CHAPTER IV.
BINDING IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

During the sixteenth century, bookbinding, as an art, had reached its highest development. The appropriateness, artistic taste, and thoroughness in workmanship which it then attained have not been surpassed in any succeeding period. In Italy we find the art at this period beginning rapidly to decline, but much beautiful work was produced in England during this and the following centuries.

In France, the last twenty years of the sixteenth, and the opening years of the seventeenth centuries, were distinguished by the remarkable style of decoration called à la fanfare. This name, which was only applied to it much later, arose out of a mere accident. Fanfare was the title of a book belonging to Charles Nodier, a well-known collector, and Thouvenin, to whom it was entrusted to be bound, reproduced on it a design of this character.

The style itself probably arose in the way of reaction against the gloomy bindings of Henry III. Margaret de Valois, with her literary tastes, took a very intelligent interest in bookbinding, but in temperament she differed utterly from her brother. It was to please her that the French binders replaced the death’s-heads of Henry with a dainty and fantastic profusion of flowers and foliage: in the books bound for her own library, daisies were endlessly repeated. One of these volumes, *Anne Senecæ Tragediae*, now in the collection of the Earl of Gosford, is bound in olive green morocco, elaborately tooled with golden daisies; on the centre of the obverse are three *fleurs-de-lys*; on the reverse a lily and hillock, with the motto, “*Expectata non eludet.*” Both motto and binding are well worthy of the princess.

The fanfare soon developed into a second phase, in which the foliage became more intricate and elaborate, the spirals and flowers more delicate and profuse. There were many examples in the library
of De Thou. In yet a third style which belongs to the seventeenth century, the sprays of foliage are of various kinds and alternate with palms, while the compartments are filled with vases and small roulettes*—toolings distinctive of the seventeenth century. A striking example of this style is the “Roman Missal,” printed at Cologne in 1629, now in the National Library in Paris.

Contemporary with the fanfare patterns were some beautiful bindings, much in vogue under Henry IV., in which arms played an important part. Grolier and Maioli only occasionally introduced arms into their bindings, but after Grolier’s death, while the geometrical patterns affected by him were more and more eliminated, the binders employed by the royal family of France had to make arms, monograms,

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* Roulette is so called because impressed by a wheel-like tool, the revolutions of which form the pattern. They should not be confused with the dentelles, or lace-like dottings, which are formed by the repeated impressions of a single tool.
florus-de-lvs, and many other devices, the main features of their designs. Under these new conditions they showed consummate taste in surmounting the difficulties of arrangement, and by a judicious mixture and repetition of these ornaments produced some of the finest examples of French binding. It was at this time that the celebrated Nicolas Eve and his brother Clovis obtained their beautiful effects by a novel treatment of foliage, as well as by an elegant repetition of special subjects.

There was still another modification which the fansfare had to undergo, about the time of Louis XIII. The new motive was suggested to binders by the manufacture of lace. The flowers and foliage were still retained, but to them were added the delicate gilt lines and mazy gold dots which so closely resembled lace-work. It is this pattern which we shall find taken up and improved by Le Gascon.

The most celebrated amateur and patron of bookbinding at the end of the sixteenth century, was Jacques Auguste de Thou (better known to bibliographers by his latinized name, Thuanus). He was President of the Parliament of Paris under Henry IV., and distinguished as a great historian. He was also an intimate friend of Grolier. It was his son who was executed by Richelieu with Cinq-Mars at Lyons, in 1642. Père Jacob, in his *Traité des plus belles Bibliothèques*, speaks of the large number of books possessed by the President, all of which are bound in morocco or gilded calf skin, which is "another extravagance in this Parnassus of the Muses."

In a letter to M. Pauline, Paris, M. Jérôme Pichon gives precise details as to the bindings of these books. From him we learn how many kinds of binding Auguste de Thou had adopted; red, green, and lemon morocco—the last more especially for books relating to the exact sciences—fawn-coloured calf with gold lines—a solid and rich style of binding afterwards adopted by the President de Longueil, and also by Du Fay—and, lastly, white vellum. In this last class of bindings De Thou imitated the style of the Elzevirs, with the difference that he had his arms stamped upon them, and had them embellished with gold lines in
spite of the difficulty of working upon vellum. The edges of these books were gilt.

