were put out, talking about her. "If we only knew how she is; but this suspense is so terrible," said Marie.

"Yes; I wish they would tell us. I am sure she is very ill, for Dr. Clifton is sitting up with her to-night, as well as Martha," said Annie.

"Do you know, Annie, I can't bear this any longer. I shall go and listen outside Mrs. Edgcome's door and see if I can make out anything; perhaps I may see Martha, and she would tell me how her mistress is, I am sure. Will you come with me?" said Marie.

"No; and I think you had better not go, Marie; it is against the rules," said Annie.

"I will come, Marie; I don't think Mrs. Edgcome would mind, if she knew," cried pretty Blanche Scott, jumping up and slipping on her dressing-gown.

They opened the door carefully, and closing it behind them, crept hand-in-hand noiselessly along the passage which led to Mrs. Edgcome's rooms. Her sitting-room, the door of which was open, was on their right, and at the end of the passage was her bedroom adjoining the sitting-room.

"What a smell of burning!" whispered Blanche.

"Yes; perhaps it is something in Mrs. Edgcome's sitting-room; let us go and look," returned Marie, leading Blanche into the room, where a little fire was still burning in the grate.

They had just reached the fire-place when the door of Mrs. Edgcome's bedroom opened, and they heard Dr. Clifton's step coming down the passage. Escape was impossible; if they left the room they would run into his arms; if they stayed, and he should come into the sitting-room, they were lost. There was not a moment to lose, and, guilty as thought, the girls without a word rushed behind the window-curtains, and stood with their hearts thumping, holding their breath and clinging to each other.

Meanwhile the footsteps came to the door, and, candle in hand, Dr. Clifton entered the room, and having poked the fire, drew forward a chair and established himself in it, apparently with every intention of remaining. The girls, who could see his movements between the curtains, were appalled at this prospect. He might sit there all the night, and there they would have to stand, shivering with cold and trembling with fear of detection. Their one hope—which they dare not whisper to each other, but which occurred to both—was that he would go to sleep. But, as it happened, deliverance came in another manner, for Dr. Clifton had not been seated five minutes when he jumped up, sniffing and muttering to himself, "Dear me, what a smell of fire!" he took up his candle and went back to Mrs. Edgcome's room. The instant he was gone, the girls darted from their hiding-place and flew along the passage to their own room, but as they passed the room in which Agnes and Julia slept they noticed a light under the door, and the smell of burning was stronger than ever just here.

"It must be in this room," said Marie, opening the door, and on entering the whole of the opposite end of the room appeared to be in flames, for the draught caused by the opening door had fanned the smouldering carpet into a flame, in which the muslin covering of the dressing-table was in a moment enveloped. The truth was, Julia Robinson had been reading in bed, and had fallen asleep with the candle on the bed; her book had caught fire and had fallen on the ground, the noise had roused Julia just sufficiently to blow out the candle, and then, unconscious that the novel was burning away on the carpet, she had fallen comfortably to sleep.

"Julia! Agnes! Madge! Jump up quick! The room is on fire!" exclaimed Marie, rushing to the washing-stand, and, seizing a basin of water, she threw it on the flames.

The three girls started up, and, terrified beyond measure at the sight of the flames, flew out of the room and down the passage screaming, "Fire," at the top of their voices, while Blanche Scott quietly fainted away just on the landing. Marie emptied every jug and basin in the room on to the flames, but without succeeding in putting them out, and tried in vain to empty a huge bath which stood near on to the burning carpet; failing in this, she was trying to get the carpet into the bath, when Dr. Clifton came rushing in—for all this had happened in less time than it takes to tell.

"The bath—can you lift it?" cried Marie, dropping the burning carpet, while Dr. Clifton upset the bath all over it and then threw the wet carpet over the dressing-table, and in a few minutes succeeded in extinguishing the fire.

"Bravo, my child!" said Dr. Clifton, as the flames subsided; "you have saved the house from being burned by your presence of mind. Are you hurt?"

"One of my arms is burned a little. I did not feel it much till just now; it is hurting me a good deal now," said Marie.

"Come with me and I'll dress it for you. And someone go in there and see what damage is done, and wipe up the water," said Dr. Clifton to the group of girls and women who, in various stages of undress, were assembled outside the bedroom-door.

As soon as he had disappeared with Marie, the girls, headed by Mademoiselle, rushed into the room, chattering as hard as they could. Mademoiselle, with a candle in her hand, went round to Julia's bedside, where the scene of the fire had taken place, and the first thing that caught her eye was part of the novel which had not been utterly destroyed; this she secured without anyone observing her, and then directing the servants to wipe up the water, she turned angrily round to the three inmates of the room, and demanded to know how the fire broke out.

"I don't know," said Madge Reynolds. "I was asleep, and I heard someone call me, and I awoke and found the room in flames."

