

How to Cover Books.

MANY persons regard books as among their choicest possessions, and handle them with loving care; but who can refuse to lend a book, and who knows what treatment it may receive in strange hands? Innumerable nicely bound books are received annually into the homes all over our land, are read, handled, passed from one to another, borrowed and lent, until in many cases, when their owners welcome them back again, if they be so fortunate as to do so, scarcely a vestige of beauty is left in the bindings that were once so tasteful and pretty with their flashes of colour and glints of gold. Books in dull, worn and soiled covers are all that are left to take their places on the bookshelves.

The best way to preserve books that are to be much read is to cover them before they are ever used. With thick, soft, firm paper: cover them so closely that no exposed edges are left to wear out, and so neatly that even the careless will see that they must respect the protecting paper and let it be.

Once learn to cover a book in a neat and lasting manner, and form the habit of covering every newly acquired book before it is handled at all, and one has accomplished something for which he will be thankful as long as he lives to prize the collection of fresh, nice-looking books thus rescued from dullness and tatters.

If boys and girls would begin to save the books they own, would learn to cover them securely, label them with their titles on the back with pen and ink, and number them in the order in which they were acquired, they soon would be surprised to see what a nice beginning of a library they would secure. Such a collection often forms the nucleus of a large and valuable library.

The first thing to do is to get a supply of thick, firm wrapping paper—like that used on the books in public libraries, or by tailors for large, heavy packages; having that, a pair of scissors, a tape measure, a pencil and a rule, we are ready for work.

We will select a medium-sized book on which to make our experiments; one eight by five, and an inch

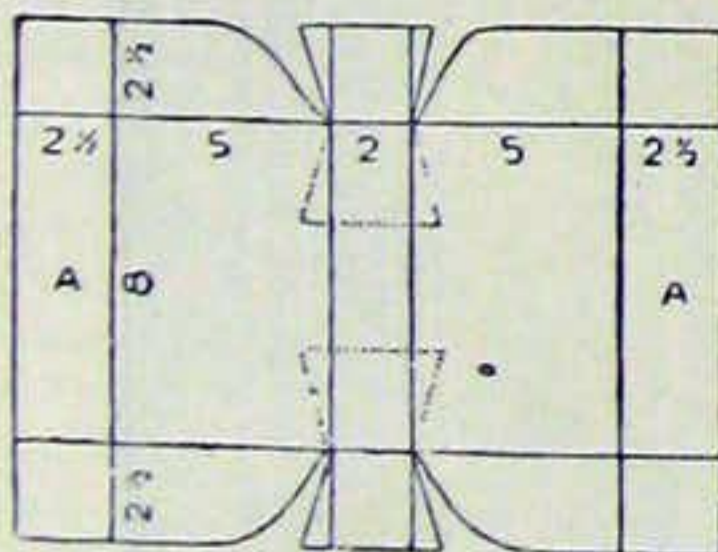


FIG. 1.

and a half thick will do. We wish the paper to fold over two inches and a half inside the book cover, so, drawing the tape measure around the book from side to side across the back, and allowing it to project two inches and a half beyond both front edges, we find it takes seventeen inches—the measure shown by the lines extending from right to left across Fig. 1.

Measuring the book lengthwise, allowing two inches and a half at the top and bottom, we find thirteen inches are required, as shown by the perpendicular lines of the same figure; therefore from a corner of

one of our large sheets of paper we cut a piece measuring seventeen by thirteen inches, and, with the rule and pencil, proceed to mark it off into portions, according to Fig. 1, which plainly shows just where and how to shape the rounded corners and the ends of the two-inch back piece.

To fit the cover to the book, turn in the ends of the back piece, as shown by the dotted lines, lay the open book, face upward, directly in the centre, fold the portion marked A over to the inside of the covers; close the book and crease the two front edges so that they will remain smoothly in position; lay the book down, turn one cover back, push the square corners of the paper in between the book cover and the paper over it, and crease it down, when it should look like the upper right-hand corner of Fig. 2. The lower corner on the same side shows the same work; it has been loosened and drawn out to show how it is folded and creased; when replaced, the *point* is to be slipped back *outside* the cover. The projecting flaps now left at the top and bottom are to be folded inward, and smoothly creased down, when the finished cover will look like that at the right of Fig. 2. Treat the other side of the book in the same way, and the cover is completely adjusted; write or print the title of the book and the name of the author in plainly readable letters upon the back with a coarse pen. The exact measurement, the underfolding at the corners, and the close creasing at the edges, all combine to fit the cover so neatly and closely that, after it has been in position a few days, one would almost as soon expect to see the leaves drop out as to find the cover unfolding or slipping off.

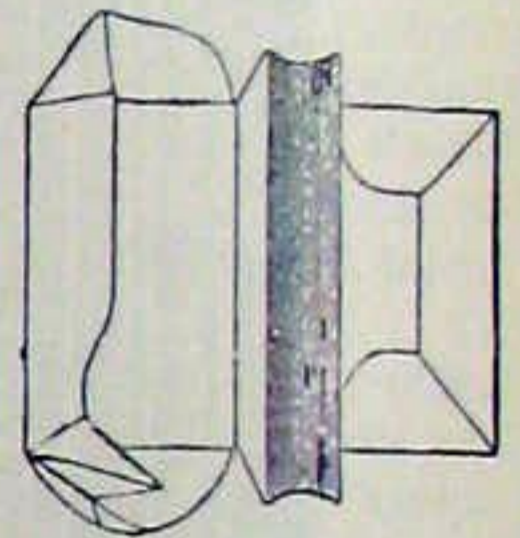


Fig. 2

Having covered one book satisfactorily, the rest may be covered very quickly; let them vary in size as they may, the only difference being in the measurements taken. Of course, for small books less than two and a half inches should be turned in, and for very large ones a little more.

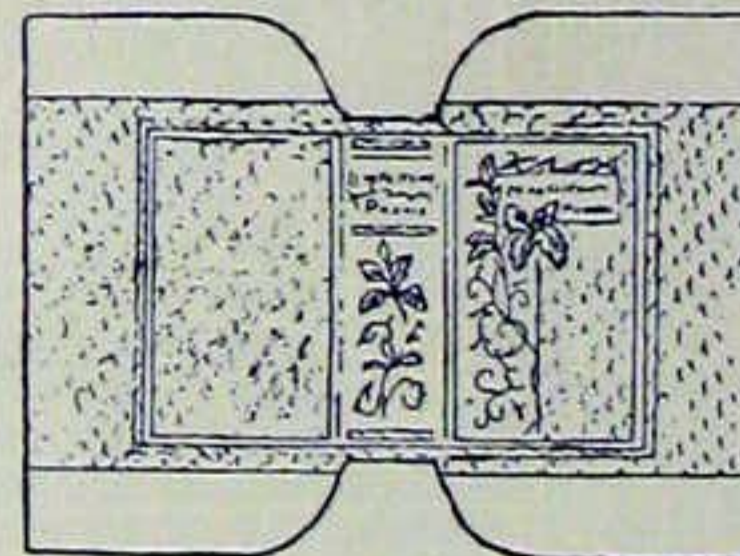


Fig. 3.

Fig. 3 is the same as the opposite or right side of Fig. 1; it shows how the printed paper covers—duplicates of the cover designs—that often accompany new volumes nowadays may be pasted to the outside of the home-made covers if desired, making them stronger and more attractive. Such a cover usually lasts until the volume which it protects has been its rounds as "the latest thing out" and returned "an old story," when it deserves to have its soiled working dress removed (and laid away to be donned for future journeys), and, with binding fresh and neat, find repose behind the draperies or doors of the bookcase.