivalent to the vowel *i* : *syllabe, cycle, style* (pronounced *sil-la-be, si-cle, stî-le*).

II.—When *y* is followed by a vowel, it is a consonant : *yole, yacht*.

NOTE.—*Y* begins only one or two words. The word *yeux* is simply the diphthong *ieu*. Here *y* also represents *i*.

III.—When *y* stands between two vowels, the first vowel is generally *diphthongal*, ending in the sound *i* : *appuyer (a-pui-yé), ennuyer (an-nui-yé), payer (pèi-yé), essayer*. The vowel *o*, however, becomes in such case *triphthongal*, as we have seen (p. 32) : *loyal, citoyen (louï-yal, sitoai-yèn)*.

IV.—The word *païs* is pronounced *pèi-yi*.

## K (C, Q) AND G.

I.—*K* is not used in French, except in a few words taken from foreign languages. It has in such words its true sound.

II.—*C* has the sound of *k* (*lac, col, cou*) except when followed by

(6) It is remembered that *er* in these words is pronounced *êr*. See p. 64, VI.

*e* or *i* (*y*), when it is pronounced *s*: *cela, cil, cycle*. It sometimes also has the sound of *s* before *a*, *o*, and *u*, but in such case it always takes a mark called the cedilla: *ça, leçon, reçu, français*.

III.—When two *es* are written before *i* or *e*, the first is pronounced as *k*, and the second as *s*: *accès, accepter, accident*.

IV.—**C** is pronounced *g* in *second, czar, zinc*.

V. Final *e* is silent in *broc, croc, eric, arsenic, tabac, estomac, clerc, porc, mare, banc, blanc, flanc, franc, tronc, jouc, douc*. (7)

VI.—**Çt** is silent in *respect, suspect, abject, instinct*.

VII.—**Q** is pronounced *k*, but is nearly always written *qu*, except in *cinq, ouq*: *qui, que, quoi, queue* (*ki, kw, kœ, kœ*). (8)

The *q* in *cinq* becomes silent before another consonant: *cinq lires* (*cèn livre*).

VIII.—**G** before *e* (including *é, è*) or *i* is pronounced *j*: *gémir, agir, gilet*. The letter *u* is therefore written after *y* when an *e* or *i* follows, if the consonant is to have its true sound: *guerre, langue, guide, figue*. (See p. 67, V.)

IX.—**G** final is silent in *bourg, étang, horeng, rang, sang, seing, long, poing, orang-outang, yt* in *doigt, vingt*, and *ys* in *legs* (*lê*).

GN

I.—These letters usually represent a single sound: *a-gneau, campu-gne, si-gnat*. In a few words recently taken from Latin the *gn* represents the sounds of *g* and *n*: *ignition, stagnation*.

II.—*Signet* is pronounced *si-nè*.

X

I.—This letter generally represents the sound *ks*: *ex-près, ex-pliquer, ex-pirer, fixer*, etc.

II.—When **ex** is followed by a vowel, it represents the sound of *gz*: *ex-ercise, ex-ile, ex-alter, ex-hausser* (*h* silent), *ex-humer*. (9) Hence *e* is often written after *ex* to show that the *ks* sound is to be

(7) The *e* in *douc* is pronounced when the word comes before a vowel, or stands at the beginning or end of a sentence.

(8) In a few words, such as *équatique, équateur*, etc., the *u* has a value distinct from the *q*. See page 67.



preserved : *ex-citer, ex-cepter*, etc. In the middle of words, however, *ex* followed by *ion* or *er* represents the *ks* sound : *reflexion, complexion, vexer, annexer*.

III.—Final *x* represents *s* simply, and is silent, except in *six* and *dix*, in which it only becomes silent before a consonant : *six jours, dix jours (si jour, di jour)*. (10)

IV.—*X* has the value of *z* in *dix-huit, dix-neuf, deuxième, sixième, dixième*.

