Florimond Badier.

One of the finest books and most remarkable for its binding in the National Library, Paris, is a folio De Imitatione Christi (Paris, Imprimerie Royale, 1640), bound by an artist who has placed his name on the inner lining (double) of the cover, Florimond Badier fecit. inv. Except that he was made one of the booksellers to the king, Louis Quatorze, in 1645, we know little of this excellent craftsman. Monsieur Léon Gruel thinks that Badier may be the real name of the worthy, well known under the sobriquet of Le Gascon, and, as a proof, urges the great resemblance between this signed work of Badier's, and the designs usually attributed to the Gascon. And, doubtless, there is a very similar plan of dividing the side of the book into various differently-shaped panels—filling in the spaces with small ornaments aux petits fers, and the extreme use of the stippled dots in brilliant gold (au pointillé), both of which characteristics are found in the beautiful works usually called Le Gascon's; but this similarity may possibly have been only the copying of a style then fashionable in Paris. Unfortunately we too well know how prevalent the hateful practice of copying still is.

Le Gascon is but a legendary character: nothing whatever is known of him personally. His most celebrated work, the binding of La Guirlande de Julie, presented to Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, is historical; but in none of the writings of the time, and they were numerous, is it distinctly attributed to him by name. If we could but discover whether Florimond Badier was born in Gascony or not, this would greatly help us to settle the question.

In the original work, which is bound in deep-red morocco, the centre star is an inlay of olive-coloured leather, the oval is of bright orange; the eight-leaved panels on either side are olive with a darker centre; the small ovals (one above, one beneath) are also olive, surrounded with orange; the four-sided irregularly-shaped panels at their sides are marbled, with centres of citron; other panels are very similarly treated. The book is in perfect preservation, and nearly as bright as when it left Badier's workshop. When it is remembered that the plate is a reduction, one fourth the size of the original, we can imagine the amount of labour and the many days and hours that its author expended upon it. In no collection of bindings can we find its equal for elaborate and exquisite workmanship.
The side lining (doubié) is of equal excellence, perhaps even more skilful: a copy of it will be given in a future number. Both plates are printed in colours in the Manuel de l'Amateur de Reliures lately issued by Léon Gruel, by whose permission they have been reproduced.

We think we ought to add that the block from which this plate was printed was made by the Phototype Company, 303, Strand, from a negative taken by the orthochromatic process, by Mr. L. B. Fleming, Norwood Villa, Hanwell. It is an exact reproduction on a small scale. There is no touch of handwork on it.

The Principles of Design as Applied to Bookbinding.

By Henry B. Wheatley, F.S.A.

(Continued from page 122.)

Monsieur Gruel gives some splendid specimens in this style, bound about 1640 by Florimond Badier, which have been attributed to Le Gascon, and thinks it possible that Le Gascon is merely a surname for Badier, or some other binder of the time.

Besides these designs, a simpler, but equally effective one, was obtained by the repetition of initials, emblems, badges, and other personal ornaments, such as the F and fleurs de lis of Francis I., the H and D and interlaced crescents of Henri II. and Diana of Poitiers, the C of Charles IX., the lilies of Margaret of Valois, the H and fleurs de lis of Henri IV., the M of Marie de Medicis, and the L of Louis XIII., and the monogram of L and A, of Louis and his wife, Anne of Austria.

With the eighteenth century came in the elaborate inlaid work of Le Monnier and others; but in this same century we see but little of a fully covered side, and the De Rômes adopted borders and corners, with arms in the centre, and much plain leather left untooled. Then we have the weak lace borders of Padeloup, and after this binder comes darkness. There can be no doubt that the finest specimens of historical gold toolings were produced in France, and it is, therefore, convenient to choose the examples of eras in design from French bindings; but we must not forget that England produced some splendid specimens of the art, which followed the same lines as the French, but which were by no means servile copies of the productions of our neighbours. James I. was apparently the most tasteful patron of bookbinding among our sovereigns, and the British Museum Library contains a magnificent collection of his books, bound in the most sumptuous manner. Many are large folios covered with heraldic thistles, which have a very fine effect. Fig. 4 is taken from one of these handsome volumes, and this portion of the side shows the repetition of the thistle and fleurs de lis.

The books produced by Nicholas Ferrar and the so-called Nuns of Little Gidding, are chiefly known as examples of embroidery, but in some instances this embroidery has been lost, and the tooled leather binding, which was under an embroidery, only remains.

The works of a later date show the influence of the styles of art which succeeded each other, and left their mark in our houses and on our books. I have here a specimen of design in which the influence of Chippendale is seen on the side, and that of the Adams on the back. The Cottage and the Harleian styles, among others, are distinctly English, and