

**THE CRITICAL FRENCH  
PRONOUNCING  
VOCABULARY**

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The Critical French Pronouncing Vocabulary by Marin de La Voye

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**MARIN DE LA VOYE**

**THE CRITICAL FRENCH  
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THE CRITICAL  
FRENCH PRONOUNCING  
VOCABULARY.

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BEING A COMPENDIOUS AND COMPLETE  
COLLECTION OF

FRENCH AND ENGLISH LINGUAL SOUNDS,  
ANALOGICALLY COMPARED.

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By MARIN DE LA VOYE,

AUTHOR OF  
THE NEW FRENCH AND ENGLISH LEXICON;  
THE COMPARATIVE FRENCH GRAMMAR AND PHONOLOGICAL REFERENCE BOOK;  
FRENCH MISCELLANIES; MORAL TALES, ETC. ETC.

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## PREFACE.

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THIS is a kind of addendum to the Author's New Phraseological Reference Book, and Comparative Grammar, in which it is sometimes referred to.

The writer's object in composing this Critical Pronouncing Vocabulary, was that of placing within the reach of beginners a small and accessible volume, within which they could instantly find the pronunciation of any French letter, syllable, or word, in whatever oral situation it might appear. Being somewhat similar to Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary, the plan is more familiar to the generality of English students. No lingual sound of any kind has been recommended in it, which is not sanctioned by the best authorities. Where any orthoëpic difficulties have occurred, the subject has been thoroughly discussed, examples given, and conclusive directions, sanctioned by grammarians of undisputed celebrity, clearly illustrated, for the enquirer's use.

French lessons have been collected at the end of the book for the purpose of serving as graduated exercises in pronunciation. A set of questions also has been added, more effectually to assist masters in the tuition of their pupils.

Nothing, it is humbly thought, has been omitted, that could in any degree facilitate the practical use of scientific as well as rudimental principles on correct and Modern French reading and speaking.

## PREFATORY EXTRACTS.

## TRANSLATION.

"We shall address ourselves only to minds of a studious, reflecting and teachable character; more especially to those who are naturally well-disposed; for we feel confident, that, with such readers, we cannot fail to be successful; we shall find it easy to convince them that pronunciation may be illustrated by figurative sounds.

"It will, however, be right for them to recollect, that figurative pronunciation is not always represented by a combination of letters agreeable to the sight. The eye frequently meets letters jumbled together for the purpose of exhibiting words by a kind of physical process, when no degree of analogy seems to exist between them; this arises from the rare cases in which readers are called upon to read alphabetical characters so combined. In order to reap a fair advantage from figurative instructions on pronunciation, the student's intellectual powers should constantly be on the alert; it becomes necessary, that the reader should lend himself to the method, and place entire trust on the work to which he refers."—*Grammaire de NAPOLEON LANDAIS.*

Exemples in NAPOLEON LANDAIS' *Dictionnaire des Dictionnaires*:—*Basse-cour*, bácekour.—*Capitation*, kapitácion.—*Dinatoire*, dinatoare, etc.

[From a *Dictionnaire Universel* by BOISYR.]

"Il est certain que, dans plusieurs cas, ces figures sont nécessaires pour les jeunes gens. Exemples: *énivraut*, an-ni-; *mécan-naisable*, -kônèçâblè; *tisane*, -zânè."

[From the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie*.]

Exemples:—*Géolage*, dans ce mot et dans les trois suivants, on prononce *jé*.—*Initier*, on prononce *iniciér*.—*Quintuple*, on prononce *cuin*, etc.

[From NOËL ET CHAPHAL'S *Grammaire française*.]

*Oi* se prononce *é* dans *roide*, excepté dans le haut style, où l'on prononce *roade*.—*X* a le son de *gz* dans *Xantippe*; et celui de *ss* dans *Bruzelles*.



[From NOËL ET CHATSAI'S *Nouveau Dictionnaire de la Langue française.*]

*Bordoyer*, bor-dou-ier.—*Caïse*, kèce.—*Décoction*, dékokcion.—*Guinée*, ghiné, etc.

[From various authorities.]

Examples:—*Accident*, aq-sident: WAILLY.—*Indemnité*, eindame-nité: BONIFACE.—*Neuf hommes*, neu-vhommes: G. DUVIVIER.—*Des crocs en jambe*, des crok-zen jambe:—A. LEMAIRE.

All the preceding quotations (and a great many more which might have been produced) have been collected here to prove that the pronunciation of words has often been, and may be, clearly illustrated by the judicious use of auxiliary letters and signs representing equivalent sounds.

There are writers and teachers who object to this method of instruction, declaring that the result can never be satisfactory. With regard to a few cases, their opinion deserves a certain degree of attention; but, in a large majority of instances, such a judgment is both intemperate and prejudiced. Walker's excellent *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* establishes, beyond doubt, in the English reader's mind, the feasibility and use of such a system of communication.

When two languages are taught, such as the English and French, the one by the assistance of the other, it appears very rational to attempt a definition of lingual sounds, through corresponding equivalents, represented, either by simple letters [or syllables, or by analogical combinations, universally acknowledged to be pronounced in the way required. This process, insufficient as it may be, with respect to a very small number of letters

and syllables, affords so much aid in the study of pronunciation, that it would be *ungenerous*, as well as *pusillanimous*, to neglect its adoption. Ungenerous, because it would be interestedly withholding sources of self-instruction from a vast number of beginners; pusillanimous, because it would betray an apprehension, felt by the writer or teacher, of not being able to defend the theory.

Let it be justly pointed out in this place, that an intimate acquaintance with both languages is absolutely indispensable, for the purpose of proving orthoëpic similarities between English and French lingual sounds; consequently, a comparatively small minority of persons are competent to form a fair estimate of the value of the figurative system exhibited in this book.

Whenever it happens that objections are raised against the practice of imparting pronunciation by a plan of instruction similar to that of this orthoëpist, the disputant should be requested, in the presence of French and English hearers, to read out a page of good composition in the prose and poetry of each language. Both tests proving his proficiency, would entitle him to a right of pronouncing on the matter: nothing short of this twofold knowledge should be deemed sufficient to merit the confidence of English learners.

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