## H

I.—We have already seen that *h* is never really pronounced in French (except in a few interjections), but in a number of words the *h* has the value of a consonant, inasmuch as it prevents elision and "liaison" (see p. 78). We give below some of the commoner words in which *h* has the value above mentioned :

hache, axe	haricot, bean	haut, high
haine, hatred	havre, harbor	houle, surge
harnais, harness	héros, hero	hors, outside
harpe, harp	héron, heron	hideux, hideous
hasard, hazard	herse, harrow	homard, lobster
hâte, haste	heurter, to hit against	honte, shame
halte, halt	hibou, owl	houblon, hops
hameau, hamlet	haïr, to hate	hutte, hut
hardi, brave, bold	harrasser, to harrass	hurler, to howl
hardes, clothing	hanche, hip	hussard, hussar.
hareng, herring		

II.—The letter *h* is used in the digraphs *ch*, *ph*, and *th*. For the pronunciation of *ch* see p. 42. *Ph* is pronounced *f*. In *th*, however, *h* has no value : *théorie (té-o-ri, athée (a-tée)*.

## W

I.—This character is not used in French except in one or two

(9) The *h* in *exhumer, exhausser*, etc., not being pronounced, the *x* is followed by a vowel in these words.

(10) In a few words, such as *index, préfix, larynx*, recently taken from Latin, the final *x* = *ks*.

words borrowed from English and German. In *wagon* it is pronounced *v*, this word being also written *vagon*. (11)

II.—*Whist*, *whisky*, *warrant* are pronounced *ouist*, *ouiski*, *ouarant*, *ou* being as near as most French persons ever get to the English *w* or *wh*.

DOUBLE CONSONANTS.

Double consonants have generally the value of a single consonant only. In words beginning with *ill*, *imm*, *inn*, *irr*, *aun*, it is preferable to pronounce both consonants : *il-légal*, *im-mense*, *in-né*, *ir-résistible*, *an-nales*

THE "ACCENTS."

The marks ' ^ ^ which we have been using over the French vowels are generally called "accents," because they were taken from the Greek, in which language they served to indicate the position and nature of the accent in Greek words. These marks serve a very different purpose in French, as we have seen. The "circumflex" may be found on any of the vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*. The "acute" and the "grave" are found on the *e*. The grave is also occasionally found on *a* and *u*. In such case it has no phonetic value, but merely serves to distinguish two words whose orthography would be otherwise alike : *la* (*the*), *là* (*there*, *ou* (*or*), *où* (*where*).

THE NAMES OF THE LETTERS.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
a	bé	sé	dé	é (12)	èf	jé	ach	i	ji	ka
L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V
èl	ème	ène	ô	pé	ku	èr	ès	té	u	vé
W	X	Y	Z							
-double-vé	iks	i grèc	zèd							

The modern names of the consonants are : *be*, *se*, *de*, *fe*, *ghe*, *he*, *je*, *le*, *me*, *ne*, *pe*, *ké*, *re*, *se*, *te*, *ve*, *kse*, *ye*, *ze*.

(11) The German *æ* sounds something like an English or French *æ* (but to pronounce it the lower lip must not touch the upper teeth) and when it occurs in German words used in French it is pronounced *æ*. Only one or two such words, however, are to be found in the dictionary of the French Academy.

(12) The three characters *e* *è* *é* have only one name (*e*), though the first is often called *e muet*, the 2nd *e accent grave*, and the third *e accent aigu*.

## CHAPTER III.

## FINAL CONSONANTS, LIAISON, ETC.

We have just seen that many of the final consonants that are written are not pronounced. As a general rule, the final *s* (including *x* and *z*), the final *t* or *d*, and the final *p* are silent.

In early French these final consonants were of course articulated, otherwise they would not be written to-day. When they came into contact with a consonant of a following word they were retrenched and weakened, until finally they ceased to be articulated altogether. They generally persisted, however, when followed by a vowel, as in *chez elle*, *deux ailes*, *les autres*, for in such case the articulation of the consonant is most natural and prevents a gap or *hiatus* between two vowels. The final *s* or *x*, it should be said, always weakened into *z*, so that we pronounce *deux ailes*, *les ailes*, etc., *as deux èle*, *lèz èle*, etc. (1).

