DELIGHTFUL drive, and a charming dissertation on many points of progress in connection with the printing and binding of books from the greatest of living authors, these were the privileges enjoyed by a select party who were conveyed, by the courtesy of Cyril Flower, Esq., M.P., to Aston Clinton, on Saturday, April 12th. The time was five o'clock in the afternoon; the place was the lovely country seat of one of the most popular Members of Parliament; the object was to personally converse with the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.; and the result was one of the most pleasurable of pleasant experiences. Now, if we are to believe the charming author of "Lorna Doone," prefaces "are a nuisance, plunge straight into your subject"; and following this advice, we will only state that owing to indisposition the ex-premier was unable to fulfil his promise to visit the Printing Works at Aylesbury, as had been hoped. Mrs. Gladstone, however, with graceful courtesy, drove into Aylesbury, in company with Mr. Cyril Flower, M.P., to express the right hon. gentleman's disappointment. They were received at the works by Mr. Hazell, Mr. George Watson (both of whom had travelled from London specially for the occasion), and Mr. Henry Jowett. Mr. Hazell, after Mrs. Gladstone had apologised for the absence of her distinguished husband, begged her to convey to the right hon. gentleman a set of "Modern Painters," which had, in common with the rest of Professor Ruskin's works, been printed at Aylesbury. In addition to this, copies of "Hazell's Annual," the Photographic Quarterly, and the "Amateur Photographer Prize Pictures" were included in the gift. Mr. Jowett presented volumes of Hasell's Magazine, laying stress on the unique position and no less unique success of the magazine, of which he is editor. Mrs. Gladstone, after thanking the donors for their presentation, engaged in animated conversation, at the termination of which the signal was given to return home.

The foregoing overture will form a prelude to the music, to which the visit on the following day might fitly be compared. The party consisted of Mr. Hazell and Mr. Watson (Directors), Mr. Henry Jowett (Manager), Messrs. E. Ryder, T. Collings, G. Thrasher, C. J. Curtis, W. L. Stevens, (Overseers), with Mr. W. Howard Hazell, Mr. H. C. Johnstone, and Mr. D. Williamson. On their arrival at Aston Clinton, they were received with great affability by Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Flower, who gave the party a most cordial welcome. After the Dowager Lady Rothschild had added a few
genial greetings, the party were conducted through the handsome hall, in which rare flowers, gay in rich profusion, lent a glorious glow of radiant colour, to the drawing-room in which Mr. Gladstone and the guests were assembled. Rising from his seat near the fire, introductions took place, after which the right hon. gentleman said:

I think, is fairly entitled to be termed ‘a noble art.’ I believe the firm has a special position, from the fact—if I am wrong, please correct me—that it has works of large dimensions in the country, while its head office is in London. Now, that is, I hold, a very good principle, this linking together of the town and country, and is usually accompanied by both economy in cost—is it not so?—and improvement in the conditions of labour. I am, however, somewhat surprised that the cost of binding is no cheaper, but rather dearer, than it was twenty years ago, and consequently, instead of our having our books bound for us, we have to put up with the cloth binding. Now, what is the reason for that?

Mr. Hazell: “I think, sir, that it is on account of the fact that, while machinery has done much to cheapen the cost of printing and cloth binding, new machinery in leather binding has not been introduced.”

Mr. Gladstone: “Then you say no new machinery has been introduced for binding? I had the impression that some new system was in vogue for pressing the book into shape.”

Mr. Curtis said that in his opinion the result was due to the shortening of the hours of labour, and the corresponding increase of wages.

Mr. Gladstone: “Yes, that is all very well; but that has affected other industries, while the goods of to-day are much cheaper. My point is this—‘Why is binding no cheaper?’”

Mr. George Watson informed the right hon. gentleman that books were now certainly passed between heavy rollers, thus lessening hand labour; but beyond that there was hardly a process which had cheapened leather binding.

Mr. Gladstone: “And now with regard to the type,—do you still adhere to the old-faced type, such as one sees in Pickering’s works, one of which I was looking at this morning?”

Mr. Jowett: “Yes, we find that we cannot excel that style.”
pages of their Prayer Book are a perfect picture, reminding one of those early printed books which are still marvellous examples of printing."

Mr. Cyril Flower, M.P.: "And, Mr. Gladstone, this firm also carries on type-casting."

Mr. Gladstone: "Indeed! Then I suppose your works for carrying on all these various

Mr. Jowett: "And singularly, too, the ink used in the fifteenth century books is still intense and brilliant."

Mr. Gladstone: "Yes,—beautiful."

branches are in the country, and your offices in London. Where are the London offices?"

