

We have been informed by an American subscriber that tree-calf has been overdone in that country, and that nearly every binder has been ornamenting his books in tree-calf. This has certainly not been the case in England, the reason being that so very few know how to produce a "tree" properly. We trust, however, that by following our directions the difficulty will be overcome. A short time ago, an engraved wooden block was brought into the market to block a "tree" in black; it did not, however, find favour, as each side was exactly like the other, and altogether the effect was stiff and formal, very different to the beautiful and varied forms of the natural flow of the water process.

To tree-marble calf on the skin for half bindings, the skin is prepared by paste washing, colouring and glairing as done on the book, the skin is then laid upon a board, the board being slightly elevated at one end, water is then thrown on evenly all over, and sprinkled with the iron and brown. Should a longer flow or stem be desired it can be had by placing under the skin a few small stones, or pieces of wood, the leather resting on these divert the flow of water into another channel; but on no account may the leather touch iron, or it will, as all bookbinders know, or should know, stain it badly.

After the leather has been marbled it should be washed freely, using a sponge and plenty of water.

Archibald Leighton.

THE FIRST BINDER IN CLOTH.

THE name of Leighton has been associated with bookbinding in London since the year 1764, when an Archibald Leighton from Aberdeen commenced business in Cold Bath Square, Clerkenwell.

His first wife (Margaret Mudie) died in 1781, having borne him fourteen children, and it is said that the elders of the Scotch Sandemanian Church (of which he was a member) urged that it was his duty to take another wife; he pleaded that he knew of no one worthy to succeed to the one he had lost, whereupon they engaged to find him one, and sent either to Glasgow or Dundee for a Miss Euphan Dougal, to whom he was soon afterwards married.

Of this second marriage there were nine children, the subject of this memoir being the eldest son, who was fifteen years of age when he lost his father, to whose business he had been apprenticed. It is a curious physiological fact, that whereas the first family of fourteen have so multiplied that they are probably the progenitors of nearly all in London who bear the name, the second family of nine have in comparison hardly increased at all.

After the death of Archibald Leighton the elder, the business was carried on by the widow in partnership with her step-son, George, who finally established a separate business in Vineyard Gardens, Clerkenwell. Another step-son, John, established a business as bookbinder in Brewer Street, Golden Square, where the business still exists. Eventually the parent business was removed to Exmouth Street, Clerkenwell, where it was carried on by Archibald Leighton the younger, in partnership with his mother, as Leighton and Son. Here the business capacity and energy of Archibald Leighton soon manifested itself, and,

patronised by the principal publishers of the day—Murray, Colburn, Pickering, Tilt, the brothers Finden, Saunders and Otley, Baldwin and Cradock, Moon, Boys and Graves, Charles Knight, and others, a large business was rapidly accumulated—dwelling-houses were absorbed, gardens built over, and finally a theatre with an entrance in a back street was added.

It was the days of "the Annuals," when it was customary to prepare for the Christmas season books of poetry filled with choice steel engravings and bound in morocco or silk, under such titles as *The Keepsake*, *The Bijou*, *Friendship's Offering*, *The Oriental Annual*, *The Landscape Annual*, *Hood's Comic Annual*, *The Book of Beauty*, &c. These books commanded a very large sale, and the binding was done in quantities that would be considered large even at the present time. An instance occurs to the writer of 2000 imperial quarto volumes (*Finden's Tableaux*), full bound in best morocco, gilt.

The stamping presses in use at that time were not unlike the old-fashioned "Columbian" hand-printing presses which may still be seen in many printing offices. Gas had not penetrated into the workshops, therefore these presses were heated with red-hot irons, constantly changed from a fire near at hand; the finisher heated his tools at a charcoal brazier. There was no cutting machine but the plough knife, and each man or woman had his own special dip candle in a tin candlestick, which was loaded with sand to keep it steady—the dips were not even "snuffless," and the operation of snuffing was usually performed with the fingers.

Those were the days before we enjoyed the "blessings" of free trade, when an English book was of English manufacture, both inside and out. Now all this is changed; the paper, the type and the ink, the leather, the glue and the thread, are to a great extent imported from abroad; the leaf-gold and the mill-boards almost *wholly* so; no one is "protected" except the author.

It was in 1822 that Mr. Archibald Leighton first introduced bookbinder's cloth for binding books; no doubt his mind was first directed to the subject by association with his intimate friend Mr. David Smith, of the house of Bowman and May, Manchester Warehousemen, of Wood Street, Cheapside.

Mr. James Wilson the elder was the family draper, and he was no doubt applied to in the first instance, and *possibly* supplied Mr. Leighton with some of the first he used, and so his name became associated with the invention; but several years elapsed before Mr. Wilson began to supply the trade, and in the interval the business was a monopoly in the hands of Mr. Leighton.

The first book bound in the new material was the first volume of Pickering's *Miniature Aldine Classics* (Dante), which was published in 1822. Another book bearing same date on the title-page, *Thomas Moule's Bibliotheca Heraldica* (a copy of which the writer has in his possession in the original binding) was probably the second book so issued. It was introduced "with the smooth washed surface," the re-introduction of which fifty years later is said to have "inaugurated a new era in cloth binding," and so it was used for many years. It was not till the year 1831 or 1832 that the embossed cloth as we now use it was introduced. The embossed surface was suggested by Mr. Leighton to Mr. De la Rue, and he, acting on the suggestion, carried it out, with the appliances he possessed for embossing paper. A watered silk pattern such as was used for *Lord Byron's Life and*