We learn also that De Thou had various kinds of ornaments employed upon the bindings of his books, which varied with different epochs of his life. In the books composing his library in his bachelor days, gleaned for the most part from Venice, and considerable in number, we find, between two branches of laurel, his arms in silver, with a cherub’s head as a crest, and his name, Jac. August. Thuanus, stamped below the escutcheon—sometimes only this escutcheon reduced with two lilies as a crest. More often the armorial bearings placed upon books of this earlier library are argent with a chevron sable, and three gad-flies or bees of the same; below, a garter bearing his three names; and above, a cherub’s head, winged with a halo; the whole surrounded by two branches of olive tied together. After his marriage with Marie de Barbançon Cany, in 1587, the two escutcheons—that of the husband, already described, and that of the wife, which was gules with three lions crowned argent—were placed side by side upon the bindings, while the three initials, J., A., and M., for Jacques, Auguste, and Marie, were placed below the escutcheons and upon the back of the volume, where, up to that time, he had merely placed his own three initials, A. D. T. (Auguste de Thou). On the death of Marie, after fourteen years of happiness, her husband paid a tribute to her memory in an old classical book, bound in rich crimson morocco, bordered by a wreath of twining stems, and bearing branches of beautiful red berries; on the back his wife’s initials are interlaced with his own.

After his second marriage in 1603, the complicated arms of the Chastre family, to which his wife belonged, replaced those of the Barbançon, the letter G., for Gasparade, being substituted for the M.

Some of the books possessed by De Thou had been inherited by him from his father Christopher; amongst these, several were originally bound for Grolier. Christopher de Thou had once saved Grolier’s honour, and the latter acknowledged his gratitude by these valuable presents. These treasures were carefully preserved by Auguste de Thou, and
RECUEIL D'ESTAMPES D'APRES LES TABLEAUX DE PERISSIN ET TORTUREL,
(Pictures of the Huguenot Battles.)
BOUND IN MOROCCO BY CLOVIS EVE.
Formerly in the collection of Jacques Auguste de Thou (with his Coat of Arms).
transmitted by him to his son, when he, in his turn, became President. He was also Baron de Meslay, and his arms appear surmounted, not by a baron’s crest, but by a count’s, upon the numerous tasteful volumes with which he enriched the library commenced by his grandfather.

This magnificent library, which remained intact for over a hundred and seventy years after the decease of its founder, did not long remain in the De Thou family after the death, in 1677, of the second Jacques Auguste. Three years later, his son sold the collection. The Marquis de Ménars, bought the greater number of the volumes, paying a heavy sum for them. Many of the remainder were purchased for the king’s library. The Marquis died in 1718, and the valuable collection, greatly enlarged, was sold to the Cardinal Armand Gaston de Rohan. From the Cardinal it passed into the possession of his heirs, the Soubises, and in 1789 it was not only intact but again enlarged. Unfortunately, when the Prince of Soubise died, the other Rohans were in need of money, and sold this famous library.

At the sale of Mr. Payne’s books in London, on the 10th April, 1878, there was an *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis*, which was catalogued as “Probably the finest specimen in existence of the celebrated library of President de Thou: it is bound in red morocco, with rich tooling in floreate compartments, powdered with the Bee and initials of Thuanus.” The British Museum is rich in specimens of Thuanus, as the Rev. C. M. Cracherode, whose library now rests there, bought largely of these treasures at the sale of 1789. The National Library, Paris, has one of De Thou’s bindings, which is a masterpiece of the finest fanfare style; it is Matthioli’s *Discorsi di Pedacio Dioscoride*, Venice, 1568, and bears the arms of De Thou and his first wife.

The names of the binders employed by De Thou are almost unknown. At that time the workman, whatever his skill, was so little considered, that his name was scarcely mentioned even in the account-books. Almost the only French binder spoken of at that period is mentioned by Estoile, in his Journal, in 1607. His name was Habraham; he had bound a small Italian collection.
To have assisted in any way in the production of a volume which was disapproved of by the Government was certain of punishment. Many bookbinders were imprisoned in the time of Francis I., and their risk was equally great up to the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1664, a bookbinder, named Le Monnier, was imprisoned in the Bastille; and in 1694 a young bookbinder named Larcher was hanged for having bound infamous libels against the king. In 1757, the same fault met with the same punishment, whilst those who had bound books written against the reigning favourite were placed in the pillory. From this it is easy to understand that binders preferred to remain unknown; but, from various historical details, we are able to identify some of them.