Mr. Hazell: "At 1 Creed-lane, near St. Paul's Cathedral."
Mr. Gladstone: “How many have you in your employ?”

Mr. Hazell: “Nearly 1,200 altogether.”

Mr. Gladstone: “But how many at Aylesbury?”

Mr. Hazell: “About 400 persons, sir.”

Mr. Gladstone then asked several questions as to various kinds of literature printed at the Aylesbury works, to which Mr. Jowett replied: “You will be interested, sir, in hearing that we printed your pamphlet, ‘Is the Church of England worth Preserving?’ at our Aylesbury works.”

Mr. Gladstone: “Oh yes! I suppose it was the one that appeared in the Contemporary, and which was published by Strahan.”

Further conversation ensued as to the printing of Professor Ruskin’s works, Mr. Hazell explaining that the firm were simply the printers of the works under Mr. Allen’s direction, who published them at Orpington.

Dryden, in his essay on “Dramatick Poesy,” says, “Every age has a kind of universal genius”; and, whatever may be the political feelings of those who come in contact with Mr. Gladstone, they cannot fail to remark the extraordinary universal knowledge of which he is the possessor. At the conclusion of this conversation, which had attracted interested listeners to the drawing-room in the persons of the Lady de Rothschild, Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Flower, and the Hon. Mrs. Yorke, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. G. W. E. Russell, Mr. Herbert Paul, and others of the house-party, the visitors took their leave of Mr. Gladstone, who cordially shook hands with them and wished them hearty success in their commercial undertakings. Mr. Cyril Flower then photographed the party in no less than six positions, after which tea was generously served by the host and hostess, and thus concluded a most enjoyable visit. It is but fitting to express, what was felt by every one of the party, the deep gratitude which was due to the Dowager Lady Rothschild and Mrs. and Mr. Cyril Flower for both their delightful hospitality and their kindness in thus having afforded the opportunity of such a charming interview with the most distinguished of living personalities.—Hazell’s Magazine.

Mr. Chas. T. Jacobi, manager of the Chiswick Press, 21 Tooks-court, E.C., writes that the particular book referred to by Mr. Gladstone—in fact, all the works issued by the Mr. Pickering of that period, were printed by the late Mr. Charles Whittingham, of the Chiswick Press. This Prayer Book was issued in 1844. It was printed in red and black, in black-letter, and was of folio size.

The general appearance of the volume somewhat resembles the “Gutenberg” Bible—hence, probably, Mr. Gladstone’s reference.

This book was shewn by the Chiswick Press in the first Arts and Crafts Exhibition of 1888.

Mr. Gladstone on Bookbinding.

Referring to the foregoing conversation on leather-binding, Mr. W. J. E. Crane, a well-known London binder, writes: “Everyone is aware that the veteran liberal statesman, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, is a student and literary man of life-long experience, and hence when he enunciates his opinions upon books we are glad to listen. The article on “Books and the Housing of them,” contributed by Mr. Gladstone to a recent number of the Nineteenth Century, was extremely interesting to book-lovers, and an excellent proof of the versatility of mind of this octogenarian statesman. But the ancient classic poets asserted that even Olympian Jove occasionally nodded, and if this be possible to the king of gods, how much more so to a mere man, however great his intellectual endowments. But does it not appear surprising that a gentleman who has had so wide and intimate an acquaintance with the great realm of books, as a life-long student like Mr. Gladstone must have done, should appear to be so badly informed upon so ancient and artistic a craft as that of the bookbinder? Leather binding is, and always has been, a craft carried on by expert workmen, who have acquired skill by years of practice in delicate and careful manipulation, which machinery cannot emulate or equal. To produce a good and delicately finished leather binding mainly by machinery is as impossible as to produce the Medicean Venus or one of Raphael’s Cartoons by means of machinery. All that machinery can do for the good binder is to take a portion of the drudgery of his trade off his hands; but this is of trifling moment, because, without
machinery, any stout apprentice or labourer could do the same. Hence if the rolling machine (to which Mr. Gladstone referred) has superseded the old beating hammer, and if the guillotine, the backing machine, the millboard cutter, &c., have relieved the modern bibliopagists of some drudgery, they have still left all the more important and delicate operations to the left hands of a skilled—and therefore fairly paid—ouvrier. Good leather binding is, consequently, and always has been, an expensive luxury of the wealthy, and so also—whatever changes Mr. Gladstone may imagine have taken place—are good garments, carriages, furniture, jewellery, or anything else which has still to be made by hand by skilled workmen.

