

**A COURSE OF LESSONS IN THE FRENCH
LANGUAGE, ON THE ROBERTSONIAN
METHOD; A COURSE OF LESSONS IN THE
ITALIAN LANGUAGE; A COURSE OF
LESSONS IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE**

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A
COURSE OF LESSONS
IN THE
FRENCH LANGUAGE,
ON THE
ROBERTSONIAN METHOD;

INTENDED FOR
THE USE OF PERSONS STUDYING THE LANGUAGE
WITHOUT A TEACHER.

BY
A. H. MONTEITH, ESQ.
HON. MEMB. OF THE W. L. C.



Sixth Edition.

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P R E F A C E.

THE object of the present course of lessons is to give persons disposed to study the French language without the aid of a teacher some directions for their guidance, and to furnish them with a model whereon their studies may be advantageously prosecuted.

In order the more perfectly to supply the part of a teacher, a comprehensive, and at the same time practical, view of pronunciation has been given, together with such elucidations of the sounds peculiarly French as will enable the learner to enunciate them with a sufficient degree of accuracy.

The prevalent notion that it is impossible to acquire French without a teacher, appears to have arisen from the lugubrious attempts of grammarians who have undertaken to explain the pronunciation of the language. No human intellect could possibly digest, and bring to bear on the words of the language, the pages of unintelligible rules and ill-organised observations they have amassed with this view. In the present course of lessons this prolixity has been carefully avoided; and whilst no useless detail has been introduced, every essential point is fully explained and brought prominently before the observation of the learner. French words being written in most cases exactly as they should be pronounced, there is nothing to prevent the acquisition of their pronunciation by theory; and the generality of persons who study the language, by relying upon the ear, that deceives them at every step, and by losing sight of the theory, neglect the only certain means whereby they can acquire a really good pronunciation.

PREFACE.

A great many otherwise intelligent persons run away with the idea that French may be acquired by going to France: this is an excessively vulgar notion, and means that the language may be acquired by intuition, or some other magical process. Whether in France or England, persons of mature years will not acquire the language thoroughly without a diligent and assiduous study of its principles: hundreds of pounds have been expended by Englishmen, both in this country and in France, with a view to acquire French, without having attained the desired object—all the wealth of the Indies, and all the teachers in Christendom, will not suffice for the purpose, where diligence or intelligence is wanting on the part of the learner himself. On the other hand, any Englishman of ordinary capacity, whether in his own country or in France, whether with or without a teacher, if he set his mind earnestly to the subject, may in the course of twelve or eighteen months become perfectly conversant with the language.

The present short course of lessons, besides containing a full *exposé* of the pronounciation, comprises an explanation of the chief difficulties the learner has to encounter, and will enable the diligent student, without the aid of any kind of oral instruction whatever, to see his way clearly into the *materiel* of the language.

NOTICE TO FIFTH EDITION.

The author, in revising the preceding editions of these lessons, has been much assisted by the observations of his correspondents. He takes this opportunity of thanking them for their valuable assistance, and will be happy to receive any further suggestions relative to the emendation or improvement of his works they may be pleased to favour him with.

13, LONDON WALL,
August, 1843.

THE FRENCH LANGUAGE.

LESSON FIRST.

READING.

Trois voyageurs trouvèrent un trésor dans leur chemin, et dirent, " nous avons faim, qu'un de nous aille acheter de quoi manger," un d'eux se détacha et alla dans l'intention de leur apporter de quoi faire un repas.

Before the learner can read the above, he must first be taught the pronunciation of the words and their meaning. We shall therefore place under each word such a combination of letters as may convey a notion of its sound to the English student. Afterwards we shall exhibit the meaning of each word in a literal translation of the entire passage. This done, the learner will be able to translate into English and to pronounce the text of the lesson, if not with absolute accuracy, at least with a sufficiently close approximation. It is not indeed to be expected that the learner should be altogether perfect the first step he makes in a language. A portion of each lesson will be reserved to point out the true pronunciation of such French sounds as cannot be exactly exhibited by a combination of letters.

The following is a repetition of the text, with the pronunciation of the words, as also their euphonic connexion one with another, according as the language is read and spoken by a well educated *native of Paris*.

Trois voyageurs trouvèrent un trésor dans leur
 Trwa wa-ee-a-shair troo-vair-t *un** trairor dan lair
 chemin, et dirent, "nous avons faim, qu'un de nous aille
 she-mis ai deer, noo-z av-on fm, kun d noo-z ah-ye
 acheter de quoi manger," un d'eux se détacha et
 ash-tai d kwa maw-shay, un d ai a day-tash-a ai
 alla dans l'intention de leur apporter de quoi faire
 al-la dan lin-ten-see-on d lair ap-por-tai d kwa fair
 un repas.
 un er-pa.

In order to read the above as it ought to be, the learner should deal with the verbal pronunciation we have given just as if the combinations of letters that represent the French sounds were so many English words. There are no unheard of sounds in French that require the features to be distorted in enunciating them. The learner must avoid all straining, all effort, if he desires to speak French correctly.

Before leaving this part of the subject we may observe, that a little attention to the pronunciation now will be worth more than a hundred times the amount of labour afterwards; the same words will occur over and over again throughout this lesson and those that are to follow, so that a correct pronunciation at the outset will be of the greatest utility.

The sign *~* we have used indicates that the words or letters it joins are to be pronounced as one word, and the sign *-* over the *ai* signifies that these letters should be pronounced with a more open sound than usual.

* For the pronunciation of the combinations *an*, *en*, *in*, *on*, and *un*, marked in *italics*, we refer the student to the article PRONUNCIATION, page 13.

TRANSLATION.

Trois voyageurs trouvèrent un trésor dans leur chemin,
 Three travellers found a treasure in their road,
 et dirent, " nous avons faim, qu'un de nous
 and said, we have hunger, that one of us
 aille acheter de quoi manger," un
 may go (let one of us go) to buy of what (whereof) to eat, one
 d'eux se détacha et alla dans l'intention de leur
 of them himself detached and went in the intention of to them
 apporter de quoi faire un repas.
 to bring of what (whereof) to make a repast.

Aided by the above translation the student may read into good English the text itself. And now that the meaning of the words, as well as their pronunciation, are understood, the learner should accustom himself to reading the French aloud; this exercise will familiarise the ear with a correct enunciation of the words, and serve to impress them more firmly on the memory.

VOCABULARY.

As it is essential to the march of our method that the learner should be perfectly familiar with every French word introduced into a lesson, both as regards its general meaning and precise logical value, we shall range all the words with their various translations in separate columns, so that he may be enabled to test his proficiency in this particular. This may be done advantageously in the following manner: cover over with a card the English column, and translate each French word aloud; verifying this translation by removing the card from the translation given of it. After all the French words have been turned into English in this way, cover over the French column of words, and translate in the same manner