is by means of Lederschnitt, or incised leather, that the greatest facility is gained for the production at once of the most beautiful and most durable of all the forms of punched leather work.

To produce this class of work, the following tools will be required:—A light flat-faced hammer, and a flat awl, which must be ground down to a good sharp cutting edge, for under-cutting the leather in a horizontal direction. A knife, shaped as Fig. 1, and a moulding tool, Fig. 2, one end of which is flat while the other has a smooth round sharp point. Two flating irons, Figs. 3 and 4; two forcing punches, Figs. 5 and 6; a frosting punch, Fig. 7; two star punches, Figs. 8 and 9; a few sizes of pearl punches, Figs. 10 to 15; and some forcing rings, Figs. 16 to 19. The figures given show the tools half the natural size; surface, natural size; and the set may be bought of Herr Wilhelm Leo, Stuttgart, for 13/-.

The best leather to use is cow-hide, of the natural colour and medium thickness, such as is generally used by saddlers, and it must be well wetted through before the work is commenced. It should then be pulled out, laid on a large lithographic stone, and rolled flat and smooth, when the design must be traced into the leather as before described. It has then to be cut very carefully and equally half way through the leather all along the lines of the design. This is a task requiring a very steady hand and delicate touch; the knife has a short blade and a long thin handle, and should be held like a pencil between the thumb and fingers in an upright position, so that the cutting is mainly done with the point, which must be kept very sharp with a smooth edge.

By the time the cutting is completed the leather will need to be damped afresh, and then the cuts in the leather must be forced open with the point of a knitting needle or an agate pencil. Then go all round the outer edges of the incision, forcing down the leather with the broad part of the modelling tool or the flating irons, keeping close to the cut so that the inner portion of the design will be left standing. The corners of the square iron will enable you to get into some of the corners of the design, or the point of a folder may be used, while the round iron will suit for curved lines. Directly any part of the leather shows any signs of drying it must be moistened afresh; the great point of successful work is to keep the leather just damp enough to be workable, without becoming sodden, and if it is left overnight it is always advisable to cover it with a piece of waterproof sheeting. Having gone
round the cuts, smoothing the leather outward from the design, next flatten out the groundwork with some force until it is all equally smoothed down.

It is by the use of the modelling tool, either at the point or the flat end, that the design is mainly worked up, but where it is desired to raise the edge of the design rather than the centre, as, for instance, to give effect to lines passing under, or for the up-curl of a leaf, the sharp flat awl is used as a chisel to undercut the leather horizontally, as in the accompanying design, Fig. A, which is intended to show the progress of the work. The distance of the under-cutting depends upon the character of the height and effect desired. Small points, as, for instance, the junctions of the overlapping fingers of leaves, are raised by means of the point of the modelling tool, which is forced beneath the surface, as shown in the illustration Fig. 6; but, by whichever means the leather is thus raised, it would not remain so without filling in, which must be done either with soaked brown wafers or a pulp made of tissue paper and paste, which must be forced in to the height desired and smoothed off flush with the edge of the incision.

Where high relief is required in the central parts of a design, forcing rings must be used, as the effects to be gained by under-cutting are only of use on the outer portions of the work. The design being cut in, you need not fear to lose the tracing by stretching, and you need not be particular as to the exact size of the part to be raised so long as the highest point is kept
in the centre, the main object being to stretch or force the leather up, so that the outer parts may be easily smoothed out again. First, give the part of the design to be raised a little extra water, then lay on the leather one of the forcing rings, and hold in position between the fingers of the left hand, turn the leather over, and with the right hand press the forcing punch into the leather against the ring so that it is stretched into a knob outwards. The choice of rings and punches must be in accordance with the size of the ornament and the thickness of the leather. You will soon find that on the same sized ring a large punch will break the surface if the leather is thick, though it will just suit if the leather is thin. Great care and judgment are required not to break the surface of the leather. Where the rings are not large enough to cover at once the part to be treated, they may be shifted so that one part is raised at a time, the leather easily stretching if kept properly damp. Having thus forced the leather up it must be filled in with modelling wax, which should be applied with dry fingers, and after it has been forced into the hollows and made level, it must be secured in its place by means of pieces of tissue paper pasted over the wax on to the leather, as it will not adhere to the wet leather. This forcing and filling in requires great patience, especially with beginners, who are apt to half spoil the effect gained in one part as they proceed to another.

