

THE JUNE MAGAZINES.

"PUTNAM'S." The June number of Putnam's Magazine has the following list of articles:—"Down the Danube," Colonel John Hay; "Birds of the North," President P. A. Chadbourne; "The Tale of a Comet" (concluded), Edw. Spencer; "The Outlook of our English Literature," Professor J. M. Hopkins; "A Woman's Right," Mrs. M. C. Ames; "Fulfillment," Mary L. Ritter; "Shall We Have a More Readable Bible?" J. B. Bittinger; "A Domestic Romance;" "On Time;" "Quaker Quirks," Mrs. F. Barrow; "The Exhibition of the Academy," Eugene Benson; "Dinner vs. Ruffles and Tucks," Louisa Palmer Smith; "Proportional Representation," David Dudley Field; "The Coming of the Dawn;" "Editorial Notes;" "Literature at Home," R. H. Shoddard; "Literature, Science, and Art Abroad," Charlton T. Lewis.

From the very pertinent paper by J. B. Bittinger, which asks the question "Shall we have a more readable Bible?" we make these extracts:— We do not ask this question irreverently; but conscientiously; for there is no book that is so frequently printed as the Bible, none that is so universally read, none that is so highly prized, and none that is so badly printed. If we were asked to select a form for a book, to limit its influence and readability, we should select the form in which our English Bible is almost universally published.

What other book is put before the reader in such guise? Here we have poetry printed as prose, and prose printed as poetry; long, involved, and compacted logical sentences cut up into epigrammatic forms; and simple, childlike narrative, which, in the original, flows as smooth and clear as a meadow-stream, dammed, rendered turbid and intermittent by innumerable obstructions of verses. In all other books the paragraph ends with the sense; in the Scriptures, whatever the sense may be, every line or two brings the reader to a halt. The sign of the paragraph is indeed prefixed, but it serves no practical purpose, and is a positive blemish. Should we dare to read any other book so ill? Don Quixote or Robinson Crusoe would have outlived such "hewing to pieces before the Lord." Imagine Pope's "Hud" printed as we print Isaiah! Dissect "Samson Agonistes" as Job is dissected! How long would they survive such mutilations? One-half of our Scriptures is poetry—a poetry which brings its structure with it—a structure so strong and characteristic that it lives even in the prosaic moulds into which it has been run in our Bible. If read appreciatingly, the ear may catch the tones of the Hebrew Muse; but when the eye turns to see her fair form, it is met by a jarring recognition. Before the hap-hazard, horseback versification of Stephens everything must give way—the current of narrative, the glow of fancy, the chain of reasoning, and even the mechanism of grammar. And then, as if to aggravate the evils of these numerous and inapt divisions, ever since the Geneva translation of 1557, each verse is set by itself—a jet of inspiration isolated like an apothegm.

Any one who has been a member of a family or a visitor in a family where the Scriptures are read, verse-by-verse, cannot help notice the limping, halting process it is—how the sense was obscured, and all spiritually dissipated, by the verse-mutilations. The child invariably reads according to these divisions, dropping its voice, and with it, the sense, at the end of each verse. Then, the next reader begins, not with the tone and inflection of continuity, but as if a new idea were introduced; and so on to the end of the chapter. It is hardly necessary to say that, in this kind of reading, "the Word of the Lord" has not the "free course" for which we are taught to pray; nor can it "be glorified" in such treatment. Or, if one has no such domestic experience as this, let him go to our schools, in which the Bible is a text-book, and mark how it is read, and it will be impossible to resist the conviction that the arbitrary division into chapters and verses is a very serious mistake. The persons who most need to be assisted in the reading of the Word, and to whom it should be made "sweeter than honey or the honey-comb," the young and the unlettered are they whose books are thus marred and maimed; while, for the Greek scholar, we print our Testaments as we print other books—dividing them by the sense and according to the sense, and, in the printing, impart to them the appearance of other books.

But a few examples of these verse-divisions according to what shall we say?—not the sense, but, perhaps, the jottings of Robert Stephens, scrawled out among five readers in the family or the school, and what must become of it? Or suppose your reader is one and the same person, but unskilled, is it likely that he will get the same sense out of these five aphorisms that he would get if they were printed in the following familiar form? "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end (that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ).

New imagine this sentence, fervid in feeling, impetuous in movement, and logical in structure, parcelled out among five readers in the family or the school, and what must become of it? Or suppose your reader is one and the same person, but unskilled, is it likely that he will get the same sense out of these five aphorisms that he would get if they were printed in the following familiar form? "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end (that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ).

In the divisions into chapters the same fatality to the sense often prevails. Sometimes these are so malapropos that nothing but the reverence of the intelligent reader saves them from ridicule; but what tends to excite the ridicule or contempt of the learned may be a hindrance to the unlearned. In illustration of our remarks take the story of the vision of the angel, as told in Joshua, chapters v and vi. How does our Bible give it? They cut it in two. One part is left in chapter v, and the other part is found in chapter vi, the fifth chapter ending with the edifying words, "Joshua did so;" that is, took off his shoe. Of the full import of the narrative the reader of the fifth chapter will know nothing; and the same is true of the reader of the sixth chapter. Unless read in connection they cannot be understood. In Isaiah the direct significance of more than one of his

