

In case 411 there are some cloth covers and designs. Hawthorne's "Wonder Book," in white relief design, is not clear enough. The "PO EMS BY OS CAR WIL DE" is made an abominable cryptograph without any prize for the solution; and in the design for "Silverpoints," an indicator is required pointing the way to the lettering, which is ridiculously small.

The design for "Goblin Market," by Laurence Housman, is an elegant and chaste piece of work, though we cannot admire the style of the lettering; so is the design for "Legends and Lyrics," by Mr. Gleeson White, which has been produced in our pages previously.

Knowing the class of people to whom the Arts and Crafts Exhibition appeals, with whom, however much art is a fashion, there is still an undercurrent of common sense, we must feel surprised that the binders of the trade who lay themselves out for high-class work, leave this means of display almost wholly in the hands of such traders upon human credulity as we have here derided, when they might be exhibiting some of the finest productions of which good art and good craftsmanship are capable, to their own profit.



MR. WM. MORRIS, in reply to the question of a *Chronicle* reporter, "What is there to say about this year's 'Arts and Crafts?'" says that "The object of the 'Arts and Crafts' is to give people an opportunity of showing what they could do apart from the mere names of firms. I don't think we are drifting away from the original intention. The executant generally gets in. It is impossible, besides, to give the name of everybody concerned in the production. A work of art is always a matter of co-operation. After all, the name is not the important matter. If I had my way there should be no names given at all. As for what is novel here, there isn't much, and that's the truth. There is a large quantity of excellent art, but the only thing that is new, strictly speaking, is the rise of the Birmingham school of book decorators. My own printing, too, is among the novelties. But these young men of the Birmingham School of Arts—Mr. Gaskin, Mr. Gere, and Mr. New—have given a new start to the art of book decorating." And Mr. Morris walked round the room where his own printing press is at work turning out his lecture on Gothic Architecture, admiring and descanting on the charming little drawings hung on the walls.

Asked as to the conditions of art under the coming Socialistic regime, Mr. Morris said: "I presume art work will then be done by guilds, and everybody will have leisure to do such as he feels inclined to. Things like my big tapestry will of course be public property, and will hang in town halls and such like places. The community will always be glad to see that people who are producing objects for the public delight do not want for food and clothing. All masterpieces, indeed, should be public property. Why, even in this age we are coming to think hardly of a man who takes

exclusive possession of a great work of art and hides it away. Moreover, no man should make a work of art common by staring at it all the time. If I had a beautiful picture I should put curtains over it."

"Then pending the arrival of the socialistic millennium the Australian millionaire must take the place of the enlightened community?"

"Yes; I suppose he must. That, by the way, is one advantage of a book. The individual can obtain possession of a beautiful book, and he can put it away and take it out again only when he wishes to enjoy its print and illustrations. Indeed, a book is nowadays perhaps the most satisfactory work of art one can make or have. The best work of art of all to create is a house, which will prove, to my thinking, a Gothic house. A book comes next, and between a house and a book a man can do very well."

Persian Bookbinders.

AN ART which is carried to a high degree of excellence in the East, but which seems in some danger of decaying, is that of ornamental bookbinding. Some notion of the skill of Oriental craftsmen in this branch of design may be gathered from specimens given in the latest issue of *The Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, printed and published by Griggs & Son, Ltd., Hanover-street, Peckham, S.E. The best of these specimens, says Col. Holbein Hendley, came from Ulwar, and are doubtless of Persian origin. Few approach in goodness of design and in carefulness of execution the work of Kari Ahmed and his sons, who were for some years in the employ of the chief of Ulwar. The grandsons have now succeeded to the sons, however, and in their hands the art is likely to become a mere trade. In India a man of real genius develops an art from some hints he receives from strangers, or, it may be, discovers it himself, but from jealousy or from fear of destroying his monopoly teaches only the members of his own family, who may or may not share his skill, and thus in the course of a generation or two nothing remains but a shadow or parody of perhaps an exquisite production.

In the Ulwar bookbindings the ornament is somewhat after the old Grolier style, in which the colours are painted on the boards and are not inlaid. In most of the designs the pattern is produced by the use of brass blocks. The colours are then painted on with the brush. Sometimes the Ulwar artist colours the whole of the ground, and at others only part of it, so as to produce very different effects by the use of the same blocks. The effect is remarkably fine, and may be compared to the design work on some of the most beautiful productions of the more famous china manufactories. The bindings are expensive, as they are all hand-made, and a great deal of gold is used. Numerous specimens have been made for Queen Victoria and other distinguished persons. They all show more or less similarity to the best specimens of Persian workmanship, of which the binding of the Koran purchased by the Emperor Aurungzebe, and now in the Royal Library at Windsor, is a particularly interesting example.