Having stretched and filled in the various parts, the leather must be again laid on the stone, the surface dampened, and the whole work modelled, to give the effect shown in the upper part of the illustration. After that it should be left to dry out for awhile so that the modelled parts may set.

For the groundwork three kinds of punches may be used, of which the star punches are easiest; the next and most often used are the pearl punches; and the most difficult the dull or frosting punches, which have a slightly arched surface and give a similar effect to the frosted work on tooled edges. Sometimes the groundwork is frosted over and the star punches are worked rather openly on the top.

After the leather has dried out for some hours, take some thin paste made with rye flour and paste the stone all over, then lay a sheet of thin paper on the pasted stone so that the paper will be thinly and evenly pasted, then lift the paper and wipe the stone; now lay the paper on the stone again, the pasted side at the top, and lay on the leather, press all the groundwork down firmly on to the paper to make the under part adhere to the paper, and leave it for about an hour to dry. This paper lining prevents the leather contracting as it is being punched.

Next, wash over the surface of the leather with some warm thin glue water and the punching may commence, the groundwork being kept damp. The third-size pearl punch should be used for this design, the corners being filled in with a smaller size. Hold the punch upright and firmly, so that it does not jump after the blow with the hammer, and work in straight lines close together wherever possible, as shown in the upper part of the illustration. Where it pulls out it must be renewed as the work proceeds, until the whole groundwork is evenly punched down. The modelling tool will then be required to give the finishing and sharpening touches to the design; if it is laid aside to dry thoroughly.

For dull or frosted work the punch must be held loosely to allow it to jump when struck, and it must be slurred along, care being taken not to let it injure the sharpness of the design.

Sometimes the modelling is done and the groundwork left flat, when very pretty effects may be gained after the leather is thoroughly dry, by dyeing the ground with spirit dyes, so as to give it a dark mottled appearance; or it may be browned over with salts of tartar, as used for calf marbling, while the design is either blacked with iron black or bleached with oxalic acid.

The punched work looks best if simply washed over with soda or salts of tartar, sized, and varnished. If any of the lines have lost their sharpness in the drying, they should be renewed before the final varnishing.

Our Prize Competitions.

COMPETITION NO. 9.

We offer a prize of Twenty Shillings for the best design in black and gold on cloth. Book, "Eric Brighteyes." Size, 7½ × 4¼ inches; back, 7½ × 1¾ inches.

RULES.

1. All designs must arrive on or before August 31st. The award will be made in the September number.
2. All designs submitted must be upon the condition that they have never been used before; but no limit is placed upon the number submitted.
3. All designs must be drawn in ink upon a white ground.
4. All designs may be signed with a nom de plume, but the correct name and address of the competitor must accompany each design.
5. The Editor reserves to himself the right to publish any design which may be sent in, as worthy of honourable mention, besides the successful design.
6. The decision of the Editor must be considered final.
7. The Editor cannot hold himself responsible for the return of unsuccessful designs under any circumstances whatsoever.
8. All designs for competition must be directed to The Editor, British Bookmaker, De Montfort Press, Queen-street, Leicester, and marked "PRIZE COMPETITION" in the left-hand top corner of the envelope. A cheque for 20/- will be forwarded to the successful competitor immediately upon the award being made.

Our Special Prize.

We hope that the Special Prize for finishers offered in our May number is not being forgotten. All books intended for competition must arrive at our London office on or before August 26th, and we are hoping to see a goodly number. In our next issue we hope to be able to announce the name of the judge—who will not be a competitor, nor the employer of a competitor—and we hope that our choice will give general satisfaction.