

**HINTS ON FRENCH  
SYNTAX  
WITH EXERCISES**

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Hints on French Syntax with Exercises by F. Storr

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**F. STORR**

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HINTS ON  
FRENCH SYNTAX

WITH EXERCISES.

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*FIFTH EDITION*

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1889.

## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

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As the Master of a Modern School where more than one French Grammar is in use, I found it no easy matter to fix some definite standard of attainment in French Syntax which might be applied to the several classes. To meet this difficulty, I drew up three years ago, *in usum Mercatorum Scissorum*, some *Hints on Syntax*, in which I sought to include what in my opinion is most essential, and to emphasise the rules where, in my experience, boys are most to seek. Having tested the *Hints* and found them serviceable in my own case, I now venture, with no little hesitation, to offer to other Modern Language Masters a revised and somewhat enlarged edition. They represent a minimum of knowledge, and lay no claim to completeness or strictly logical arrangement. In the nomenclature of tenses I have adhered to English names. Is it not high time for English schools to abandon the barbarous terminology of ancient French grammarians? I hold, too, that it is impossible to teach the subjunctive without some knowledge of analysis of sentences. If a boy knows his *Kennedy*, or even his *Nason*, half the difficulty vanishes. The interleaved form will enable Masters to supplement defects, and pupils to add instances they come across in their reading, and so drive home the rules. The fewer and simpler these are, the less anomalies and rare usages are insisted on, the more time will be left for acquiring a mastery of the language, to which end grammar is but a subsidiary, and not the chief instrument. My object has been not to exalt the study of Syntax, but to lighten the burden; and the merit, if any, of the *Hints*, consists in the omissions. My best thanks are due to Mr. Colbeck of Harrow, Mr. Turner of Winchester, my colleague Mr. Spiers, Mr. H. Courthope Bowen, M. James Boille, and other friends for hints on *Hints*.

## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

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A YEAR'S experience has furnished me with some corrections and not a few additions to the *Hints*. I have further to thank Mr. Victor Spiers for many valuable suggestions. It is only in process of time and by help of collaboration that an elementary class-book of this sort can hope to become a school classic. The Editor will gratefully welcome suggestions or corrections from Teachers who have used the *Hints*.

One word of explanation as to the appended exercises. They were added at the request of several Masters and Mistresses who rightly objected to preaching without practice. They follow roughly the order of the rules, but any exact correspondence has been purposely avoided. The Editor has found by experience that exercises written on this plan are almost worthless. The pupil applies the rule as mechanically as if he were hoeing turnips; composes, for example, fifty variations on *Il est soldat*, and a week after, when a similar phrase occurs in his composition, writes unblushingly *Il est un soldat*. Surely, too, it is high time that '*Is your young aunt picking old cabbages in the green garden!—No, but my old grandmother is picking young ones,*' et hoc genus omne, should be banished from French and German, as Balbus and his wall have been banished from Latin and Greek, thanks chiefly to Mr. Arthur Sidgwick. The examples here given are in the main extracts or translations from standard authors, chosen not merely to illustrate French Syntax, but because they are instructive, amusing, or at least sensible. The 'made up' sentences which are interspersed are such as are likely to occur in ordinary conversation. Some of the sentences are borrowed from that voluminous but excellent work, Brinkmann's *Syntax des Französischen und Englischen*.

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HINTS  
OR  
FRENCH SYNTAX.

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I. *Definite Article required in French, where omitted in English.*

1. Abstract nouns :—**La vertu, le vice, le mariage.**
2. Nouns in general sense, or denoting the whole class :—**La laine se vend cher ; Je ne crois pas aux revenants.**
3. Geographical names, except towns :—**La Grande Bretagne, La France ;** but *Londres ; L'Amérique,* but *Les Etats Unis d'Amérique ; L'ambassadeur d'Espagne* (see ii. 2), and *J'arrive d'Amérique, Je demeure en France.*

Notice :—*Elle a les yeux bleus ; Le sucre coûte dix sous la livre ;* but (of time), *Il gagne cinq francs par jour ; Les trois quarts du peuple.*

## II. *Definite Article omitted in French, as in English.*

1. After a noun or adverb of quantity or want:—*Une foule de gueux ; beaucoup de fautes ; peu de succès ; nombre de vaisseaux*, 'a number of ships.'

Exceptions:—**Bien des péchés ; la plupart des hommes** (literally 'sins a many,' 'the greatest part of mankind,'—article required by i. 2).

Remark, however, the expression *bien d'autres*.

2. When **de** or **à** with a substantive equals an adjective:—*Le chemin de fer ; De la poudre à canon*. But *L'homme au nez camard*, 'the snub-nosed man;' because *nez* is used of a particular nose, not indefinitely, like *canon*.
3. When a preposition and noun form an adjectival or an adverbial phrase:—*Un homme sans six sous peut vivre sans souci*.

Notice:—*Il agit avec probité*; but, *Il agit avec une probité extrême*.

4. When the genitive after verbs, participles, and adjectives denotes source, material, instrument, cause, or manner:—*Un in-octavo couvert de parchemin ; Mourir de honte ; Content de soi-même ; Plein de bonté*.
5. When a verb and substantive form a phrase, and may be rendered by a single verb in English:—**Avoir faim ; Faire peur ; Entendre raison**.
6. 'The' with comparatives, representing the old instrumental case, is omitted:—**Plus on mérite un bien, moins on l'ose espérer**.