Pyrogravure.

The art of fire-drawing, commonly called poker work, or branded work, has been principally used for the purpose of ornamenting wooden articles, such as chair backs, picture frames, etc., and forms a very pleasant occupation for anyone having a little leisure and artistic faculties. Latterly, it has been also applied to the burning in of designs upon leather, but very little successful work has been exhibited as yet, except upon such small articles as purses and wallets, cigar and fusee cases, etc. We believe, however, that there is a large field for this form of ornamentation upon book covers if binders would but take it up and bring their ordinary appliances to assist in the production. Any one with a fair knowledge of drawing might with but little practice turn out very creditable work; but if the design were drawn upon the leather, a child might do the burning in. The main thing is to procure a suitable design and an easy method of transferring it to the leather. In order to show the character of the work, we give herewith three examples worked out by Madame Korvin-Pogosky, which shew some of the effects which may be produced. The largest is taken from the title page of an old Slavonic Church book of the fourteenth century in one of the Russian monasteries.

The apparatus as manufactured by Herr Fritzschke, of Leipzig, is very simple, effective, and inexpensive. It consists of a glass bottle half-filled with benzine, the metal stopper is lined with indiarubber, which makes the bottle airtight; through the centre there are two metal tubes with indiarubber tubing attached, one is connected with a bellows and reservoir and the other to the platinum style or pencil, which is held in a hollow wooden handle so constructed that the air passes in and keeps it cool in the hand. The platinum point is heated over a spirit lamp till it becomes red hot; the bellows on the other tube is then set in motion with while the breadth of the lines may be increased by the depression of the instrument.

The design is usually traced or drawn in pencil upon the leather, which should be tacked out tightly on a flat smooth drawing board. The best leather to use is Russian calf-skin of natural colour, but almost any light coloured leather may be used. With German calf, however, the surface is so delicate that the
burnt-in design easily cracks up after a short time, so that it is advisable not to use a leather with such a prepared surface. The prettiest work is effected in outline, after the manner of pen and ink sketches or wood engravings, but a solid ground work may be burnt-in in the stipple and diaper style, and the design left standing like a piece of carved woodwork.

The utmost delicacy of touch is required in the use of the platinum point, especially in starting any line or curve. While in motion, the point draws its black line freely and clearly enough, but in starting—until practice has made the worker proficient—the tendency is to dwell upon the point, and the slightest hesitancy causes the burnt part to be broader and deeper than the rest of the work. When finished the work should be washed over with a weak solution of potash, which serves to darken the design and to cleanse the cover from any stains that may occur in the working. After it is thoroughly dry it should then be varnished with ordinary brown varnish lightly laid on. The whole effect depends upon the evenness of depth and of colour, and it is advisable to have a few lessons in order to know how to get over difficulties that are likely to arise. Madame Korvin-Pogosky gives such lessons at her residence, No. 164 Askew-road, Ravenscourt Park, W., and she has proved herself both a practical worker and teacher.

Many beautiful and artistic designs may be worked for book covers by using a thin veneer of white sycamore wood glued on to the ordinary board of a book as a side. Wood stands the burning treatment better than any leather can do, and after being nicely varnished the design is imperishable. A veneer does not add materially to the weight of the book, nor does it give such a clumsy appearance as wooden boards usually do.

We hope the slight idea of the work given here may be of service to many who would like to find some pleasurable occupation for their spare time. As a commercial speculation, it may appear at first sight too costly a method of production, but we are convinced that with a little patience and perseverance it could be placed upon the market at moderate prices, and would prove an acceptable change from the styles now in vogue.

A RESOLUTION adopted by the Literary and Artistic Congress at Neuchâtel, urging the United States Government to modify the printing clause by allowing a period of six months for republication, seems to offer a fair compromise of the question which is now most harassing to British authors. It would practically protect all British books for six months, for no one would risk reproducing a British work when it might be made, "copyright," and the reproduction be thereupon condemned for infringement.
not matching one part with another. We saw such a specimen on exhibition once, with a ticket attached, stating how many pieces of leather had been used in the design, as if that was the most important feature of the work, but though the inlaying was fairly well done, the figure was all muddled, some parts of the outer lines being of one colour and some of another. If you follow the master-pieces of the Grotier collection, or the examples given on the previous page, you will find each part of the strap-work complete in itself, and repeating itself in proper order, with the colours symmetrically disposed.

For inlaying, choose soft Spanish straight-grained morocco which pares very easily; especially avoid the use of the newer delicate shades of French moroccos, which fade very rapidly. Measure off strips which will suit the general width required, and cut the way the leather stretches most. Beware of the outer edges of the skin, which stretch more than the other parts, and will give you a different shade from the other parts, besides being rougher and more open in texture. Soak the strips well in clean water, lay the strip surface down on the paring stone, and with a folding-stick smooth out the strip, pressing out the grain and squeezing out all superfluous water; then pare as thinly and evenly as possible, that is, as thin as a sheet of stout tissue, but perfectly free from holes or ridges. While the strip still retains a little damp, enough to make it impressionable, lay it on as much of the design as requires one piece without a break, that is, from the part where one line crosses the strap-work to that where another crosses, as shown by the white lines in the accompanying diagrams; press the strip down into the working with your fingers until you have an impression of the part desired, then lift carefully and cut round with a sharp pair of scissors, or lay the strip on a thin sheet of zinc and cut round with a sharp knife. In cutting, let the scissors or knife incline outwards, the cut running in and under, thus making a slightly bevelled edge. Be careful that the cut is clean, with no jagged edge nor trace of the fleshy side of the skin showing; also that it is exact to the edge of the lines, and that the leather is not stretched in the cutting. This operation requires good sight, sharp tools, and no end of patience. Never try to use up a piece of leather that is unequally pared, nor to pare it after it is cut out; nor allow the slightest particle to project beyond its proper limit.

As soon as it is ready, stick the piece on before cutting out more. Have by your side another paring stone or a piece of glass, paste that evenly over and lay the piece on it, fleshy side down, then lay a piece of paper on top, smooth it gently over, so that the piece will be evenly coated yet with no surplus paste to squeeze out, remove the paper, lift the piece with the point of a folder and lay it on the cover without stretching; then lay a clean piece of paper on top and firmly press it down flat and smooth with the thumb or a folding stick, when it must be left to dry.

When you have completed the inlaying, and all is thoroughly dry, wash over the side with clean water, removing any traces of paste that may have lodged round the edges of the work, taking care not to shift the inlays by too much wetting; let it thoroughly dry again, and then give the sides a good hard nip between japanned plates, to press the inlays down into the sides and make the whole surface level. Wash the sides over with vinegar or clear urine, and prepare as usual, pencilling in the whole of the lines and tools.

[To be continued.]
PYROGRAVURE.—DESIGNED AND EXECUTED BY MR. ARTHUR B. GRAY, CAMBRIDGE.
BROWN CALF, WITH STAMPED DESIGN.
(ITALIAN CIRCA 1550.)
IN THE LIBRARY OF THE BOOKSELLERS' UNION, LEIPZIG.