A few names have been handed down through some incidental allusion. Thus the celebrated advocate, Patru, writing to a friend on the 4th of April, 1677, says: “Oudan is one of the best bookbinders in Paris.” Of the binder thus mentioned nothing further is known, except that he was made bookbinder to the king in 1679. Patru himself possessed a beautiful library, and was driven to compile a dictionary in order to procure means to gratify his expensive taste. The name of Michon is mentioned by the Abbé de Montreuil in a letter in which he says, “I have six hundred volumes bound by Michon in red and black morocco.” Michon was made bookbinder to the king in 1664.

In his *Livre Commode des Adresses*, published by the apothecary Blegny, under the name of Abraham de Pradel, he gives the names of several binders in 1690, among others, that of Bernard Bernache, who is mentioned as one of the best binders of the day. Denis Nyon is known to us by the Edict of 1686 as one of the Wardens of the new Guild of binders and gilders, and Eloy Levasseur is also mentioned in the same edict. Of this binder it is said by La Caille that, although he excelled in the art of adorning a book, he was not successful in making it open well. The secret of the Greek bookbinders, which allowed of books opening to the very back, seems to have been unknown at that time; but in later years it was recovered, and the new discoverer had it patented. De Thou’s binders possessed the secret, for M. de Solar had
a Pliny, in Svo., bound in morocco, which had all the suppleness spoken of by the Abbé de Longuereau, when describing a fifteenth-century binding. "I have," he says,* "a ‘Trésor’ of Estienne which is unique. It is bound in two thick volumes, and yet, when placed upon the table, it opens quite to the back, as if it consisted of only five or six pages. One of my friends wished to have Calvasseur’s Concordance bound in the same manner; but Levasseur, although he is the most skilful binder in Paris, only succeeded in spoiling the book." This shows conclusively that in France the binders of the seventeenth century understood the artistic decoration of books better than their "forwarding."

In 1593, in the reign of Henri IV., De Thou was appointed keeper of the Royal Library in the place of d’Amyot. He then employed Clovis Eve, whose shop was at Mont St. Hilaire, close to the Royal Library, to bind the king’s books, and in all probability availed himself of his services for his own library. This Clovis Eve was both a bookseller and a bookbinder, which, as we have already seen, was a necessary combination. "Some even," as we read in the Guide des Corps Marchands, in the chapter upon bookbinders and gilders, "some even possessed a printing-office." These were the privileged few who in Paris possessed the same right of uniting all the industries of a book that Aldus had in Venice. Those who confined themselves solely to the industry of binding were usually in the employ of some rich amateur, and formed part of his household, as was the case with those employed by Grolier.

Clovis Eve is little known as a bookseller, probably because the exigences of his duty as the king’s binder occupied him completely. In 1605 he was still in office; but five years later his son Nicholas had succeeded him. Nicholas, in his turn, was succeeded by his son Clovis, who was king’s bookbinder up to 1631. We also hear of Louis le Duc, as binder to Henri IV. in 1598.

An edict passed in France, in 1618, gave great trouble to bookbinders. It directed that all booksellers and bookbinders should keep within the University, either above St. Yves or within the palace, and

* Longueruano, page 85.
forbade any one to have more than one shop or office. This latter order greatly displeased the bookbinders, as they had always had recourse to another industry, similar to their own, namely, that of the "doreurs des bottes." When the binders only required rough gilding on sheepskin they did it themselves; but if they required anything more elaborate they had recourse to the leather-gilders, whose craft was considered a very different one, as their business consisted in "placing fine lines of gold in arabesques upon gentlemen's boots." These boot-gilders were well acquainted with the use of the small tools which had for some time been the fashion. The books collected by Queen Louise de Lorraine, the inventory of which is dated 1603,* were nearly all bound in this manner. Here is one out of the many items of the inventory—"Cosmographie Universelle, by André Thevet, covered in white vellum, gilded at the edges, and in small tooling, valued at six livres."

