

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

period in itself, and might have been closed with a full point; but the author has added another division, by way of inference, and this is dependent on the first division. The author proceeds—"The one has all that perfection requires, and more, but the excess may be easily retrenched; the other wants the qualities requisite to excellence." Here the first division makes a complete proposition; but the antithesis begun by the numeral *one*, is not complete, without the last division.

"Economy is no disgrace; for it is better to live on a little, than to outlive a great deal."

"Be in peace with many; nevertheless, have but one counselor of a thousand."

"A friend cannot be known in prosperity; an enemy cannot be hid in adversity."

In general then, the semicolon separates the divisions of a sentence, when the latter division has a dependence on the former, whether the former has a dependence on the latter or not.

*Secondly.* When several members of a sentence have a dependence on each other, by means of a substitute for the same principal word, and the clauses, in other respects, constitute distinct propositions, the semicolon may be used; as, "Wisdom hath builded her house; *she* hath hewn out her seven pillars; *she* hath killed her beasts; *she* hath mingled her wine; *she* hath also furnished her table." *Prov. ix.*

### Colon.

The Colon is used when the sense of the division of a period is complete, so as to admit of a full point, but something is added by way of illustration; as, "A brute arrives at a point of perfection that he can never pass: in a few years he has all the endowments he is capable of, and were he to live ten thousand more, would be the same thing he is at present."

*Spectator, No. 111.*

### Period.

The Period or full point marks a completion of the sense, a cadence of the

voice, and the longest pause used between sentences. It closes a discourse also, or marks a completion of a subject, chapter or section.

The full point is used also after initials when used alone, as after N. S. for New Style; and after abbreviations, as *Croc. Anglic.* for *Crocus Anglicanus.*

To these may be added,

The dash (—) which marks a break in the sentence or an abrupt turn; as, "If thou art he—but O how fallen!"

The interrogation point (?) that closes a sentence which asks a question; as, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?"

The exclamation point (!) which is used after sudden expressions of surprise, or other emotions; as, "O happiness! Our being's end and aim!"

The parenthesis ( ) and hooks { } include a remark or clause not essential to the sentence in construction, but useful in explaining it or introducing an important idea. They mark a moderate pause, and the clause included is read with a depressed tone of voice; as,

"Know then this truth (enough for man to know)

Virtue alone is happiness below."

*Pope.*

It will be readily seen that the sentence is not at all dependent on the parenthetical clause; but the converse is not true, for that clause has a dependence more or less remote on the sentence. Thus, *enough for man to know*, is not intelligible without connecting it with the parts of the sentence preceding and following. So in this passage; "If any one pretends to be so sceptical, as to deny his own existence (for really to doubt of it, is manifestly impossible) let him enjoy his beloved happiness." *Locke, 4. 10. 2.* The included clause here is connected with the preceding part of the sentence, and it is a substitute for *existence*.

With regard to the duration of the pauses, it may be observed that the comma, semicolon, colon and full point, may bear to each other the proportion of one, two, four and six; and the interrogation point and exclamation point may be considered each as equal in time to the colon or period. But no precise rule can be given, which shall extend to every case; the length of the pauses must depend much on the nature of the discourse, and their respective proportions may be often varied to advantage by a judicious speaker.