

two peoples and of the languages they speak, to gain access to one of the world's richest and most varied literatures, to have a better understanding of the best elements of German life, to appreciate the great cultural contributions of the German-speaking countries in the fields of art, architecture, music, science, religion, philosophy, and education, to open up the vast storehouse of German folklore, poetry, and proverbs so rich in content, to see the German home-life with its examples of patience and thrift and industry, to keep in touch with the latest findings in science or the latest works in literature or the most advanced movements in the arts, to know the thoughts and feelings of a great nation so closely akin to our own and destined to play so important a part in the future of the world—these and many more would appear to be strong reasons for a hearty welcome to the advice, "Study German."

When we pause to appreciate the importance, nay necessity, of knowing German if we would pursue advanced work in practically any one of the fields of medicine, chemistry, physics, economics, history, philosophy, psychology, or mathematics, we will see how utterly unintelligent it is to abridge for American youth an opportunity to study and master the language.

Editors, lawyers, clergymen, college presidents, statesmen, scientists, physicians, military leaders—in short, leaders in all lines who are competent to advise—have within the past year, in response to a query, given as their deliberate and enthusiastic opinion that German literature, German art, German science, German industrial and commercial activity are a part of the world's best possessions.

The study of German never stopped in France. It went right on during the war, as did the study of French in Germany. Indeed France urged America not to take the step she did take. One result of the unwise let-up in the study of German dur-

ing the war will be an unnecessary gap in American scholarship, which it will require a whole generation to repair. The worst blunder a people can make is to close the gates of knowledge. We did not hurt the German armies by boycotting Goethe, Beethoven, Schiller, and Wagner and shutting out a whole generation of our young scholars from a great mine of scientific knowledge. We injured only ourselves and our own young people. Languages do not make war, but a thorough mastery of them conduces to good will and understanding. It is high time that the study of German, for which the professional men throughout the country are so insistent, should more speedily reach its former state of usefulness and thus serve international understanding by serving the youth of America.

THOMAS J. FARRAR

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF FRENCH

THE American Association of Teachers of French was organized in New York in January, 1927, in order to carry out the following aims:

1. To promote and improve the teaching, study, and appreciation of French in the United States.
2. To serve as interpreters (a) to the United States of the best in French civilization; (b) to France of the best in our civilization.
3. To develop good fellowship among the teachers of French through the chapters of the American Association of Teachers of French.
4. To further the interests of teachers of French and to improve teaching conditions.
5. To encourage the exchange of students and teachers between France and America.
6. To encourage research in the peda-

gogics of French and the publication of the results for the general betterment of the profession.

7. To publish a journal—informational, cultural, and professional—to help bring about these objectives.

These aims were a condensation of a great number of detailed proposals suggested by many of the most eminent teachers of French in the country when they learnt of the proposed organization of this society. The fact that the Association has grown beyond the expectations of its founders proves that they were not wrong in supposing that it was needed and, further, that the A. A. T. F. is evidently carrying out its aims to the satisfaction of a very large proportion of its own members, as well as of members of the profession.

Out of an original group of fifty who met in New York a little over two years ago to form a Metropolitan Chapter, the Association has grown to a membership of approximately 1400 paid-up members distributed in eighteen chapters. Ten additional chapters are in process of organization. The active chapters might be said to represent the whole country, being distributed through the states of California, Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New York, that is the West, the Middle West, and the East. Membership at large covers all the states in the Union except seven. Although the paid membership is 1400, the publications of the Association are reaching over 1600 people, the mailing list of the society. It should further be noted that the increase in paid members in the Association is twenty per cent higher than it was last year.

The activities of the AATF in attempting to carry out its program have necessarily been varied. Its most important project has been the publication of the *French Review*, its official organ, appearing six times a year. The number of worth-while contributions to this periodical increases

with every number. Up to the present it has been characterized by the variety of the articles offered. Questions of interest to every group of teachers have been discussed. Phonetics, Contemporary Literature, French Life, Methods of Teaching French, Classroom Problems, French Art, French Scholarships, have all been treated, by both American and French scholars. Some of the articles have served as the basis for new research in particular fields.