"Nonsense! Don't tell me you were all asleep. Some of you must have been reading in bed. It was you, I suppose, Agnes Cromwell?" said Mademoiselle, turning angrily to Agnes, though she knew well enough Agnes was not guilty.

"No, indeed, I never read in bed," sobbed Agnes, who, what with the fright the fire had given her, and fear lest Julia should not confess, was inclined to be hysterical.

"Then it must have been you, Julia? this is your bed, too," said Mademoiselle.

"Yes, it was; but I am very sorry, Mademoiselle. I fell asleep. Please don't report me."

"Report you, indeed, when you have nearly burned the house down, you wicked girl! How dare you do such a thing? What were you reading?"

"I was only learning some French poetry for the examination," said Julia.

"Indeed! You certainly deserve the prize, as you have worked so hard for it. Perhaps when Mrs. Edgcome hears how industrious you are, she will forgive you for setting the house on fire. Now, mademoiselles, go to bed, please; there is no occasion to stay here any longer. Julia, your bed is soaked; you must sleep with Agnes or Madge. You deserve to sit up all night, you wicked girl," said Mademoiselle, driving the rest of the girls off to bed.

"It is very odd there is not a scrap of my book left; it must have been burnt completely up," said Julia, after a long search among the *débris* when Mademoiselle had gone. No answer from Madge, who was already half asleep, and all Agnes said was, "Oh, Julia, how could you tell such a story?"

"Because I should be expelled if they knew. Oh, Agnes! will you promise not to tell of me? The book is burnt; they will never find out; if you will only keep my secret, I will never be unkind to you again. Will you promise?" whispered Julia.

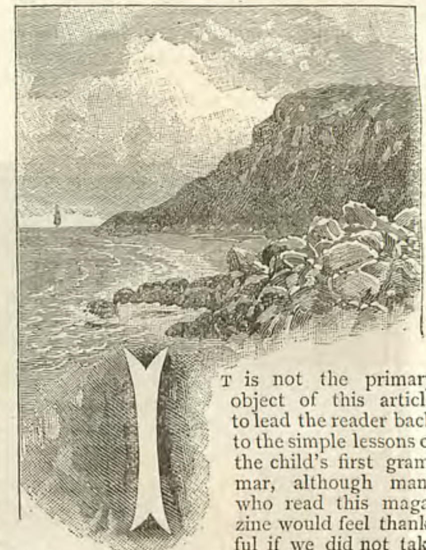
"I won't tell, Julia, unless they ask me what book you were reading, and then I won't say; but I can't tell a story," said Agnes; and soon after both girls were fast asleep.

(*To be concluded.*)

PUNCTUATION.

VIEWED IN A NEW LIGHT.

PART I.



IT is not the primary object of this article to lead the reader back to the simple lessons of the child's first grammar, although many who read this magazine would feel thankful if we did not take it for granted that they could dispense with such leading-strings, because others could run by themselves. But while my chief object at present is to supplement a series of articles dealing with the great principle of good feeling, to which etiquette is but a handmaid, I will not disappoint those who desire to obtain it of a brief lesson in punctuation itself, before I conclude my address.

I have many times endeavoured to point out that this said good feeling should lie at the root of all our habits, great and small; our words and actions, our very dress and general deportment, and the expression of our countenance. In claiming so extensive a field as this for its exercise, I take the opportunity of pointing out that, insignificant as the little stops may be which are employed for the division and subdivision of written thoughts into sentences, parentheses, and paragraphs, or for other purposes, there is no greater error made by young people than to dismiss as beneath their consideration anything, let it be what it may, on the ground of its being "a trifle."

Without further preamble, I may state the fact that a fancy has crept into fashion amongst a certain number of persons, some engaged in literary pursuits, others using their pens in private correspondence only. Within their circles we find those who claim to belong to the upper classes of society, and to be thoroughly

conversant with those polite usages that, with occasional exceptions, obtain among them. This new fashion consists in the almost total disuse of punctuation.

Such an unauthorised departure from a practice so time-honoured, so well supported on the foundation of common sense, one which has descended to us from the great seats of learning of the ancient world, dating back, to our certain knowledge, to a period of nearly four centuries before the advent of Christ—such a departure should not surely be blindly and unreasoningly accepted without a careful investigation of "the why and wherefore." What are the advantages offered? As yet, none have been set forth. Arbitrary fancy alone is urged in its defence.

It is quite true that the Alexandrian MSS. in the British Museum show no punctuation; and it is also true that it did not come into use in our own country in its full perfection for a considerable time after the introduction of the art of printing. The earliest books thus brought out had none of the stops now in use; but the necessity for assisting the reader to arrive at the true sense of the writer's statements was undoubtedly recognised; for perpendicular lines or dashes were employed as substitutes for that system of punctuation which superseded them, and which represented only the more modern comma. In the year 1580 the colon was introduced, and this not proving sufficient, the semicolon was added to the list of stops or points some twenty years afterwards.

