Shavings for Binders.

When Diane de Poitiers first became a widow she stamped her volumes with a laurel springing from a tomb, and the motto, “Sola vivet in illo.” But when she consoled herself with the companionship of Henry II. she suppressed the tomb and made the motto meaningless. Her crescent shone not on her books but on the palace walls of France, and her initials are always laced with the H of her royal lover.

“In large libraries there should not be too much blind tooing, or too great a want of gilt. No doubt the ornament should be as appropriate as possible to the book. One could not endure ginger-bread gilt bibles and prayer books or dictionaries, or other books of reference. Let them have a subdued decoration on their backs; bands only full gilt, or a running edge tool in the centre of them, with small ornaments between the bands.”—D. DIBDEN.

“The weapon with which the binder deals the most heavy blows to books is the “plough,” the effect of which is to cut away the margin, placing the print in a wrong position relatively to the back and head, and often denuding the work of portions of the very text. This reduction in size not seldom brings in a handsome folio to the size of a quarto, and a quarto to an octavo.”—BLADES.

In their cream-coloured ‘Oxford vellum,’
In their redolent ‘crushed Levant,’
With their delicate ‘watered linings,’
They are jewels of price, I grant;—
‘Blind-tooled’ and ‘morocco-jointed,’
They have Zechinsdorf’s daintiest dress,
They are graceful, attenuate, polished,
But they gather the dust no less.—
AUSTIN DOBSON.

Binding is often ordered by collectors in “Janseniste style.” By this is meant that the covers shall be without decoration, quite plain. The name is taken from Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, who avoided the decoration of the altar. The Janseniste style should never be adopted except the book is covered with a fine piece of levant morocco, otherwise it will look very poor.

“It is hopeless to expect the art of bookbinding to revive until means are taken to raise the standard of appreciation in which binding is held. There are few connoisseurs who understand the principles of artistic binding, and many men and women who would be ashamed to admit they were a bad picture will admire a cheaply bound book by inferior workmen.”—WHEATLEY.

Gascon was a famous binder who lived in France during the reign of Henri II., and nearly all the books in that monarch’s library were bound by him. He doubtless was also the binder of many of Grolier’s books. It was Gascon who first introduced the elaborate gold tool finishing on volumes.

Roger Payne was a native of Windsor, and served his time with Mr. Pote, who was a well-known bookseller in that borough and publisher to Eton College.

“The great merit of Roger Payne lay in his taste—in his choice of ornaments, and especially in the working of them. It is impossible to excel him in these two particulars. His favourite colour was that of olive, which he called Venetian. In his lining, joints, and inside ornaments, our hero generally and sometimes melancholically failed. He was fond of what he called purple paper, the colour of which was as violent as its texture was coarse. It was liable also to change and become spotty, and as a harmonising colour with olive, it was odiously discordant. The joints of his books were generally disjointed, uneven, carelessly tooled, and having a very unfinished appearance. His backs are of tooled silk for firmness. His work excellently forwarded—every sheet fairly and bona fide stitched into the back, which was afterwards usually coated in Russia; but his minor volumes did not open well in consequence. He was too fond of thin boards, which in folios produces an uncomfortable effect, from fear of this being inadequate to sustain the weight of the volume.—Dr. DIBDEN.

Books placed in a library should be thoroughly dusted two or three times a year, not only to keep them in all their freshness, but also to prevent any development of insects, and to examine for signs of dampness. The interior of a book also asks that care, which unfortunately is neglected very often. After having taken a book from the shelves it should not be opened before ascertaining that the top edge is not covered with dust. If it is a book that has had the edge cut it should be dusted with a soft duster, or the dust simply blown off. If it is a book with uncut edges it should be brushed with a hard brush. By this method, in opening the volume one need not be afraid that the dust will enter between the leaves and soil them.

The Romans had their librarii, librarioli, bibliopagi, and bibliopola: answering to our printer, engraver, binder, and bookseller. The librarii multiplied books by transcribing MSS.; the librarioli illustrated them by ornament on the title pages, margins, and terminations; the bibliopagi employed their skill on the embellishment of their exteriors; and the bibliopola were engaged in the disposal of them.

TO THE BOOKBINDER.

Has my muse made a fault? Friend, I entreat,
Before you bind her up, you would her beat.
Though she’s not wanton, I can tell
Unless you beat her, you’ll not bind her well.

Jean Grolier was a collector of books, and not a binder (as is popularly supposed). He was ambassador from France at the court of Italy, and after twenty years’ residence in that country he returned to Paris and became the founder of fine bookbinding in France.

