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Our Portrait Gallery.

JOHN W. HEWETT, LONDON.

As in many other businesses, so in our own trade, not every bookbinding establishment is owned by a bookbinder. The opportunities for successful speculation with a fair return for money invested, has at different times induced men of capital outside of the trade to invest their money in bookbinding concerns, and they are not the least successful of the houses in the trade. In such cases the difficulty lies in securing the proper direction and control of the working departments, which must be in the hands of some practical man with all the ability and tact of an employer, and they are not easy to find.

The subject of our sketch this month, Mr. JOHN W. HEWETT, is a case in point. Totally unconnected with the trade, yet in 1877 he took over the business previously carried on by Mr. Clark, in Shaftesbury-street, Hoxton, when it had got into low water and serious complications. Two years later he removed to No. 24 Old Bailey, where the business has grown up to considerable dimensions under the able direction of Mr. J. Cameron, and afterwards Mr. H. Coster, the present manager, and Mr. C. Geer, the foreman, his son-in-law, to both of whom Mr. Hewett admits himself indebted for their untiring zeal and energy in the conduct of affairs.

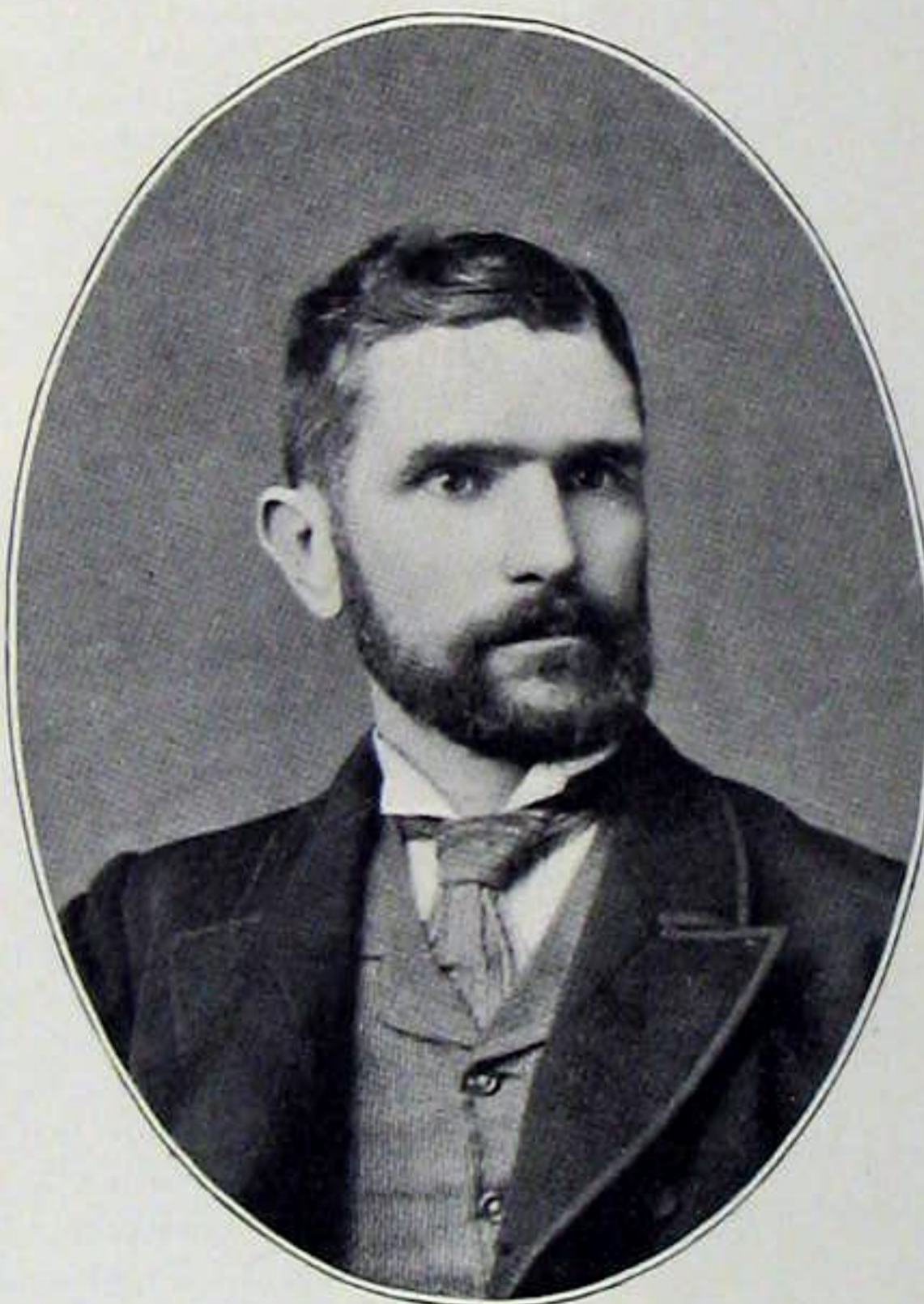
The premises occupied consist of the second and third floors of a commodious building, which are well arranged and equipped with the necessary machinery and appliances, to some of which Mr. Hewett intends shortly applying steam power. The second floor is divided into the forwarding, finishing, and blocking departments, while the upper floor is arranged for the accommodation of the staff of female workers. The work of the house is mainly in the seconds style of the bible and prayer book bindings, but there may also be seen almost every variety of the many forms

