

monition, however, may be deemed admissible for those writers who fall into the abominable habit of punctuating everything with a dash. The dash is a valuable adjunct in the process of punctuation when properly applied, but it can scarcely be advocated for exclusive use in lieu of commas, semicolons, colons and periods. Some of the MSS. that come to an editor call to mind the remark of a lady writer who on being asked her authority for using so many dashes said, "Oh, when I'm in any doubt as to punctuation I throw in a dash." Some of our writers according to this would appear to be in doubt most of the time, and if their MS. was given to the printer as it leaves their hands the proof would make it appear as if more than half of the author's mind was in a blank. A safer precept than the lady's would be—when in doubt do not use anything.

Moderation is also suggested in the use of italics. These innocent little letters have their legitimate place in our literature, but too often they are dragged out to bolster up an argument which contains little strength outside of the emphasis given it by the conspicuous type. It is sometimes as if the author were aiming occasional blows at the reader to compel his attention to the various points he was attempting to make, in the evident conviction that without this method of typical gesticulation the points would be overlooked.

Offensive mannerisms of speech such as too frequently mar the pages of our journals should be avoided. These are mostly matters of habit and few men realize how badly they have this habit till they conduct a critical examination of their own work. An instance of this kind occurs in a recent issue of one of our most pretentious monthlies where on a single page no less than five sentences are started with the word "Now." This word seemed to be the evil genius of that writer for in a short article of a little more than three pages he made it do duty in this respect ten different times. This in face of the fact that in every instance the sentence would have been strengthened by its omission. It was not used in the sense of stating time but simply as a disagreeable excrescence which jarred on the reader at every turn. In giving full sway to this one mannerism the author made an article sound ridiculous which in other respects was a worthy one. A good way to cure one's self of this habit is to read aloud the MS., as has before been advised, previous to having it typewritten, but in case the habit has become so far a second nature that the author is unable to detect his own mannerism he would do well to hand it to some friend for revision. When his defect is once pointed out he should avoid it in his future writing.

A final word of advice directed more particularly to our young writers must conclude what is already too long a paper. The usual tendency with amateur authors, especially if they chance to