I said that punctuation was of very ancient origin. It is more than probable that it was of earlier existence than the several classical authors who have named it have been able to state. Suidas informs us that it was in use as far back as the year 380 B.C.; and Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca that it was practised by the Greeks and Romans. Indeed, it is to the latter that we owe the designation of the system, for the name "punctuation" is derived from the Latin noun which signifies a "point," otherwise called a "stop."

A necessity, therefore, for its use has been acknowledged; not alone by modern writers and critics, but by those of the old world likewise, the fathers of the "world of literature;" and in the absence, so far as I am yet aware, of any newly discovered advantages to be derived from its disuse, I will proceed to draw my young friends' attention to the great principle which that disuse must violate.

In previous articles I have recommended a practice, which I may venture once more to repeat; viz., on all occasions of doubt as to the line of conduct to be pursued, the words to be spoken, or the fashion to be followed, ask yourselves the simple question, "Will this conduce to the comfort and convenience of others? or, at least, will it prove in every respect harmless to them?" An honest answer may at all times be accepted as your guide. That right feeling which I have told you is "the foundation of all good breeding" should ever be the principle on which your intercourse with your fellows is to be based; and how far this consideration may be brought to bear on the question of punctuation we may now demonstrate in a very few words.

To read your own letters and compositions in an intelligent manner, with the suitable inflexions of the voice, and the pauses which are essential to render the true meaning and feeling of the author apparent, is usually, though not always, easy enough. You are thoroughly acquainted with your own ideas, and as you read aloud you change your tone of voice in good time to allow for any parenthesis that may occur; and so forth. In fact, you know all that is coming to complete the entire paragraph, and make your pauses accordingly. But to another person either reading your private letter at first sight, or your published book aloud to others—and who cannot at once ascertain, through intuition or second sight, the drift of your observations, unassisted by certain recognised signs—your undivided sentences (leaving him in doubt until sufficient time have elapsed for reflection) must prove both a trial of patience and of temper, and in case of reading aloud, of annoyance to more persons than one. In fact, it does more mischief still: it inflicts a wrong on the author, for it breaks the thread of the story or discourse, and thus spoils his work. How often the sentences of an ill-stopped letter have to be read a second time, by way of arriving at the writer's meaning, must be known to many who read these pages; and not only so, but it must often have occurred to them to observe that a total omission of punctuation, as well as any misplacement of the same, will completely pervert the meaning designed to be conveyed and lead to serious misunderstandings, to most ridiculous absurdities, or cause the words of the writer to bear a very equivocal meaning.

I now give an example of unstopped writing, making a dash to show where the reader might break the sentences by mistake, in the absence of any punctuation. The writer is supposed to be in a little country town where a fair is being held; she hears a confused noise outside the hotel, and she describes what was going on:—

"There seemed to be a great bustle outside my dress—coming to grief for always full of curiosity—I jumped up suddenly and it tore to ribbons such a herd of cattle looking out of a window—I saw all—a whole drove passed by driving a squealing pig in a yellow wig a blue coat and drab continuations—A little hump-backed man followed behind with a long whip riding my dog — always on the *qui vive* gave tongue to his loud 'Bow wow'—What a horrible din Quack quack—Gobble gobble an old woman—red in the face with hobbling after her ducks and turkeys—grunted and groaned the bag-pipers puffing and blowing discordantly—the motley crowd diversified by the acrobats performing their monkey-tricks to the sound of the 'darkies'' minstrelsy never partial to a noise—I cannot tell you how confusing—it was a woman obliged to live—by her pen with an addled headaching before—the din began felt—half demented," &c.

Now this absurd account could be rendered perfectly intelligible without the alteration of a single word, were the proper stops employed in punctuation inserted in their right places to show where suitable breaks and pauses should be made, viz.—

"There seemed to be a great bustle outside. My dress coming to grief; for, always full of curiosity, I jumped up suddenly, and it tore to ribbons! Such a herd of cattle! Looking out of a window I saw them all; a whole drove passed by. Driving a squealing pig, in a yellow wig, a blue coat, and drab continuations, a little hump-backed man followed behind with a long whip, riding. My dog, always on the *qui vive*, gave tongue to his loud 'Bow-wow.' What a horrible din! 'Quack, quack,' 'gobble, gobble!' An old woman, red in the face with hobbling after her ducks and turkeys, grunted and groaned; the bag-pipes puffing and blowing discordantly; and the motley crowd, further diversified by the acrobats performing their monkey-tricks to the sound of the 'darkies'' minstrelsy. Never partial to a noise, I cannot tell you how confusing it was. A woman obliged to live by her pen, with an addled head, aching before the din began, felt half demented."

