

## Bookbinders' Leather.

THE different kinds of leather that are used for binding books may be classed as Morocco, Calf, Sheep and Roan, and Russia.

MOROCCO is made from goat-skins which are imported from Norway, Germany, Switzerland and the Cape, in a dried state, and tanned in England. They are dyed to any required colour, and finished with much care in this country in three or four ways. This leather lends itself to several *grains*, which are known as hard-grain, Turkey or cross-grain, and straight-grain, but the best and most beautiful is the Levant grain. The high polish or smooth surface is given in various ways, mostly by pressure after the book is covered. Of the different processes that are used, we will speak in a future paper.

CALF-SKINS also are usually imported in a dried state from Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, and are tanned and dyed of various colours here in England. Calf is almost always used in a smooth state, that is to say, with no grain. The artificial grain that is sometimes seen on calf is given by pressure. Tree-marbled, sprinkled, and many other fancy methods are of a separate character, and will be explained hereafter. Rough calf is used for ledgers and other large account-books. It is prepared from the skins imported from the North of Europe, tanned in this country, and dressed on the flesh side.

ROANS are made from sheep-skins tanned and prepared in imitation of morocco in this country. The best roans are from the hides of Scotch sheep, but large quantities of sheep-skins are imported from India, principally from the Bombay and Madras districts.

BASILS are also from sheep-skins, tanned here, and are usually dyed of a deep red colour; they may be had glazed or diced (*i.e.*, stamped diagonally).

SKIVERS, also sheep-skins, are used largely for small and cheap account-books and cheap Bibles. Here the skin is split; the grain side is tanned as a skiver, and the flesh side is dressed for what is called chamois leather. Skivers are dyed of any required colour and finished in a variety of ways.

PIG-SKIN is likely to come into use again; it is strong and inexpensive. Many of the earliest printed books were bound in pig-skin, stamped with blind-tool ornaments; and we notice that it has been lately used by some of the French binders instead of morocco. *Peau d'âne* (ass's skin) is also sometimes used for *reliures de luxe*.

RUSSIA leather we have placed last, because the demand for it now is not so great as it was a few years ago. The hides of small or young oxen (not calves) are tanned in Russia, where they receive the peculiar and well-known scent, which is obtained from an oil distilled from the pine-tree, the secret of which was, until the last few years, known only to a few leather manufacturers in Russia. The skins are split or shaved down for bindings; the thickness of the hides depending very much upon the class of work for which they are intended. For large or heavy account-books, the skins are left of nearly the full thickness. But we must confess that we have a prejudice against Russia leather for bindings. It does not wear well, and when exposed to the heat of gas soon perishes.

VELLUM is a preparation of the best calf-skins. At one time it was much used for bindings, but of late years the demand has fallen off in England. It is now employed