

**A SELF-TEACHING READER, FOR
THE STUDY OF THE
PRONUNCIATION OF THE FRENCH
LANGUAGE, AFTER A PLAN
ENTIRELY NEW**

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A Self-Teaching Reader, for the Study of the Pronunciation of the French Language, after a Plan Entirely New by Théodore Charles Laporte

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THÉODORE CHARLES LAPORTE

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FRENCH LANGUAGE,

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WHICH

WILL ENABLE THE AMERICAN OR ENGLISH STUDENT TO ACQUIRE WITH
FACILITY A CORRECT PRONUNCIATION, WITH OR
WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF A TEACHER.

BY COUNT DE LAPORTE,

INSTRUCTOR IN THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

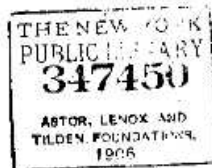
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NOTICES OF THE GRAMMAR.

From the North American Review, January, 1844.

Most of the text-books in common use among us at the present day for instruction in French are designed only for beginners, and contain but a brief and imperfect view of the grammatical peculiarities of the language. A more full and elaborate treatise was needed for occasional reference by those who had made some progress in the study, and for constant use by all who aimed at a perfect mastery of the subject. In the large and handsomely executed volume now before us, Count de Laporte, a successful teacher in Boston, has endeavoured to supply this want, and, so far as we have had opportunity to examine the work, it appears to be executed with great care, judgment, and fidelity. The difficult subjects of the proper use of prepositions, and the regimen of verbs, are treated at great length, and in a very lucid and satisfactory manner. Examples are spread upon the page in great abundance, taken mostly from authors in high repute; and the minute and critical examination of them, though better adapted, perhaps, for a French treatise upon rhetoric, than for a manual to be used by foreigners in the acquisition of the language, is well calculated to give precision to the ideas of the student, and to impart some valuable information respecting the philosophy of language in general. But little is said on the subject of pronunciation, for the very satisfactory reason mentioned in the Preface, that, if the pupil has a teacher, he will learn it by the ear; if he has not, the attempt to gain any correct knowledge of the peculiarities of French as a spoken language is hopeless. The Syntax is not treated separately in this grammar, the rules for the syntactical arrangement and construction of words being presented in connection with what is said on the use of the different parts of speech. This is an innovation on the common method, but we are inclined to think that it is a judicious one. The volume contains no exercises for writing French, being already of great size without the introduction of such matter; but the author mentions his intention to publish another work, which will supply this deficiency.

We commend the book to the attention both of pupils and instructors in French, as we believe there are few among them who will not be benefited by the attentive perusal of it.

From the Boston Evening Transcript.

A FRENCH GRAMMAR. BY COUNT DE LAPORTE.—In the acquisition of any language, the Grammar is the first and most essential aid; and, in consequence of its very importance, the utmost clearness and precision are requisite in compiling or arranging the work. Few Grammars of the French language, arranged for the use of foreigners, fully answer the purpose for which they were designed: the child infinitely prefers to study the initiatory phrase-book, and regards his grammar as a bugbear, which he would avoid, but which his teacher will not permit him to pass over. The adult, knowing the usual process of instruction,

is content to wade through an edition of Wanostrocht, perhaps, or some other equally unsatisfactory combination of rules, verbs, and exercises, and after it is gone through is scarcely wiser on many points than he was at the outset; confessing to himself, very likely, that, if he has gained any thing, it has been rather through oral instruction than from his grammar studies. We are not alluding to *one* case but to *many*, and our readers who have passed the initiation will acknowledge the truth of our remarks.

The work which is intended as the subject of this notice has been given at the head; and it forms a rare exception to the foregoing observations. Its author is well known as an efficient teacher of the French language, whilst his thorough understanding of the English tongue renders him peculiarly competent for the proper adjustment and adaptation of a work such as he has now given to the American public. After a thorough examination of his Grammar, we can safely say that we have found no deficiency; but, on the contrary, many additions to the usual subject-matter of such productions. The rules and explanations, arbitrary and otherwise, are laid down with a conciseness which cannot be misapprehended, and the whole system of arrangement adapts itself clearly to the comprehension. Those almost mystical *prepositions*, which perplex the student more than any other part of the study of the French language, are illustrated at great length, more than sixty pages of the grammar being devoted to this important subject, and its thorough and lucid explanation. The work itself extends over 782 pages, without including the exercises usually found in such publications. These it is intended to give in another volume.

Our space will not permit us to enter more largely into an examination of the merits of this new grammar. We are confident that its great utility can only be proved by being carefully read or attentively studied, and we would that it might be universally adopted as a school-book. It will do more towards the understanding of the genius and philosophy of the court language of Europe, than any similar compilation that we can remember. It is a desideratum for all persons who are ambitious of a knowledge of the French tongue.

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From the Boston Daily Atlas.