I fancy I hear my reader say what a difference a few stops have made. Yes, truly; and for a mere arbitrary ephemeral fashion's sake do not make "printers' pie" of your letters or MSS. designed for the press. But there are some who delight in opposition, and if they cannot deny that you have proved your case, they will make the best of a very feeble mode of attack, and retort, "What a great fuss made about a mere trifle!"

It is my object, however, to maintain the principle that while we may regard all our private grievances, affronts received, pains, worries, losses and crosses as "trifling" by comparison with those of others, or with our own demerits, and scanty gratitude to the Great Benefactor—nothing else should be dismissed as beneath our consideration as too insignificant for the exercise of our sympathy, or the hearty labour of head and hand if in the service of others.

The importance of every subject is, without doubt, comparative; and some things may reasonably be esteemed as unimportant compared to certain others. But no more dangerous mistake is made by our young men and women than that of dismissing any subject in the off-hand style (too common amongst the inexperienced) as "only a trifle." So-called "little things" are not always to be gauged by their comparative dimensions, in whatever sense the term may be applicable, whether to words, actions, time, bulk, or space.

Supposing you had a small fly in your eye, or an almost invisible scrap of steel-filing, and that, half-blinded, you asked the aid of a friendly hand; and your friend dismissed you by saying it was "only a trifle"? Look up at the wide expanse of the starry sky at night, and then down at your own small person—a mere speck, nay less, in the immeasurable universe—and you will realise the feelings of the Psalmist when he exclaimed, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" The Almighty does not value him in proportion to his dimensions; and if size were to be regarded as essential to importance, would you not think it a grievous wrong?

So much for size as a gauge of importance. In reference to Time, how few appreciate a brief period—a moment, an hour, or a day, at their full value! It has been said—

> ". . . a moment's thought might have saved a life,
> Or gained an advantage in mortal strife;
> Or won to the goal in the hard-fought race;
> Or prest a last kiss on a clay-cold face.
> Or breathed a forgiveness or sighed a prayer
> That had saved a soul from untold despair;
> And proved the bright moment a priceless boon;
> Yet, gauged as a 'trifle,' 'twas lost, how soon!"

Why should I continue the argument further? Nothing, save your own wrongs and sufferings, may be regarded as too small for your consideration; but, believe me, it does very much matter whether you consult the comfort and convenience of others in every act of your life, whether you study every little thing tending towards that grand and gracious object. In the present case you act likewise in the service of truth and of commonsense a sufficient argument in favour of any course adopted, apart from all consideration of that principle which I have often before told you was "the foundation of all good-breeding."

S. F. A. CAULFEILD.

(*To be continued.*)

cute her studies, but she nearly died of home-sickness, and had to come back to her mother, in whose house she worked almost night and day, that she might thus attain that proficiency whose more ordinary method of acquirement her clinging affections had frustrated.

And now another circle of acquaintance formed about the Moniers—certainly a varied and entertaining circle, whose fault was not conventionality. Many were gifted—each had a hobby or a history.

Jane Monier, who always wanted to please, began to feel herself a little out of the fashion in this set. What her older acquaintances had said was quite true: Jane had never showed any strong individual taste. She was bright and clever, could do most things well, but nothing very well. Of the three girls, it was she who had openly chafed under the comparative monotony and common-place of their suburban life; since from the beginning Bertha had had absorbing resources in her scientific books and Hilda in her music. Jane threw herself warmly among the new acquaintances whom her sister's pursuits gathered round the family, but those who attracted her sisters least, attracted her most. She did not so much make friends with the actual workers, as with the workers' kinsfolk, admirers and hangers-on, who whispered among each other, not always inaudibly, that they believed there was more in Jane Monier than in either of her sisters, if it would only come out. Jane felt quite able to believe this, and began to watch for the "it," which should appear.

She thought she would apply herself to art. She had had good drawing lessons in her school-days, but now she found that the teaching she had received had been a little out of date, and she decided that it was this alone which had prevented the development of talent in herself. Mrs. Monier was by no means incredulous. Her other daughters had manifestly not been mistaken in themselves, and those who have not hitherto been misled are slow to fear misleading, just as those who are accustomed to truth are not ready to suspect a lie. So she made it quite easy for Jane to gratify her wish for a thorough art-training.

Jane's art-studies presently assumed an importance which threw everything else into the shade. She had no time for anything beside: they intruded everywhere. She had no patience with her neighbours' wall-papers or hangings; her talk was coloured with "tones" and "harmonies." She could not tolerate her old dresses, but must have new ones, neutral in tint and quaint in form, and cut off her long braids and wore her hair short and in "admired disorder." One would have thought that beauty had come upon the earth quite lately, and was not able to make itself at home. She wanted to rearrange the house from attic to basement. She would do it with her own hands—it should be a labour of pure love and true art. Mrs. Monier was not unsympathetic. She could agree with much of Jane's talk, though there was a little of it which she did not quite understand: she could not tell whether it was Jane's thoughts, or only her expression of them which seemed so misty. But she gently suggested that as every great undertaking must begin somewhere, Jane's artistic household reform had better begin in her own painting room, especially since a connoisseur on the subject had declared that the wide, low chamber was exactly the kind to lend itself to decorative purposes.

