

## Hymn and Prayer-Book Covers.



The cover of this Prayer-book is  $3\frac{1}{4}$ -inches long,  $2\frac{3}{4}$ -inches wide, and  $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inches thick. It is made of neat's skin, and is ornamented with a pattern in leather work, not embossed. The wrong side is only ornamented with two straight edge stripes and the wide back with several thick relief stripes across. Thick cardboard is put under the leather cut in one piece, the inside being lined with brocade paper. A leather clasp  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch broad fastens the book. The blue edges of the paper are patterned with silver stars. Directions for Leather Work were given in an earlier number of *THE BOOKBINDER*.

The illustration here is a Hymn-book with gold embroidery, for Confirmation. The size of the book is regulated by the ornamentation, around which the edge can be left any desired width. The ground is of black velvet and the petals worked on a cotton foundation in silver contoured with gold thread, the calices with plain gold, the leaves and stalks with twisted gold thread. The covering of a book in velvet requires very careful treatment, especially in the matter of the consistency of the glue used, but it is a branch of work that any experienced craftsman may venture upon.



## Careless Bookbinding.

A COMMON complaint with persons who send books and magazines to local binders is that their directions are either ignored or neglected, and that when the volumes come home they are anything but ornaments to the shelves. One of our correspondents tells us of a set of books totally spoilt by inefficient work, the margins ploughed down to the letterpress in many places, and the backing in others so close as to render the reading very difficult. "I would much rather," he says, "have my books with rough edges, though they certainly attract the dust, than have their margins treated as some binders treat them." Another correspondent complains of insecure sewing, and tells how a volume of Dickens came to pieces before it had been in use a month, and yet this same book, he adds, was resplendent in gilding and colours. A third relates an instance of neglect which totally destroyed the value of the work. For want of sufficient drying, the letterpress and plates set off against each other, and gave the pages a disagreeably mottled appearance. In this case something was doubtless due to the sender, but would not a careful binder have discovered that the sheets were not dry enough to stand the ordinary beating and pressing? A few hours in a cool oven or an open room would have dried the ink. Some fault, too, may have belonged to the printer; his ink was, perhaps, too cheap, and would not dry. A cool hand passed over the surface of the page would certainly have informed the binder as to this fact, but in the hurry of cheap work this precaution is often neglected. In the present state of the printer's art, damp sheets are inexcusable.

Another instance of carelessness is given by "T. H." He says: "I sent the twelve monthly issues of *Mirth* to my bookbinder, with special written directions to put them in neat half-calf just as they were, all the wrappers and advertisements included. As this was a somewhat unusual course, I took the further precaution of calling upon him and explaining that I wanted the magazine so bound, because the advertisements contained some announcements I wished to preserve, fully explaining to him that all he need do was to detach the title and contents, place them in front, and then bind up the twelve monthly parts. He declared himself perfectly assured of the plain necessity before him, and promised compliance with my desire. Guess my surprise when the book was sent home minus the wrappers, and with only two pages of advertisements at the end. I took it back to him immediately, when he politely apologised, and said he would rectify the error. He had given orders to his foreman to have the book bound as I had directed, but unfortunately the sewing woman had stripped off the covers, &c., but he had no doubt he could find and replace them. A fortnight elapsed and I called again; a month, and the book was yet unbound; three months, and then, upon my urgent request, the job was completed. But how? Three of the twelve wrappers were pasted in front of the title-page, and sixteen of the ninety-six advertisement pages inserted in the end. Could anything be more vexatious? Of course, I complained, and of course Mr. Binder was again very sorry. But the fact was, the sheets had disappeared, and on inquiry he found that the twelve parts, as originally published, were no longer procurable. The stock had been sold off, and the mistake was irremediable, and so on—till I left his shop, a wiser and a sadder man."

There is a taste in bookbinding which seems to be innate. The lover of books may not possess it, but he sees at a glance whether there is real accordance between the inside and the outside of a volume. Costliness is not an indispensable element in the tasteful arrangement of a bookcase. Those who cannot afford the elaborate work of a Payne, a Lewis, or a Hayday, can at least gratify their sense of beauty with ornamental cloth. To such a degree of elegance and finish have books in cloth recently attained that the need for leather-work is much less than hitherto. Indeed, we may say of some of the cloth-cased books issued by first-class publishers that "they are fitted for any gentleman's library." But by all means let us avoid incongruities. The local binder has much to learn; and he seems very slow in learning it. What his father and his grandfather did before him, he does still; but, we fear, less conscientiously. He seems to display a lack of the genuine workman-spirit. He is satisfied if the book be turned out fairly well, and the customer make no complaint. Of such ordinary work there is, he will tell us, even smaller demand than ever. No wonder; for he takes no pains to cultivate a higher and better taste. Take an every-day example. Mr. Smith takes in the *Graphic*, and the Misses Smith patronise the *Family Herald* and *All the Year Round*. As the half-yearly volumes are completed, they want them nicely bound. They go to Mr. Jones, their bookseller, and give him their orders. Mr. Jones takes them readily enough, and transmits them to Mr. Brown, the local binder; and as each must get a profit on the job, the result is dissatisfaction. When the next half year comes round Mr. Smith and his daughters order the cases for their newspapers and magazines of the publishers. The cases are neatly ornamented and nicely lettered; but too often they are so slightly attached to the sheets that the book soon falls to pieces. The remedy for all this lies in a word—emulation. Let local binders be content with nothing less than good if not first-rate workmanship, and they will soon find that custom will come back, and profits will not be wanting.