Calf, whether dull or polished in the finish, is not suitable for a flexible back; neither is crush’d levant, owing to its polished surface: because the free opening of a flexible back will wrinkle and destroy the finish of these leathers.

The principles to be observed in finishing are: appropriateness of design, accuracy, solidity, and brightness of workmanship.
Shavings for Binders.

BOOKBINDING is essentially decorative, and good decoration is far more often suggested by material and mode of work than by any desire on the part of the designer to tell us of his joy in the work. Hence it comes that good decoration is always traditional. Where it is the expression of the individual, it is usually either false or capricious. These handicrafts are not primarily expressive arts, they are impressive arts. If a man has any message for the world he will not deliver it in a material that always suggests and always conditions its own decoration. The beauty of bookbinding is abstract decorative beauty. It is not, in the first instance, a mode of expression for a man's soul. Indeed, the danger of all these lofty claims for handicraft is simply that they show a desire to give crafts the province and motive of arts such as poetry, painting, and sculpture. Such province and such motive they have not got. Their aim is different. Between the arts that aim at annihilating their material, and the arts that aim at glorifying it, there is a wide gulf.

The bindings of books in galleries perish from heat, and the higher the books are above the floor the more active is this destructive agency. Leather is an animal tissue, and will not, like linen, cotton, paper and other vegetable substances, sustain without injury a higher temperature than we find agreeable to live in. Books cannot live where men cannot live. They are more nearly allied to us as congeners than we are wont to suppose. In excessive heat the leather of bindings slowly consumes, and its life departs. Books should be shelved in the coolest part of the room, and where the air is never likely to be overheated, which is near the floor where we ourselves live and move.

"We ought to recollect, with more of a realized conception than we commonly attain to, that a book, aye that every book, consists, like man from whom it draws its lineage, of a body and a soul. They are not always proportionate to each other. Nay, even the different members of the book body do not sing, but clash, when bindings of a profuse costliness are imposed, as too often happens in the case of bibles and books of devotion, upon letterpress which is respectable journeyman's work and nothing more."—GLADSTONE.

De Thou was a celebrated patron of the art of bookbinding, who lived in the reign of Henri IV. of France, at the end of the sixteenth century. He was the friend of Grolier, and formed one of the finest collections of books and bindings that money and sound judgment could procure. The library was dispersed early in the eighteenth century, and many fine examples from it are to be seen in the British Museum.

In the library at Mexborough House, in Yorkshire, were formerly two books—Sir John Cheek's "Hart of Sedition" and Braithwaite's "Arcadian Princess"—both bound in the prepared skin of Mary Bothman, "the Yorkshire witch," who was executed early in the beginning of this century for murder.

"Noble Works ought not to be printed in mean and worthless forms, and cheapness ought not to be limited by an instinctive sense and law of fitness. The binding of a book is the dress with which it walks out into the world. The paper, type, and ink, are the body in which its soul is domiciled: and these three—soul, body, and habiliment—are a trio which ought to be adjusted to one another by the laws of harmony and good sense."—GLADSTONE.

The late Francis Bedford was not only a distinguished bookbinder but also a collector of fine books, which he placed in handsome bindings. On his death, his valuable library, which embraced standard works in all classes of literature and many rare books of prints, was dispersed by Messrs. Sotherby, and brought high prices. His copy of Rogers' "Poems" and "Italy," £116, were the chef-d'oeuvres of the collection.

There's Eve,—not our first mother fair,—
But Floris Eve, a binder true;
Thither does Bauzonnet repair,
Dermes, Le Gascon, Paileloup!
But never come the cropping crew
That dock a volume's honest size,
Nor they that "letter" backs askew,
Within the bookman's paradise.—
ANDREW LANG.

It is curious that bibliographers should have so persistently neglected the study of stamped bindings, since they are often of the greatest importance as the means of supplying valuable evidence. When they have not been tampered with they are generally lined with printed fragments, often of great rarity, and still more valuable for the light they throw on the history of the individual book.—The Library.

Books should be handled tenderly; it should be remembered that their nerves and sinews are but sewing thread and thin glue, and that they are not brick-bats. They should never be forced open too wide—should not be swung by a single cover—nor have their pages turned by a child's primer—nor ground beneath the elbow—nor consigned to the mercy of pitch and toss accidents.

"Would you like this book half-bound, madam?" said the obliging bibliopole to the lady from Chicago.
"For the land's sake, man!" she smartly replied, "what should I want with a book half bound. Have it finished."

In 1835, Prince Oginski, a Polish exile, gained his living in Paris as a bookbinder, employing only Polish workmen. His shop was close to the Barrière du Roule, and over it was the inscription—Oginski, Bookbinder.

