

No. Italics may stamp and bluster in tradesmen's puffs. Sequence, collocation and verbal nicety bow them out of polite letters.

Almost as bad as those—scores against literary credit run up by the reckless scribe—are those marks which a child in his wisdom is wont to call con- (or per-) verted commas. I have known people—mercy suffered them to live and go at large—who were capable of perverting the name of their house, their dog, their very child. "'Tommy' is still at 'The Hollies.' He has 'Sambo' for company." Personally I am opposed to capital punishment; but when depravity goes as far and as deep as that—"don't you think?—surely it would be kinder to the creatures themselves.

Then there is—so named, I think, of Dean Alford—the shriek, or mark of exclamation. That useful member of the company of Mr. Vincent Crummies, worthy and nasty Mrs. Grudden, was a large employer of its cheap labour. She had "quite a genius for making out bills, and was a great hand at throwing in the notes of admiration." And those notes do lend a pleasingly gory finish to such a title as—

THE MANIAC'S REVENGE!

Or, THE SPOTTED BOLSTER OF DEAD MAN'S DYKE!!!

I don't think, even there, I care about more than three. In other literature they are the

wampum and the feathers of the Mohawk. Only as *flambeaux* to the interjection or to veritable exclamation are they tolerable at all. I think they make even a sensitive Oh! a little uncomfortable.

Not very long ago, a writer on writing seriously advised the literary aspirant—the unfortunate, misguided literary aspirant—that he might cut away his colons and semi-colons and sail the ship with commas, full stops and—dashes.

Meesecrable wratch! Only Carlyle can express him. He might as well have advised the disuse of adverbs and conjunctions.

I think it may be laid down as a general rule—limited, no doubt, by many and notable exceptions—that the better a man has written the more he has foregathered with the colon, dear and desired, and with his gentle half-brother. And, as a man would avoid shipwreck, let him steer clear of the dash. It is the rock on which thousands of likely craft have struck and been dashed to pieces.

To any young scribe, anxious to master the delicacies of punctuation and of typographical detail, I would give one bit of advice—very brief and yet leaving little unsaid.

Consider the methods of Miss Marie Corelli. Give your days and nights to them. Make up your mind to understand the why and wherefore of every little eccentricity; and when you do—don't. Mind, I am speaking

of the merest externals. Miss Corelli is a woman of genius. But her dashes and her italics and her shrieks and her desperately inverted commas! "The Sorrows of —" Yes, that does describe what they induce.

Perhaps the most humorous misconception of the use of typographical arrangement relates to the printing of verse. The indentation of the lines, of course, should follow the metrical structure, and, in the case of a very elaborate rhyme system, accurate arrangement often demands a thorough grasp of the mechanism of metre.

Some of our artists, in making dispositions of poems within ornamental borders, set the lines (no matter what their relation) one out, t'other in, in regular alternation. They think they look nicer that way.

Poor, poor poets!

Some day, perhaps, there will arise an epigrammatist or an emblemist who will mortify and abolish the *corpus vile* of verbal text, running our follies through or teaching us heavenward thoughts with the pure spirituality of stops. His book will inaugurate the new poetry—the poetry of the period. I shall begin to inquire for it at Mudie's as soon as ever that flying-machine is issued in a cheap and handy edition.

Meanwhile, if we are to employ the common organ of speech, let us learn to manage the stops.

LAURELLA'S LOVE STORY.

By HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.



CHAPTER II.

ISTORY repeats itself, but a picnic seldom does. It certainly failed to do so in this instance, though the fine weather remained unbroken. In the interim Sir Cosmo Cameron accompanied his son to pay his respects, as he termed it, to his future daughter-in-law, whom he greatly admired, and was wont to pet with a certain stately old-fashioned gallantry. Charlie, who remained to dinner, teased Laurella by pretending to be jealous of what she called the "decided flirtation" which she carried on with Sir Cosmo whenever they chanced to meet.

