CHAPTER II.

BOOKBINDING AFTER THE INVENTION OF PRINTING.

The discovery of printing entirely changed the character of book-binding. The general use, in Germany of pig-skin, and in Italy of calf and morocco—the latter introduced by the Venetians from the East—seems to have followed closely upon the production of the works of Gutenberg and Fust, in 1450.

There are many printed books still in good preservation that were bound in calf with oaken boards at the end of the fifteenth century. The manufacture of rag-made paper for printing on, which took the place of parchment, led to the employment of this latter material for the bindings of ordinary books, and there is no question that much valuable literature was lost in the application of old parchment manuscripts to binding purposes. We are told that many of the manuscripts in the Claremont Library were bought by Father Sirmond for fifty écus from a Lorraine bookbinder, who was going to use them to re-cover his volumes.

In a book that is too little known, Recherches historiques et remarquables, 1713, we read that “Masson, being in the Rue Mercière in Lyons, discovered the works of Agobard (Archbishop of Lyons in the ninth century), which a bookbinder was about to tear up in order that he might use the parchment for the covers of books. Masson purchased the manuscript, which may yet be seen in the King’s Library.”

As printed books multiplied, their money-value became less: cheapness and utility began to be regarded in binding, and it was only in great libraries and monasteries that elaborate book-bindings were continued. As a rule, wooden boards, clasps, and gold nails were laid aside, silken and woollen fabrics but seldom adopted, and leather and parchment became of ordinary use.
It must have been very difficult at this time to find any book that was wanted from the library shelves, for the titles were rarely visible, though they were sometimes written in large letters on the edges of the leaves; more usually they were upon one side of the leather cover. Occasionally, however, we meet with vellum-covered volumes in which the vellum overlapped the edges, and the title was written on the flap.

In monasteries, an officer called the armarian had charge of the books. He was expected to see that they were not injured by damp or insects, and especially to look after the bindings, and to keep a catalogue. Ingulphus, Abbot of Croyland, speaking of lending them, says, "Our books, as well the smaller un-bound volumes as the larger ones which are bound, we altogether forbid," and in Archbishop Lanfranc's Constitutions, 1072, there is an injunction that, at the beginning of Lent, the Librarian should deliver a book to each of the brothers in the monastery, to be returned in the following Lent.

BOOK-BINDING IN ITALY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the love of art became more general, book-binding received the favourable attention of the wealthy, and many treasures of these ages have been preserved to show us how highly it was esteemed. The greatest progress in the art was made in Italy, where Da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo were producing their great works. There, the habit of binding books with planks of wood, with the backs, corners, and fastenings of leather, was soonest dismissed. The Italians were also the first to discontinue covering books with pig-skin—a custom which has survived in Germany to the present day.

Aldo Manuzio* (Aldus) set up his first printing press in Venice in the year 1488; the headings and other similar ornamentations in the interior of his books were often introduced to embellish the exterior as well; even the well-known Aldine anchor is of frequent occurrence.

* His name was Teobaldo Manuzio; born 1450, died 1515.
HORTUS SANITATIS.—(STRASBOURG, 1536.)
Now in the Bibliothèque Nationale.
Illustrations of this use of printers' ornaments may be seen on the numerous books which, it may be presumed, Aldus bound for the library of Grolier, of which we shall have to speak presently.

Italy claims to have been the earliest European home of artistic binding with gold tooling. There is no doubt that this was of Eastern origin, for some of the earliest Italian ornamental bindings are evident imitations of the covers of Persian and Arabic manuscripts. Venice was for Italy the first school of binding, and to Venice—owing to her relations with the East—flocked many Arab and Greek workmen, who would naturally be attracted to the house of Aldus. Many of the Aldine bindings were simply imitations of the designs that covered the walls of some celebrated mosque. There were two styles which were more particularly copied, viz., the corded and dotted patterns, and those in which large surfaces of solid gold-work were spread over the side.

"The taste for fine binding," says M. Libri, in the preface to the Catalogue of the choicer portion of his library, 1859, "was spread through every class of Italian society; and, during the whole of the sixteenth century, we find books gorgeously bound for pious congregations, for religious men or women, for poets and princes, for cardinals and for popes; and we even see men celebrated for their humility, as well as for their stern and modest habits of life, like St. Charles Borromeo and St. Pious V., admit as much refinement in the adornment of their books as the most dissolute of men, such as that detestable Orsino, who strangled his wife with his own hands."

