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Our Portrait Gallery.

JOHN P. GRAY & SON, CAMBRIDGE.

MR. JOHN PHILLIPS GRAY, the head of the firm engaging our attention this month, was born in Cambridge in the year 1824, and served his apprenticeship in the almost cloistered

Cambridge and started in business for himself, in partnership with Mr. William Armstrong, but the partnership did not last long, being dissolved in 1850.

At this time the business was carried on at No. 16 Green-street, a curious old-fashioned one-story house which is still standing, but for better accommodation Mr. Gray removed to No. 14 in the same street; these premises, too, after a few years were found quite inadequate for the rapid growth of the business, and a move was made to the present address, No. 10 Green-street. This building, with its improvements and extensions, now ranks as one of the finest binderies in the eastern counties for light and accommodation.

The front shop, which serves as both showroom and office, is interesting as a type of the older houses in the town, with its walls wainscotted from floor to ceiling and quaintly carved wooden chimneypiece of early date. The forwarders' shop is a large oblong one-story building, the forwarders working on the ground floor and the machinery being arranged down the centre of the shop (upstairs is devoted to materials, board cutting, and map mounting), leading off from this is the finishers' shop, a building erected in 1877 and designed to suit the requirements of this department. The sewers and folders have roomy accommodation apart from the other employes. Most of the present staff of workpeople were trained on the premises, many of them having been in the firm's employ a number of years.

