

being filled in with colour and the lettering in gold. "A Book of Old Ballads" is in olive green satin grained cloth, the scroll work and figures printed in drab with a dull red lettering, the cloud being a splendidly engraved piece of gold work; the outlines of both scroll, lettering, and figures are in black, and the whole work is highly effective. The most chaste design is perhaps that of "Odatis," which is all in gold, the larger letters being fluted, as well as parts of the leafy spray. The shading of the garments is very beautiful, more resembling that seen on printed work than the production of the blocking press; the gauzy texture, the branch shewing beneath it, and all the finer engravings on the shield, making as fine a picture as we have ever seen, and a true work of art.

### A School of Printing.

**I**N the immense printing establishment of A. Chaix & Co., in Paris, a school exists, not only to instruct apprentices thoroughly in the different branches of work pursued in the establishment, but also to make sure that they have the wide general information so useful to the printer, and a clear understanding of their duties as citizens and members of the social order. The instructors are drawn mainly from the superior employés or foremen of the house, only a few teachers coming from without. The two hours' instruction every day is given at the time when the foremen and machinery are most at liberty; this may be changed when there is unusual pressure. The preliminary course comprises four years' instruction in language, arithmetic, geometry, history, geography, reading, and accounts. The technical course covers the whole subject of typography and its accessories, the instruction being of the most practical value. Grammar, as applied to typography, and reading in Latin, Greek, German, and English, written and printed, are the literary features of this course. The supplementary course introduces the history of printing and of French literature, with the biographies of great printers; the elements of physics, mechanics, and industrial chemistry; lessons in political economy, social science, and common law, which gives special prominence to all matters relating to the welfare of the working man, such as provident and aid societies, insurance, saving, consumption, co-operation and participation. The elements of political science and commercial law complete this excellent curriculum. The whole cost of instruction is borne by the house, and each apprentice is paid ten centimes for each day's attendance; at the end of the month the pupil receives the amount for pocket money.

THE oldest portion of the Bodleian Library at Oxford was founded by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, in 1445, and it is said that the library has not been altered since 1602, when it was made the first free library in the world—a fact, however, which did not preclude a small admission fee.

### Artistic Bookbinding.



LEAVING out of the question all technical details, we may consider the conditions of a good binding to be the following: (1) regularity in the folding of the printed sheets, solidity in sewing and backing, elasticity of the hinges, so that the volume will open easily and remain open; (2) appropriate and well executed exterior ornamentation. The very nature of the envelope of a book indicates the kind of ornamentation which it admits. The principles of decorative art find their application in binding, and here and elsewhere elegance is incompatible with over-loading, and richness itself needs a certain measure and certain points of repose. The book-cover evidently must not be ornamented all over. The second principle laid down by Charles Blanc for the decoration of book-covers is this: the decoration of a book ought to be in harmony with the nature of the work, with the importance of the author and with the character of his thoughts. Furthermore, whether the ornamentation be executed by hand or by a machine; whether it be blind-tooling, gilding, stamping, painting, or mosaic; whether it be an aristocratic binding or a democratic cover in cloth-boards, the design ought always to be simple and flat without shading. Subjects and figures treated in a picturesque manner are out of place, and, whenever employed, they should be treated flatly after the manner of the friezes and borders of the Greek and Roman ceramists. Arms and heraldic escutcheons should likewise be treated flatly and so as not to give the idea of projections. The same observation, too, applies to mosaics in colour. The decoration of the flat surface of a book-cover should, generally speaking, be purely ornamental, and always without perspective. These principles were instinctively observed by the Italian artists of the sixteenth century. These binders introduced gilding, colour, and mosaic, which, however, did not become general until the seventeenth century. Their effects of colour were obtained by a sort of enamelling on the leather by means of a liquid paste or varnish, the effect and brilliancy of which must have been marvellous. Even now, after a lapse of three hundred and fifty years, many of these coloured Renaissance bindings are singularly fresh. By means of this colouring matter, and sometimes by means of mosaic or inlaying, the complicated geometric designs of the Byzantine ceramists were reproduced by the Italian artists in the bindings called "a entrelacs," that is to say, interlacements. The Aldi were the first to employ all these innovations in binding, and the first mosaic binding known, a binding made of inlaid leather, is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, printed by the Aldi at Venice in 1501, and bound for the famous collector Jean Grolier.

MESSRS. BENNETT BROTHERS, 3 Bouverie-street, Fleet-street, E.C., send us specimen sheets of a new series of Improved Brass Cast Type manufactured by them, which show neat, bold, clear, and sharp faces, very cleanly cast, and the prices, whether for types or for handle letters, very moderate.