"Oppressed Greece" was all very well. Crushed levant is very well, but when "Greek joined Greek," and your Greece stuck to your levant, it was very ill.—Book Mart.

There are a few books that are bound to be read; but there are many more that are bound so that they cannot be read.

A good binder, like a poet, is born not made. Most binders are not to be borne.—Book Mart.
or the beginning of decadence. Harvey’s greatness as an engraver is touched upon together with Samuel Williams’ works. The French and German schools are only lightly dealt with, and the ensuing records of Smith and the author himself, brings the reader up to date. Freethand drawing, mechanical engraving, and wood engraving as a distinct art are enlarged upon, as are also the subjects of tone, texture, and line. An explanation of the difference between the new school and preceding work, with a closing question: “Can wood engraving be revived as an art?” leads to the final chapter upon the two kinds of Chiaroscuro.

This closes a most elaborate work, the main contents of which cannot be gainsaid. Whether the world of letters and art, as existing to-day, will grow into a taste for that which is only true and correct in the forms of illustration, we dare not venture to say, but can only hope that it will be so. However, until this is accomplished, there is no great hope for a general acknowledgment and practice of the Linton school. Mr. Linton has done all that a great teacher can do, and it is only to be hoped that succeeding generations will be so impressed with the great engraver’s principles of work as to return to them, and only endeavour to improve in the matter of execution. While the printed text of our books remains what it is, pure wood engraving is its only true form of illustration, and Linton the only living master and teacher of that form.

A few notes of Mr. Linton’s life will be given in our next issue, together with a notice of his “Poems and Translations,” published by Mr. J. C. Nimmo, by whose permission the portrait of the great master of wood engraving has been reproduced for our pages.

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**Shavings for Bookbinders.**

**Mr. Andrew Lang**, in his book entitled “The Library,” devotes a chapter to bindings, and his advice to the bibliophile is: “Let old English books, as More’s ‘Utopia,’ have a cover of stamped and blazoned calf. Let the binder clothe the early Rabelais or Marot in the style favoured by Grolier, in leather tooled with geometrical patterns. Let a Molière or Corneille be bound in the graceful contemporary style of Le Gascó, where the lace-like pattern of the gilding resembles the point lace in which La Fontaine liked to view himself. Let a binding, à la fanfare, in the style of Thounenier, denote a novelist of the last century; let panelled Russia leather array a folio of Shakspeare, and let English works of a century ago be clothed in the sturdy fashion of Roger Payne.”

**Book-lovers** have a language of their own. For example, a Bibliopagist is a Bibliophile with a special regard for bookbindings. A Bibliopath is a book miser; a Bibliophile is a bookseller for Bibliophilies; a Biblioklept is a stealer of valuable books. A man who has a collection of choice manuscripts and refuses to let another man consult them is a Bibliopagist. Bibliolatry is the worship of books.

**Thomas Maioli**, from whose name the well-known style in binding is derived, resided in Italy during the earlier portion of the sixteenth century. He was not a binder, but, like Grolier, a rich bibliophile with a taste for fine bindings. The great beauty of the Maioli bindings lies in the graceful scroll-work finishing.

**Binding** in which the back is coated with a drying solution of india-rubber, was patented by William Hancock in 1836. It is largely used for music, plate, and single sheet work.

To determine the real size of a bound book, writes Mr. Wm. Blades, find the signature and count the leaves (not pages) to the next. A further test is the binder’s thread in the middle of the sheet: the number of leaves from each thread to the next will give the same result. But these rules do not apply to the old black-letter books and those of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in which the most satisfactory test is the watermark. The rule is: a folio volume will have all the watermarks in the middle of the page; a quarto has the watermark folded in half on the back of the book, still midway between the top and the bottom; in an octavo it is at the back, but at the top, and often considerably cropped by the binder’s plough; and a 12mo and 16mo have the watermark on the fore-edge.

The finest bindings of the sixteenth century were those collected by Canevari, physician to Pope Urban. They are easily distinguished by a medallion worked in gold, silver, and colour, with a small device and motto, “Libri declario.” These bindings are unsurpassed. There are several fine specimens in the British Museum.

Some of the finest specimens of artistic decorative printing done in Italy are the little books offered to people upon the occasion of their marriages. They are generally in the form of an original poem, an essay, or a historical dissertation on marriage customs, written by some friend of the bridegroom.

Books should be kept in a warm and dry place, otherwise they will become speedily mildewed. The mildew shows itself in the form of roundish or irregular brown spots, and cannot be cured. After the process has once commenced it can only be checked by the utmost attention to dryness.
Shavings for Binders.