LAPORTE'S FRENCH GRAMMAR. — A French Grammar has just been published by Messrs. Otis, Broaders, & Co., and as the author, Count de Laporte, has acquired much reputation in this city as a teacher, we were impressed with a desire to ascertain the merits of the work, and are free to confess that we have been well rewarded for our trouble. It has been our lot to review many works upon this subject, but they are generally deficient not only in clearness and arrangement, but in a philosophical explanation, which tends to throw light on the difficulties appertaining to the genius of the French language. The author has taken great pains to accomplish this object, and, we feel bound to say, has been successful. This work is not a mere compilation of barren rules, without any connection, and laid down as matters of fact, calculated only to be stored in the memory of the pupil, leaving his mind a complete stranger to the study; but it is a grammar which compels the student to reason and compare; and he not only remembers, but he understands, and the acquirement of the French language, which has been so troublesome and difficult, becomes to him pleasant and satisfactory. Notwithstanding the merits of this work in acquiring a knowledge of the language,

an objection may arise as to its cost, for introduction into our schools generally; we will therefore say a few words upon this point. All teachers acknowledge, that, in the course of their instruction, they are constantly obliged to supply, by oral demonstration, the deficiencies in the contents of the school-books now in use for teaching the French language; and it is a well established fact, that unless a child, or even a person of mature years, sees and reflects upon such difficulties, the best oral explanations vanish almost as soon as the lesson is over; it becomes, therefore, important, that these demonstrations should be found in print, to save a vast deal of trouble and time both to teacher and pupil. Elementary books are proper for any study which may be divided into parts, and reduced to abstract principles, to be reunited afterwards; but the study of a language forms an inseparable whole, and each part is necessary to a correct and elegant formation of the most simple sentence. Instead, therefore, of being obliged to purchase some three, four, or five grammars, as is usual with parents, is it not much better and cheaper to obtain one work, at a higher price than is common, which embraces all the demands necessary for a complete education in the French language?

It would not be so great an evil, if these several grammars put together contained the necessary amount of information; but they do not, and it is to such a work as the one of which we are now speaking, that we look to supply the deficiency; and we doubt not that our community, always ready to appreciate a valuable addition to their means of obtaining a thorough education, will liberally reward the Count de Laporte for the service which he has rendered to all those who desire to obtain a knowledge of the elegant and graceful language of *la belle France*.

From the Boston Daily Advertiser.

NEW FRENCH GRAMMAR.—The author, Count de Laporte, has undoubtedly taken much pains and given great care to the preparation of this work, as an attentive and careful examination will convince any French scholar. The utmost clearness, method, and precision are among its merits, and cannot fail to prove essential service to all who desire to acquire a rapid and thorough knowledge of this graceful and elegant language, so commonly understood now, as to constitute an essential part of the education of every well informed person. We know the difficulties to be encountered in obtaining a knowledge of this language, and we feel a pleasure in recommending a work which, we feel confident, to a great degree tends to remove such difficulties, and substitute a system of arrangement adapted to a clear and comprehensive knowledge. The explanations of idiomatic constructions are numerous, yet so simple and clear, by pertinent illustrations, as to be easily understood. The prepositions, which more than any other part of the study of the French language, perplex and retard the learner, are made comparatively easy, by extensive illustrations, and the student feels that he is not spending his time, as is too often the case, upon a work of mere barren rules, without any connection whatever, and laid down as matters of fact, to be committed to memory, and leaving the mind of the student a complete stranger to the study; but it compels him, by its peculiar construction, to reason and compare, and he not only remembers, but he understands, and consequently the study becomes pleasant and agreeable.

From the Boston Evening Gazette.

We received, a few days since, through the politeness of the publishers, Messrs. Ous, Broaders, & Co., a copy of a new French Grammar, by Count de Laporte. The magnitude of this book had nearly frightened us from the task of an examination; but on glancing at its plan, our attention was attracted by the perfect method exhibited in the arrangement of its subjects; especially with the table of contents, the most copious and convenient that we have ever seen attached to any scientific work. For purposes of reference, the table will prove of great value, as it enables the student to refer, not only to the page, but to the very paragraph, in which any subject is discussed. We have given an attentive and careful examination to this work, and feel satisfied that the author had not only understood, but that he had become practically acquainted with the difficulties which impeded the progress of the English student, and has been enabled in consequence to remove many obstacles to the acquirement of the language. The explanations of idiomatic constructions are elaborate, yet simple, and are doubly clear by numerous and pertinent illustrations.

Our first impression was, that the work might be too diffuse and voluminous in its explanations and examples; but the more we have examined it, the more we feel satisfied that the explanations and illustrations constitute one of the most useful results of the author's labors; being absolutely necessary to the student in learning even the simple construction of the language. We recommend to scholars the sections on the use of the article, on pronouns, and on the definition of the tenses, as containing a more complete explanation of the difficulties pertaining to these subjects, than we have seen in any other treatise. We have not forgotten the many hours of labor which we have expended in vain upon incomplete works upon French grammar, for explanations of difficulties which we encountered in the study of the language; and we deem it but justice to the author of this work to recommend it, as calculated to offer great facilities in obtaining a rapid and correct knowledge of the French language.

PREFACE.

THIS work, which we present to the public, speaks for itself, and requires no commentary on our part; it is founded on the principle of mnemonics, which consists in comparing a fact which we wish to remember with another already present to our mind. It has none of the faults so justly imputed to that system, which, in order to represent the sounds of one language, uses the letters of another, — a system condemned by most grammarians, as having a tendency to impress upon the memory of the student a wrong spelling of the language which he is desirous to acquire. Although, as we admit, it is impossible to find in the English and French languages two sounds exactly similar, yet no one can deny that there is a strong analogy between most of them, which may give an idea of what the sound should be; if the pupil has the assistance of a teacher, the task of this teacher will thus be greatly diminished; and if he studies alone, he will have a guide, which, if not perfect, will enable him to go not blindfold in the numerous paths of this intricate labyrinth.

Our own experience since we have used this method tells us of its advantages; and we feel confident that the public will soon ascertain, that, in preparing this work, we have done something useful, however daring the attempt may be considered.

It will be found, that, in the practical part of the work, — we mean the reading lessons, — we have not used the same English words to represent the sounds, as we did in the rules which precede those lessons. This circumstance is due to the remarks of some friends, who, being equally well acquainted with both languages, suggested to us the words employed in the latter part of the work as better adapted to our purpose than those we had previously chosen.