So the blue drugget was taken up and the old chintz-like wall-paper was taken down, and the floor and the walls remain bare to this day, for while Jane was deciding what should cover them, she began to weary in her pursuit of decorative art, or, as she expressed it, "to sicken with a sense of the unattainable." She discovered that though she was quite sure she had "genius," yet that she had not the concentrative power which enables one to master "mere detail." So the demolition of the painting-room mattered little, since Jane left off using it.

This gave Mrs. Monier's ready faith a slight shock. She had never approved of the queer dresses and the short hair, having always noticed that the more bravely her eldest daughter fought her hard and hot battle for an independent and beloved field of usefulness, the more carefully she kept within the bounds of old womanly custom in non-essentials, and that when she did make any variation, it was only to draw nearer to the stronghold of simplicity and use. But Mrs. Monier would not let herself feel disheartened about Jane; the girl had always been a little inclined to ride her hobbies to death, but anybody may make one mistake.

Jane dropped her classes and her studio. She would simply study nature; the skill which comes from the study of nature was the only skill worth having, after one has got the mere A, B, C of technical training. She would catch Nature as she flew, and fix her flying, and then, a fig for mere finish! So she got up at dawn to go into the city to make sketches of historical buildings before the streets were filled with busy throngs, she went into the highways and byways in search of models of "Age," and "Misery," and "Crime." The worst of it was, her historical sketches were not accurate, a window or a chimney more or less seemed to her a very unworthy scruple. Also, even "Age," "Misery," and "Crime," were occasionally so scandalised by her caricatures of them, that despite her liberal bribes, they would follow her to her home and be abusive at her gate! Matters came to a climax when Mrs. Monier detected Jane in the act of disguising herself to go in masquerade "to study nature" at the early cattle market! It was in vain that the young lady pleaded the precedent of Rosa Bonheur. Mrs. Monier sensibly pointed to Jane's sketches of wooden-legged sheep and grotesque horses, and told her that genius must justify itself before it can claim its privileges and its freedom, and that she was certainly beginning quite at the wrong end. Jane pleaded and wept and stormed, but here her mother was inexorable, and Jane threw down her pencils and sketch-block. If she was not to be allowed to do her best, she would do nothing!

(*To be concluded.*)

PUNCTUATION.

VIEWED IN A NEW LIGHT.

PART II.

IN the first part of this article I promised to give a few general directions on the art of punctuation to such of our girls as have not hitherto given it their consideration. But, before I commence, I must premise that I am not going to supply instruction respecting all the points or stops employed, nor even an exhaustive list of rules and their exceptions in reference to those points of which I do treat, and which are the most essential. For ordinary purposes of writing, the comma, semi-colon, full-stop, notes of interrogation and admiration, the dash, hyphen, quotation marks, parenthesis, and apostrophe are sufficient. To speak of paragraphs, brackets, acute and grave accents, diæresis, ellipses, index, asterisk, cedilla, and section-marks, would be to swell the proportions of an ordinary article too considerably, considering the small use which the majority of our readers would make of them. Those who need them must be referred to the many educational works that bear on the arts of speaking, reading, and writing, and must study these important subjects in a more thorough and exhaustive way for themselves.

Sentences are divided into the simple, the compound, and the complex and subordinate contained in the compound. Refer to the rules of syntax, and you will find that "a simple sentence contains one subject or nominative, and one finite verb or predicate; that a complex sentence contains one principal subject and one principal predicate, with one finite verb or more dependent on the principal sentence; and that a compound sentence contains two or more simple or complex sentences."

I quote from Dr. Joseph Angus. Simple sentences need no point to break them, and are concluded by a note of admiration, interrogation, or a full-stop, otherwise called a period. A compound sentence contains clauses, or subordinate and parenthetical sentences, such as are introduced, so to say, "by the way"—extra statements not necessary to the completion of the full sense of the original compound sentence. They are not introduced of necessity, because the latter would be perfect in itself, but are added only the more fully to explain the idea or the statement it expresses. In such subordinate or parenthetical clauses, forming sentences within a sentence, adjectives are sometimes employed, and so distinct clauses are formed.

Now, the nature and length of these several kinds of sentences need to be indicated by certain signs; and these signs denote, in some cases, the length of pause and tone of voice which a due consideration of the sense to be conveyed renders suitable. The comma, semi-colon, and full-stop are the most important of all the points in general use; and beginning with the comma, I must tell you that it indicates the cutting off of a portion of a sentence, which portion is not complete in itself, yet if omitted would destroy the sense of the compound sentence in which that portion or clause is introduced. Where the comma is placed the reader is warned to make a brief pause before proceeding to finish the entire sentence.

