The result of the post-mortem examination was as follows: The body was very emaciated. The abdomen contained 1 pint of blood-stained exudate, but there was no peritonitis. The spleen weighed 2,270 grammes and showed evidences of old perisplenitis in patches. The liver was also enlarged. The intestine was congested, but no ulceration was present. In smears from the liver and spleen no Leishman-Donovan bodies could be found, but abundant streptococci were present. These were also present in the bone-marrow, where only one Leishman-Donovan body was found after considerable search.

This almost complete absence of parasites was unexpected. It is possible that it is connected with the administration of senega on the last five days of his illness, but on the other hand Private R. S., who also got senega in the same dose for four days, had abundant parasites in his organs. Another possibility is that it was connected with the acute streptococcic infection which terminated the illness. The use of senega was begun on hearing through Sir William Leishman that Captain Ensor, R.A.M.C., had been getting promising results with this drug, but it hardly had a fair trial in these two cases as the patients were already almost in extremis.

SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE 1 ON PUNCTUATION AND STYLE. 2

BY COLONEL COUNT GLEICHEN, K.C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G., &c.

I have been led to put these few notes together, on punctuation and style, by the evident want of knowledge as regards both which I have come across in some of the very numerous reports on all sorts of subjects which it is my unhappy duty to read.

To take punctuation first:

Now punctuation is a subject which is, as far as I know, never taught in schools. Fellows are supposed to know it by instinct, like geography and English history and the art of writing and knowledge of the stars, and various other useful subjects which are totally neglected at school. I only happen to know something about it because I happen to have been taught it, by a foreign tutor, before I went to school, and the principles have somehow stuck in my mind. There are no rules, however, without

---

1 This is only the framework. The lecturer illustrated and explained it vivâ voce—impossible to reproduce textually.

2 Printed by permission of the Director of Military Operations.
exceptions, and very few of the rules I shall give you are absolutely hard
and fast. But do not take the rules I give you as merely rules to be
learnt off by heart and applied dogmatically. Get the hang of the thing,
the construction of the sentence, and the rules of punctuation will come
automatically. Sense—both common-sense and the sense of the sentence
—has a great deal to do with good punctuation. In fact one may say that
punctuation is merely the application of common-sense.

The object of punctuation is, of course, whilst making the meaning of
the writer clear, to classify the different parts of the sentence so as to
render them subordinate to the main idea, which should stand out in
a clear and striking manner.

As an instance of the want of punctuation:—

We all know the celebrated sentence: “King Charles I. walked and
talked half an hour after his head was cut off.”

Here is another:—

“The I.O.’s of Divisions had no communication with other Divisions
or with the D.M.I. except by writing through the Directing Staff.”

(Susceptible of being read in three different ways, according to
punctuation or the want of it.)

“Hence he considered marriage with a modern political economist as
dangerous.”

“Most of the roads are paved with a strip of small cobbles down the
centre.”

“It was and I said and not or.”

The main principle therefore to remember is this, that you should treat
your sentences as divided into one main group, expressing the main idea
of the sentence, and other side groups subordinate to the main group; and
punctuate accordingly by dividing these off from one another by some sort
of stop, e.g. (main sentence underlined):—

“I shall ask for roast beef, if there is any.”

“When I reached the station, I found the train already gone.”

“He told me that, although his motives might be misjudged, he was
convinced that he had done right.”

“Napoleon, true to his economic heresy that exports alone enriched a
State while imports weakened it, allowed Italian ships freely to export
corn and other produce to England in that terrible year of death, in the
hope that the high prices obtained for them would impoverish England
and bring to Italy wealth sufficient to enable her to meet the heavy drain
of the yearly subsidies to Paris.”

Even though the main group may be a very long one, no stops should
be used if there are no groups or ideas subordinate to the main one, e.g.:—

“The quiet unostentatiousness of its salutary methods is in such
glaring contrast with the panic-stricken philanthropy intermittently shown
towards our unemployed as to make the British visitor feel that in this
domain he has still a great deal to learn from such a system as is explained above.”

