

The name of the artist may be read at the foot of the design, FLORIMOND BADIER FECIT. INV. The date of this binding is about 1645, when Badier was made bookseller to the young king, Louis Quatorze.

## Oriental Bookbinding.

IN a very interesting article by a German master-binder—Paul Adam, of Düsseldorf—on the bindings of the Orient, it is remarked: “As these books were sewn without bands, a piece of cotton stuff was glued over the back. The covers were laid on before the edges were cut, so that covers and edges were exactly even. Covers consisted of layers of paper glued together, in later times of boards. The inner cover is generally lined with leather ornamented like the exterior. The edges were usually white, in exceptional cases with water-go'd ornamentation. Books of a finer class had casings which folded inward.”

Maioli, Grolier, and Canevari drew their inspiration from the Egypto-Arabian school, especially in the matter of ornament, as the gold *pointillé* field- and hand-tooling in general. The oldest bindings of this school are invariably in light-brown, undyed morocco. The decorative work of the oldest bindings was produced simply by the use of a scraper, the design taking the shape of a rosette, in which hexagonal geometrical figures were worked, the resulting compartments being frequently stamped with small stars. The covers dating from the latter half of the fifteenth century show a better division into compartments and application of a stamped border.

These bindings, without doubt, served as models for the books of Matthias Corvinus. The perforated and carved designs are particularly interesting. The parts in relief constitute the ornament, which was frequently shut in by gold lines; while the leaf and flower designs were set off by prevailing white and blue colours. The Turko-Egyptian bindings are simpler. The covers of grained morocco are ornamented by a centrepiece which is pressed into it by means of a matrix of camel's hide. Later, through Persian influences, metal dies come into use, and the ornamentation becomes richer and of better workmanship. Lines and such other border ornaments are traced with a tool and then gone over with water-gold, and such gold-work was sometimes stamped afterwards. In later periods, gold was used in different shades to reach greater effects. There was often a similar *doublé* of red leather.

Bindings in pure Persian style often have linings of beautiful perforated work with coloured underlay. The stamped or freehand cut corner and centrepieces are very fine and delicate. Where the leather of the cover and the *doublé* meet, a painted gilt line ornaments the edge. The *doubles* of religious books are also ornamented with stamped effects. The carved leather and water-gilt bindings, very original work, may be styled the dying bloom of artistic Oriental bookbinding. Rich ornaments, especially large centrepieces, are engraved on the moistened leather with a tool; small stamped rosettes complete the design, then the work is gilded with a brush, and again gone over with the heated tool.

Alike in the fundamental principles of its decoration is the Turco-Anatolian paper binding—a reminder of our board binding at the beginning of the nineteenth century—poor material used with great thrift, workmanship clumsy and defective, poor calf-skin for the backs, inferior boards covered with green paper, a centrepiece stamped on a panel of

gold or silver paper pasted on the cover, and varnished over. Quite another thing is the superbly ornamented Persian binding, vine and plant motives with leaves and blossoms—these last in gilt. This gold-work is uncommonly durable, apparently executed on a lacquer ground. In the finer specimens the gilding is retouched, the gold burnished, the ground stamped, &c. The lacquer bindings with a leather back have a chalk ground, perfectly smooth. The painting is done on this, and is then repeatedly varnished. The varnish has turned a dark brown from age. The writer is of the opinion that these Oriental bindings may be studied with great profit by the book-decorators of the Western nations.—*American Bookbinder.*

## On Female Labour in the Central Districts.

THE Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops has been recently issued. Mr. Lakeman, one of the Inspectors, contributes an interesting paper upon the "Social Condition of Female Operatives in the Central Districts." Referring to Bookbinding, he says:—

"This industry employed an army of workers now greatly reduced by the introduction of motive power to stitching machines; the value of hand-sewing has fallen in consequence, producing a redundancy of labour and causing much misery during slack times. The work being light and clean attracted young girls, who were bound for two years, and received 3s. and 4s. a week each year. Young persons could earn 8s. to 10s. on fair work, and experienced hands 12s. to 15s., though when on cheap work this sum is not reached; forewomen earn 21s. as a maximum. As in other trades, greater advantages can be found in some binding factories than in others, and workers are classed accordingly.

"The commercial book-sewer finds regular employment, and can earn 15s. a week at machine work; the publishers' sewers are subject to the uncertainties of trade. Generally, girls work in threes, two of them at machines, one to prepare work, changing places by rotation; they earn 12s. to 15s. each, but hand-sewing has fallen to 8s. to 10s. Religious publications are very poorly paid for; and masters accept orders upon barest margin of profit. In the houses of the best publishers' binders, the hands are not sent away in ordinary slack times, that is from March to end of July; the little work to be done then is divided equally, affording less than half wages; but in extra slack periods large numbers are dispensed with, but as the slack time of one class of binders may be the busy season of another, girls can go to and fro. The price of labour is governed by the trade, which is said to be unable to bear a higher strain in advancing wages. I believe that publishers' binding work is now amongst the poorest paid of city industries. It is undisputed that great and sore trials are undergone by many young hands out of season."

It is a well-known fact that publishers' binding is done at the very lowest margin of profit. The fierce competition that prevails, and the rivalry of little masters, have brought about the present unsatisfactory state of things. It is to be hoped that before long a remedy will be found that will benefit both employers of labour and their workpeople.