We know that these boot-gilders were very expert in the ornamentation of elaborate covers. One of them, named Pigorreau, was especially renowned, and in 1615 established himself in Paris. When, three years after, the edict forbidding bookbinders to employ any workman but those of their own craft was passed, Pigorreau ran the risk of being left without work or being obliged to return to boot-gilding. If he could be received as a bookbinder he might still do well, and he accordingly made the attempt; but the binders, although they liked him as a workman, would not receive him as a brother-craftsman. But he persevered, and in 1620, on the 20th of March, obtained an order from the Court that he and his partner, Balagni, were to be admitted. The binders, although much enraged, were compelled to admit them; but Pigorreau wished for further revenge, and a document of the day states that "in hatred of the syndics, he took as his sign a gilder stamping a lace pattern on a book, with the motto, "En dépit des envieux je pousse ma fortune." Pigorreau, by his triumph, gained a great step for the gilders, who, by entering the Bookbinders' Company, became united to the printers of the University. We read in the same document that "from that time, although opposed

* Published in 1856 by Prince de Galitzin.
by the binders, several gilders, either by payment of money or on the pretext of having served an apprenticeship to binders, contrived to become members of the company. Nevertheless their letters of freedom have always borne the triple description of merchant, bookseller, and printer, which has given rise to several lawsuits between the company and gilders who wished to be received as masters.”

Gaston, Duke of Orleans, was a great lover of beautiful books. He had one library at Blois and another in Paris, which was at the Luxembourg, at the end of the Rubens Gallery. “The bookshelves,” writes Père Jacob, “were covered with green velvet, with borders of the same, garnished with gold lace and fringe; the binding of the books was in a corresponding style, with the monogram of his Royal Highness.” These books, bound either in plain calf or light violet morocco, with a double G and crown, are nearly all to be seen in the National Library. It is not certain who bound for the Duke of Orleans, but possibly it was the binder known as Le Gascon, who was then at the head of his profession.
Le Gascon marks the beginning of a new era, when the names not only of the book-collectors, but of the artists who bound for them, began to be prominently recognized. Of Le Gascon himself, however, we know only that he had, while young, worked under the binders of De Thou, and that he made a name in the second part of Louis XIII.’s reign. He took the fanfare style as the basis of his designs, but improved on it by the delicacy of his tools and the ingenuity of his arrangement. He began with a small number of dotted tools, foliage, and the so-called seventeenth-century tools; but as he progressed in originality he made more and more use of gold dottings, and in his best work these form a predominant ground on which the other patterns are shown up with marvellous effect. The gilding was the part of his work in which Le Gascon excelled; this was always beautiful, the letters and ornaments being peculiarly neat and fine. He generally chose a dull red morocco of a peculiar tint. In minor details he was hardly sufficiently careful. The *Life of the Cardinal de Bérulle*, in Baron Rothschild’s collection, is a rich example of his latest style.

Le Gascon was the binder of that *chef-d’œuvre*, the *Guirlande de Julie*, which Mademoiselle de Rambouillet found upon her toilet-table on New Year’s Day, 1633. The cleverest wits of the Salon d’Arthénice composed the madrigals; Jarry transcribed them, and the Orléannais, Nicholas Robert, painted symbolical flowers. This Robert was in Le Gascon’s service, and copied the flowers in the Luxembourg and Blois Gardens at a hundred francs the page. Le Gascon bound the *Guirlande de Julie* in levantine morocco, both within and without—a very unusual thing, as Tallemont remarks; and on both covers, also within and without, he placed multitudes of J’s and L’s, the initials of Mademoiselle de Rambouillet’s christian name.