The late Mr. Blades writing of chained books, says: "Before the invention of printing books were scarce and dear, and it was the custom of the college authorities to lend single volumes to students for one year, to be then returned with evidence of their having been profitably studied. No doubt positive loss was one result, and injustice to non-favoured students another; but books borrowed have always been proverbial for not coming home to roost, and chaining seemed a natural way of securing them for general use. This appears likely to have been the object of chaining rather than the prevention of theft.

"Corvinus, King of Hungary," says Warton, "placed fifty thousand volumes in a tower which he had erected in the metropolis of Buda; and in this library he established thirty amanuenses, skilled in painting, illuminating, writing, and binding, who, under the conduct of one Ragusinus, a Dalmatian, consummately learned in the Greek, Chaldaic, and Arabic languages, and an elegant designer and painter of ornaments on vellum, attended incessantly to the business of transcription and decoration."

John Bagford, the bookseller, who died in the early part of the last century, made a collection of specimens of bindings (mostly stamped calf), which he stripped off the books themselves. These are in the manuscript department of the British Museum, where there are also a large number of fine specimens of early bindings, which have been specially catalogued in the classed catalogue of manuscripts under the division of drawings.

A didactic poem was written in 1820 by Lesnè, a French binder. It is in four books, and morocco, calf skin, and the paste brush are extolled in classic style. Speaking of Lesnè, Dr. Dibden expressed the hope that he could bind better than he could write poetry, otherwise he feared his family would often want a meal.

M. Quaritch is the owner of the MS. prayer book carried by the first Earl of Shrewsbury at the battle of Castillon in 1453, in which both he and his son were slain. It was discovered, as is supposed, after the fight by some Bretons, who took it to their own province, where it remained until about forty years ago.

In Dibden’s Biographical Decameron we read: The printing of the folio Bible in the reign of Henry VIII. (1538) must have given importance to bookbinding. The first edition consisted of 2,500 copies, one of which was set up in every church in England and secured to a desk by a chain.

Colbert, the Minister of Louis XIV., took such an interest in bookbinding that, in a treaty with Morocco, he inserted a stipulation for a certain number of skins annually, to be used for bindings in the Bibliothèque Royale.

A beautiful book, like a beautiful woman, is none the worse, but rather all the better, for having a good dressmaker.

What are Remarque Proofs? Booksellers and binders are sometimes asked this question. In the present day a remarque proof means a really good impression from the plate with a finely etched sketch on the margin. In most cases a portrait of the artist is given. In earlier days a remarque on a plate was evidence of the artist’s caprice. When Raphael Morghen engraved the “Last Supper” after Leonardo da Vinci he caused some copies to be printed before the plate was finished; a salt-cellar was left incomplete. Proofs in this state are extremely rare and fetch high prices.

In 1521 Andrew Lisly, a bookbinder, was employed for 199 days at Eton College repairing the library; he was paid fourpence per day in wages, and one shilling per week in commons. The bursar bought for his use 20 calf skins, 36 white sheep skins, 5 pig skins, and 24 red skins, 100 plates of horn, 5,000 copper nails (to be set round the edge of the boards, like bosses), 10 pounds and a quarter of strips of brass, 7 pounds of brass wire, 27 pairs of clasps, and a quantity of green and red thread, glue, and needles.

Burns saw a splendidly bound copy of Shakespeare in the library of a nobleman in Edinburgh, and he wrote the following lines on one of the pages:

"Through and through the inspired leaves,
Ye maggots, make your windings,
But oh, respect his lordship’s taste,
And spare the golden bindings."

The Harleian style of binding takes its name from Lord Harley, Earl of Oxford, who, at his death, bequeathed his library to the University of Oxford. The books are principally bound in red morocco, raised bands, tight backs, marble ends and gilt edges. The finishing is a broad tooled border with centre panels.

Grotius, the famous Dutch statesman and man of letters, who lived in the 17th century, made his love of books do him a special service. When imprisoned at Gorcum he escaped from prison in the box which carried his books backwards and forwards for exchange.

Never destroy old writings or autographs; nor destroy old book plates. If necessary remove them to the end board. Before destroying old bindings examine them for rare leaves or woodcuts of little value in those days, but now, perhaps, curious and valuable.

Mr. Mathews, the well-known American binder, says: "I hold that a study of the several styles of design hitherto used in the decoration of bindings through the centuries, should be made both by collector and binder."

Parchment and leather, stamped with elaborate and grotesque designs stretched over wooden covers, was the prevailing style of binding in the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth century.

Grolier’s books had worked upon them the Latin inscription, “Johanni Grolier et amicorum,” signifying that Grolier wished his friends to enjoy the use of his books.

Binders began to use sawn backs about 1751.