In the meetings of the various chapters, which constitute the next important activity of the Association, a great number of local problems have been brought before the society, and in many cases the discussion resulting has made for better co-operation and understanding. This has been true in the Metropolitan Chapter. The contacts with eminent Frenchmen, such as Professor Hazard of the Collège de France, and Mademoiselle Villard of the Université de Lyon, made possible in some cases by the kind co-operation of the Alliance Française and the Société des Professeurs Français, have been most fortunate for the members of the AATF. In some sections of the country the meetings of the Association have developed an *esprit de corps* among the teachers of that region which has already given them renewed courage in attacking their daily problems.

The generosity of the Société des Professeurs Français has permitted the AATF to offer a yearly scholarship to one of its members to study in France. Projects are on foot to present medals to encourage students of French to better work. Professor Cru of Teachers College (Columbia), as Librarian, has collected books of particular interest to teachers of French. These books are to be circulated upon request. Professor Cru through the *French Review* discusses practical classroom difficulties with members of the Association. Every month offers new opportunities to the AATF to serve the teachers, and it con-

tinues to make every effort to do so. It is precisely by enlarging its fields of activity and by fulfilling more completely the duties towards its members that the Association feels that it is doing a necessary piece of work. The very encouraging and even enthusiastic results of its efforts make it wish to extend its work and serve more of the many thousands of teachers of French in the United States and keep them in closer touch with each other in order that the spirit of co-operation may grow among them and make for a more efficient and more agreeable discharge of their duties. It is as a national organization that it can best carry out its aims, and it is as such that it hopes for continued support.

EDMOND A. MERAS, *Secretary.*

FRENCH VERBS IN A NUTSHELL*

ALTHOUGH there is no royal road to learning, yet we must find some short cuts—must straighten some curves—else how can the next generation travel further than we?

The plan here suggested for mastering French verbs has nothing astonishing about it, but it has been tried out for several years and seems to work without much difficulty. It is mechanical, not scientific, but it is convenient for busy people. It is not even entirely exhaustive, for it makes no attempt to deal with obsolete verbs or to include such defectives as are seldom used. These have long been safely listed in the grammars, for reference on the rare occasions when they are needed.

The claims of this plan rest upon two facts: (1) that, by segregating ten very unruly verbs so that their irregular conduct can not intrude itself upon our attention, we can focus upon the great principles that govern French verb forms; and (2) that, by listing a dozen exceptional future stems and half-a-dozen past definites, we can rely

on the rest and fearlessly proceed to form all tenses from four principal parts—four only.

The responsibility is squarely left upon each root-verb to stand for its whole family of derivatives. When these deviate from its manner of conjugation, due notice of the unlikeness will be given. For instance, when it is stated that *venir* and *tenir* take a *d* in the future tense, it goes without saying that the same is true of the two dozen verbs compounded from these by means of prefixes (*revenir*, *devenir*, etc.).

Fortunately, those verbs presenting the most irregularities are the strong, serviceable auxiliaries and semi-auxiliaries that have to be learned early, before the student realizes how irregular they are. *Avoir* and *être* break many "rules"; but we learn, perforce, their conjugation before we are aware of this fact. The present subjunctive of *pouvoir* and of *faire* runs smoothly through to the end before we are disturbed by the knowledge that better-behaved verbs would have reverted, in the plural, to the present participle stem. But these four verbs and half-a-dozen others are very troublesome when we begin later to make any general statements in regard to the laws of the French verb. Macaulay objected to dogs because they interrupt conversation. The same charge must be brought against these verbs, which may well be branded as "The Unruly Ten." They naggingly break in upon our observations on verbs in general; they at any moment are apt to impede the flow of classroom eloquence. We may mention as unchanging facts the endings of the present participle and of the future and imperfect indicative, and certain tip-endings such as *-nt* for "they" —[^]*mes* —[^]*tes* —*rent* of the past definite, together with the entire formation of the conditional and of the imperfect subjunctive. But we can make few other universal claims without instant and pert contradiction from one or more of these ten verbs. "There are birds

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