The *Introduction to a Devout Life*, which belonged to Anne of Austria, bears her monogram with a profusion of *fleurs-de-lys*, and certainly was bound either by Le Gascon or one of his imitators. One of the prettiest books left by him, dated 1641, is a small 4to. manuscript, of only sixty-nine pages, called *Preces Biblicae*, which was copied for Habert de
Montmort, by Nicholas Jurry. On the title-page we read, "Nicholas Jurry seiebat anno domini 1641." About the same year he bound the books so much sought after at the present day, which the same learned magistrate, Habert de Montmort, the friend of Gassendi, Ménage, and Molière, gathered together in his house in the Rue Vieille du Temple. Le Gascon bound them all in red morocco, with head-bands of silk and silver, and with exquisite rich tooling round the monogram of the owner, impressed on a cartouche of black morocco in the centre of the boards. Add to this, inner linings of marbled paper, then a new and much-admired discovery, and we know the uniform style adopted in this library, where, following the custom which appears to have been general at that time, all the books, whatever their size, were bound alike. Le Gascon did not approve of a uniformity which limited his talents; but he had no choice, uniformity being the fashion. There are two volumes ascribed to him, bound in red morocco, and tooled in his distinctive style—one is a Book of Hours, once belonging to the Duc de Mayenne, and which was sold at M. de la Vallière’s sale; the second is the beautiful Cologne Bible of 1630, which belonged to M. Renouard. If, as seems probable, Le Gascon made this binding, with its gold-dotted compartments and borders of flowers, it certainly is one of his chef-d’œuvres. This richly bound volume had enamelled gold clasps and corners; but this part of the ornamentation was done by the goldsmiths, who were largely interested in books, more especially religious ones.

Sir Kenelm Digby, who, after the execution of Charles I., lived in exile in France, had many of his books bound by Le Gascon. In the head-bands of these, silver threads alternated with silk. Upon his return to England at the Restoration, Sir Kenelm left his valuable collection in France, and at his death, in 1665, the books were dispersed, and many are now to be found in the National Library.

In the same library is a most remarkable example of a richly-decorated binding, which is signed twice, Florimond Badier Fecit, the ornamentation of which is very similar to many of the books attributed to Le Gascon; in fact, so much are they alike that many learned amateurs
consider that Badier and "Le Gascon" were one and the same person. (See illustrations on pages 129 and 166 in Vol. I.)

In M. Cigongne's collection is an Office de la Vierge, a small manuscript in vellum, which is a marvel of goldsmith's work. The binding is of silver gilt, covered with filigree ornaments and angels' heads delicately carved in ivory. Upon the boards are two cameos—one representing St. Catherine, the other St. Agatha. The "lining" is formed of plaques of coloured enamel, representing the Betrayal and the Bearing of the Cross.

There is another manuscript copy of the Office de la Vierge of the sixteenth century, the miniatures for which cost the Cardinal de Médicis 2000 crowns, and for which the Pope, wishing to present it to Charles V.—a well-known lover of beautiful books—had a rich cover of chased gold, ornamented with precious stones, to the value of 6000 crowns, made by Benvenuto Cellini.

Another book of the same time, also a Book of Hours, and apparently of Italian workmanship, is to be seen in the Duke of Saxe Gotha's museum. This binding, which is about four inches square, is of enamelled gold: "Upon each
of the boards is carved some sacred subject in relief, under an arch; figures of saints being placed in the corners, and the whole surrounded by a border formed of diamonds and rubies; the back is decorated with three small bas-reliefs of the finest execution." The *Heures* of Simon Vostre, which Pius V. sent to Marie Stuart, now in possession of M. Cigongne, are bound more simply, but yet richly, the Pope's arms being embroidered in gold upon ruby velvet.

In the South Kensington Museum there are a few examples of book-covers decorated with pearls and precious stones, and among them is a beautiful binding, said to be of Dutch workmanship, in which a plate of silver-gilt embossed and chased in scroll-work is remarkable for its elegance. (*See illustration.*)

With the exception of these goldsmith-bound books, we find nothing in Italian bindings towards the end of the sixteenth and through the whole of the seventeenth centuries which can bear comparison with the chefs-d'œuvre produced by the French artists of that period. Towards 1640 the decadence in the art in Italy was almost complete, especially in Rome. "They do not bind well in Rome," wrote Poussin to M. de Chanteloup, June 16th, 1641; and Mazarin, about the same time, wishing to have his books well bound, had about a dozen bookbinders sent from Paris to Rome, where they were employed in his library from 1643 to 1647. These bookbinders were under the direction of the librarian, Naudé, who paid them fifteen sols a day on their giving an account of what they had provided—gold-leaf, sheepskin, &c. We know the address of some of these binders,—Eudes, above the Puits-Certain, at the sign of the Sphere; Talon, beyond St. Bénoit; Moret, near the Sorbonne; Saulnier, beyond the Rue St. Jacques, near the Soleil d'Or. Others were simply workmen, whose names are given without address—Du Brueil, Hugues, Galliard, Filon, Louys Petit, Guenon, and Cramoisy. Petit and Saulnier were the most skilful, and were retained by Naudé after the heaviest part of the work was finished. By 1647 Saulnier alone was left to do all that yet remained.

