

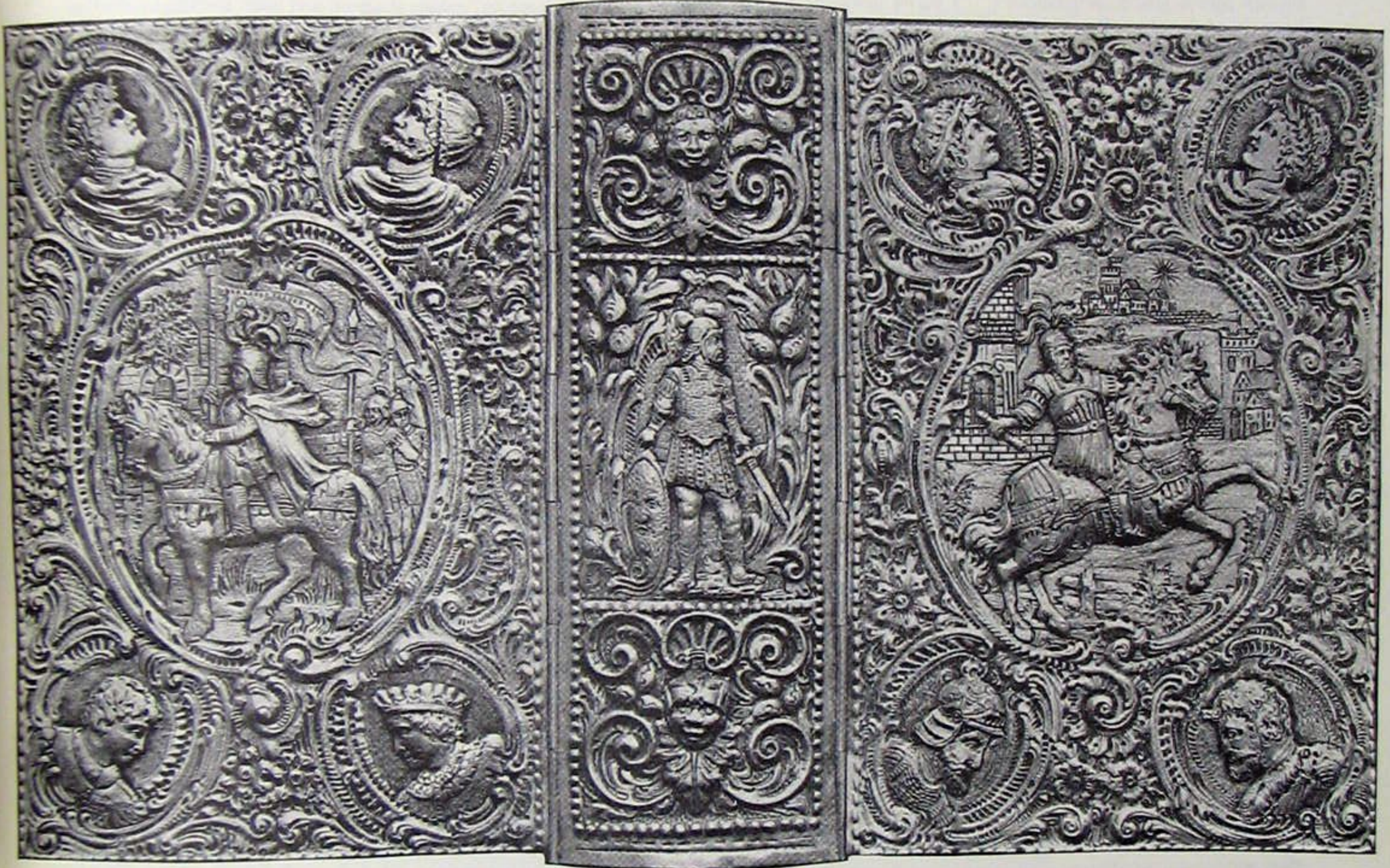
Old Books.

TO-DAY, in Paris alone, there are two hundred well-known collections of valuable books, and one need not be, as in 1783, a Duke de la Vallière, to possess a collection of which the catalogue alone occupies three vols. 8vo, and which produces £20,000 at a public sale. Without becoming in any degree common, such collections have now become three or four times as numerous as at that time. Sales realising from £5,000 down to £1,200 are fairly frequent.

coveted for their printed covers, for their prospectuses, and also for their value to the bookbinder.

The dedicated copies are particularly sought out; the authors' own copies, or authors' annotated copies, reach high values. Judge of the effect produced at a sale by the announcement of, say, a copy of *Candide*, first edition, full margins, bound in the skin of Voltaire. The highest ambition of the biblioplist will be reached when he can read in his catalogue of sales, "bound entire,—skin of the author."

The true book collectors often know where all the well-known valuable books have their lodging. When



A Silver Book Cover.

OUR illustration is taken from the cover of "Historia Gotthrum Vandalorum," by Hugone Grotio, printed by Elzevir in Amsterdam, 1655. The cover is a fine specimen of contemporary North German art in silver *repoussé* work, the effect being heightened by engraving and a fine stipple. The clasp and deep head-guards are also exquisitely designed and worked in the same style. The cover measures $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, the sides are $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches broad, and the back is $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick, so that altogether it is a very massive piece of work. We are indebted to Mr. Tregaskis for the loan of this valuable book for reproduction.