"burdens" is obscured by these arbitrary interruptions. Each prophecy is a poem, and should be printed as distinctly by itself as a psalm of David. But the Burden of Babylon is cut in two—part is in one chapter, part in another; while the Burden of Palestine is tagged to the end of chapter xiv as an appendix to the Burden of Babylon. In chapter xii three distinct prophecies concerning three different countries are rolled into one. It would be far less misleading to print three psalms in one chapter than thus to confuse and confound three prophecies. Of the same character is the cutting off of the twenty-first chapter of the Acts from the twenty-second chapter. The former, like a sensation novel published in the middle of the century, breaks off in the middle of the interest. The same offense is repeated at the end of the 23d chapter. Of course, no such unworthy motives influenced Stephen, who happily lived before the days of dime novels; and it was only a heavier jolt, or a more hazardous stumble, that broke the thread of Luke's narrative in these most inopportune places. The Bible is a household volume, given to the people, and for private reading. It is read, and heard read, a dozen times as often as it is used for verifying quotations. Let it, therefore, be printed in the interest of the people, rather than in the interest of the polemic. What defense can be made for amputating the last part of the eighth chapter of Mark, and adding it to chapter ix? It is the conclusion of a most touching appeal, "the immediate jewel" of Christ's discourse. The man who perpetrated it robbed the eighth chapter of that which did not enrich the ninth, and made the former poor indeed.

If, now, the Christian public ask, "Whose duty is it to put the Word before the American people in a readable form?" we answer unhesitatingly, The American Bible Society's. Its position, its wealth, its power, and its prestige, call upon it to do this work. No other house can do it as well and so effectively as the Bible-House. How much it can do may be inferred from the fact that it has the confidence of the Protestant world. It has the patronage of the whole American Church, save a portion of the Baptist denomination. It has the market of the entire country. How much it can hinder by mere indifference may be gathered from the limited success of Reeves' Paragraph Bible, first published in England in the beginning of the present century, and republished in a cheaper form a few years since by the University of Oxford. That Bible "not having been adopted by the societies through which, by far, the largest number of English Bibles is circulated, the advantages of this form of division into paragraphs were neither sufficiently known nor duly appreciated." Unless, therefore, this work is undertaken and done by these great societies, what was said fifteen years ago must continue to be true—"There is no such thing as a readable Bible."

Fancy Fashions. "There is no knowing in these days of restless luxury," says an English writer, "what fashion may not revive. Powder is already much used this season in Paris, probably it will not be long before it blows over here; and as for paint, it has been looking up for a considerable time. In the abstract, nothing, it must be confessed, seems more absurd than to conceal the golden sheen or silky blackness of women's hair under a snow result is far from unpleasant. Go into a flour-mill and see a robust young miller at work; you will then at once observe what a value the rose color and healthy carnations of his complexion gain from the whiteness of his hair. Certainly his eyes look richer and darker from the contrast, and the result is an aesthetic gain. At all events, powder is better than the gold-dust used to spangle the hair of French ladies some seasons ago. That fashion savored too much of the days of the Roman empresses, when careless slaves were sometimes thrown into tanks to feed the lamproys. Gold-dust! Why, the glistening of a tress of golden hair, untempered by any such sophistries, excels metallic glitter as much as a sunbeam transcends a streak of yellow paint.

"There is no knowing what may not be revived. Perhaps the peacock doublets of Raleigh's time, the sleeves hung with gilt bells of Richard the Second's period, the tight-fitting cote hardies and broad jeweled belts of Edward the Third's barons, or the cocked hats and three-tier wigs of the Georgian era. The Greeks had other views about these matters. They never changed their style of dress. The plain robe and tunic of Demosthenes; the peplos of Helen hung in similar folds to that of the peplos of Aesop. The Greeks never greivd tired of the simple folds and the statuesque curves of the simple dress their first sculptors had immortalized. What would they have said to the 'Grecian bend,' that last distortion of folly and affectation? The purest ideal of the way a woman should walk is the manner in which a milk-girl carries her pail—erect, buoyant, elastic, the bosom thrown forward, the head up. Put such a child of nature, Irish or Welsh, beside a young lady walking in the absurd way now fashionable. It matters little whether the modern belle tries to walk so, or whether high-heeled shoes produce in her that Chinese helplessness. One would think she was trying to play a sort of female pantalon, as she minces forward with pretty helplessness, some form of spinal disease being induced by every step. Farewell to what French cynics call 'the grenadier stride' of Englishwomen. Women totter forward now, they do not walk. The French shuffle and the Spanish glide are divine compared with such a style of walking as the Grecian bend produces. The 'bend' is ungraceful, unnatural, and unhealthy. But it is useless to remonstrate or revile. What did Punch do against the absurdities of his day? Nothing. It is supposed that women's fickleness in dress arises from a desire to please men. If it does, how is it that they in dress never alters one hour the sooner for all man's ridicule or dislike?"

A writer in the Advance says:—"Not so long since I heard sung in the church the anthem 'Rock of Ages,' in which there is a solo to the words, 'Should my tears,' etc., which was sung as follows:— 'Shoo-hoo-hoo-hoo my-hi-to-hears For-er-her flow-ho, Shoo-hoo-hoo-my-hi-ze-head No longer kno-ho, Thi-his-for-hi-hi could No-hot-ah-ha-to-hone, Thon-hoo-muh-hust-as-have, And thon-hoo-ah-ha-lone, In my hand no price I bring, Simply to thy draw-hoos I-chi-eling."

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