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Our Portrait Gallery.

F. BEDFORD, LONDON.



THE business which is carried on under this widely-known name, is, of course, no longer under the direction of the celebrated binder who bore it, and who died in the year 1883 at the ripe age of eighty-three. For a short time it was carried on by his nieces, but finding it beyond their powers, it was disposed of to its present proprietor, MR. JOSEPH SHEPHERD, whose portrait we give this month, and who still carries it on, though not at the old house, 91 York-street, Westminster, he having removed to Trafalgar House, Great Newport-street, St. Martin's-lane, W.

Joseph Shepherd was born in London on the 16th day of September, 1858, and learned the trade in the house of Messrs. Simpson and Renshaw, the successors of Messrs. Edmonds and Remnant, where, in the modern branch of the binding trade, he had the advantage of a thorough tuition. Being desirous of learning more concerning the methods of producing the very best classes of work, he pushed out into other shops and gained some further experience; until, in 1884, he acquired the business of the late F. Bedford, retaining the style of the firm. This was no light undertaking for a young man, for while the name and fame of the dead master overshadowed all, it was not the name and fame only; the dead master had left proofs of his ability behind, against which every fresh piece of work was compared. This was discouraging on the one hand, though on the other it served as a spur to Mr. Shepherd's energies for the production of such work as would bear comparison with that of his predecessor. It might almost be wondered how he succeeded in keeping the business together at all under such circumstances, but that he conscientiously did his best in the production of neat and artistic designs, the tooling of which, executed by his own hand, is both bright, solid, and exact, while

in the forwarding there is every indication of a studious regard for solidity and shapeliness that will compare with the work of most binders' art. Fine binders, in the fullest sense of the term, are very few and far between, but the subject of our present sketch is undoubtedly a good binder, in whose hands book lovers need not fear to place their choice volumes. During his comparatively short career he has had numerous orders from men who are renowned book lovers, and from others who are widely-known public men, and

some few years ago was honoured by a visit from Mr. Gladstone, who took a great interest in the bindings shown him and processes of the work, recalling several conversations he had held with his "old friend" Rogers, the poet, upon the subject of taste in bindings, a subject Mr. Gladstone said Rogers took a great deal of interest in.

Referring to the death of Lord Tennyson, Mr. Shepherd told us that when at Whippingham he had written a few verses on the death of a skylark, an incident he witnessed, and he was prompted to send them to the great poet, who received them and forwarded to him a suitable acknowledgement in his own hand, which Mr. Shepherd preserves in a little volume of autograph letters, and which we viewed with melancholy interest at the time of our visit.

Like many other binders, Mr. Shepherd deploras the present ruinous competition in trade, which aims at cheapness before anything else, and is, he considers, slowly but surely destroying all the interest a man should have in making his work as good and artistic as that produced in by-gone times. No man can stand the heavy rent and other expenses attendant upon a place of business, and fairly put into his work the time and attention demanded to make a perfect binding at the prices he is obliged to accept even now, and those, low as they are, are being continually docked by competitors who find means of doing without—now



JOSEPH SHEPHERD.

one thing, and then another—things not discernible to everyone, but which rob a book of the merit to be found in Bedford's work. While the cry is ever for work such as Bedford produced, the binder finds few such patrons as the late Duke of Portland, whose knowledge of the good points of a binding and kindness and liberality to his protégé are well known.

The volumes we have selected for reproduction are bound in that neat and quiet style for which the house has earned a good repute. "The Sea" is bound in dark blue morocco, inlaid with fillets of various coloured leathers. This book was exhibited at the Folkstone Art Treasures Exhibition. "Gulliver's Travels," a first edition, is in red morocco, with panel side; and "Endymion" is in grass-green morocco, inlaid with citron.



Foreign Notes.



