



COVER DESIGNS BY CEDRIC CHIVERS, BATH.

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Our Portrait Gallery.

CEDRIC CHIVERS, BATH.



HERE are not many binders better known to librarians throughout the length and breadth of great Britain than the subject of our present sketch, and there are not many public libraries where at least some specimens of his work are not to be found; and that is saying a great deal for a provincial binder.

When we visited Bath recently, we naturally made our way towards Gay-street,—a rather aristocratic locality for a binder's shop, but there it is,—curious to see what manner of man Mr. Chivers was, and what kind of establishment he kept. A quiet and rather stylish looking double-fronted shop, alone amongst some tall private houses, with some finely carved oak screens, and just a few rather elegant bindings in the windows, caught our eye. There was such an air of the fine art studio about the place, that we went gingerly up the steps and opened the door quietly, moving as people do about an art gallery with a subduing influence upon them. Mr. Chivers very soon put us at our ease however, and we recovered ourselves sufficiently to explain the cause of our visit and to learn something about himself and his work, feeling all the time that he was a very pleasant companion, whose shop talk was interesting but who was busy with many other things.

CEDRIC CHIVERS was born in Bath, on March 11th, 1853. His father was a bookbinder, and he was brought up to the trade, working in his father's shop until he was 24 years of age, when he became dissatisfied with the dull monotony of pamphlet and cloth work, relieved only at intervals by a little leather binding, and seeing that it gave him little opportunity for future development, he started out for London to gain an insight into the methods of doing better work and push his own way in the world. For a time he

was unsuccessful in finding employment, but he picked up a great deal of hard experience that taught him later on to do all in his power to help the workers to obtain a less precarious footing in the world, with better results for their work. After two or three short engagements, and an almost fruitless run through the Provinces, Ireland, and Scotland, he returned to London where he obtained a permanency with M. Chatelain, of Newman-street, Oxford-street, at finishing. This he subsequently resigned to acquire a better knowledge of

extra forwarding, serving for six months as an improver, and gaining experience in the use of the French paring knife, and in covering best levant work. At this time he was living with a young Swiss—now the junior partner of Asper Frères, the well-known book-binders of Geneva—and together it was intended to visit Paris, when Mr. Chivers was offered the foremanship of the establishment where he worked. The offer was however declined, and the Paris trip carried out. It was at the time of the Exposition in 1878, and Mr. Chivers was thus enabled to see the magnificent collection of bindings then on view in the Trocadero, besides being taken through many of the leading ateliers of Paris by his friend, who was acquainted with some of the principal Parisian binders of repute.

After experiences thus gained, Mr. Chivers returned to England and started in business for himself in Bath, on the first floor of No. 24 Union-

street, where, rather curiously, Mr. R. Rivière had first practised the craft of binding some forty years before. There he remained patiently pushing forward his business, until, in 1886 he was able to remove to more commodious and pleasantly situated premises at 39 Gay-street, where we found him established as a prosperous binder.

Mr. Chivers' speciality is a binding for public libraries which he has patented under the name of



CEDRIC CHIVERS.

