

**EXERCISES IN  
FRENCH  
COMPOSITION**

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Exercises in French Composition by P. F. Merlet

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**P. F. MERLET**

**EXERCISES IN  
FRENCH  
COMPOSITION**



# EXERCISES

IN

## FRENCH COMPOSITION:

CONSISTING OF

EXTRACTS FROM ENGLISH AUTHORS TO BE TURNED INTO  
FRENCH, WITH NOTES INDICATING THE DIFFERENCES  
IN STYLE BETWEEN THE TWO LANGUAGES.

A LIST OF IDIOMS, WITH EXPLANATIONS, MERCANTILE TERMS  
AND CORRESPONDENCE, ESSAYS, ETC.

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1858.

*303. C. 102.*

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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INSTEAD of reprinting the " Dictionary of Difficulties " entire, the Author thinks it sufficient to publish the present selection from that work, containing as it does, those parts which are absolutely necessary for the attainment of French Composition. He hopes that in its present form this volume will be found adapted for Schools and Private Tuition.



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE FREE EXERCISES.

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Having, in the Syntax given the rules necessary for the construction of sentences, we have made choice of the following pieces, with a view to initiate the learner into the practical part of the language, that is, *Composition*. The Free Exercises given in the Syntax, are of a simple, easy, and familiar style; in this part we have endeavoured, by a gradual increase of difficulty, to bring the learner on to the highest species of style.\*

*A few Hints on the Manner of setting about Translating the Free Exercises.*

1. Enough of the piece to be translated should be read attentively, in order that the translator may understand the style of the original, and, as much as possible, adapt his own to it.

2. Next, he should endeavour to translate, not merely the words, but the sense.

3. If the English sentence should happen to be idiomatic, or should contain inversions, it had better be turned into simple style,† still preserving the same meaning; and in that state be translated.

4. As English admits of more inversions and of longer sentences than French, the learner will usually find it safer and more consonant with the perspicuity of the French language, to divide the sentence, and make two in French.

5. As the English language is chiefly derived from the Saxon, Latin, or French, each of these furnish the former, with words which are often synonymous with each other. When, therefore, the learner does not know the French for an English word of Saxon origin, let him think of a synonyme to it; and that synonyme being found, will most likely put him in mind of the French word he is looking for. For instance: "to settle," (syn.) "to establish"—*établir*, &c.]

6. The words printed in italics, refer to a particular rule, or indicate that they must not be expressed literally in French, or even that they had better be left out.

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\* This being the case, experience has since suggested to the Author that Notes, by way of assistance, would be useful. These observations will therefore be more upon Style than upon Grammar.

† Unless the learner is forward enough to give the equivalent idiom in French.

‡ It will also be advisable to consult the author's "French Synonymes."

## FREE EXERCISES :

BEING A SELECTION OF ENGLISH PIECES; FORMING A SEQUEL TO  
THE FREE EXERCISES IN THE SYNTAX.

## EXTRACT FROM THE 'VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.'

I was<sup>1</sup> ever of opinion that the honest man who married and brought up a *large*<sup>2</sup> family, *did*<sup>3</sup> more service than he who *continued single*<sup>4</sup> and only talked of population. *From this motive*<sup>5</sup> I had scarce taken orders a year before I began to think seriously of matrimony, and chose my wife as she did her wedding-gown—not for a *fine glossy surface*,<sup>6</sup> but such qualities as would wear well.<sup>7</sup> To do her justice, she was a good-natured, *notable woman*;<sup>8</sup> and as for education, there were few country ladies who could show more. She could read any<sup>9</sup> English book without much spelling; but for *pickling*,<sup>10</sup> *preserving*<sup>11</sup> and *cookery*,<sup>12</sup> none could excel her. She *prided herself*<sup>13</sup> also upon<sup>14</sup> being an excellent contriver in house-keeping,<sup>15</sup> though I could never find that we grew richer with all her contrivances.<sup>16</sup>

However, we loved each other tenderly, and our fondness increased as we grew old. There was in fact nothing that could make us angry with the world or each other. We had an elegant house, situate in a fine country, and a good neighbourhood. The year was spent<sup>17</sup> in moral or rural amusements, in visiting our rich neighbours, and relieving such as were poor. We had no revolutions to fear, nor fatigues to undergo; all our adventures were by the fireside, and all our migrations from the blue bed to the brown.

<sup>1</sup> As the writer means that not only he was, but that he is still of opinion, it seems that *I have ever been* would be more correct, answering, in French, to, *J'ai toujours été d'avis*, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Nombréux.*

<sup>3</sup> *Rendre . . . service.*

<sup>4</sup> *Rester garçon, or vivre dans le célibat.*

<sup>5</sup> *Aussi.*

<sup>6</sup> *Le brillant de l'étoffe.*

<sup>7</sup> *Qui garantissaient un bon user.*

<sup>8</sup> *Bonne ménagère.*

<sup>9</sup> *Toute espèce de.* Gr., p. 78, notes; and 82, rule 210.

<sup>10</sup> *Conservees.*

<sup>11</sup> *Confitures.*

<sup>12</sup> *La cuisine.*

<sup>13</sup> *Se piquer de.*

<sup>14</sup> *Femme de ménage des plus habiles.*

<sup>15</sup> Turn: "I never perceived that we became the richer (for it),"—*em.*

<sup>16</sup> When "to spend" is applied to money it is translated by *de-penser*; when to time we use *se*