Lovers of bookbinding rejoice when they meet with works from the library of Tommaso Maioli. Who and what Maioli was, and at exactly what period he lived, we do not know, but he possessed a splendid library. It is supposed that Michel Maioli, one of the earliest of Italian collectors, was his father or uncle. Tommaso Maioli's bindings are the perfection of art. He adopted the liberal inscription, Tho. MAIOLI ET AMICORUM, which was afterwards imitated by Grolier.
A book, which belonged to both Maioli and Grolier, was in the possession of M. Brunet: the name of Maioli is stamped on the cover, and upon the title-page Grolier's famous motto, Portio mea Domine sit in terra viventium, is written in his own hand. In fact, all Maioli's books that have come down to us are beautifully bound. We may especially mention a Caesar in folio (Rome, 1469), now in the British Museum; and the Della Injusticia del Duello (Venice, 1538), belonging to the Dresden Library. The Bulletin du Bibliophile for September, 1858, gives a facsimile of a book which was sold for two thousand francs; and in 1859, at the Libri sale, M. de Villeneuve paid £91 for one of Maioli's books, or rather, for its binding.

Another of his finest treasures is the Hortus Sanitatis, a folio volume, printed at Strasbourg in 1536, and now in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. It is bound in olive-green morocco, and decorated with one of the most artistic designs ever applied to a book. (See illustration, page 63.)

Several specimens are to be found in the Slade Collection in the British Museum; one is in citron morocco of a rich tint, with a border design in delicate gold tooling, of myrtle twigs and butterflies, intermixed with daisies. Some of his bindings are olive-coloured; another, in black morocco, is decorated with gold scroll-work, filled in with inlaid red and white leather. Maioli was still living in 1549, for a book from his library is of that date.

From all these treasures of art we can readily judge how great was the skill of the Italian binders of those days, and many volumes preserved in other libraries prove how greatly their work was valued; for example, those in the collection of Cardinal Bonelli, and especially those possessed by Demetrios Canervari, doctor to Urban VIII. The doctor's books are easily recognised by his device upon the cover, Apollo driving his chariot over the waves (Apollo in gold, the sea in silver, and the chariot painted of its proper colour).

It is a great pity that we know so little of the men who designed the bindings of Maioli and Grolier. There is some little evidence that they came from the Aldine establishment. If we examine the binding
of the Procopius (page 10) and the Hortus Sanitatis (page 63), both Maioli’s, by the side of the Euthymius (on this page) and the Virgilius (page 74), both Grolier’s, and compare them with these three ornaments taken from books printed at the Aldine press, we cannot but come to
the conclusion that the same artist designed them all; and if we examine
the drawings by Hans Holbein now in the British Museum, we find

some with the flow of the lines and shape of the finials almost identical.
We know that between 1515 and 1528 Hans Holbein and his brother
Ambrosius designed frontispieces and head and tail pieces of many kinds
for Froben, Cratander, Valentine Curio, and other printers at Basle,
and for Froshover of Zurich; because title-pages and other book orna-
ments with their monograms are constantly met with. And although
there is no record of Holbein having visited Italy, yet he frequently
used Italian ornament; witness the large drawing of a chimney-piece
designed for Henry VIII. in the British Museum, and the exquisite
design for Queen Jane Seymour’s cup in the Bodleian. He was a man
of wide genius, and not to be cramped by national conventionalities.

Another reason for believing that Holbein was in some way connected
with the Aldine establishment is his intimacy with the learned Erasmus,
who for some time was a corrector of the press* at Venice, and a “very
dear friend” of Aldo Manuzio. What would be more likely than that
Erasmus should suggest to him or his successor the employment of
certainly the most able designer of ornament of that time? In an essay
by Henry Shaw on “Examples of Mediaeval Art,” in the Art Journal
for 1849, there is an engraving of a binding of an “Erasmus,” then in the
possession of Mr. Pickering, which has precisely the same character of
ornament as the books we have just mentioned.

* Another learned corrector of the press at Venice was Musurus, a native of Crete. We are
told that Aldo Manuzio was so poor that he could provide only scanty fare for the thirty-three
persons who daily sat at his board. Erasmus afterwards complained, in one of his Colloquies,
that he had been half starved, whereat Musurus replied that Erasmus drank enough for the triple-
bodied Geryon, but only did half the work of one man!
That the Maoli family were connected by business transactions with the Aldine press in Venice we know from the fact that a book by Laurentius Maiolus (Lorenzo Maioli), *De Gradibus Medicinarum*, was printed there in 1497. Probably the learned Lorenzo was a doctor.