Sometimes there are several main groups in a sentence, and in this case it becomes a question whether they should be separated by full stops and therefore made into separate sentences, or whether a semi-colon (the next longest pause to a full stop) would suffice, e.g.:—

“...the sides of the mountain were covered with trees; the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers; every blast shook spices from the rocks.”

You might divide them off by full stops; but here the semicolon is preferable in order to bring them all into one sentence and so form a single picture—that of fertility; this is a matter of style more than of rule.

Complete sentences—i.e., with subject and predicate—as above, should never be separated by commas only, unless closely connected together, both in sense and by particles. One of the most common forms of error in punctuation is a sentence such as this:—

“The report is divided into three parts, the first contains an account of the actual manoeuvres, the second consists of a description of the terrain, the third brings to notice the peculiar tactics adopted by the Red Army,” &c.

There should, of course, either be a full stop after “parts,” with semi-colons after “manoeuvres” and “terrain”; or else, if you want to make the whole into one sentence, keep the first sentence as the main one, and make the remainder subsidiary, thus:—

“The report is divided into three parts, the first containing an account of the actual manoeuvres, the second consisting of a description of the terrain, whilst the third brings to notice the peculiar tactics adopted by the Red Army.”

Or else, since firstly, secondly, and thirdly are closely connected, you might write it:—

“The report is divided into three parts. The first contains an account of the actual manoeuvres, the second consists of a description of the terrain, and the third brings to notice the peculiar tactics adopted by the Red Army.”

As the comma is the most frequent offender, we will tackle him first.

It may be news to you that it was only introduced into English literature in the sixteenth century.

A good general rule is to use as few commas as possible; the erring reports which I have read always suffer more from a plethora of comma than from a deficiency thereof.

Commas are, after all, the main form of stops for dividing up a sentence; and though they are often wrongly used as substitutes for colons, semi-colons, dashes, and even full stops, it is a worse fault to put a comma where it is not wanted, or to leave it out where it is, than to use it merely in substitution for other stops. If, therefore, we get our ideas
right about commas, we shall not do so badly with the other stops, for they are much easier to deal with.

Broadly, therefore, we can say that commas should only be used when we want, with a light touch, to divide off groups from each other or to break the continuity of ideas. To necessitate the use of such a small stop as a comma, the separation of ideas need be very trifling: the break may even represent merely a slight pause in one’s thoughts (on paper), but that is where the comma comes in. If you want to separate your ideas more strongly, you use a semicolon; and if you want to separate them absolutely you use a full stop; it is the comma, however, that represents the slight pause or break in one’s written thoughts, that divides off the subsidiary groups from the main group, and the sub-subsidiary groups from the subsidiary ones:—

“The Sultan and his advisers, in face of this aggression, which appeared to be quite uncalled-for, gave proofs of inexhaustible patience and of wise moderation.”

Sometimes the pause is so slight that one does not require a comma at all:—

“These facts however have sunk deeply into the national mind of Germany.”

And sometimes, although a new idea is brought in, it all forms part of the whole, and therefore should not be fenced off by commas:—

“It is further evident that Turkey possessed the same brave uncomplaining soldiery.”

The other day I came upon this appalling ‘over commaed’ sentence:—

“Ever since the days of Frederick the Great, Prussia and her well-tried army, have enjoyed a large measure of respect, and admiration, in all quarters of the world.”

There should, of course, be no commas at all in the above; it is only one idea throughout.

In many cases what appear to be subsidiary sentences are only expanded nouns, adverbs, adjectives, &c.; they should not therefore be fenced off by commas. E.g., in the above sentence, “Ever since the days of Frederick the Great” only represents an adverb of time, and “in all quarters of the world” an adverb of place. You would not fence off “then,” or “whilst,” or “everywhere”—why then fence off these sentences?

Here is a sentence in which the sub-sentence merely represents a nominative:—

“To-say-that-he-endured-his-misfortunes-without-a-murmur is to say only what his previous life would have led us to expect.”

We therefore put no comma after “murmur”: for the subject and verb, unless separated by a subsidiary sentence which requires fencing off, ought never to be separated by any kind of stop.