The final *t* and *d* persisted before a vowel nearly as tenaciously as the *s* and *z*, but with this difference that the *t* instead of becoming weak and sonant (instead of becoming *d*) remained surd, and the *d* also became surd (became *t*). Hence *grand homme*, *quand on parle*, etc., is pronounced *grand ome*, *quant on parle*, etc. (2).

The little word *at* (*has*) has a curious history. The final *t* was soon suppressed in this word, which was written *a*. It persisted however, whenever it was followed by the pronouns *il*, *elle*, or *on*, in the interrogative, as in *at-il ? at-elle ? at-on ?* The early grammarians, not knowing the meaning of this *t*, which was heard in the above expressions, imagined that it was added for the sake

(1) In old French documents we find *x* and *z* written indifferently for *s* in the plural. To-day the *x* is still used to mark the plural of words ending in *eu* and *au*: *feux*, *beaux*, etc.

(2) The Latin *s* regularly becomes *z* between two vowels in French (as *rosa* becomes *roze*) and it is chiefly between two vowels (as in *les ailes*, *deux ailes*) that the common people pronounce the final *s*. The change of this consonant into *z* in such case is therefore easily accounted for. A final *d* on the other hand is only heard in *sud* and one or two proper names, whereas a final *t* is much more frequent. The change of final *d* into *t* is therefore not unnatural.

of euphony, and so they separated it from the *a* by a hyphen and wrote *a-t-il*, *a-t-elle*, *a-t-on*. This error has not yet been effaced. (3)

The articulation of the final consonants when they come before a word beginning with a vowel is, as we have said, very natural, and in certain expressions, such as *nous autres*, *ils ont*, *ont été*, *est ici*, *cous êtes*, *beaux acts*, *les amis*, *deux oranges*, etc., it is never neglected even by the most illiterate French people. When we go beyond expressions like these, however, and articulate the final consonants in expressions like *plantes ensemble*, *choix agréable*, *jeunes et vieux*, etc., we are no longer followed by the common people, for this pronunciation is more or less artificial and affected, however elegant and correct it may be. Ernest Legouvé, in his book, *L'Art de la Lecture*, relates that Mme. de Girardin once corrected a young actress for articulating the *s* in *plantées ensemble*, on the ground that it was quite unnatural for a young person to pronounce in that way. In reading poetry, the final consonants should always be articulated when they come before a vowel, but in prose there are many cases where this rule cannot be followed too strictly, and in familiar conversation the rule should be applied still more cautiously; for we can appear too formal, stiff and cold by deviating too widely from the common habits of speech. We give below some specific directions for the treatment of the final consonants, which no doubt will prove useful to the student.

#### FINAL P OR B, C OR G.

These letters, when naturally silent, remain silent before a vowel. Exceptions: The *p* in *trop* and *beaucoup* violate the rule: *trop arare*, *beaucoup à faire*.

#### FINAL F AND V.

*V* is really never final. *F* is frequently final, but rarely silent. The final *f* of *neuf* becomes *v* before a vowel: *neuf ans*, pronounced *neur au*.

(3) A similar error was made in separating the *t* in 3rd pers. sing. of verbs of the 1st conjugation when used interrogatively, e.g.: *donne-t-il?* *donne-t-elle?* *donne-t-on?*

## FINAL L.

This letter, when naturally silent, remains silent before a vowel : *fusil à vendre*.

## FINAL M AND N.

These letters when final simply denote that the vowel preceding them is nasal, and consequently they must not be pronounced : *parfum à vendre, un nom intègre, du vin excellent*.

IMPORTANT EXCEPTION.—The final *n* of adjectives is articulated when followed by a vowel : *mon ami moyen âge, un autre, bon état*, etc. The *n* in the words *en, ou, bien, combien, and rien* is also articulated in such case : *on a, bien armé, combien avez-vous, rien à faire*. Care must be taken not to ruin the nasal vowel by articulating the *n* too soon. Let the nasal vowel be fully pronounced before the tongue rises to the teeth. We may represent the pronunciation of the above words as follows : *monn ami, unn autre, onn a*, etc.

