

**G. Nolst Trenité, "Charivarius"
The Chaos (1922)**

Dearest creature in creation
Studying English pronunciation,

I will teach you in my verse
Sounds like corpse, [corps](#), horse and worse

I will keep you, Susy, busy,
Make your head with heat grow dizzy.

Tear in eye your dress you'll tear,
So shall I! Oh, hear my prayer,

Pray, console your loving poet,
Make my coat look new, dear, sew it!

Just compare heart, beard and heard,
Dies and diet, lord and word,

Sword and [sward](#), retain and Britain.
(Mind the latter, how it's written).

Made has not the sound of [bade](#),
Say said, pay-paid, laid, but [plaid](#).

Now I surely will not plague you
With such words as vague and [ague](#),

But be careful how you speak,
Say break, steak, but bleak and streak.

Previous, precious, fuchsia, via,
Pipe, [snipe](#), recipe and choir,

Cloven, oven, how and low,
Script, receipt, shoe, poem, toe.

Hear me say, devoid of trickery:
Daughter, laughter and [Terpsichore](#),

Typhoid, measles, [topsails](#), aisles.
Exiles, similes, reviles.

Wholly, holly, signal, signing.
Thames, examining, combining

Scholar, vicar, and cigar,
Solar, mica, war, and far.

From "desire": desirable--admirable from
"admire."
Lumber, plumber, [bier](#), but [brier](#).

Chatham, [brougham](#), renown, but known.
Knowledge, done, but gone and tone,

One, anemone. Balmoral.
Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel,

Gertrude, German, wind, and mind.
Scene, [Melpomene](#), mankind,

Tortoise, turquoise, chamois-leather,
Reading, reading, heathen, heather.

This phonetic labyrinth
Gives moss, gross, brook, brooch, ninth,
plinth.

Billet does not end like ballet;
Bouquet, wallet, [mallet](#), chalet;

Blood and flood are not like food,
Nor is mould like should and would.

Banquet is not nearly parquet,
Which is said to rime with "darky."

Viscous, Viscount, load, and broad.
Toward, to forward, to reward.

And your pronunciation's O.K.,
When you say correctly: croquet.

Rounded, wounded, grieve, and sieve,
Friend and fiend, alive, and live,

Liberty, library, heave, and heaven,
Rachel, ache, moustache, eleven,

We say hallowed, but allowed,
People, leopard, towed, but vowed.

Mark the difference, moreover,
Between mover, [plover](#), Dover,

Leeches, [breeches](#), wise, precise,
Chalice, but police, and lice.

Camel, constable, unstable,
Principle, disciple, label,

Petal, penal, and canal,
Wait, surmise, [plait](#), promise, pal.

Suit, suite, ruin, circuit, [conduit](#),
Rime with "shirk it" and "beyond it."

But it is not hard to tell,
Why it's pall, mall, but [Pall Mall](#).

Muscle, muscular, gaol, iron,
Timber, climber, bullion, lion,

Worm and storm, [chaise](#), chaos, and chair,
Senator, spectator, mayor,

Ivy, privy, famous, clamour
And enamour rime with hammer.

Pussy, [hussy](#), and possess,
Desert, but dessert, address.

Golf, wolf, countenance, [lieutenants](#).
Hoist, in [lieu](#) of flags, left pennants.

River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb,
Doll and roll and some and home.

Stranger does not rime with anger.
Neither does devour with [clangour](#).

Soul, but foul and gaunt but aunt.
Font, front, won't, want, grand, and grant.

Shoes, goes, does. Now first say: finger.
And then: singer, ginger, linger,

Real, zeal, mauve, gauze, and gauge,
Marriage, foliage, mirage, age.

Query does not rime with very,
Nor does fury sound like bury.

[Dost](#), lost, post; and doth, cloth, [loth](#);
Job, Job; blossom, bosom, oath.

Though the difference seems little,
We say actual, but [victual](#).

Seat, sweat; chaste, [caste](#).; Leigh, eight,
height;
Put, nut; granite, and unite.

Reefer does not rime with deafer,
[Feoffer](#) does, and [zephyr](#), [heifer](#).

Dull, bull, Geoffrey, George, ate, late,
Hint, pint, Senate, but sedate.

Scenic, Arabic, Pacific,
Science, conscience, scientific,

Tour, but our and succour, four,
Gas, alas, and Arkansas.

Sea, idea, guinea, area,
Psalm, Maria, but malaria,

Youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean,
Doctrine, turpentine, marine.

Compare alien with Italian,
Dandelion with battalion.

Sally with ally, [yea](#), [ye](#),
Eye, I, [ay](#), [aye](#), [whey](#), key, quay.

Say [aver](#), but ever, fever.
Neither, leisure, [skein](#), receiver.

Never guess--it is not safe:
We say calves, valves, half, but Ralph.

Heron, granary, canary,
Crevice and device, and [eyrie](#),

Face but preface, but efface,
Phlegm, phlegmatic, ass, glass, bass.

Large, but target, gin, give, verging,
Ought, out, joust, and scour, but [scouring](#),

Ear but earn, and wear and bear
Do not rime with here, but [ere](#).

Seven is right, but so is even,
Hyphen, roughen, nephew, Stephen,

Monkey, donkey, clerk, and jerk,
Asp, grasp, wasp, and cork and work.

Pronunciation--think of psyche--!
Is a paling, stout and spikey,

Won't it make you lose your wits,
Writing "[groats](#)" and saying "[grits](#)"?

It's a dark abyss or tunnel,
Strewn with stones, like [rowlock](#), [gunwale](#),

Islington and Isle of Wight,
Housewife, verdict, and [indict](#)!

Don't you think so, reader, rather,
Saying lather, bather, father?

Finally: which rimes with "enough"
Though, through, plough, cough, [hough](#), or
tough?

Hiccough has the sound of "cup."
My advice is--give it up!