“The warmest and most enthusiastic admirers of our naval institutions
On Punctuation and Style

and victories are to be found throughout the ranks of those whom we expect one day to fight."

There should of course be no commas after "victories," for subject and verb must not be separated; and there must be none after "those," for "those-whom-we-expect-one-day-to-fight" is merely a genitive in the guise of a sentence.

One of the most frequent pitfalls for the unwary is the question as to when you ought to put a comma before "and," and when not.

When the "and" connects merely two words, there should never be a comma.

(a) When the "and" connects two sentences:—

The rule is quite simple: when the subject (nominative) is repeated, you put a comma; when it is not you do not.

"He kicked her, and then he stabbed her."
"He kicked her and then stabbed her."
"The Bavarians are a musical race, and they sing well."
"The Bavarians are a musical race and sing well."

It is merely an amplification of our original rule, that separate complete sentences, i.e., sentences with subject and verb, must be kept separate by some sort of stop.

This rule generally holds good; but sometimes, if the sentences joined by "and" are long, or express quite different ideas, or the repetition of the subject is obviously suppressed, a comma is by some writers inserted before the "and"; even if the subject is not repeated:—

"The tribunal discovered a reactionary conspiracy, and elicited the fact that many leading men were concerned in it."

It is however not wrong to leave the comma out.

"The Artillery Commandant had two guns set up, one at the entrance to the barracks, the other at the exit, and made ready to withstand the mutineers."

Here of course the comma before the "and" is correct: but it does not belong to the "and"; it is part of the fence of the subsidiary sentence "one . . . exit."

(b) When two or more words are strung together, with commas in between, and there is an "and" before the last, there should not, as a rule, be a comma before this "and."

"Cheese, fruit, flowers and fish are to be had there."
"Tom, Dick and Harry."

If however the string of substantives is long and complicated, one may put a comma before the "and": but this really only represents a taking of breath, or a change of idea:—

"Nothing was to be seen in either case except a few tents for officers, warrant officers and sentries, and a few shelters for ammunition and supplies."

Here you have no comma before the first "and," but you should put one before the second one.
The comma before or after a relative pronoun also presents difficulties; but in nine cases out of ten the difficulty solves itself if you look at the main principles. Take these sentences:

"The new Servian gun, which is obviously borrowed from the French model, is the only weapon in this country which can be considered entirely satisfactory." Here "which . . . model" is merely a subsentence.

"The man who did that ought to be punished." The first five words are merely the subject.

"The man who, by pretending to be sick, shirked the march ought to be punished."

"That man, whom I well know to be a bad character, is not worthy of your confidence."

Sometimes you would be justified in leaving out a comma:

(a) "He would be shocked if he knew the truth"; but
(b) "If he knew the truth, he would be shocked."

The difference here arises from the fact that in the position of the words in (a) the sense of the main sentence is not complete till we have finished the whole sentence. In (b) the usual rule of separating complete sentences applies.

When words are common to two or more parts of a sentence and are expressed only in one part, a comma is sometimes used to show the omission:

"London is the capital of England; Paris, of France; Berlin, of Germany."

The colon is often misused. Its function is chiefly explanatory.

"The reason I give you for my decision is this: that I do not consider that the enemy could have reached the river in time."

"Three nations adopted this law: England, France and Germany."

"Dr. Johnson's chief works are the following: the Lexicon, Lives of the Poets, and Rasselas."

"The rain beat against the window: it was in fact a miserable day."

"The change of thought is great: from the sublime to the ridiculous."

It is used also in front of quotations:

"The passage in which he says: 'The law ought to forbid it because conscience does not admit it'—occurs in one of his most celebrated essays."

A long deliberate quotation is generally preceded by a colon and a dash, and starts on a new line:

"He wrote as follows:—"

"'I have named none to their disadvantage, &c.'"

It is also used for enumeration, where "namely," or "viz." is understood but not written.

"There were twelve tribes of Israel: Zebulon, Naphthali, &c."; but in practically all the correct uses of the colon the underlying sense is that of explanation. It should certainly not be used instead of a semicolon, which is quite a different stop.
On Punctuation and Style

The dash is perhaps often rather a slovenly method of punctuating when you are not sure what stop to use: but it has its uses. It is useful for separating off a sentence when commas are not sufficient, e.g.:

"Five-sixths of the revenue repealed—abandoned—sunk—lost for ever."

