

## WHAT TO DO WITH OLD MAGAZINES.

WHAT becomes of all the magazines?

This is a question that frequently obtrudes itself, when one looks into the windows of the retail booksellers, or passes those great cradles of struggling literature, over which the agents of Messrs. Smith or Willing preside as monthly nurses; and indeed it is one that has its serious, if not almost mournful, aspect to any mind so old-fashioned as to retain some veneration for print. Books—real books, that is to say—exert on those who have lived much among them, an influence the reverse of that of the proverbial familiarity; and as the earnest, loving student of men and women learns to recognise some indications of goodness and hopefulness, where the careless see only degradation, or perhaps repulsiveness; so the student of books has an instinctive feeling towards every bundle of printed paper fastened up in a cover, that at least it may contain something for which it should be honoured, and so deserve to have its existence prolonged. Of course we must not try to drive the parallel too far; for while almost every human being retains, even in degradation, some trace of the image of God, only too much that is printed nowadays is made in the irreclaimable image and likeness of the prince of all evil.

Almost all our magazines that take the lead in popularity and "up-to-dateness" are free from matter of this latter sort, but the demand of editors for "copy" has grown so urgent, and the supply of what is really good is necessarily so limited, that there is too often a most pitiable superabundance of rubbish—"detective" stories; prying into the privacy of public persons, with interesting illustrations of Mr. Anthony Kippard's dinner-table and Miss Marie Elsmere's new hair-brushes, and suchlike. This it is that hurries our monthlies into a premature decrepitude. An "old" magazine, now, may mean anything with a date previous to that of the current issue. Its numbers are rarely kept beyond the arrival of their successors; and, when so kept, are perhaps stacked away in piles of dust and mildew, or else bound in solemn rows, that furnish a filling for vacant shelves, but are never taken down and read by anyone.

If one were to stack up, or to bind all the magazines, new and second-hand, that one buys, the accumulation would soon become unwieldy; but when there is much worth keeping, it is well to know the best way to dispose of it. Taking an article here, and an article there, you will soon have enough material for a respectable volume. Well, let us be practical.

When you read your magazine through, mark with a pencil, or make a memorandum, of every article you think worth preserving; and then, as soon as the number becomes "old," you can separate the grain from the chaff. This is easy enough to do, if the sheets have been properly sewn together; but, unfortunately, you will often have to cope with the abomination of metal "stitching"—that last insult to the self-respect of anything calling itself a book. In such case, after you have taken off the wrapper, and laid the metal bare, you must straighten the ends of the wires, where they are turned in, with a pair of pliers; and then, after passing the blade of a strong knife, or, better still, both blades of a closed pair of scissors, under the middle of the stitches, to raise them, take the pliers again, and pull the wires out.

Now you have your material, the next thing is to arrange it. Sometimes you will find a selected article beginning at the top of the first page of its first leaf, sometimes at that of the second; and ending, in like manner, at the

bottom of the first or second page of its last leaf. Those articles that begin at the top of the first page of the first leaf, and end at the bottom of the second page of the last, need no special treatment. But often they are not so self-contained; and if you were to take your excerpts, and have them bound together just as they came, your volume would be sadly disfigured by fragments of beginnings and endings. The way to avoid this with such articles is to take one that ends at the bottom of the first page of its last leaf, and paste that leaf back-to-back with one on whose second page another article begins; or else take a picture, and with it cover, in the same way, the page that is not wanted.

This pasting together of your excerpts must be done very neatly. I will tell you how I manage with mine. First I cut a rectangular gauge, from a piece of strong cardboard, making it the size of an average magazine page. Some of our magazines, such as *Blackwood's*, the *Cornhill*, the *Monthly Packet*, etc., are issued in crown 8vo. Others, the more modern, including reviews of the *Nineteenth Century* class, and almost all the American monthlies, in demy 8vo; these sizes cannot well be bound together in one volume, and will require separate gauges. Then I take my article and fit the gauge to its upper and inner edges, drawing a pencil-line



FIG. 1.

