

**DR. WM. SMITH'S FRENCH
COURSE. A
SMALLER GRAMMAR OF
THE FRENCH LANGUAGE**

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Dr. Wm. Smith's French Course. A Smaller Grammar of the French Language by Charles Héron Wall

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CHARLES HÉRON WALL

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A SMALLER GRAMMAR

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FRENCH LANGUAGE.

BY CHARLES HÉRON WALL,

Member of the Philological Society; Author of the "STUDENT'S FRENCH GRAMMAR," of an English Translation of Molière, etc.

For the Use of the Middle and Lower Classes in Schools.



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P R E F A C E .

THE present work is an abridgment of the 'Student's French Grammar.' As it is intended for Junior Classes, all the PROSODY, and many of the more difficult parts of the NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS, have been omitted. Still, like its larger companion, it will be found to be both historical and practical. It has stood the test of many years' actual use in large classes.

C. H. W.

HALBRAKE SCHOOL,
WANDESWORTH COMMON.

A SMALLER FRENCH GRAMMAR.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. Philologists have divided the languages of the world into different families:—the Turanian family, the Semitic family, the Aryan family.

They have separated the Aryan family into two great divisions:—the Southern or Asiatic, the Northern or European.

They have further separated the Northern or European division into various groups, of which the following are the chief:—the Slavonic, the Hellenic or Grecian, the Teutonic, the Celtic, the Italic or Romanic.

§ 2. The only important language of the Italic group is Latin. From popular Latin, with a greater or less admixture of words from different sources, sprang a number of languages, of which the following are the chief:—

Spanish and Portuguese.

Italian.

Langue d'Oc, or Provençal.

Langue d'Oïl, or Old French.

The Langue d'Oïl, or Old French, had four principal dialects:

The Normandy dialect.

The Picardy dialect.

The Burgundy dialect.

The dialect of the Isle of France.

From the dialect of the Isle of France, with a greater or less number of forms from the other dialects, and at various times words from other languages, has arisen Modern French

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

§ 3. Before the Romans came into Gaul, Celtic was spoken there as in England. The Romans first settled in Gaul about a.c. 100, but it was not till the invasion of Cæsar (b.c. 58) that Latin penetrated beyond the Roman *Provincia*. It does not seem to have been the general language of the country till about the fifth century. Of course it had by that time changed greatly, and was known as *Romana rustica*, or peasant Latin. From the 5th to the 10th century the Germans came in large numbers into France, but they did not establish their language there as they did in England. They learned the *Romana rustica*, and joined to it a number of their own words. The language went on changing till the 12th and 13th centuries, when it may be said for a time to have stood still. The language as we then find it is called *Langue d'Oïl*, or *Old French*. Like Latin, it depended much upon inflexions and less upon the position of words. It was "synthetic" (as it is called), though less so than Latin. Then came a time of confusion, which lasted during the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries. The language spoken during the beginning of that time was like *Old French*; during the later part it resembled *Modern French*. The best name for it is *Middle French*. In the 17th century were born Corneille, Racine, Molière, Pascal, Bossuet, and many other famous authors. They wrote a language which scarcely differs from the French of the present time. Some words and phrases have become old-fashioned, and are no longer used; but the language is really the same. Inflexions are of less importance, and almost everything depends on position. The language is, "analytic."

§ 4. Not many Celtic words remain in Modern French. The number of German words is much greater; they relate generally to war, feudalism, etc. During the 16th century a great many Latin* words were introduced from books. These we speak of as *learned words* to distinguish them from the *popular Latin* words of which French is mostly composed. Also in the 16th century many Italian words were forced into French. Then a number of Spanish words. During the present century a great deal of English has been gradually establishing itself. The number of words from other languages is not very great; still there are some from India, China, etc. See *Student's French Grammar*, pp. 15—25 for lists.

* And some Greek.

BOOK I.—PHONOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.—ALPHABET, SYLLABLES, ACCENT, ETC.

THE ALPHABET.

§ 5. **Names of the Letters:** (1) The letters, which are used to represent the various sounds employed in speaking any language, form its alphabet.

The French alphabet is the same as the English.

It is important not to confuse the names of the letters with their sounds; the sounds given to the letters often vary, the names do not.

(2) The names of the vowels in French are:—

a (*fâchez*), e (*été*), i (*ici*), o (*écho*), u (*tu*).

(3) There are two ways of naming the consonants in French. The following is the ordinary way:—

bé, cé, dé, effe, gé, ache, ji, ka, elle, emme, enne, pé, ku, erre, esse, té, vé, ics, zede.

w is called 'double vé,' and y 'i grec.'

The following is the better way. The names then correspond as much as possible to the sounds:—

be, de, fe, ghe, ho, je, ke, le, me, ne, que (ke), re, se, te, ve, xe (kse) zø.

c may be called se or ke; w may be called ou or ve.

§ 6. **Imperfections of the French Alphabet.**—For an alphabet to be perfect, every separate sound should have a separate symbol. The French alphabet, like the English, is imperfect:

(1) There are at least thirty-two sounds, and only twenty six letters to represent them.

(2) The same letter may represent more than one sound: the *o* in *mode* has a different sound from the *o* in *rose*; the *g* in *manger* has a different sound from the *g* in *gant*.

(3) The same sound may have more than one letter to