For example—

> "Dost thou love life, then do not squander time;
> For that is the stuff that life is made of."
> *B. Franklin.*

This quotation illustrates the fact that the first section of a compound sentence is cut off by a comma; the second part, completing the first idea, is here stopped by a semi-colon, and an additional explanatory clause, not absolutely essential to complete the sense of the preceding clauses, but still further working out the thought, brings the whole of the compound sentence to a conclusion with a full-stop.

The comma is also used as a substitute for a finite verb, so as to obviate the necessity of its repetition. For example—

"From law arises security; from security, (arises) curiosity; from curiosity, (arises) knowledge."

It is also employed to stop off every repetition of the same word, or at least, the first of two, as in the well-known song by Tennyson—

> "Break, break, break, on thy cold grey stones, O sea!"

And likewise in one of Hamlet's soliloquies—

"O! that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew."

Where the clauses of a compound sentence are inverted, after a favourite fashion which obtained, and especially in poetry, in the last and commencement of the present century, a comma must be employed to divide clauses so transposed; viz.—

"To rest, the cushion and soft down invite." *Pope.*

Again, when the word "or" is either used or understood, though not inserted, before giving an explanatory term, extra name, or definition to the subject or person under notice, the comma is then indispensable, viz.—

The King Richard I., or Cœur de Lion; William of Normandy, or the Conqueror. The word "or" is thus substituted by the comma.

There are three other occasions when this stop is employed: in one case, when conjunctions, expressed or understood, are employed to connect more than two words in couples in the same construction, viz.—

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time."
Macbeth

Another occasion is presented when the infinite mood is employed of various verbs following one another in immediate succession. Then the comma must be placed between them, thus—

"A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command."
Wordsworth.

Lastly, so far as I propose to give rules for the use of the comma, a number of adjectives following each other in close succession likewise require to be separated by this stop, as demonstrated by the words of a soliloquy of Hamlet's already quoted—

"How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world."

But, before dismissing the consideration of the use of the comma, I must add that it should follow such adverbs as "first," "secondly," "again," and "hence," when used at the commencement of a sentence, and after such conjunctions as "however," "moreover," "further," when employed in the same way to begin the sentence. It must likewise be placed after interjections, when a note of admiration is not employed, and after the phrases "in short," "once more," "on the contrary," "on the other hand," "in the first place," "for instance," "so to say."

The colon is but little in use, and I do not consider it to be a necessary adjunct to ordinary letter writing, nor to the assistance, either of a reader or his audience, towards a full comprehension of the writer's meaning; nevertheless I will give a few rules respecting its use. It is chiefly employed in poetry, and it claims a rather longer pause or break than that by the more useful semi-colon.

It is used in compound sentences, like the latter, and also, at times, in complex ones; and, in the same way, its employment is dependent on the nearness of the connection that exists between the two clauses which it divides. It is placed at the end of that portion of a compound sentence that immediately precedes the final clause, those preceding it having been stopped by semi-colons, viz.—

" . . . . . 'Tis well said again;
And 'tis a kind of good deed, to say well:
And yet words are no deeds."
King Henry VIII.

It is also occasionally used when the first clause of a compound sentence is perfect in itself alone, but is succeeded by a statement which is not altogether co-ordinate, and yet not absolutely independent of it, but is a further and natural carrying out of the same train of ideas, viz.—

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest."
Pope.

Lastly, it is used when there is no connecting participle between closely united co-ordinate sentences, viz.—

"It may cost something to serve God: (but) it will cost more not to serve Him."

The semi-colon is, however, very useful; and is required when there are two or three clauses in each co-ordinate sentence; especially when each clause is stopped off by commas. This is exemplified in Coleridge's "Epitaph on an Infant," viz.—

"Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening bud to Heaven conveyed,
And bade it blossom there."

The semi-colon is also used when the several words, separated from each other respectively by the comma, stand in the same relation to other words in the sentence, viz.—

"This rule forbids parents to lie to children, and children to parents; instructors to pupils, and pupils to instructors; the old to the young, and the young to the old;" etc.
Wayland.

The next point to be considered is the parenthesis, which consists of two semi-circular lines, respectively curling inwards, and which marks the addition of an extra clause quite unnecessary to the sense of the original sentence into which it is introduced, viz.—

"The day (it was winter) was dark and threatening."

"Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace."
Leigh Hunt.

Be sparing in the use of parentheses. When needed, the sentence must be perfect in its construction and meaning without this clause, added as an extra only.

The period, or full-stop, is employed in two ways—first, to indicate the conclusion of an entire sentence, whether simple or compound; secondly, to substitute what is deficient, and left to be understood in abbreviated words and initial letters. In the first-named case its use is untrammelled by any rules or perplexing exceptions. Unlike all other stops, it is essential to every sentence, simple or compound, viz.—

"Cleanliness is indeed next to Godliness."
Bacon.