[To be continued.]
As the seventeenth century went on, French bookbinding continued to progress. The Abbé de Marolles, in his Mémoires, writes, "Our bookbinders are esteemed above all others;" and he was a good judge; all the books in his library, as well those which he wrote as those which he gave to his friends, were well bound. Nor was this progress confined only to luxuriously bound books, for it now became possible to have those which were in daily use elegantly yet inexpensively bound—a discovery of importance in a country where, although there were many lovers of books, binders were but ill-paid. "We have," says the Abbé de Marolles, "some who, at little expense, make parchment resemble calf, adding gold lines on the back—a discovery due to a bookbinder in Paris named Pierre Gaillard."

This Pierre Gaillard was a bookseller and bookbinder from 1600 to 1615; that is to say, about the time that De Thou had his books covered with vellum with gold lines. We therefore naturally infer that Gaillard, being the inventor of that kind of bookbinding, bound for De Thou. Portier was a bookseller and binder at the same time, as was also Macé Ruette, to whom, according to La Caille, we owe the invention of yellow-marbled morocco and marbled paper. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century this paper was so universally employed for the inside lining of book-covers, that one of the strangest things about the Guirlande de Julie was, according to Tallemant, that it was of gilded morocco both within and without. From that time the use of marbled paper has never been abandoned. The poor abbé and philosopher, Privat de Molière, made it for his living.

Antoine, the son of Macé Ruette, continued his father's fortunes. Towards the end of Louis XIII.'s reign, and during great part of that of Louis XIV., he was bookseller and bookbinder to the king—a title which gave him, in virtue of a brief which we quote here, the right to live in the Royal College:

"To-day, July 3rd, 1650, the king being in Paris and wishing to reward Antoine Ruette, his bookbinder in ordinary, his majesty has—in consideration of the services he has rendered to him and the king, his father, and which he has continued to render—given
and accorded him lodging for life in his Royal College, and also insured him what charges he has before received as bookbinder in ordinary.

"Signed, Loménie."

We believe that Ruette made the bindings au mouton d'or in the Chancellor Séguyer's library. The ordinary books were in sheepskin; the more valuable in red morocco. The beautiful Heures on fine paper, dedicated to "La Chancelière," offered to Madame Séguyer by the Company of Booksellers and Bookbinders of Paris, probably came from his shop, which provided the devotees of that time with such elegant little volumes, some of which bear Ruette’s name on the title-page. It is still more certain that most of the manuscripts and printed books in the king's library at that time were bound under his direction. For these bindings the king bought in Africa, through Petis de la Croix, twelve thousand morocco skins. M. Lalanne writes, "We have read that Louis XIV., in his wars with those barbarian powers, imposed as a condition of peace that they should provide a certain number of these skins." He also remarks that the manuscripts and books of that time, in the king's library, were bound in morocco.

Books bound by Rangouze still exist; they are particularly well printed, and each presentation copy is bound in a different manner.

Those by La Serre are more uncommon. In the Mazarin Library there is a book which belonged to Anne of Austria, of which the binding is a chef-d'œuvre; it is a copy of Le Portrait de Mademoiselle de Maunyville, fille d'honneur de la royne mère du roy Louis XIV., a manuscript in folio, admirably written upon parchment. This book, which was one of the gems of the Clicquot sale in 1843, is bound in lemon-coloured morocco, with a similar lining, and is covered all over with gold lace-work, with four gold fleurs-de-lys in the centre. All presentation copies in these days had to be well bound. Louis Racine, writing to one of his friends, says, "They are not content if you send a book in a simple cover of marbled paper." Voltaire appears to have been the first to break through this rule, to which most people remained faithful up to the commencement of the present century.
He was often far from Paris, without any good bookbinder at hand; and bound books moreover were not allowed to go by post. Too impatient to await the delays of the bookbinders, he cut short all obstacles by sending all that he published to his bookbinder, Martel, who covered each volume with blue or marbled paper, at a sou and a half a piece. Sometimes—as, for instance, in the case of Zadig—when Voltaire appears to have been in Paris, he deputed Longchamps to buy him sufficient coloured paper, and the work of covering was done at home.

