

Book Notes.



LN "CRAIGMILLAR AND ITS ENVIRONS," by Tom Speedy, Messrs. Geo. Lewis and Son, of Selkirk, show that they can turn out fine bookwork equally as satisfactorily as tasteful and attractive job printing. Craigmillar Castle is a well-known landmark to the citizens of Edinburgh, and with the surrounding district is full of intense historical and antiquarian interest. The old castle is also an object of attraction to strangers visiting Edinburgh from all parts of the world, by reason of the associations and traditions with which its history is invested. From its battlements a magnificent panoramic scene meets the gaze of the observer. To the north towers venerable Arthur's Seat, beneath whose shadow Duddingston Church and Lock lie calm and peaceful. A little to the west, the metropolis, with its castle and numerous spires, stands out in bold relief. In the distance is the Firth of Forth, ever widening towards the ocean, with the Bass Rock and North Berwick Law conspicuously prominent. Behind are Liberton kirk and parish, Gilmerton, Straiton, and various other villages; the whole being bounded by the Pentland, Marfoot, and Lammermoor ranges. The illustrations, of which we present two, kindly lent by the publishers, are in "half tone" and "line," are numerous and admirably printed, and the clear-cut old-style type, sharp clear impression, ample margins, and generally very neat make up, make the book, from a printers' point of view, as nearly a perfect specimen of bookmaking as it is possible to produce, the neat and appropriate binding giving the finishing touch to a handsome volume of which the printers and publishers may well feel proud.

It was indispensable in the olden times to the practice of almost every technical handicraft that the workman should have learnt the art and mystery of the calling by a long apprenticeship. Of late years a system of engagements for short terms has extensively taken the place of the ancient régime, and in the opinion of many, not particularly old-fashioned people, the change has not by any means been wholly beneficial. We are aware that this opinion is becoming widespread, and amongst other industries affected it is interesting to note, as a sign of the times, that at a representative meeting of the London piano, reed, organ, and harmonium manufacturers it was resolved "to recommend a return to the system of apprenticeship by indentures, with a view to raise the standard of British workmanship in the trade."

THE Queen takes great interest in the art of bookbinding, and hearing recently that a lady practised the craft with much success, she had some specimens of her handicraft forwarded for her inspection. The lady in question is Miss Nicholls, who was a pupil of Mr. Cobden Saunderson, but now carries on business on her own account. Her Majesty has all her books at Windsor bound in a uniform binding of royal blue.

An American School of Bookbinding.

IN his fifth lecture to the library class, at the Drexel Institute, Philadelphia, John Thompson cursorily explained the various processes of preparing, forwarding, covering and finishing as applied to bookbinding, and then pointed out in detail some of the distinctive features of the Aldine bindings, and those collected and executed for the princely patrons, Maioli and Grolier.

He next passed in review the artistic triumphs of the Eve family, Le Gasçon, Boyer, and the late French binders. The principal English binder discussed, of course, was the eccentric Roger Payne, who worked spasmodically, but always successfully. Although he did not sign his bindings, he has left many remarkable descriptive bills of charges.

Some of them are highly interesting. John Nichols, editor of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, wrote of Payne shortly after he died, that "he lived without a rival, and, it is feared, without a successor." His best work was executed in russia leather, which came into use as a book cover about the middle of the eighteenth century. Some of the eccentricities of bookbinding were alluded to and mention was made of some volumes actually bound in human skin. There are two examples of this "style" in Philadelphia, and one English collector prided himself on possessing a book bound in the prepared skin of a murderer who had expiated his crime on the gallows.

The consideration of great bookbinders and their styles culminates in one wonderful feature. Beyond the knowledge of the main characteristics of their styles much more is known of their patrons than the binders themselves. This is particularly noticeable when speaking of a Grolier or a Colbert binding. A large number of persons regard Grolier as a bookbinder, and even Thomas Hartwell Horne, the eminent English author, in his "Manual of Bibliography," called him a bookbinder of France. It would be very gratifying to know more of the binders themselves, and who executed the decorations on the covers of volumes in the libraries of French kings before the Bourbons.

It was not, however, until well on in the eighteenth century the French binders inserted the little slips of paper pasted on the cover and styled *etiquettes*, containing their names and addresses, and it was considerably later before the custom was adopted in England.—*Ex.*

A HEAP of old papers had been taken to a paper factory at Paris, to be reduced to pulp. The workman sorting the papers was struck by the appearance of old age of some sheets. He collected them and took them to his foreman, who discovered that they were written by Robespierre, the famous terrorist of the French Revolution. It is a paper on the influence of atavism upon criminality. It was dated 1785, and was written to compete for a prize offered by the Academy of Amiens, at which city Robespierre at that time held a humble office at court. The papers have been rebound and deposited in the National Library of France.