of devotional work which are got up to tempt the eyes of purchasers who desire a moderate priced book with a fair exterior. Yapps, circuits, padded sides, combinations, slip cases, and fancy boxes of all shapes for sets, besides the ordinary limp and boarded work of smaller books are plentiful, with here and there great piles of heavy family bibles, such as we see reclining at ease in suburban parlour windows, convenient hiding places for all sorts of odd trifles that

children are tempted to stow away. Few in the trade but have at some time wondered what becomes of the hundreds of thousands of bibles which are turned out of the workshops year by year, knowing at the same time that there is scarcely a home that does not already contain more than one volume of Holy Writ. A walk through this shop does not diminish the wonderment, when we see the stacks of work which stand all around, and regard them as simply part of the thousands which pass in and out and have been passing in and out during the fifteen years that the business has been in the hands of its present proprietor. Things are quiet, too, just now, especially in Oxford orders, but in a few weeks the American trade will be coming in, when Mr. Hewett expects the piles of work will be considerably increased.

Most bible binders have their own special lines which suit the publishing houses for whom they

work, and the amount of trade done depends upon the power of a firm to produce ever and again some novelty of design that will catch on with the public and secure a ready sale for the book. The consequence is that every firm is in rivalry with its fellows, the competition is fierce and unbroken, and much expense is entailed on the purchase of blocks that rarely serve for long, since no pattern will sell a book for much more than one season. As a sample of what is being done by the firm at the present time, we have selected



J. W. HEWETT.

four books of a style that is being produced in large numbers, in persians both grained and smooth, and German calf. For this work hand-blocking presses are used; the covers are blocked before they are put upon the books, the ends being afterwards turned in upon padded sides.

Mr. Hewett employs a staff of from eighty to ninety persons, including circuit and box hands, whom he has always employed on the premises, though prior to 1885, when the Societies commenced a movement which aimed at restoring this branch of work to the trade, much of the circuit and box work was done out of doors. At that time Mr. Hewett acquiesced in the men's wishes, and during the whole period of his business connections with the trade he has given way to all reasonable representations on the men's behalf. In November last he granted the eight hours to those in his employ, with a ten per cent. rise to the women, when the shop celebrated the altered conditions by many interchanges of compliments between employer and employed.



OLD BOOK-PLATE OF JOHN PEACE, BRISTOL,
Showing Interior of Bristol City Library.

ROYLE'S New Self-adjustable Blocking Type-case (shewn in Messrs. Royle and Son's business announcement elsewhere) is a handy contrivance which deserves bringing to the attention of all bookbinders, who will at a glance see its utility, the great advantage in the saving of time, and the certainty of getting a straight line. It does away with the old-fashioned slip cases, and the waste in time and patience where the lines have to be put up in the square cases, filled in and screwed up; there is likewise the advantage of being certain that the type will not fall out during blocking process. This type-case is well and strongly made and moderate in price.

Our Prize Competitions.



THE THIRTEENTH PRIZE of Twenty Shillings for the best half-bound book, not finished—offered to competitors under the age of twenty-one years—has been awarded to W. F. Bowyer, aged seventeen, working at Mr. H. Bowyer's, 21 Harrow-road, Edgware-road, London, W. The book—a volume of Cowper's works, Lansdowne edition—was bound in half light-blue morocco, gilt edges, with gold vein marbled paper ends and sides. The whole work, except that of the gilt edges, is guaranteed to have been done by this lad, and it is a first-rate piece of workmanship in every way.