"Henceforth the Majesty of God revere;
Fear Him, and you have nothing else to fear."
James Fordyce.

The dash is employed in a very unmeaning way by most letter-writers. It should only be used to indicate an emphatic or unexpected pause of a somewhat abrupt character, to separate words uttered in a broken and faltering manner, when the same word is repeated twice, or to mark a sudden transition of thought and a greater length of pause than even a full-stop would supply. The following are examples of its use by distinguished authors—

"Farewell!
For in that word,—that fatal word,—howe'er
We promise—hope—believe,—there breathes despair." *Byron's "Corsair."*

"If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms never—never—never."
Pitt. (Speech November 18, 1777.)

"Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way or that."
Wordsworth.

The hyphen is a horizontal line of half the length of the dash, and is employed as a connecting link between two words, which, being so united, form a compound word. This is done when either an adverb or adjective and a participle make a compound adjective when followed by a substantive, viz.—"A fast-trotting horse"; but when they follow the latter, the hyphen is omitted, viz.—

"A ship, quick sailing over the lake, glided past like a spectre."

Again, should the first noun denote the material, omit the hyphen, as, "a gold chain," "a brass knocker." But when used in the dative, or possessive case, the hyphen should be inserted, viz. "A band-master," "vacation - time," "a man - cook." A hyphen is a point in extensive use, and amongst our classical writers, both ancient and modern. Two or three quotations will suffice as examples—

"Where, through the long-drawn aisle, and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise." *Gray's "Elegy."*

Milton also, in *Paradise Lost*, forms a compound word when he speaks of "moon-struck madness," and Shakespeare, in *Othello*, of—

"the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,"

in *Macbeth*, of suffering "a sea-change;" and again, of

". . . . pity, like a naked new-born babe."

The apostrophe is used to denote the omission, for brevity's sake, of certain letters in the words employed, as for instance, "a child's toy," instead of "a child his toy"; "e'en," instead of "even"; "ere," for "before"; "e'er," for "ever"; "lov'd," for "loved," and "thro'," instead of "through." Such abbreviations are quite permissible in poetry; but with the exception of the first-named example, to mark the possessive case, the use of the apostrophe for the purpose of abbreviating words is a vulgar habit. For example, to write "I'm," for "I am," is not *comme il faut*, and is never practised by well-bred people.

Quotation points are formed like the apostrophe, and placed in couples on either side of any sentence borrowed from another writer. They are also called *guillemets*. Those placed at the beginning of a sentence or paragraph are like apostrophes turned upside down. When a quotation is made within a quotation, single quotation points are employed, viz., if you were quoting such a passage as this—

"Methought I heard a voice say, 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep,'—the innocent sleep,—
Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care."

Single quotation points are also used when not the exact words, but the sense is given as a quotation or repetition of some observation.

And now I may bring my lesson to a conclusion. To such as seek amusement only, it must have been dry indeed, supposing that their search for the same were bravely prosecuted to the end. For them I feel very sorry; but there is compensation in the reflection that to many such instructions are welcome, as well as of considerable value. I trust also that I have sufficiently demonstrated the fact that even so small a matter as this "Art of Punctuation" has a higher degree of import-

ance than would appear at first sight to a superficial observer. Mere strokes and specks on a sheet of paper in themselves, and though useful, each in its peculiar way, in pointing out the true meaning of the writer, this is not the only point to which I direct your attention: I would point towards a higher object, and that object is, consideration for the convenience of others.

What is called a "slap-dash" style is ill-bred. To scrawl off a few lines to one watching, with anxious and loving eyes, for a thoughtful and satisfactory letter, giving every little detail that could interest or amuse, a blot dropped here, a word forgotten there, two words filling a whole line, and all the sentences running, unstopped, into one another, the date omitted, and the chief subject left to a postscript, or never mentioned at all; such a production we but too frequently see. Alas! how unsatisfactory, nay, worse than that, how ungracious! People of kindly natures and well regulated minds are scrupulous about those small items that combine to make up a large sum-total of comfort for others. We have it not often in our power to do much at a time, and our youthful readers are not expected to accomplish great things. But the heart to do so may influence the hands and the lips in many ways, and of this we may always feel assured, that as "a straw will show which way the wind blows," we can always see what those around us would do if they could. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

S. F. A. CAULFEILD.

SNATCHED FROM PRISON DOORS.

By EMMA LESLIE, Author of "Out of the Mouth of the Lion."