along the other two sides of the cardboard, as at A to B, B to C, Fig. 1. These lines are to serve as guides in cutting all the various sheets to a nearly uniform size, an operation best performed by the aid of a brass-edged

"stationer's ruler," and a sharp knife, the paper being laid on a sheet of "tin"—really tinned iron, such as "tinware" is made of. Soft as paper is, it has a wonderful power of turning and blunting the edge of a knife, and therefore it is well to have a slip of Kansas, or other good oil-stone at hand, to restore the cutting power. When I am making a volume of extracts, the leaves of which are of the same size, I do not crop them as I have just described, but leave them (what the binders technically call uncut. But if one wants to put articles from, let us say, *Scribner's*, the *Nineteenth Century*, *Chapman's*, and *Chambers's Journal* into the same cover, one cannot make the volume turn out at all neatly without some such cutting. The pages of *Chambers* (being royal 8vo.) require a reduction at the top, by cutting off about three-eighths of an inch of the margin, before the gauge is applied.

Next comes the pasting together of the pages that are to be covered. For this, there is nothing equal to what is sold as "Stickphast Paste," but you can make what will do nearly as well with flour, or, better still, starch, putting in a little salt, and a few drops of essence of cloves or cinnamon to keep it sweet. Cover both pages thinly and evenly with your paste, to prevent their "cockling," wipe away any waste with a towel, and then dry them quickly, between sheets of hot blotting-paper, in a screw-press. I use for

this, as well as for a multitude of other purposes, a housemaid's napkin-press, of wood, which I have screwed down to my working-table. When using it for this purpose, I keep at least half-a-dozen pads of blotting-paper in front of a good fire; so that when one pair of pads is in the press, with a pair of magazine leaves being brought into close adhesion between them, the others may be drying and heating, ready to take the place of those just used. By pads I do not mean the made-up blotting-pads sold by stationers, but sheets of the thickest and best blotting-paper—two will be enough for each pad—placed one inside the other, and kept together by a slip of gummed paper folded down, when wet, so as to join their outer edges.

Sometimes an article begins or ends on part of a page, the rest being occupied with matter you do not care to preserve. When this is the case, you may adopt one or other of several devices to keep your volume free from disfigurement by the superfluity. For instance, supposing that X, Fig. 2, is the first

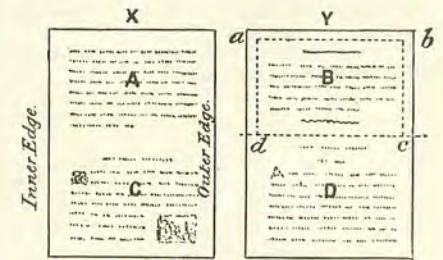


FIG. 2.

leaf of one of your excerpts, and that the article begins with the paragraph C, on the first page of that leaf, you may cover the matter, A, that you do not want, with a picture; or else you may search through your other excerpts, until you find a leaf such as Y, on which B is the ending of an article you do want to keep, falling on its first leaf, D being superfluous; and then cut out B neatly, as at a, b, c, d, to cover A with. Many other cases of the fitting together of beginnings and endings will be sure to occur, where a little ingenuity, thought, and patience will be needed to secure a finished appearance for your work. Articles in double columns, such as those in *Chambers's Journal*, often give one a good deal of trouble to arrange neatly. But the desired result may always be achieved by the careful fitting together of those that supply each other's deficiencies of shape, as well as by the judicious introduction of small pictures, cuttings from newspapers, and even (if nothing else can be found) slips of blank paper.

Having arranged articles enough to make a volume, choose a good picture for your frontispiece, and place a title-page, written or illuminated on good paper, facing it. This will give ample opportunity for the exercise of your artistic powers. Try to invent a good title. I have called some of my volumes "Patchwork," others "Unconsidered Trifles," others "Literary Salad." And finally, number every article in its proper order; and prefix a table of contents, in which you should give the title and author of each, with the name and date of the magazine or review from which it has been taken. Your book will then be ready for the binder. Tell him not to cut the front or lower edges, as the cropping (if any) you have already given them will be sufficient.

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