



PERSIAN DESIGN.

## Persian Design for a Book Cover.

OUR illustration represents a small but graceful side of Oriental character. The border is perhaps too minute in detail, but the central portion is an exceedingly pure composition, and well covers the field. In this, as in all similar works, it is essential to success that the ornament should be so nicely balanced as to present no patch either of field or pattern for the eye to rest peculiarly upon, and at the same time that the whole should be made up of graceful forms. The stores of Persian and Moorish decorative art have been largely drawn upon by modern designers, and some elegant adaptations have been produced both in cloth and morocco.

### Hints to Finishers.

ONE of the prime points in finishing, says a trade journal, is that a certain amount of moisture shall be retained within the material worked upon, and if by any unavoidable circumstance this condition has been lost prior to finishing, it should be regained by some appropriate application that will secure it. This is made necessary from the fact that in coagulating albumen upon leather to the best advantage a given amount of moisture must be present, so that when heat is applied steam or vapor is produced,



which, mingling with albumen, coagulates it, and at the same time fixes the gold with more certainty and with tenfold better results in brightness and solidity of impression than when the requisite above mentioned is absent.

One of the most commonly known helps to finishers of previous times, as well as the present, is urine, and its introduction into the finisher's art seems to have originated from the manufacturers of leather, who, to a certain extent, still employ it in leather manipulation. Fresh urine when compared with old is less satisfactory in effect. It is only when kept for some time, and after fermentation has commenced, that it begins to acquire the properties for which it is valued. In this state it has long been known by tanners as "sig," and also by finishers, while in textile manufacture it is named "lant." Among other things urine contains urea, and when fermentation takes place this urea is changed into carbonate of ammonia, which, remaining in the liquor, communicates to it its alkaline properties, and the discovery of this may be suggested as one link toward utilizing a limited portion of liquid ammonia with albumen as a beneficial factor in finishing.

It is acknowledged that the best possible condition of all leathers for finishing is the day following the application of the leather to the books; but even in this case it is not always safe to proceed without the aid of some additional preparation beyond paste wash and glair, for, without this precaution, the work taken along at any given time must be very limited in extent. What is wanted is some liquid that will extend the time in the finisher's favor, rather than limit it to a few hours; therefore it is advised to apply clear urine, and afterward a weak solution of oxalic acid, followed by a thin paste wash and two coats of glair, and heat sufficient to secure brightness and permanence upon the material used.

## Some British Binderies.

NO. I.—MESSRS. W. & R. CHAMBERS.

CHANCING to be in Edinburgh, I took advantage of my stay to get a glimpse at the old-established house in High Street, where the various works of this firm are printed and bound. In itself the stone building, raised on the sloping side of the rock on which the old town is built, is a monument of patient persevering industry and enterprise, for few employers in the trade have risen from such small beginnings to such a proud position as that held by these pioneers of cheap healthy literature.

Mr. W. Chambers has aptly described his own position in 1814, when he was thrown upon his own resources as an apprentice to a bookseller at four shillings a week, as being "a hard, but somewhat droll scrimmage with semi-starvation," and even at the close of his servitude he was only earning the meagre sum of five shillings. Yet, with but a week's wages in his pocket, he obtained a stock of books on credit to the value of ten pounds, and having built for himself a small stall in Leith Walk he boldly set up in business on his own account. Not satisfied with his fairly satisfactory success he next ventured on a small printing press, which, with a quantity of well-nigh worn-out type he purchased for three pounds, and turned out a small edition of Robert Burns' songs, binding in paper boards the copies he had struck off with his creaking machinery. After severe struggles in conjunction with Robert, which