## FINAL R.

This letter, when naturally silent, remains silent before a vowel : *singulier et plural, le premier à venir, le fermier est arrivé*.

EXCEPTIONS.—The final *r* of adjectives may be articulated before a noun beginning with a vowel : *singulier effet, premier amour, dernier enfant*.

The *r* of verbs ending in *er* may also be articulated before a vowel : *aimer à boire, parler à monsieur, aller au champ*. Care must be taken to preserve the *é* sound of the *e* in *er*, and not to pronounce it *è*. In familiar conversation the students would perhaps do as well to keep the *r* silent in the above cases. In reading, however, he should articulate it.

## FINAL T AND D.

I.—Final *t* when naturally silent is often pronounced before a vowel, especially in verbs : *est ici, ont été, était alors*.

II.—The final *d* of verbs may be pronounced *t* before a vowel : *prend une table, apprend à lire, coud-il*. This rule must be applied

with caution, especially in conversation. Thus, *il veut à présent* might be taken for *il veute à présent* if the *d* of *veut* were pronounced as *t*. When final *t* or *d* is preceded by *r*, it should be left silent: *il part à présent, il perd une fille*. We must except, however, such interrogative forms as *perd-il? part-on?* etc., in which the articulation of the *t* (or *d*) must never be neglected. (4)

III.—The final *t* or *d* of nouns and adjectives should remain silent—at least in ordinary speech: *un rat est venu, il est rond aussi*. Exceptions.—We should never fail to articulate the *t* in the adjective *tout*, and the *d* in the adjective *grand* when these words are followed by a vowel: *tout à moi, grand ami (grand ami.)*

IV.—The final *t* of several other words such as *tout comment*, etc., may be articulated before a vowel. The *d* of the word *quand* should never be neglected in that case: *quand on parle (quant on)*.

V.—The *t* of the *et* is always kept silent, no doubt to distinguish the word from *est*.

#### FINAL S, Z OR X.

I.—These three letters when final and naturally silent are pronounced *z* when they come before a vowel. *Je suis ici, les autres, vous avez été*. It is particularly important not to neglect the *s* (or rather *z*) in *les, des, ces, vous, avez*, and other words of frequent occurrence when they come before a vowel. We would scarcely be understood if we said *nou avon* for *nouz avon*, *c'è le ami* for *lèz ami (les amis)*. Exception.—Final *s* preceded by *r* remains silent: *vers une heure, je pars avec lui*. (5)

#### THE VALUE OF H.

In most French words *h* has no value whatever. Thus the words *homme, heure, habit, honneur*, etc., are to be treated as

(4) The *t* (or *d*) in these interrogative forms is run on to the *il, elle, ou*: pronounce *per-til, par-ton, cou-til (coud-il)*, etc.

(5) One of the chief reasons for articulating a final consonant which is by nature silent, is to prevent *hiatus*. When no hiatus can occur, there is much less reason for articulating the silent consonant. Accordingly, in words ending in *es, et, ed*, there is no good reason for pronouncing the final *s, t, d*, since the *r* preceding these letters is pronounced.

words beginning with a vowel, and a final consonant before these words must be articulated : *deux hommes, trois heures, les habits, son honneur.*

There are certain words, however, in which the *h* is pronounced—or at least was pronounced until quite recently,—and in such words *h* has the value of a consonant. We pronounce *les haches, deux hivers, bon hibou*, as *lè ache, deu omaz, bon ibou*, not *lez ache, bonn ibou*, etc. See p. 76.

#### THE VALUE OF INITIAL Y.

*Y* only begins one or two words. In *yole* and *yacht (yat)* *y* is a true consonant, and hence in *les yoles* and *les yachts* we keep the *s* of *les* silent. In the word *yeux*, *y* simply represents *i*, and hence we pronounce the *s* in *les yeux (lèz ieu)*. The word *y* (there), is also pronounced *i*; hence we say *allons y (alonz i), sans y rester*, etc.

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#### PRACTICAL EXERCISES.

Further practical exercises illustrating the rules and principles set forth in this work will be found in Part I. of our Analytical French Method.

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