Often, when a book was presented, an inscription in gold letters was placed upon the cover. Upon a rich copy of the Epictetus of Politian, bound in lemon-coloured morocco, we find the arms of the Duke of Guise, and read, "Dux Guisius hoc te munere donat." On the Aethiopica of Heliodorus, in red morocco, with lace-work and compartments, a similar inscription appears, and, what is still rarer, the date of presentation—"Ex dono D. Antonii Druot, 1659." When Jacob Spon offered Mademoiselle de Scudéry a copy of his Traité de l'Usage du Café, du Thé, et du Chocolat, we find "Pour Mademoiselle de Scudéry" placed upon the binding, which is of red morocco, with laced pattern in compartments.

It was the fashion for authors not only to write but to collect books, like the Academician, Balesdens, who is forgotten as a writer, but remembered as a collector. His library was severe both in fashion and subject, according to Nodier,* and rivalled that of his patron, the Chancellor Séguyier. He was careful to put his name upon all his books, among which were to be found many of Grolier's. Often too poor to satisfy his craving for beautiful specimens, he bore poverty with peculiar philosophy. Writing to Séguyier, 1658, he says, "A number of books have arrived in this city belonging to the Queen of Sweden; but they do not tempt me, for I have no means of satisfying my passion."

Another literary man and collector, whose books have only lately come into vogue among bibliophiles, was the Baron de Longepierre. He lived towards the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the

* Mélanges d'une petite Bibliothèque, p. 50.
eighteenth century. After writing several dramas which met with no recognition from the public, he at last hit on the subject of Medea, which proved a complete success. He was so elated with the result, that he determined to have all his books ornamented with the Golden Fleece, and for this purpose entrusted them to Du Seuill. They were bound in morocco of various colours, and in the centre and corners of each cover he had a Golden Fleece stamped. These bindings are now eagerly sought at very high prices.

Much good binding was executed in England in the seventeenth century, that is to say, principally in leather; for metal bindings or fanciful ivory covers were either badly executed or carried out and finished in very second-rate style. There is, however, one exception to this in the British Museum; it is a book which was the property of Charles I., and is bound in silver plates beautifully engraved and laid upon velvet. Bindings were also, but only very rarely, made of Venetian filigree silver; they were but little used, as they tarnish very easily. Coats of arms were usual upon both sides of the cover, and a book which belonged to Oliver Cromwell, bound in black morocco, with clasps, is thus decorated with the Cromwell arms.

In spite of the patronage bestowed upon fine bindings by rich amateurs of taste, the good binders living at any one time must have been few in number. Some allusion may be made to the Companies who kept a large part of the trade in their own hands, and whose restrictions may have sometimes hampered the efforts of individual binders. The Stationers' Company made some stringent rules as to the binding of certain classes of books. In 1566 William Hill, originally a printer, was fined for binding primers in parchment, contrary to the Company's orders. In August, 1637, the bookbinders of London presented a petition to Archbishop Laud, at Croydon, in which they "prayed that no books might be sent into the country in quires to be bound; that it should be ordered what books are to be bound in sheep, and that there may be a certain price set down by
the Company in a table, and fixed in Stationers' Hall; that there may be a restraint of binding apprentices; and that bookbinders, free of other companies than the Stationers', may be conformable to the orders of the Stationers' Company."

In the history of bookbinding in England, one of the most important and interesting names is that of the Ferrar family. Nicolas Ferrar retired to Little Gidding, in Huntingdonshire, with a colony of relatives, in the year 1624, and founded there a religious establishment, which, on account of the number of the female inmates, was styled by the neighbours the Protestant Nunnery. In *The Life of Nicolas Ferrar*, by Dr. Peckard, we read that, "Amongst other articles of instruction and amusement, Mr. Ferrar entertained an ingenious bookbinder, who taught the family, females as well as males, the whole art and skill of bookbinding, gilding, lettering, and what they called pasting-printing by the use of the rolling-press. By this assistance he composed a full Harmony or Concordance of the Four Evangelists, adorned with many beautiful pictures, which required more than a year for the composition, and was divided into 150 heads or chapters. For this purpose he set apart a handsome room near the oratory."