"The normal meaning of the word—or rather, I should say, the absolute meaning—is so-and-so."

Or it may denote hesitation:

"Well—I don't know—that is—no, I cannot accept it."

Or an unexpected turn of thought:

"He entered smiling—and embarrassed."

A written conversation is often punctuated by dashes. It gives a more lifelike appearance: for people rarely talk in correctly punctuated sentences.

A dash also comes after a full stop after the side-heading of some paragraph:

"Extent and boundaries.—On the north it is bounded by, &c., &c."

It is often used as a parenthesis:

"It is stated that as their pay is so poor—only thirty shillings a month—they cannot afford to buy any liquor."

The semicolon is used to separate parts of sentences between which there is a distinct break, but which are too closely connected to be made into absolutely separate sentences fenced off by full stops:

"Several positions were occupied in succession; one was held for a long time; at last however it was relinquished."

"They are fine upstanding animals, with plenty of bone; they appeared to be well looked after."

It must be remembered however that semicolons can only be used to fence off complete (subject and verb) sentences of which the sense is complete—as with full stops: whose use I need not explain.

Nor do I require to explain inverted commas, brackets, marks of exclamation or interrogation, or italics.

Hyphens: it is impossible to lay down any definite rule.

Style and Matter.

By style I do not mean an elaborate literary style, but a practical military one.

A good style is a thing which comes naturally from clear-headedness. A muddle-headed man will never have a good style. The main objects to strive for are: Terseness, simplicity, accuracy, clearness, short sentences. Macaulay is as good an author to imitate as any other—unless the writer has already a superior style of his own.

A good style cannot be taught by exact definitions, but a great deal can
be done to improve a bad style by studying a good one. If you have a vivid and picturesque imagination you can give it rein when you write on other than official military matters—but for goodness sake curb it when you are writing a military report: it is not wanted there.

Choose your words well: it is better, and leads to less friction and waste of time in the end if you spend a few seconds in selecting the right word, rather than write in an inferior word which does not express your meaning, and then have to explain it, or explain it away, in half a dozen muddled sentences. The English language is quite rich enough. The words are there right enough if you will only take the trouble to search for them. Select those words which mean a great deal, but mean it exactly, and do not waste your time on long sentences where one or two well-selected words would do. Cultivate condensation, not superfluity.

It is extraordinary how one man can tell you in three pages as much as, or even more than, another man can tell you in a dozen. I have suffered from many of the latter style of reports, and the worst of this superfluous style is that if you want to make a précis of it you cannot do it by cutting off pieces here or there: you have to read it, get the sense of it, and then rewrite the whole thing off your own bat—a frightful waste of time.

These superfluities of writing generally come from three causes. The first is that the man's brain is organically incapable of grasping a subject as a whole, and organizing it and distributing it; and so he drifts along from point to point, flying off at a tangent, coming back later on, putting the minor points in the important places, and relegating the important ones, so to speak, to the backyard; so that by the time the unfortunate man for whom it is intended has struggled through the lengthy report, he is not much wiser than he was at the beginning.

The second cause is that the writer is quite capable of organizing the subject he is writing about, but that he will not take the trouble to do so. He will not take the trouble to think out, for a minute or two, how the report ought to be presented so as to give the reader a clear picture of what the writer wants to impart, but he sits down and begins writing at once without arranging his ideas in sequence, and without settling beforehand which are the main ideas and which the subsidiary ones.

The third cause is that a man may be physically incapable of bringing a thing to a point, and must give all the details—relevant and otherwise—which refer to the matter. In fact, he has a meticulous mind, and is incapable of separating his facts.

The late Lord Salisbury, when preparing a speech, used to construct it carefully by first settling what the three or four main ideas were which he wanted to ram home on his audience, and then he would approach the first idea with preliminary remarks, gradually work up to that, and clinch it. Then he would treat the second idea in the same way, and so on, so that he always got to the main point after the ground had been
carefully prepared for it, and it was much more convincing in consequence. (No doubt many others do it, too, and are good to read and to hear;—but many more do not.)