Another worthy bibliophile of this period, who encouraged good bindings, was Marc Lauwereyns de Waterliet, of Bruges; he also adopted a motto, M. LURIN ET AMICORUM; and sometimes, as on a book in the Libri sale, *Vita ut aqua fluens humana*, a play upon his own name.

In Italian memoirs we often read of Isabella d’Este, Marchioness of Mantua, whose portrait Titian painted. This lady was one of the most celebrated patrons of Aldus, and a great lover of books; she frequently ordered special copies to be printed on vellum for her own library, and had them bound in the most luxurious fashion of the period—probably in the Aldine workshops. These were veritable *livres de luxe*.

The splendidly gilt bindings which belonged to the Medici, the Della Roveres, the d’Estes, and other celebrated families, are probably the work of some of the celebrated artists of the Renaissance period in Italy. The bindings of the manuscripts belonging to Piero de’ Medici are ornamented with miniatures and other decorations, and are distinguished by the *fleur-de-lis*. Those acquired by Lorenzo are stamped with the Medicean arms, a laurel branch (in allusion to the name *Laurentius*), and the motto *Semper*. And there can be no doubt that the marvellous missal, printed in 1505 at Venice, by A. De Zanchis, and bound for Cardinal Sigismond de Gonzaga, owed its binding to some distinguished artist. At that time the art of decoration was cultivated in every way, and the greatest painter thought it no degradation to design a book-cover.
DE PARRHISIORUM URBIS LAUDIBUS. Paris, 1514.

Bound for Louis XII. and Anne of Brittany. In the Bibliothèque Nationale.
BOOKBINDING IN FRANCE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

From Italy the art of bookbinding passed into France, where, during the sixteenth century, it was brought to perhaps its greatest perfection. The expeditions of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. into Italy, had an important influence upon French art: among other things they were the means of imbuing Frenchmen with an appreciation for Italian bindings. The old heavy covers began gradually to go out of fashion. Almost the last specimen of this date we know of is a velvet binding of a Book of Hours, inclosed in an iron case of perforated scroll-work.

The imitation of the Italian style of decoration in France gave way to more original attempts towards the middle of the century, but up to that time nearly all the bindings which have come down to us are reproductions of Italian designs and ornamentation generally. In fact, the French school of binding owed its rise entirely to the masterpieces of Italy, exactly as the French painters learned their art from the Italians, and it was only after a long period of copying that the pupils learned to equal their teachers.

The bindings of French books during these times were quiet in colour and ornamented with graceful designs. Every possible care was taken in the execution: the sides of the book were generally covered with patterns in tooling, sometimes in a diaper design, the spaces being filled with small ornaments, such as a bee or a flower. Clever craftsmen commanded great prices.

Diana of Poitiers, the favourite of the next king, Henry II., of France, devoted much attention to the binding of her books; perhaps those executed for her are the finest specimens ever produced in Paris; probably they were designed by Le Petit Bernard (Bernhard Salomon of Lyons), who also made drawings for her jewels. They were usually engraved with a bow and crescent, sometimes with an arrow rising from
a tomb, with the motto *Sola vivit in illo.* On the love-offerings from the
king an H is worked in, with a crown and fleur-de-lis. The practice of
inscribing mottoes on books was very usual. There is a beautiful book,
which was published by Aldus, described in Dibdin’s *Decameron* as bound
in fine Italian olive binding, with the device of a serpent entwining a ring,
and the motto *Selicet es superis labor est.*

On many of the king’s own books are stamped and interwoven the
initials (H. and D.) of his own and mistress’s names, with crescents,
bows, quivers, and other symbols of the chase, appropriate to a lady
bearing the name of Diana.* On some of his books the H is interwoven
with a C, and in this case the latter initial is that of his wife, Catherine de
Medicis (see Illustration, page 82). There are a few bindings of the early
part of Henry’s reign which have his medallion in the centre. This
stamps them as in all probability of Italian work.