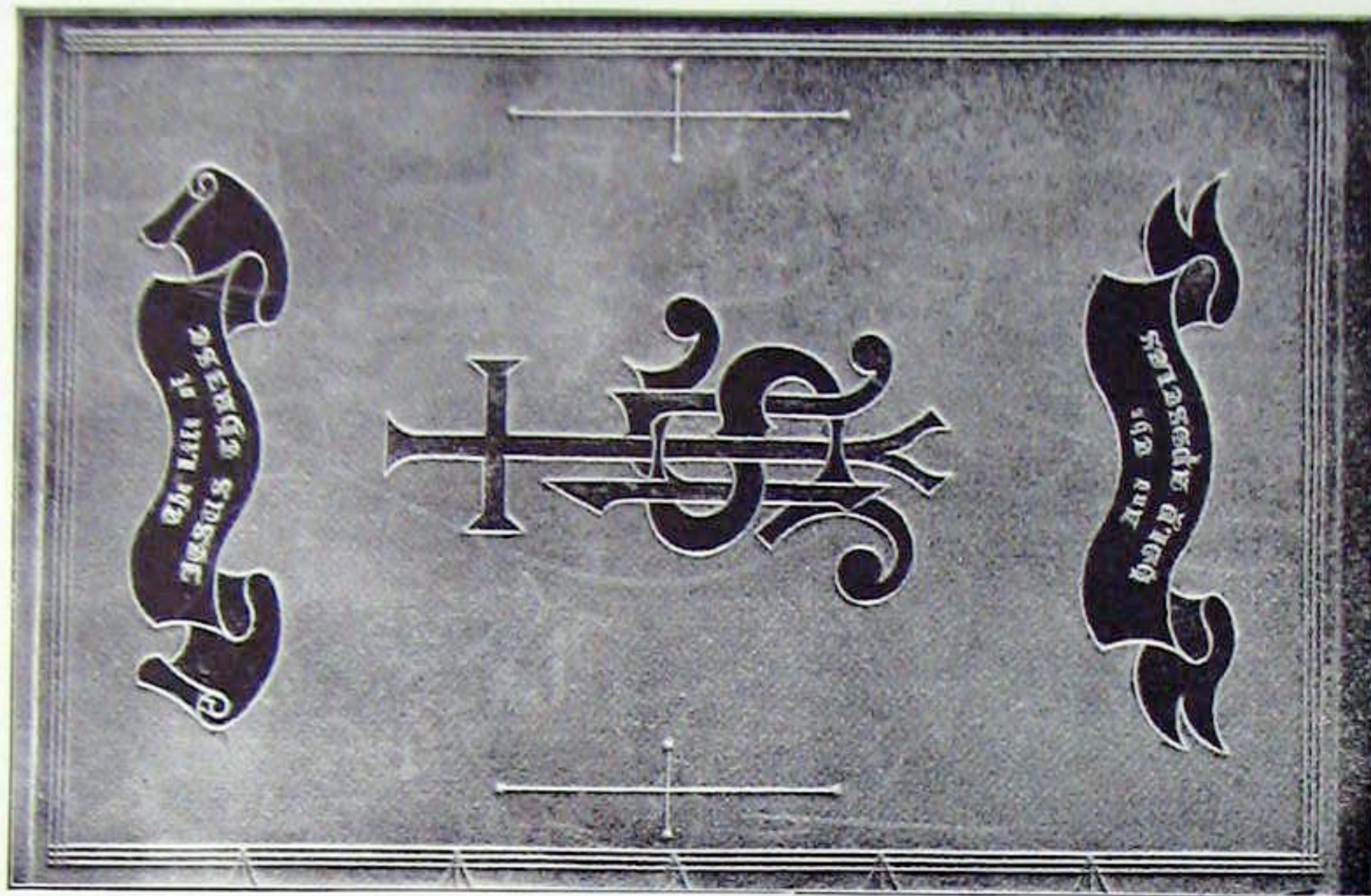
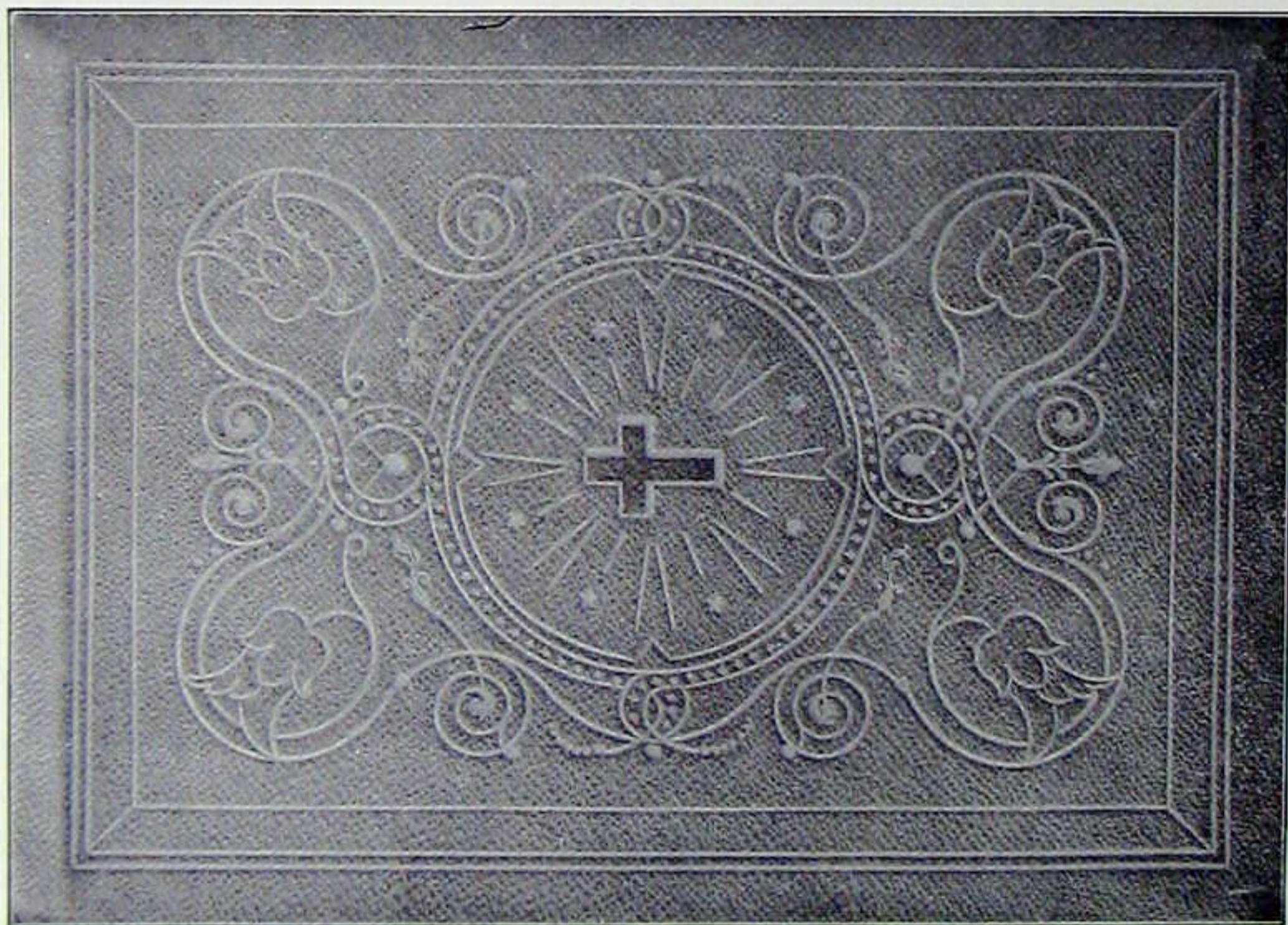
The class of work undertaken by the firm is extremely miscellaneous, embracing everything from the stitched pamphlet to the *Reliure de luxe*: map mounting, albums, ledgers, and pub-