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

THE weeks went on, but Amy could not get a situation, and the pressure of want began to be felt by the two girls. Lina had given up her dinners in the middle of the day, and contented herself with a slice or two of bread and butter brought from home, but this change to a meagre diet and the close neighbourhood they were living in now, soon began to tell upon her, and one day, as she stood near her machine, she fell to the floor fainting. It was some time before she recovered, and then she had to go home, and the doctor they sent for, who called to see her in the evening, finding her weak and low, ordered her a few days' rest and plenty of nourishing food. The rest she must perforce take, although it meant a lessening of their now slender income, but the extra nourishment was beyond their means unless they went into debt, and against this Lina had sternly set her face.

Seeing how small was the hope of Amy's getting a situation, she had so arranged their household expenses as to pay Mrs. Mead a shilling or two each week of the rent left owing, but this, with what had to be deducted for clothes and boots (for it was necessary to maintain a respectable appearance), left them only sufficient for the barest necessaries, so that a further diminution of their income must, of course, cause grave anxiety, and the idea of a greater outlay for beef-tea and wine, as the doctor ordered, was not to be thought of.

Amy was out when Lina was brought home, and she had not returned when the doctor called, which Lina was rather glad of, as it saved her the trouble of protesting against getting into debt, which she knew Amy would instantly have proposed.

She had so far recovered when Amy returned, that she did not notice anything unusual in her appearance, but Lina was obliged to tell her about the fainting, and that she had been ordered to take a few days' rest by the doctor.

"Whatever shall we do, Lina? for they'll cut down your salary for it, you know, and I was going to ask you if I couldn't have a shilling or two this week to do up my hat," said Amy, with a look of dismay, as she noticed how pale Lina looked.

"I don't think we can spare anything for dress, this week," said Lina, wearily; "and besides your hat is not so very shabby," she added.

"Oh, that's what you always say," grumbled Amy; "well, I'll wait till next week," she added, "but you really must spare me two or three shillings then, for I want some things very particularly."

"Very well, we'll see," said Lina; but she turned her face to the wall and cried softly to herself as she thought of Amy's unfeeling words. She could not have what the doctor said was necessary to make her well, and here was Amy insisting upon buying new finery to go to a dance—for that was what she wanted it for, Lina felt sure.

There was no more, however, said about it, only Amy was sulky and disagreeable all the next day. Lina stayed at home two days, and certainly felt better for the rest, but to her dismay, when she went to work, the feeling of weariness and languor crept over her before she had been there an hour, and at dinner-time Mary, and one or two others, tried to persuade her to give up and go home again.

"You look downright ill," said Mary, in a tone of concern; "I believe you worry yourself too much about that good-for-nothing Amy."

But Lina shook her head. "I shall be all right in a day or two," she said, "I've got a bad cold coming, I fancy, I've shivered so the last hour."

"Go home and go to bed," said Mary.

"Cant afford it," whispered Lina; "I've lost two days already this week."

"Well, come and have some dinner with us instead of going home," said Mary; for she had no idea that Lina went away merely to eat her bread and butter unseen, and thought that Amy prepared dinner at home for the two of them.

"No, not to-day," said Lina, though she wished she could afford a good dinner, for she felt sure she could eat that, although she had no appetite for the bread and butter she had brought in her bag. But she went for her usual walk round St. Paul's Churchyard eating her poor dinner, and went back to her work. She kept on until six o'clock, and then went home and to bed at once, for she felt positively ill, and when Amy returned an hour later she was frightened almost out of her wits, for Lina was in a high fever, and talked so incoherently, that Amy ran downstairs to find the landlady at once.

"You'd better fetch a doctor," said the woman, when she came up and looked at Lina. "She's very bad, I can see; I thought she was looking bad when she went out this morning."

"Oh, dear, what shall I do," said Amy, wringing her hands; "if she'd only rouse up and tell me what to do I wouldn't mind."

"Why, fetch a doctor, I tell you. I've got enough to do to look after my children, and besides, who's to know what's the matter with her? It may be fever or small-pox or something catching, and if it is she'll have to go from here at once."

"What! You'd turn her out," almost screamed Amy; "turn my poor Lina out, when she's so ill? That you shan't. I can nurse her if nobody else will."

"Then, go and fetch the doctor; you'll find his house just round the corner, and hear what he says."

Amy ran downstairs, for perhaps the first time in her life, wholly forgetful of herself and her own small interests. "Oh, if she were to die, it would be my fault, for it's all through me losing my place that we've had to come to this dirty hole, and live on bread and butter. My poor Lina, my poor Lina!" exclaimed Amy, half aloud as she ran down the street.

The doctor was at home and promised to come and see Lina at once, and indeed, he followed close on Amy's footsteps, fast as she ran, but he could not satisfy the landlady as to what ailed his patient. He would come again in the morning, when the symptoms would be more decided, he said, and he left directions with Amy what she was to do, and promised to send some medicine shortly.

When the morning came, Lina was decidedly worse, but showed no symptoms of either scarlet fever or small-pox; in fact the doctor seemed a good deal puzzled what to call her complaint, but said she must be carefully nursed and