Diana possessed a splendid library at the château of Anet. At her
death its treasures were preserved, and it was not till 1723, when the
Princesse de Condé, to whom Anet then belonged, died, that the books
were put up to auction. We find from the catalogue that the king had
given to Diana many of the magnificent books which he had inherited
from his predecessors. Amongst others was the manuscript *Bible*
*Ystoriaux* of Guyart des Moulins, presented to King John, and upon the
fly-leaf of which was written, “*A moi jehan roy.*” This valuable book
passed to the Library of the Duc de Berry, and was thence restored to
the Royal library, until Henry II. gave it to Diana. She also possessed
the beautiful manuscript on vellum containing the first four decades of
*Titus Livius,* translated by Pierre Bercheux, prior of St. Eloi, Paris—the
binding of which is somewhat eccentric. In the centre of the boards is
placed the scutcheon of Charles de Bourbon, in bronze relief, and his
monogram, also in bronze, at all the corners.

Books of the most varied description were to be found at Anet: side
by side, for instance, are copies of Saint Basil and Saint Epiphanius,

* Many of the ornaments on the pottery of Oiron known as *Faïence de Henri II.* were evidently stamped
with bookbinders’ tools.
bound in lemon morocco, with Diana's arms, silver clasps and knobs; and profane works, such as collections of *Chansons et Motets*. (See Illustration.)

The importance of many of the bindings of Henry II.'s reign make us regret that we know so little of the artists who produced them. MM. Marius Michel, in *La Reliure Française*, refer to one of them whose work is distinguished by surpassing excellence. One of these bindings —of which a photograph is given—is in the Mazarin Library, and covers a superb folio called *Pandectarum Iuris Florentini*. Another, in the National Library, is one of those rare volumes of Henry II. which have not emblems. It is Herold's *Originum ac Germanicarum Antiquitatum Libri*, Bâle, 1557. The arabesque is in silver, the centre in gold. The same obscure artist also worked for Francis II., and to him may possibly be referred the *French Bible*, published at Lyons in 1558, which is one of the most beautiful and curious bindings of the sixteenth century. It was executed for Nicolas Fumée, afterwards Bishop of Beauvais, whose ancestor, Adam Fumée, Chancellor to Louis XI., possessed a splendid library, and is remarkable as one of the few specimens of this period.
which are ornamented with mosaics of inlaid leather. The arabesque is red, on a fawn-coloured ground.

We have not much to say of the books that belonged to the king, Louis XII., who reigned from 1498 to 1515, they were mostly of foreign origin, and give no clue to the state of bookbinding in France during his reign. It was long believed that a number of manuscripts with miniatures, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, in the original bindings of coloured velvet, had been made expressly for Louis XII., and, as they were extremely beautiful, it was imagined that the king was a lover of books; but this idea was dispelled by a discovery made by M. Van Praet in examining the volumes. He found that beneath the arms of the King of France were other arms more or less cleverly effaced—no doubt being those of the first possessor. He sought further, and discovered that Louis XII. had bought these books, which had been written, illuminated, and bound for the rich Bruggeois Louis, at whose death the king had purchased the entire collection.

Anne of Brittany, his queen, also had her own collection, but little can be gathered from it, as her books have been rebound in more modern fashion; for example, her magnificent Livre de Heures now appears in the gloomy black, fashionable for religious books in the time of Louis XIV., and in striking contrast to the interior of the book, which is in the richest style of the fifteenth century. The two silver-gilt clasps bearing Anne’s initials, and adapted to the modern cover, are all that remain of the original binding, for which Guillaume Mesnager, the merchant of Tours, provided the red velvet for “xx. sols tournoys!”

A few of the volumes in Anne of Brittany’s library are from the press of the celebrated Antoine Vérand, who presented them to the queen in person, as we see by a miniature at the commencement of a copy of Æsop’s Fables, representing Vérand on his knees, holding up the book to Anne. Like all books produced by Vérand, this came from his warehouse complete, carefully printed and richly illuminated and bound, for he was privileged to combine all branches of the art.

[To be continued.]
The binder to the next king, Francis I., was Estienne Roffet. The beautiful copy of the Decameron, translated by Antoine Le Maçon in 1545, in the National Library, is an excellent example of his workmanship. He was not a printer, but only bound and sold books. Another bookseller, named Pierre Roffet, lived at this period, but he only sold and did not print books: he was surnamed Le Faulcheur, by way of distinction. The learned Geoffrey Tory at this time printed for the king. On a small octavo of 1532, Jehan Marot, we read—"Imprimé pour Pierre Roffet dit le Faulcheur par Maistre Geoffroy Tory." This skilful printer and binder often placed his sign, "Le pot cassé," upon books which, although bound by him, were printed by others. A Livre de Heurs of about this date bears his emblem stamped in gold.

