

IN the preface to vol. VII. of *Book Prices Current*, which supplies the prices realised by auction for about 100,000 volumes, realising in the aggregate £66,740, Mr. Slater notes that, while the values of most classes of books differ little from those of previous years, there is a distinct rise in the value of original editions of Sir Walter Scott's works, "if in the original boards." For the strictly limited editions of the works of modern poets and essayists, he anticipates a heavy fall in prices at no very distant date; they "have made very little impression on the open market." Cursorily glancing through the pages, with its careful descriptions, we note that a first edition of "Gulliver's Travels" realised £23 10s.; Combe's "Dance of Death and Dance of Life," £14 5s.; Turner's "Liber Studiorum," £199 10s.; "Ingoldsby Legends," £17; Tyndale's "Testament," with the illustration of the devil with a wooden leg sowing tares, £12 10s.; Higgins's "Anaclypsis," £9 17s. 6d.; Cicero's "Discourse of Old Age," "printed and sold by B. Franklin," Philadelphia, 1744, £49; first edition of Coverdale's "New Testament," 1538, £25; first edition of Shelley's "Queen Mab," £19; first edition of Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," £13 15s.; and first edition of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," 1600, £90.

THERE are sufficient English-speaking Mohammedans in this country, it seems, to support a monthly magazine. At any rate, *The Islamic World*, for January, 1894, purporting to be the ninth issue, has just reached us. Among other things, it contains an article citing fifteen texts from the Bible, which the writer alleges contain prophecies of the coming of Mohammed.



Results of the U. S. Copyright Law.

THE new international copyright law has been in operation over two years, and in some respects it is possible to judge of its operation within that time. Mr. G. Haven Putnam, who is well informed on this subject, treats it briefly in the January *Forum*, as it affects American and foreign authors, American readers, and American publishers. American authors have been disappointed in its results. They have not obtained the English returns which they expected from the protection of their works by an English copyright, and though the sales of their books in foreign countries are on the increase, they are hardly yet what might be expected. On the other hand, English authors have been also disappointed in the sale of their books in America. The demand for English fiction has greatly fallen off, and the result is that the English have not gained at all what they expected when they could control their own books. In neither case has the international copyright law done for authors what it was hoped that it might do. They are not much better off than they were before. But there has been eliminated from the book publishing trade a great deal of fiction which was worthless in itself, and for which there was no legitimate demand. American readers have not been deluged with cheap fiction.

Bookbinding as a Fine Art.



FRIDAY evening "discourse" at the Royal Institution on Feb. 2nd, 1894, was delivered by Mr. J. T. Cobden-Saunders, who spoke eloquently of the craft with which his name is now so notably associated. Speaking of the antiquity of bindings for preserving written characters, the lecturer mentioned that the early "rolls" which preceded the art of printing were often kept in cases of elaborate workmanship, on which the craft of the gold and silversmith was often expended. The invention of printing gave once and for all victory to leather and gold, and the art of bookbinding was henceforward disassociated from that of the goldsmith or other craftsman. Amongst the earliest patrons of the art were many great men in Italy, Germany, and England, but it was in France that bookbinding blossomed out in its highest perfection. We were indebted to Grolier for the first application of gold tooling to the work of making leathern bindings beautiful. Various members of the royal and holy family of France, including Henry II., Henry IV., and also Mary Stuart, were lovers of beautiful books in beautiful bindings, and some of the relics of those days which still survived to us were able for a moment to restore the aspect of the vanished part of the art. Passing to the actual technicalities of the craft, which were carefully described by means of examples and apparatus placed on the lecture table, Mr. Cobden-Saunders mentioned that the skins of wild animals were more perfect for binding purposes than those of tame or semi-tame creatures, such as the goat cultivated by the Swiss. Temporary bindings—like the ordinary "case" covers in cloth supplied by publishers—frequently had many beautiful designs on them executed in gold. He thought this was a matter for regret because cloth was a poor material upon which to place gold. The gilding wore off, the cloth wore away, the sewing came undone, and the joints broke. It was a true principle in art that nothing should be made which could be degraded in use. Permanent bindings, beautifully decorated, should only be reserved for worthy literature. The most interesting part of the lecturer's remarks were those devoted to the process of "tooling" or hot pressing with small dies the gold pattern into the leather. Mr. Cobden-Saunders remarked that his own tools were only elementary components of patterns, small leaves, branches, daisies, roses, trefoils, and so on. With these details he worked up all his designs. He never had tools cut for any special pattern. By means of lantern slides, a number of the most beautiful examples of the lecturer's recent work were thrown on the screen, and the history and development of each design traced out. Some of the designs were of exquisite grace, yet, as the lecturer pointed out, they were all formed from not more than twenty small detail tooling patterns. Slides were also shown illustrative of the glorious periods of French bookbinding from Grolier downwards.