In fact, for constructing a report, as well as for constructing a sentence, or a house, or work of any sort, you must think out your framework—and for that you must have a sense of proportion, knowing what to keep and what to discard, and how to arrange your main points so that they shall strike the reader in the clearest and most convincing way. Sir T. Sanderson, who used to receive an immense number of despatches and reports from all parts of the world at the Foreign Office, used to retain the sense of all of them in a most extraordinary manner. I once asked him how he did it, and he said, "Oh, I never read more than the last page of a despatch—I really haven't the time." (This was perhaps an exaggeration!) He hardly ever used to read a despatch or a report right through, but knew by experience that the gist of the whole thing, the summing-up of the arguments and the impression intended to be conveyed by the writer, would be found at the end. If he wanted details, he would glance over the body of the report, and note them.

This, perhaps, presupposes good despatch-writing in the diplomatic services, but it serves as a good example for report-writers to follow.

Keep subjects apart, and put them under different headings—do not bungle up all together.

Orders are perhaps the most difficult things to write, for they require all the above-recommended virtues in the highest degree. They must be terse and absolutely clear, and yet must give the maximum amount of information and instruction, and they must be written in the right order. And here comes in a necessity above all things on which I have not yet laid weight—that of re-reading what you have written before you despatch it. In order to make things absolutely clear you must imagine yourself to be the officer receiving the orders (similarly as to report), with a clear mind as to what the officer knows already and what he does not know, and only then will you be in a position to detect flaws in the orders. Punctuation is also of the greatest importance; and of even greater importance is it that no order or sentence should be capable of being read in two different ways.

"Sloppiness" should be avoided: here are some instances of sloppiness:

"No. 2 rams the cartridge together with No. 4 into the breach."

"Yesterday Captain S. shot fifteen brace of grouse along with Captain J."

"After the early fight we were present at"—instead of "at which we were present."

"I could see them from the hill I was on"—instead of "on which I was."

"The main stream was broad and it's channels" (were) "numerous."
"A party of men are expected"—for "is expected."

Never use a split infinitive: such as, "he used to generally come."

"To" should never be separated from its infinitive.

"Averse to" is wrong. "Averse from" is right. "Adverse to" is right.

"Very" takes an adjective or an adverb, not a participle. Say, "very much pleased"—not "very pleased"; or "very content"—not "very contented."

Concur with a person, but in a thing. "He concurred with the plan" is wrong.

Never use "and which" if you can possibly avoid it.

(The lecture closed with other illustrations of bad style, and with instructions for drawing up road-reports.)

Reviews.

GUIDE TO PROMOTION FOR NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS. By Captain S. T. Beggs, M.B., Reserve of Officers, Royal Army Medical Corps.

This volume is a précis of those official books a knowledge of which is required for the promotion examinations in the Royal Army Medical Corps up to the rank of Staff-Serjeant. All the subjects are fully dealt with, and it will be found a great advantage to have the knowledge which is required collected together in a concise form in one book, in place of having to search through several. References are given for nearly all statements, so that those wishing to go more fully into any particular subject may readily refer to the official books.

The second edition which has just been published will be found to contain much new matter, such as the requirements for promotion to Staff-Serjeant, semaphore signalling, &c. The subjects of examination for Staff-Serjeant are dealt with at some length, and the chapters on documents and pay should be found of the greatest assistance to those studying for this examination.

The Sections on Company and Squad drill will be particularly useful to privates and junior N.C.O.'s preparing for examinations; who, though not provided with the necessary books, must pass in these subjects. The inclusion of stretcher and ambulance wagon drill appears somewhat unnecessary, as all ranks are in possession of a copy of the Royal Army Medical Corps Training Manual.

Part V., which deals with clerical and other duties in a military hospital, could with advantage be studied by practically all N.C.O.'s.

The book can confidently be recommended to all who are working for their promotion examinations; and in addition it should be very useful to company and other officers who, through some years of Indian service, have more or less lost touch with things appertaining to the interior economy of a company and of the corps in general.