The great works of the sixteenth and seventeenth century are appearing but rarely. They are placed out of the way, absorbed and classified. It is only on such occasions as the sales of Guy Pellion and Rochbilière that we are able to come across any considerable number of original editions of the seventeenth century. Book-lovers have also been compelled to be without those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which have reached exorbitant prices, especially for the illustrious brochures and Romantiques,

they visit the home of a fellow book-collector they are envious of their host's possessions, and they wait patiently for the death of a rival in order that his books may perchance come into their hands. At last the possessor dies, the sale of his books is announced, the catalogues distributed, and the coveted number put up for sale, with a list of its excellences. The collector then gathers together his money, only fearing that some other collector more wealthy than himself may take the coveted prize away from his grasp.

Some time since, a collector at the Sylvestre rooms was within an ace of obtaining a valuable work at a fairly reasonable price, when, just before the auctioneer could close, a stranger, evidently just arrived, stepped into the room and out-bid the would-be purchaser, who, on seeing the new-comer, cried, "I am lost! you are M.—, I am lost! there is nothing in the world you and I are so anxious to possess, as this work, and you, alas! are richer than I." But how supremely happy he is when he can bear home the desired book, so coveted and sought after, and at last obtained. Where shall he place it? on what shelf, particularly noticing the possessions already obtained, for good books merit good neighbours. I have noticed, at the homes of book-collectors, that after the books have been acquired they gradually move, from being the most prominent and valuable of the collection, lower and lower, and further out of sight, as the collector becomes changed in his opinion of his old books.

An incomplete, stained, or mutilated copy is of no value, and it is of no use to endeavour to restore it, for no one will be tempted by it.

On the other hand, a really well-made and well-preserved book will be always valuable.

This explains the exorbitant prices, quite out of proportion to the value of the matter, obtained for books made up of the best papers, such as those of Holland and the Japanese and Chinese kinds.

The makers of the common sort of paper are the criminals,—the word is not too strong,—for they introduce foreign substances into the manufacture which never should be allowed to enter into the composition. The effect is not noticed while the paper is new, but, sooner or later, spots begin to appear on the surface, which no sizing can obviate.

The publishers can do nothing, and except in some few manufactories where the paper is honestly prepared, it cannot last. It is said that the supply of rags, old paper, and esparto and other grass fibres is not sufficient, and so to the already large number of dangers to books, in the shape of insects, etc., must be added that of poor paper. It is for the prevention of this evil that such precautions are taken by the publishers of valuable works. The present paper in use is laid paper, and valuable qualities are used for the volumes of collectors, so as to preserve them from the ravages of time and the deceit of the paper manufacturers. If the paper were good, an ordinary amount of sizing would be all that would be required to give the same results, but ordinary papers are simply detestable.

Book-lovers and those who are concerned in the book-trade should, therefore, beware of all books made during the last fifty years, omitting, perhaps, the best books and *editions de luxe*, for they only deteriorated more or less according to treatment and circumstances.

The same observations will apply to the binding. A good and appropriate binding preserves a book, while a poor and unworthy binding may ruin it. If, then, a binding is not stamped with some name, which is a guarantee for good work, the work should be carefully examined again, for the difference between a carefully bound and an ill-bound book is not always perceptible at a first glance.—JULES RICHARD.

"Kind Fate Protect us."

A GOOD many if not all the troubles that afflict the bibliophile are included in a contribution in the American *Book Mart*, entitled "The Book Lover's Litany," and signed H. L. We append a few of the chief verses:—

From set spoilers and book borrowers and from such as read in bed,
Kind Fate protect us.

From plate sneaks, portrait filchers, map tearers, and from book thieves,
Kind Fate protect us.

From such as read with unwashed hands; from careless sneezers and snuff takers; from tobacco-ash droppers, grease slingers, and moth smashers; from leaf pressers and all unclean beasts,
Kind Fate protect us.

From margin slashers, letter-press clippers and page misplacers; from half-title wasters, original cover losers, and lettering mis-spellers; from gilt daubers and all the tribe of botcher-binders,
Kind Fate protect us.

From heat and damp; from fire and mildew; from book-worms, flies, and moths,
Kind Fate protect us.

From careless servants and removal fiends, and from all thoughtless women and children,
Kind Fate protect us.

From book-droppers and book wrenchers; from ink and pencil markers and scribblers, and from such as write their names on title pages,
Kind Fate protect us.

From "Bowdlerised" editions; from expurgators and all putters forth of incomplete editions,
Kind Fate protect us.

From "appliance" lunatics, and library faddists; from "fonetic" cranks, and all that have shingles loose,
Kind Fate protect us.

From wood-pulp paper and all chemical abominations, and from those that manufacture faint ink,
Kind Fate protect us.

From books that have no index, and from index makers in general,
Kind Fate protect us.

From all booksellers who are ignorant and pig-headed, and from them who do not advertise,
Kind Fate protect us.

—Publishers' Circular.

JEROME relates that Pamphilus, presbyter of Cæsarea, martyred A.D. 309, collected 30,000 religious books for the purpose of lending them; and this is the first notice of a circulating library. A library was built at what is now called Trinity College, Oxford, by Richard of Bury, in the reign of Henry IV., for which he drew up a provident arrangement "by which books might be lent to strangers" (*i.e.*, students of other colleges) by depositing a security in excess of the value of the book taken out. In 1342, the stationers of Paris were compelled to keep books to be lent on hire, and there were during the middle ages circulating libraries at Toulouse and Vienna also. Circulating libraries were established at Dumfermline in 1711; Edinburgh, in 1725; and London, in 1740.

MESSRS. KELLY & SON have introduced a gold vein marbled cloth on their new case binding for "Nature's Weather Warnings." It looks like ordinary marbled paper, but of course is more durable.