**Taste in Bookbinding.**

It is a disputed question, among book-lovers of taste, whether the whole of a small collection should be bound in the same material and of the same colour, or whether a diversity should prevail. There are valid reasons for either plan. A library where both morocco and calf bindings are adopted, in the various hues which are given to each leather, has a pleasant and lively appearance, and if glaring contrasts in hues be avoided in neighbouring volumes, as they stand upon the shelves, an air of lightness and vivacity will characterise the apartment. But the contrast must by no means be too pronounced. Dr. Dibdin, a great authority on all such matters, warns us specially against the employment of either white vellum or scarlet morocco as a material for the jackets of our volumes. Both are too decided in appearance, and impart a "spotty" look to the shelves. Of course this objection applies only to single volumes or small sets in libraries of limited extent. If, for instance, a whole press, or set of shelves, could be appropriated to vellum-clad volumes of the Fathers and patristic theology, the effect would be good. The decision on the general question of uniformity versus variety must be left in great measure to individual taste.

Where the collection is small, say, sufficient to fill two ordinary book-cases (about 500 volumes), an excellent plan is to reserve one case for standard English authors, and bestow in the other works on science, art, travels, foreign books, etc. Let all the bindings be of morocco, either "whole" binding (the term used when the book is wholly covered with leather), or "half" binding (where the back and corners only are leather covered, "cloth" of a similar colour to that of the leather being used for the sides), according to the value and importance of the book. If maroon morocco be chosen for the books in the first press, and an olive green for those in the second, the effect will be chaste and massive. Both these leathers "throw up" the gilding of the back splendidly. Where expense is not a primary consideration, the back should not be scrimped in this matter of gilding, or, as it is technically termed, "finishing." A morocco-bound book should bear a good amount of gold on the back; but the patterns of the tools should be carefully selected.—Bookmart.

**Book Decoration.**

Contemporary French binders seem to be rather carrying to excess the use of the coloured leather mosaic, and are seeking in their designs a picturesqueness which seems incompatible with the nature of a book cover. A happier revival is the introduction of medals and enamels into book decoration. M. de Goncourt has, for instance, a copy of "Manette Salomon" bound in La Vallière morocco, and in the centre of each side cover, an enamal of Popelin representing the heroine of the book. The enamals are inlaid in the centre of the boards and the morocco is undecorated. Another innovation—to some extent a revival also—would be the painting of vellum bindings either in grisaille or in gouache, or in water colours. But fantastic book decoration is really only limited by the imagination and the dictates of good taste. From the foregoing principles and examples the reader will perhaps be able to form an idea of the desiderata and possibilities of high-class book decoration. Generally speaking, the same remarks apply equally to fine and to commercial bindings. The principles of decoration are the same, and it is to be observed always that the decoration of a book-cover should be ornamental and not picturesque.
Mr. Gladstone and his Books.

Mr. Gladstone, when at Hawarden, is an early riser, always down at a quarter to eight, ready for his walk to the village church, where his son Stephen is the rector. Neither rain, nor storm, nor snow interferes with this daily habit. On his return he breakfasts, and then retires to his library. All his life

A BOOK COLLECTOR,

he has had to grapple with the inelastic conditions of household arrangements. Many years ago he hit upon a happy device which long enabled him to cope with the ever-increasing number of his books. Instead of having bookcases arranged flatly round the walls of his library, he has rows of bookshelves standing out at right angles from the wall. These hold books on either side, and thus multiply the capacity of the library as compared with what it would hold under the ordinary arrangement. But even this plan has proved inadequate, and this year Mr. Gladstone has had to build a kind of annexe to the castle, in which he has begun

WITH HIS OWN HAND

to store and arrange his beloved books. This he designed as a legacy to the neighbours at

Hawarden, who even under the old arrangement, were not debarred from sharing his delight in his most cherished possessions. Whilst all his books are carefully classified, treasured places being given to works of Homer, Shakespeare, and Dante, Mr. Gladstone’s orderly mind is pleased by an arrangement that gives him a choice of chairs and tables at which he seats himself according to the nature of the work he has at hand. At one he is to be found when engaged in politics; to the other he gladly betakes himself when out of his busy days he finds an hour or two to spend in the pleasant labour of literature.—Mr. H. W. Lucy, in the "Scottish Leader's" special, "Mr. Gladstone in Scotland."

A Vain Printer—Sixtus Russinger.

MODERN erudition and faithful industry are generally indicated as well as claimed by the first printers. But of all the printers, early and late, the most boastful is Sixtus Russinger, who bragged of printing a "faultless book," that did not contain a solitary error. He was a priest of Strasburg, and printed a book in Naples in 1472, at the end of which he put the inscription:

"Sixtus the copies printed with much care,
Now twice revised by Dr. Oliviere;
The happy purchaser in vain shall look,
Yet find no error in this faultless book."