The king's books were ornamented with the arms of France and a salamander, and the letter F stamped in gold and silver. They had also the motto "Nutrio et extinguo," which, as we learn from an Italian medal, struck in the king's youth, was meant to signify, I cherish good and extinguish evil. Those books which were bound for the Dauphin during the life of Francis have a dolphin in addition to a salamander.

In the short reign of Francis II. there occurs a break in the history of French bookbinding, during which no remarkable work seems to have been produced. This was possibly owing to the Huguenot persecutions (1562–1570); but towards the end of Charles IX.'s reign there were introduced those geometric patterns with wide compartments—differing much from all that had appeared before—which served as a framework for the dismal emblems of Henry III. In this king's reign bindings assumed all their former richness and elegance. So common did it now become to have luxuriously bound books, that in his sumptuary laws the king makes particular mention of them.

By a law of March 24th, 1583, Henry III. forbids the bourgeois to wear precious stones in their dress, but permits them to decorate their books of devotion with diamonds, not exceeding four; the nobility were permitted to have five; and princes were allowed as many as they pleased. A royal declaration of September 16th, 1577, is more stringent,
and appears aimed less at richness of binding than against the profusion of ornament which is offensive to good taste. He permitted the titles of books to be printed in gold, the edges to be gilt and lines of arabesques to be traced in gold, but forbade massive gold plaques to be attached to the covers. The king did not stay the progress of art, and even permitted amateurs to indulge in rich bindings on the sole condition that they were suitable. As a result of the royal mandate, greater simplicity and good taste became general among the French collectors, who, in common with those of England, renounced the heavy style of German binding, with its elaborate ornament, and lavish gilding, the designs for which were frequently prepared by Holbein and his scholars.

Almost all Catherine de Médicis’ fine books are ornamented with her monogram and with paintings. Amongst them is the beautiful copy in quarto of Du Haillan, *De l’Estat et succès des affaires de France*, belonging to M. Cigongne. This was no doubt a presentation copy. Catherine had many such books, which cost her little but thanks. Those which had belonged to the Maréchal de Strozzi, and which she added to her own collection, cost her even less. According to Brantôme this Strozzi library was “considered worth more than fifty thousand crowns, on account of the rarity and beauty of the books which it contained,” and was long coveted by Catherine de Médicis. Upon the death of the Maréchal she took possession of it, with the promise of recompensing his son and paying some day; but, adds Brantôme, “he never received a single sou.” Catherine kept a staff of court bookbinders, who vied with each other in producing beautiful covers.

Lacroix, in his *Arts in the Middle Ages*, mentions a singular binding which was invented by Henry III. after he had instituted the order of “Penitents.” It consisted of a death’s head and cross-bones, tears, crosses and other instruments of the Passion, gilt or stamped on black morocco leather, and having the device *Spes mea Deus*, with or without the arms of France. This doleful style by no means precluded ornamentation.

The death’s head with the words *Spes mea Deus* is more often found
than with *Memento mori*, though the latter is found upon books which did not belong to Henry III.’s library. It was to be seen upon a *Cicero* at a recent sale, beautifully bound in green morocco, equal in richness
and good taste to any of Grolier's best volumes. At times the words were omitted, the funereal decorations alone being retained.

The different emblems adopted for the bindings of books were often suggestive of the names of those for whom they were intended. We have seen that the books of Diana of Poitiers were generally decorated with bows and arrows; books for a lady named Marguerite had golden daisies; and often a kind of rebus on the name was given—for instance, Jean Grolier sometimes adopted a gooseberry-bush (in French, *groseillier*) with a motto, "Nec herba nec arbor" (neither herb nor tree).

Marie Stuart does not appear to have had any particular emblem, but simply to have had her books bound in black as a sign of mourning and imprisonment; most of them were religious works. In the library at Lille there is an *Office of the Virgin*, Paris, 1574, in 8vo., in the original binding of black morocco. Another of hers was found at Niort, taken there by a descendant of the Scotchman Blackwood; and a Bible, with an inscription in Marie Stuart's own hand, was sold at the Sylvester sale, in April, 1811.

The library at St. Petersburg contains one of the most valuable books that belonged to the Queen of Scotland. It is a *Book of Hours*. Its first binding, made before the days of her mourning, was of "red velvet with platina covers, the clasps garnished with precious stones," as we read in the inventory made after her death. It is now, alas, encased in a hideous cover of brown leather.

[To be continued]