

by Humboldt as 'rhythmical patterns which characterise the ornamentation of many nations in a certain state of civilisation.' The divergent spiral or trumpet pattern, and diagonal patterns, along with those of a later style formed of interlaced bands, animals, &c., are the prevailing designs here. There is no sign of any vegetable form being used. The book was preserved at Durrow, a small town in the Barony of Ballycowen, where St. Columba founded an abbey A.D. 546. At the Reformation this book was given to the Library of Trinity College, Dublin."

## Amateurs and Bookbinding.

IN his introduction to "Bookbinding for Amateurs," Mr. W. J. E. Crane says: "Bookbinding is comparatively a modern art. The books of the ancient and classic nations were, as most people are aware, long rolls of skins or of Egyptian papyrus, which, when not in use, were rolled up and kept each in a species of circular box. When wanted, the roll had simply to be drawn out of its case and unrolled. The Jews use to this day, in their synagogue services, similar rolls of vellum, whereon is written the Pentateuch in Hebrew characters.

"Doubtless, the earliest specimens of bookbinding were those produced in the Eastern branch of the Roman dominions, usually called the Byzantine Empire. These were generally of metal—gold, silver, or gilt copper. Of course, this kind of binding was produced by the goldsmith, silversmith, and jeweller, the part of the bookbinder proper being confined to fastening the leaves together and securing them in the metal cover. Of these ancient bindings, some few specimens are still extant.

"It is difficult to trace the transition of the parchment from the roll form to that of leaves.

"In the reign of Charlemagne the art of bookbinding made rapid strides. Italian designers and artificers were employed, and we read of the caskets in which books were preserved as being of solid gold, and covered with precious stones.

"The next great step in the history of bookbinding was the general adoption of leather as a covering. It is not known precisely who introduced leather binding, nor the date of its introduction. It would seem to us to follow naturally on the use of vellum. To Matthias Corvinus, the celebrated literary and chivalrous King of Hungary, the first use of morocco is credited. This may be true of the dressed skin of the goat (morocco), but deerskin had been employed long previous in the monastic binderies. Richard Chandos, Bishop of Chichester, mentions, in his will, as early as the year 1253, a 'Bible with a rough cover of skins,' and the 'Accounts of the Households of Edwards I. and II.,' contained in four MS. volumes, presented to the Society of Antiquaries by Sir Ashton Lever, were in the original binding of calfskin, dressed like parchment, but with the hair on, except where it had been removed to give space for the written inscription.

"Soon after the introduction of vellum, it came into general use (*circa* 1460), almost ousting velvet, except for *livres de luxe*. Very soon we find the sides of such vellum books covered with an elaborate stamping of various designs—sometimes crowded and without merit; at others, so sharp, clear, and well defined, that they have never been excelled, and scarcely rivalled, by any modern workmen. When we consider that these early binders could not have the aid of the powerful arming presses of to-day, we may well wonder how they managed to impress the large and elaborate blocks with the success to which they attained.



“James I. appears to have been an ardent bibliophile both before and after assuming the crown of Great Britain, and many of his bookbinders’ bills are extant, showing entries for books bound in leather, vellum, and parchment. Although plain stamping (‘blind-tooling’) is found very early in the history of leather binding, as is evinced by the vellum and ‘basil’ book-covers so ornamented, there seems little doubt that gilding the leather had its origin in Italy, probably Venice, and had been derived by the Italian bookbinders from Eastern sources. To these same binders we probably owe the initiative of the burst of the bibliopegistic glory in the fifteenth century.

“It was in 1479 that Jean Grolier de Servia, Vicomte d’Aguisy, the founder of French bookbinding, was born. Grolier is supposed to have been the first man whose books were lettered on the back.

“By the sixteenth century leather binding had assumed its perfected form as seen at the present day, and its subsequent history showed few changes. Amongst those which have taken place, may be mentioned the substitution of ‘marbled’ edges for gilded and self-coloured ones, and the introduction of stamped calico (cloth) in the present century by English binders (by Archibald Leighton, in 1825). The latter, as a cheap medium of binding, is an immense boon, and it is now being slowly adopted in other countries. It is, however, only a temporary vehicle for new books, and can never take any place as a library binding.

“It is a disputed question, among book-lovers of taste, whether the whole of a small collection should be bound in the same material and of the same colour, or whether a diversity should prevail. There are valid reasons for either plan. A library where both morocco and calf bindings are adopted, in the various hues which are given to each leather, has a pleasant and lively appearance, and if glaring contrasts in hues be avoided in neighbouring volumes as they stand upon the shelves an air of lightness and vivacity will characterise the apartment. But the contrast must by no means be too pronounced. Dr. Dibden, a great authority on all such matters, warns us specially against the employment of either white vellum or scarlet morocco as a material for the jackets of our volumes. Both are too decided in appearance, and impart a ‘spotty’ look to the shelves. Of course, this objection applies only to single volumes or small sets in libraries of limited extent. If, for instance, a whole press, or set of shelves, could be appropriated to vellum-clad volumes of the Fathers and patristic theology, the effect would be good. The decision on the general question of uniformity *versus* variety must be left, in great measure, to individual taste.

“Where the collection is small, say, sufficient to fill two ordinary bookcases (about 500 volumes), an excellent plan is to reserve one case for standard English authors, and bestow in the other works on science, art, travels, foreign books, &c. Let all the bindings be of morocco, either ‘whole’ binding (the term used when the book is wholly covered with leather), or half binding (where the back and corners only are leather covered, ‘cloth,’ of a similar colour to that of the leather, being used for the sides), according to the value and importance of the book. If maroon morocco be chosen for the books in the first press, and an olive green for those in the second, the effect will be chaste and massive. Both these leathers ‘throw up’ the gilding of the back splendidly. Where expense is not a primary consideration, the backs should not be scrimped in this matter of gilding, or, as it is technically termed, ‘finishing.’ A morocco-bound book should bear a good amount of gold on the back; but the patterns of the tools should be carefully selected.”