"I mean to cut the shooting for an hour or two to-morrow afternoon, sweetheart," he whispered as they bade each other a lingering good-night in the porch, "we'll steal away for a walk together, you and I," and Laurella nodded a glad assent.

Sir Cosmo's enthusiasm for his son's betrothed led him to order a plentiful supply of champagne to be conveyed to the hut on the morning of this second gathering, in order, as he said, that they might drink her health with due honour, and Mrs. Garth and Christie noticed, if Laurella did not, that Charlie filled his glass much more frequently than the other men, who one and all drank very sparingly of the sparkling beverage; by degrees he became rather noisy—joking and laughing loudly, and several times addressing Laurella with a lack of reserve and respect, which excited her wonder, and brought the pained colour to her cheek, but, innocent

child that she was, she had no conception of the cause of his changed manner.

"If you two mean to have your walk you had better be starting," observed Mrs. Garth, wishing to break up the party, and Charlie sprang up boisterously.

"Of course—of course—I was forgetting; are you ready, little girl?" he exclaimed; "well, then, I will be with you in one moment."

He disappeared into the hut, and Mrs. Garth's heart sunk as she saw him pour a quantity of whisky from a bottle which stood on a shelf, into a tumbler, and drink it off. He then joined Laurella, slipping his arm into hers in a free and easy manner, which she evidently resented, and the two were quickly out of sight round a curve of the road. When the men were ready to resume sport, Guy Garth strode up to his mother and said in a low tone, "Mother, I advise you to keep an eye on Miss Lonsdale. Could you not stroll in the direction they have taken? I do not imagine Cameron will get very far."

Mrs. Garth nodded, her son's disturbed countenance confirmed her own fears, and whilst the girls were occupied with their self-imposed labours, she took up a book and walked slowly along the road.

Guy was right, the pair had not proceeded very far, for Mrs. Garth presently caught sight of them seated in the shadow of a boulder; they did not see her, and she settled herself in a nook, out of earshot, but from whence she could not fail to see them should they move from their retreat. All was quiet for a long time, and rendered drowsy by the monotonous hum of the bee. Mrs. Garth was struggling with an inclination to close her eyes, when she was roused by seeing Laurella standing alone at a little distance, shading her eyes with her hand, apparently in search of someone.

"Laurella," she called softly as she rose and approached the girl.

"Oh, Mrs. Garth, I am so glad to meet you," exclaimed Laurella in a troubled tone. "I think Mr. Cameron is not quite well, he spoke rather strangely, and complained of giddiness. I persuaded him to sit down, and he fell asleep whilst I was talking to him. I feared it was time to return but I cannot get him to wake."

"I suppose he is tired after his long tramp in the sun," returned Mrs. Garth, "do not distress yourself, dear—no—I think we will not go and disturb him. It will be nothing of any consequence; the others will look after him. Trust me, I will tell Guy," she continued, answering the girl's doubtful look. "Ah, here is Guy. Guy dear, Mr. Cameron has fallen asleep under that boulder; this silly child is not accustomed to the ways of sportsmen and fancies he is ill. You will look after him."

"Oh, yes, mother! Have no fears, Miss Lonsdale. I assure you Cameron will be all right, the lazy fellow, but this hot sun is enough to make one drowsy. I for one begin to feel I have had about enough of it, and am inclined to take a nap myself." Guy spoke cheerily, but exchanged a glance of meaning with his mother, who rightly surmised that uneasiness on their young guest's account had brought her son back. He lost no time in getting the carriage ready and starting the ladies home in spite of Sybil's remonstrance that it was too early, and they had not yet made tea.

The drive home was a silent one, Laurella could not conceal her anxiety, and the girls guessed what had happened. Mrs. Garth glanced at her compassionately, but said nothing until they reached home when she slowly followed the girl to her room.

"I have come for a little talk, Laurel dear. You must let me speak to you as your mother would if you had one—as I would to my own girls. Nay, do not be alarmed," for Laurella