lishers' work; but the specialities of the house are map and plan mounting, and the renovating or rebinding of rare old worm-eaten books, early church registers, and other works requiring a great deal of attention and skill. These valuable treasures and records are constantly being entrusted to their care, and their success in the restoring and repairing of such books has long gained for the firm a well-deserved reputation. Messrs. Gray & Son are binders by appointment to the University Library and the Union Society, and in dealing with some of the books in their charge they reintroduced pigskin for the covers, a material very



JOHN P. GRAY.

quietness of this centre of classical learning to a trade which seems to fit in with the surroundings of the Universities better than any other, not excepting that of printing, for the noisy revolutions of the cylinder press make a hideous riot in the old-fashioned streets, compared with the melancholy tap-tap of the binder's hammer. Like most young men, the desire to move out into a wider world grew upon him, and shortly after the expiration of his term of servitude he went up to the great metropolis to improve himself, and there joined the London Journeymen Bookbinders' Society. In 1847, he returned to



BOUND BY JOHN P. GRAY & SON, CAMBRIDGE.

Printed on Grosvenor, Chater & Co.'s "Acme" Printing Paper.

extensively used in early times, and which has now again become quite popular with the Cambridge bibliophiles.

Commenting in a general way upon the present local taste for bindings, Mr. Gray informed us that calf has fallen into disfavour, cloth sides have largely given place to paper, marbled edges to gilt tops, and in papers the old Dutch and nonpareil patterns to gold-veined marbles, while as regards forwarding, the antiquated flat back has revived very greatly in the public's taste. Smooth morocco is also being very much asked for and bids fair to drive the grained varieties into the background.

This firm is now the oldest in Cambridge, and Mr. Gray has nearly reached the three score years and ten which mark a full life, still he takes an active part in the general management of his business, and busies himself with a special pride in the collating, which occupies the greater part of his time. He is a subscriber to the Bookbinders' Pension Supplement and has been since its formation, some forty years ago. He is assisted in the work of the house by his eldest son, Mr. Arthur Beales Gray, who was taken into partnership recently, after having served an apprenticeship to him and going through all the branches of the business. Mr. Arthur takes charge of the finishing department and is a fair artist and workman. He recently took up the new system of burning in cover ornamentation or pyrogravure, and has made it quite a success, a sample of his work in this direction having already appeared in our pages.

MR. ALFRED LANG recently told the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, that of 10,000 novelists with whom we were blessed in Great Britain, only 150 earned anything by means of their literary labours. This was thought to be slightly exaggerated, but the experiences of a London publishing firm for the past year go to confirm it in some measure. Within a year the firm of Chatto & Windus received 663 MSS. for consideration. Of that number 44 were accepted and 619 declined!! What a mass of literature a-begging. If one firm only has rejected such a number, what a tremendous array the rejected must be in the aggregate. And yet some of the best books in our language have been rejected of publishers.

MR. W. T. DOBSON, author of "The History of the Bassandyne Bible," etc., is writing a new work dealing with the "Pioneer Printers of Edinburgh, from Chepman to Ballantyne." It is to appear, in the first instance, as a serial in the *North British Advertiser*, beginning early in April.

THREE CURIOUS BOOKS.—Among small printed books an honourable place should be reserved for "The Bible in Miniature," printed by Newberg, in 1780. Each page of this Biblical wonder, which measures only one and one-fifth inches in length, and twelve-sixteenths of an inch in width, contains an average of twenty-one words, and about one hundred and sixty letters. Still another wonderful small volume is a religious work entitled: "Small Rain Upon the Tender Herbs." This book was printed quite recently by a London tract society. Its leaves are one and one-fourth by one inch in size, yet each page



ARTHUR B. GRAY.

holds an average of forty words, or about two hundred letters. Besides these curious tiny volumes there is, it appears, a more remarkable work in existence. It is without printed matter, and is known as "The Wordless Book." It has but ten leaves, twenty pages, each of different colour. For over three hundred years it has been kept in the library at St. Rupert's Monastery. Its wordless pages are only consulted at Easter, St. John's eve, and Christmas. At these times, so the monks claim, the leaves of the sacred volume are miraculously covered with appropriate texts in characters of shining gold.