

On Marbling Leather.

WE have already said that in marbling leather, quickness of hand is desirable; and we now wish to impress upon our readers that in marbling, success *entirely depends* on the quickness with which it is executed. It is also important that the colours, sponges, brushes, and water should be previously disposed in proper order and at hand, so that any one of them can be taken up instantly. Another point to which attention should be directed is the amount of colour to be thrown on the leather, and consequently the amount that each brush should hold; again, the colour must be thrown on whilst the water that is used in the process is running down, so that while running it carries the fine sprays with it, thus forming veins or fine lines spreading out into the most fascinating forms, stopping one moment only to start again into another direction, until the water or the colour has expended itself.

The preparation for marbling the cover of a book, is to paste-wash the leather as for colouring, and in speaking of paste-washing, we think it only our duty to mention that the paste used in our previous trials, was that sent out by the London Paste Company. [We were at first dubious lest there might not be something incorporated in the paste as a preservative, which might act detrimental to the marbling, but we did use it (we own in fear) with the result that it behaved beyond our expectations].

Using the salts of tartar as the colouring medium, two or three coats should be applied allowing each to dry properly before the next; this drying is of great importance in marbling, more so than any other style of decoration, for if the leather be not thoroughly dry while being marbled the water will sink in, taking the colour with it, instead of carrying it over the leather. We find from our lengthened experience, and from those who profess to be experts in this branch, that two days are not too long to allow between the operation of paste-washing and marbling.

When the leather cover has been tinted to the desired shade, which, by the by, should be rather richer than for plain hand-coloured calf, it should be sponged over with a thin but even coat of glaire; a few drops of milk may be added to the glaire with advantage, this prevents the glaire from frothing, a matter not to be forgotten, as every bubble occasioned by the froth will become a white spot round which the colour has run.

Fresh copper as (sulphate of iron) should always be prepared for marbling, and very strong; indeed we prefer to use a saturated solution; but great care must be exercised, or the result will be too dark. The salts of tartar should be rather weaker than for sprinkling. Have then ready to hand the copperas and the tartar each in its own pan and with its own brushes, prepare a pail of water, with a bunch of birch twigs to throw the water on with, and a sponge to wash the covers when marbled, and all other requisites.

It is almost necessary to have a special place or room to marble in, as the water is thrown about and the colours stain very quickly; and if this has to be done in any place except where there is a stone pavement it will be advisable to have some covering for the floor, during the time the marbling is being done. We have used oil-cloth and sawdust, but where marbling is being done to any great extent, a wooden trough lined with zinc is an excellent receptacle; a very good size is a box, 4 feet by 2 feet, 3 or 4 inches high; with this, there need be no fear of any water finding itself through to the next ceiling. A very handy article for the bookbinder is to have a few sheets or yards of *Willesden paper*; this is

perfectly proof against water; we have often used a trough made from a sheet of it by bending the sides up and clipping the corners with an American clip. When done with, the clips are taken off and the sheet can be laid flat or rolled up, and placed in a corner out of the way until wanted again. It is also desirable to have a pair of small trestles with a long board or flat rod resting at each end, such as were described by us on page 57, No. iv. Place the book between these boards with covers extended resting on these rods; should it be desired to let the marble run from back to fore-edge, the back of the book must be elevated a little by placing a small piece of wood under the boards of the book at the joints. If to run from head to tail, then the rod must be raised at that end, in any case raised only enough to allow the water to run away slowly and evenly. All is now ready.

Charge each brush well, knock out on a hand-pin the superfluous colour until a fine spray comes away from the brush; holding the black brush in the left hand, take up as much water in the birch as it will hold, throw this on to the covers until the blotches of water unite and commence to run down, dropping the birch, take quickly the black brush in the right hand and beat it on the hand-pin over the covers, sprinkling it very evenly and as fine as possible. When sufficient has been thrown on, beat the brown colour over the cover in like manner. The colours will gain in density and beauty in a few seconds, when the whole may be washed freely with the sponge, and it should then be set up to dry.

BOOKBINDING IN THE DRESDEN GALLERY, WITH DESCRIPTIONS BY KARL ZIMMERMANN. (*Leipzig: E. Twietmayer.*)

WE have received nine parts, each containing three plates, of this carefully-edited work for which all true lovers of binding will be grateful to the accomplished Royal Librarian. The book is to consist of fifty plates, representing the choicest bindings in the King's Library, and, when completed, will be a very valuable record of the progress of the Art in Germany, from the end of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth centuries.

The most important example as yet given is No. 27, a reduced copy of the binding of a folio *Bible Concordance* of the latter part of the seventeenth century, which is very elaborately ornamented all over with arabesques of a somewhat Persian character. The workmanship is not perfect, but it is certainly one of the best specimens of German craft of this date we have ever looked at. We hope the designer and finisher of this charming binding did not see it again after the utterly tasteless silver corners with bosses and the wretched little clasps had disfigured it. When we came upon No. 5, an elegant little design on smooth dark morocco, we immediately turned to the "Descriptions," and, as we anticipated, found it was French of the second half of the seventeenth century, probably.

WE have seldom seen a more elegant specimen of the style of design invented and carried out by Le Gascon than this which Messrs. Robert Riviere & Son have sent us as a specimen of their workmanship. The acuteness of sight and firmness of touch that can reproduce such a work of art as this deserves much more credit than a bookbinder's