OUR article in the August number "On German Bookbindings" has caught the eye of the *Illustrirte Zeitung für Buchbinderei*—from whose pages we had translated an article "About English Bookbinding" (published in June)—and the reply is interesting. After repeating some of its charges about our system of sub-dividing the work, by means of which "human machines are made instead of art workers,"—which, with sorrow, we admit to be true—it reverts to our styles of ornamentation, in which there "is a great debasement of taste. The stamps are heavy and the designs poor in a style unknown. Except for a few old historic originals which the English study, they learn nothing from other nations, and even in the English styles cultivated, there prevails the heavy Harleian ornament. Our greatest surprise is, that the English, who have such a splendid art trade journal as THE BRITISH BOOKMAKER, do not take more advantage of it.

"The last compliment is in return for the article in which the English writer says that our journal has amused his colleagues, partly because of our ignorance of English methods of work, and partly because of the cool assumption that the Germans, who have learned all they know of other nations, can produce beautiful work, while 'we poor English have enclosed ourselves with a Chinese wall.'"

To our charge that their own trade journals have been "the satirists of the trade," they do not dissent, but rather seem to agree by this foot-note: "To keep silent if things are wrong, or to praise that which is bad, will not make the evil better. The strong criticism of Reuleaux upon the Philadelphia Exhibition had its effects." But whether they agree or not, the fact remains, as many translations from their journals in our own will prove to those who care to look them up.

Concerning Zaehnsdorf and Zahn they say: "Now Zaehnsdorf senior has himself claimed to be a German, though in truth he was not, only of German extraction; but all his feelings and sentiments were German up to the end of his life." When we spoke of Zaehnsdorf we spoke of the living binder, and they evidently

recognised that, though they fell back upon his father to defend their claim upon his nationality, as may be seen below in their parting salute.

"Zahn's art we claim, but not that of to-day; he has been in other lands, but had THE BRITISH BOOKMAKER looked in our journal ten years ago they would have seen many of his articles and designs with his artistic taste, before Zahn went abroad. We admit that the German bookbinder, if he would perfect himself, should go to other countries to study, but we also say that if the Englishman came into our German workshops he might learn much, and it would be to his disadvantage if he were as arrogant as this trade journal of bookbinding is. We will give this article from THE BRITISH BOOKMAKER our further attention, not confining ourselves to the choice of 'sixty volumes,' as the writer has done, which seem to have been purposely chosen to make therefrom a destructive criticism. Fine binders may be found in Germany, as everywhere else, but what is wanted is a rich buying public such as England possesses, and yet it was not possible to keep even in England a journal for bookbinding alone, for a few years ago they had to fuse together THE BOOKMAKER with another. If the art interest in English bookbinding is so great—which we are sorry to say is not the case with us—THE BRITISH BOOKBINDER would have made its appearance at once, and we will not pry into how much assistance it has received, for instance, from *our* Zaehnsdorf."

Our readers will see the point about *our* Zaehnsdorf, the living man, from whom it is suggested we receive so much assistance. We hope he will pardon this little interchange of courtesies, and not withdraw his smile from us.

We wish our German friends well, but do not want them to have our trade. We kindly criticised, as they did for us, and hope each may be mutually beneficial. We rejoice to find no contradiction of our criticism, and are sorry to think that our friends have committed themselves to the mistake that we chose the "sixty examples," not volumes, on purpose to condemn. The main point has been ornamentation, and the majority of our examples were "plates and illustrations of work deemed of sufficient importance for a place in their own journals"; we used those words. They have noticed that "The editor of THE BRITISH BOOKMAKER has found it worth while to give a place in his journal for the product of our technical schools." Why, certainly! We claim that, too, as an argument against them when they say that "the national pride of an Englishman keeps him from studying the work of other nations." Our German friends must know that it is impossible to blow hot and cold with the same breath. We wish them well, as college chums in the old school, in spite of our fencing bouts.

Whether we are right or wrong, we have been somewhat amused at the side-thrust of a third party. *The American Bookmaker* apparently thought we were too weak or lazy to make reply, and so, mighty champion of our distress, it rushed in. After quoting our translation of the German criticism, it says: "To this the representative of the British bookmaking interest has no reply. It contents itself with asking what its constituency has to say in response to such