

b *Sleeping is necessary to health.* Le **dormir** est nécessaire à la santé.

c *They came in without my seeing them.* Ils entrèrent sans que je les **visse**.

2. When the English present participle has an object, and is subject of *to be*, it is generally expressed in French by an infinitive preceded by **de**, the French sentence being introduced by **être** with **il** or **ce** as impersonal subject * :—

Doing that well is meritorious. Il est méritoire **de** bien faire cela.
Loving his parents is a good son's duty. C'est le devoir d'un bon fils d'aimer ses parents.

3. Used with a verb, a French present participle may refer to the subject or to the object. When the French present participle refers to the subject it may be preceded by the preposition **en** :—

He spoke to me while he was writing. Il me parlait tout **en** écrivant.

Being tired, I will go to bed directly. Étant fatigué, je vais me coucher.

But when the French present participle refers to the object of the verb to which it is joined, the preposition **en** † must never be placed before it; in this case a verb in the infinitive or in a personal mood may replace the present participle :—

I see her working. Je la vois **travailler**.
She perceived a child coming towards her. Elle aperçut un enfant **qui venait** à elle.

4. Many French present participles are used as nouns in reference to persons and things :—

There are many Protestants in France. Il y a beaucoup de **protestants** en France.

Your son has lost his shuttle-cock. Votre fils a perdu son **volant**.

5. When an English present participle follows the verb *to be*, it is translated into French in the same tense as *to be* is in English, but *to be* is left out :—

Your father is speaking to a gentleman. Votre père **parle** à un monsieur.

However, *to be* may be expressed in French, but the English participle is replaced by an infinitive preceded by the preposition **à**; this form frequently occurs in French in familiar conversation and letter-writing :—

His sister will be singing at that time. Sa sœur **sera à chanter** à cette heure-là.

* As to the use of **il est**, and of **c'est**, see Rule 1, Section 82.

† The preposition **en** is the only one which governs the present participle; all the others require the present or the past tense of the infinitive.