Several copies of this work were executed for distribution among their friends, one of whom was George Herbert, the poet. Its fame reaching Charles I., the king requested that a copy should be prepared for him, and accordingly the "book was bound entirely by Mary Collet (one of Mr. Ferrar's nieces), all wrought in gold, in a new most elegant fashion." This style of embroidering covers on rich velvet was the one usually adopted at Little Gidding, and some other specimens have been previously noticed. But the Ferrars also produced many bindings in leather. One of these is in the manuscript department of the British Museum; it was prepared at the special desire of Charles I., who had frequently urged his chaplains in vain to undertake the work: it is a *History of the Israelites*, dated 1639, and consists of a sort of Harmony of the Books of Kings and Chronicles. It is bound in dark morocco, with gilt line tooling on the side, forming a series of oblong
squares, one within the other; gilt lines cross the back, and C. R. is stamped at the foot. The volume is of great interest as a highly characteristic piece of binding. The copy presented to Charles is described as having been bound in velvet, most richly gilt; so that it is doubtful whether the morocco copy described above was a duplicate, or whether the velvet was a cover over the leather.

In the reign of Charles II. much good plain binding was produced, as well as some that was excellent in design and finished in execution. Two of the best examples of this period belong respectively to 1668 and 1675. The first is a volume called *Plus Ultra, or the Progress and Advancement of Learning*, which is in black morocco, with gold geometrical designs and four panels in very good hand-tooling. The second is a thin square copy of the *Man of Mode*, by Etheredge, which is supposed to have been a copy presented to the Duchess of York. It is a unique specimen, being in no respect similar to the bindings of the French or Venetian periods. The design of the tooling bears a great resemblance to that of the ordinary German work in engraved metal. It is of variegated leathers inlaid in black morocco. The centre is a red quatrefoil, and the design combines yellow, red, and grey leathers. Over them flows a graceful pattern of stems and blossoms tooled in gold, while tulips and carnations alternate in a pleasing design.

Bishop Cosin was a connoisseur in binding, and gave very full instructions to his binder, Hugh Hutchinson. In 1671, for instance, he writes to his secretary, Miles Stapylton, "Where the bookes are all gilded over, there must be, of necessity, a piece of crimson leather set on to receive the stamp, and upon all paper and parchment books besides. The like course must be taken with such bookes as are rude and greasy, and not apt to receive the stamp. The impression will be taken the better if Hutchinson shaves the leather thinner."

Large sums were paid by Cosin to Mr. House, the goldsmith, who prepared the metal work for the ornamentation of certain of the books.

Pepys mentions bookbinding in his Diary. One of his entries, dated 28th August, 1666, is this,—"Comes the bookbinder to gild the
backs of my books." He makes no reference to the names of the workmen. It seems rather odd that the books should be gilded at home, but probably the fashion of the day required it. No doubt the damage occasioned to Pepys' library by the great fire necessitated the renewal of the gilding on such books as had been touched by it.

Nott, the famous binder of Lord Chancellor Clarendon's library, is also mentioned by Pepys. Pepys tells us that he himself possessed one of Nott's bindings.

At the end of the seventeenth century, books appear to have been valued for their bindings rather than for their intrinsic merit. Beautiful and expensive bindings, which in our day would be almost unattainable, were bestowed upon very second-rate literature. A few very beautiful specimens of embroidery of the seventeenth century remain. In the British Museum there is a cover of French design, in green velvet, embroidered with small pearls, and with a large garnet in the centre, which is very charming. Perforated vellum, with fancy patterns, was also much in use: satin was often placed beneath the vellum, and, peeping through, had a pretty effect.

But while we admire the designs of seventeenth-century bindings, we are not the less astonished at their durability. The morocco used has kept its colour, the tooling remains bright, and the volumes, after much rough handling, are as firmly stitched as ever. It is the same with the bindings of the sixteenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries. In our own day, work is far less carefully executed.

Tortoiseshell bindings, edged and clasped with silver, are peculiar to the seventeenth century.