



ORIGINAL COVER DESIGNS BY GEO. FALKNER & SONS,  
DEANSGATE, MANCHESTER.





ROBERT FALKNER.



FRANK FALKNER.



FITZGERALD FALKNER.

## Our Portrait Gallery.

MESSRS. GEO. FALKNER & SONS, MANCHESTER.



LIKE many another Binding Establishment, especially those outside of London, that of Messrs. Falkner is only one department of a large house where book-binding is conducted through all its branches, and in briefly sketching out the firm's history, we must for awhile leave the beaten track of binders' lives.

GEORGE FALKNER, the well known engraver and lithographer of Manchester, first saw the light in Edinburgh on the 28th October, 1817. His father, Andrew Falkner, was a penman of renown and an able arithmetician, being a master at the High School of Edinburgh, and a member of the *Senatus Academicus* of the University. The wife of Andrew Falkner was Jean Laing, who came of an old Scotch family connected by close ties with the poet Burns.

Being brought by his father's friendship into the intimate acquaintance of such men of learning as Adam Black, Dean Ramsay, and their contemporaries, and under the inspiration of the Brothers Chambers, it was but natural that the boyish inclinations of young Falkner should early lean towards pursuits of a literary character. Thus, at the age of fourteen, George Falkner was apprenticed to the "arte and crafte of prynting." He was not, however, destined to remain long in the city of his birth, for at about seventeen years of age, owing to the dissolution of the firm by whom he was employed, he made up his mind to visit the Metropolis, where he had obtained an appointment as reader for the press in Her Majesty's printing office. While there, the great strain upon his faculties and the length of hours he was compelled to work induced him to consider the advisability of changing his employment, and he accordingly consulted the members of his family with a view to obtaining an appointment at Somerset House. In due course the young man received an invitation from the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, to meet him and accompany him to the Horse Guards, there to be presented to the Secretary of State for the War Department. "These favours," he says, "I well knew were due to the influential support tendered by my relatives at home to the Whig party, and I walked down Parliament-street with a hopeful spirit. Lord Macaulay received me with much courtesy, and invited me to state my case, to which he listened with patient attention." "I should be glad, indeed," he replied, "if I could serve you, not only for your own sake, but that of your relatives, who have placed me under obligations. My advice to you, however, is to seek no change in your profession, but steadily to pursue it, and I have no doubt that opportunity will arise by which you will be enabled to bring your education and knowledge of your business into successful application."

The prophecy—unpalatable as it was at the time—was, however, not long in being realised, for shortly afterwards Mr. Falkner's talents brought him under the notice of "Old George Bradshaw," of Railway Guide fame. The histories of George Bradshaw, the Quaker, William Blacklock, and George Falkner here become intertwined, and to attempt to unravel them in their ramifications as well as to follow Mr. Falkner in his intimacies with the local literati of the period, would fill many an interesting page. Suffice it to say that, May, 1841, chronicled the issue of a new magazine, entitled "Bradshaw's Journal," with George Falkner ensconced in the editorial chair. There is little doubt that had Mr. Falkner remained with his principals, Messrs. Bradshaw and Blacklock, he would in due course have become a member of that firm; but following a not unnatural impulse, and acting with the concurrence of his father, he commenced business in Brown-street and King-street, Manchester, in 1843, taking with him into partnership his brother Alexander, under the style of G. & A. Falkner. This partnership existed until 1848, when Mr. Alexander Falkner retired and removed to Leeds, and Mr. Falkner carried forward the venture alone with marked activity and success. In 1874 the firm became George Falkner & Son, and subsequently, in 1880, George Falkner & Sons.

At the commencement of his career Mr. Falkner determined that his business should, as far as practicable, rise above the ordinary commercial requirements of the great community with which he was surrounded, and so become the reflex of his own mind and powers. Accordingly he laid himself out to cultivate the higher branches of his craft, and the lines so laid down have been pursued up to the present time and enlarged upon. In his early years he was entrusted with the printing of the Parliamentary Plans of gigantic schemes during the railway mania of '48, and since that period nearly all the Parliamentary Plans of the great civic improvements, which have made the Manchester of to-day, were lithographed under his personal superintendence, as well as large quantities of similar work for other towns.

In 1857, at the great Art Treasures' Exhibition in Manchester, Mr. Falkner was distinctly a power. He set up a printing press in the building, and upon his shoulders considerable responsibility rested.

The heavy leaden foundation stone plates of the Town Hall and Owens' College, Manchester, lie for all time as silent and obscure witnesses of his cunning as an engraver.

For the last twenty years the firm have made great strides in the development of old style printing, and their collection of illustrations, head and tail pieces, initial letters and the like, is phenomenal. They have also devoted much attention to the invention of quaint literary conceits of all kinds, as well as to the

