



Aventures d'Alice au Pays des Merveilles (French Edition)

Lewis Carroll

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The first French translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (there have been no less than seventeen others) was supervised by Lewis Carroll himself. In the opinion of many experts, and countless older and younger French readers, it is still the best. It has a remarkable freshness and originality, and admirably renders the English puns and parodies with French equivalents. "How Doth the Little Crocodile?" for instance, is turned into a parody of La Fontaine, the staple of French lesson books.

Carroll picked Henri Bué as translator on the recommendation of Bué's father, who was an Oxford colleague. The younger Bué was just at the beginning of his career, and Carroll could not have known that he would go on to distinguish himself both as a translator and as an author and editor. Bué worked rapidly, and had the translation done in a couple of months. Carroll, on the other hand, spent another two years making certain of it. He solicited the opinions of many friends to test the puns and verses. The prose he seems to have been able to judge for himself, and he wrote to his publisher that he was highly pleased with it.

This reprinting of the first edition is complete with the forty-two Tenniel illustrations that were originally included. Of course it is not just for French readers. As one London reviewer, who called it "a delicious translation," remarked: "We could almost (almost, but not quite) wish we had never read it in English, in order to have the pleasure of reading it in French." He went on to say: "It is an exquisite book in appearance, the same size, type, and illustrations as the original volume; and the fun is wonderfully preserved." He also pointed out that it would be a great help to the "young folks in their studies." That is as true today as it was a hundred years ago, for the charm of the French Alice, like that of the original, has only grown with time.

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