COVER DESIGNS BY STOAKLEY & SON, CAMBRIDGE.

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

MESSRS. STOAKLEY & SON, CAMBRIDGE.

VISITING that ancient seat of learning and bookmen—Cambridge, we passed into a quiet little street where for a good many years the principal binders of the town—Messrs. Stoakley & Son—have been located, and were tempted to pay a visit of inspection to a house which is well known by repute to many beyond the confines of that academic town. The dull thud of the backing hammer soon his new undertaking and produced such good work that he gained a certificate at the great exhibition of 1851. It was next taken over by Mr. Nutt (nephew of David Nutt, the foreign bookseller) who was in turn succeeded by Mr. J. B. Hawes, one of Mr. Nutt's employés, when the latter left Cambridge to go into business in London. At that time Mr. Nutt strongly urged Mr. G. F. Stoakley—also in his employ—to accompany him to the capital, but Mr. Stoakley declined and continued in the same shop working for Mr. Hawes, who held the business for about twenty-five years, gaining for himself during that period an excellent reputation as an expert and reliable binder.

MR. GEORGE FREDERICK STOAKLEY first became acquainted with the trade in the year 1846, when he went as an errand boy to Mr. Henry Richard Wiseman, of Cambridge, binder by appointment to Her Majesty. There he was apprenticed, finished his
time, and worked as a journeyman for about fifteen years, making the acquaintance of several of the best London men, such as Charles Dent, Peter (known as "General") Picton, Jamie Pfeffer, and others well known in the trade, when, owing to a protracted period of slackness, he was advised to be on the look-out for something better. He did look out, and shortly afterwards accepted an offer from Mr. Nutt, whose service he entered. It says much for Mr. Stoakley's skill as a workman that, after three months' experience in the shop, Mr. Nutt desired to take him up to London. It was hard to decide such a promising opportunity, but Mr. Stoakley had ties in Cambridge and he elected to stay with Mr. J. B. Hawes, where he worked up to the post of foreman and remained until that gentleman's death, in 1885. At that juncture Mr. Stoakley's opportunity came, for he was strongly advised to take over the business, and after some anxious deliberation he made the venture in conjunction with his son Louis, who had just completed his apprenticeship in the same house. Louis was bound with the intention of becoming a forewarder, but his inclinations ran toward finishing, and by the completion of his servitude he had become expert enough to be of the greatest assistance to his father, and has since done much for the credit of the house. Although Messrs. Macmillan had given up the business, those who succeeded them relied very much upon that firm's work and Messrs. Stoakley still enjoy a large share of their support, as the shelves in their Cambridge house indicate; they attribute much of their success to the kind suggestions made from time to time by Mr. Robert Bowes, the present head of the Cambridge branch.

We were shown a good many photographs of fine bindings executed by the firm for presentation by the University of Cambridge to Her Majesty the Queen, E.R.H. the Prince of Wales, His Holiness the Pope, and several crowned heads of Europe, as well as for public and private individuals, some of which have been exposed in the Arts and Crafts Exhibitions. They are binders for the University Library, and received a highly complimentary note from the late Henry Bradshaw, then librarian, on the character of their work. They are constantly entrusted with very old and valuable MSS. and early printed books for cleaning and repairing, both from that library and Pembroke College, and they are evidently adepts at that branch of the craft.

We went over the old-fashioned house—which has been considerably altered at different times to make it suitable for its present purpose, and found an efficient staff of men and women busily engaged upon the various stages of the work, which is all in boards—when Mr. Stoakley showed us all we desired with justifiable pride and pleasure. The finishing is left to Mr. Louis Stoakley, who designs many of his own patterns, and who was rather disappointed in not having any fine work on hand at the time of our visit, which was quite unexpected and during vacation, when trade throughout the town is very quiet. Three out of the four books we have selected are from work in the house, and they give a fair idea of the character of the better class of work done by the firm, while the fourth has been kindly lent by Mr. H. S. Foxwell, of St. John's College, Cambridge, for whom it was bound. It is a large paper edition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Catalogue in gobelin blue crushed levant, on which Mr. Louis has worked out Mr. Walter Crane's design for the cover with wonderfully good effect.

Messrs. Stoakley & Son are both good types of the hard-working binders who know their business and who glory in their work. The younger one has been endeavouring to improve his knowledge of the trade by a visit to the continent, which has been rendered profitable to him through his knowledge of the German language, and he thinks it a pity that more of the men in the trade do not use their opportunities for acquiring some modern language considering the present intercourse of nations and the frequent opportunities they have of binding foreign works. Both are firm believers in the excellence of hand work, and as a proof of it they have only a board machine, relying upon hand work for every part of the business, and devoting themselves not only to the supervision but taking an active share in the work itself.

Libel on the Press.

THE celebrated Andrew Marvell, a disinterested patriot of the time of Charles II., gave the following pertinent description of the powers of the press:

"The Press, inventing much about the same time as the Reformation, hath done more mischief to the discipline of our Church than all the doctrine can make amends for. 'Twas an happy time when all learning was in manuscript, and some little officer did keep the keys of the library! Now, since printing came into the world, such is the mischief, that a man cannot write a book but presently he is answered! There have been ways found out to fine, not only the people, but even the grounds and fields where they assembled; but no heart could prevent these seditious meetings of letters! Two or three brawny fellows in a corner, with mere ink and elbow grease, do more harm that one hundred systematic divines. Their ugly printing letters, that look like so many rotten teeth, how oft have they been pulled out by the public tooth drawer? And yet these rascally operators of the press have got a trick to fasten them again in a few minutes, that they grow as firm a set, and as cutting and talkative as ever!"

"O PRINTING! how thou hast 'disturbed the peace!' Lead, when moulded into bullets, is not so mortal as when founded into letters! There was a mistake, sure, in the story of Cadmus; and the serpent's teeth which he sowed were nothing but the letters which he invented."

John Reynes was bookbinder to Henry VIII., and was located at "The George," in St. Paul's Churchyard. His work can always be recognised by his stamp. In one form or another he used the Royal Arms, sometimes quartered with the bearings of Catherine of Arragon or Anne Boley. Reynes sometimes used a panel with medallions, and a scroll with fabulous animals and flowers.—J. P. B.