HIGHLY COMMENDED:—F. E. Stoakley (Cambridge), A. Whatley (Stroud), E. Chandler (Oxford), and A. W. Bradshaw (Preston).

Of the sixteen books sent in for competition, most were very fair specimens, but some were very clumsy pieces of botchery. Four thick bands never look neat; nor do large bumps on the sides where the slips are drawn in. The leather on the backs and covers should be pared down exactly from the points covered by the sides and the whole insides squarely trimmed out. These are such elementary points that we marvelled at books being sent in for competition with such gross defects.

COMPETITION NO. 15.

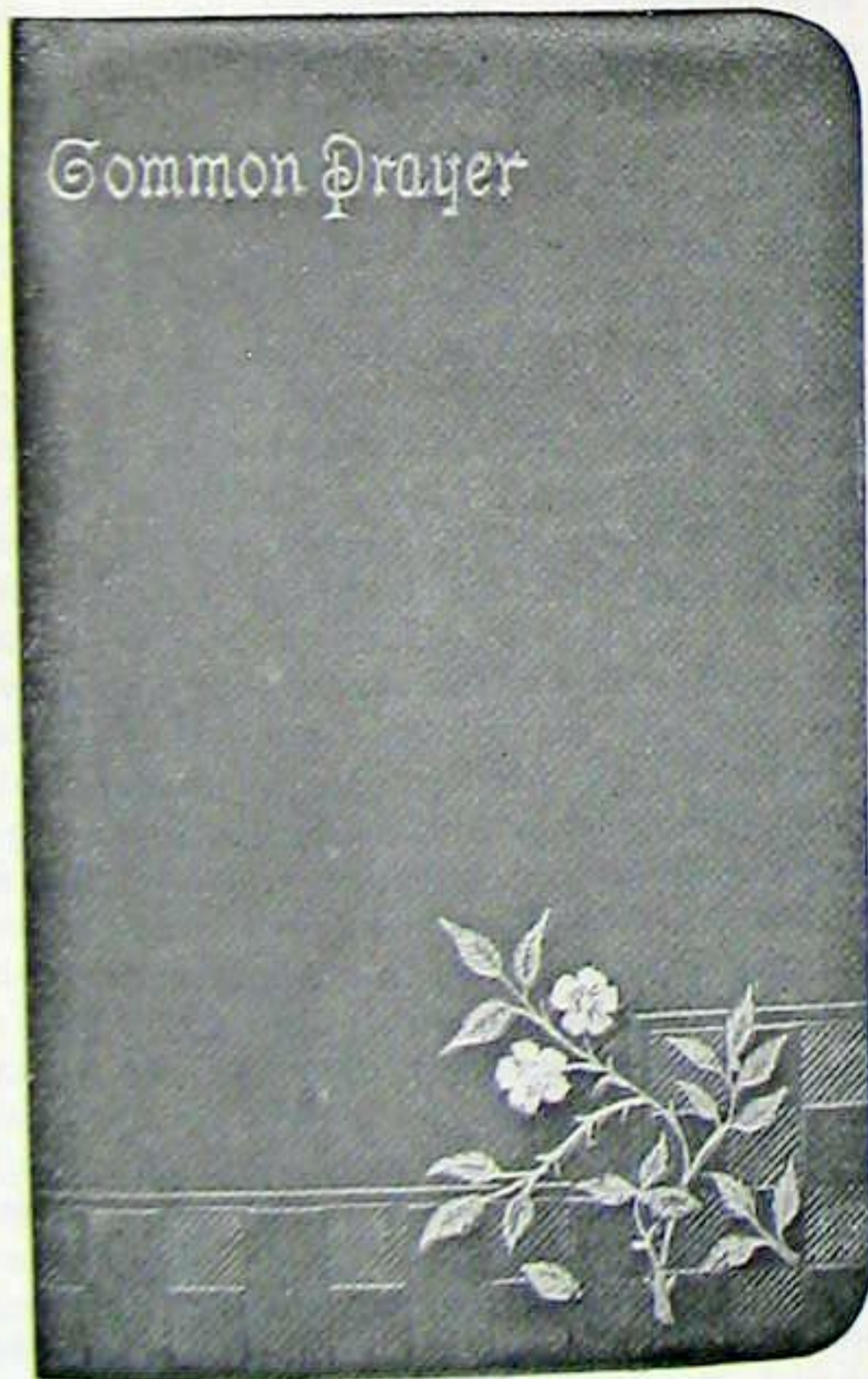
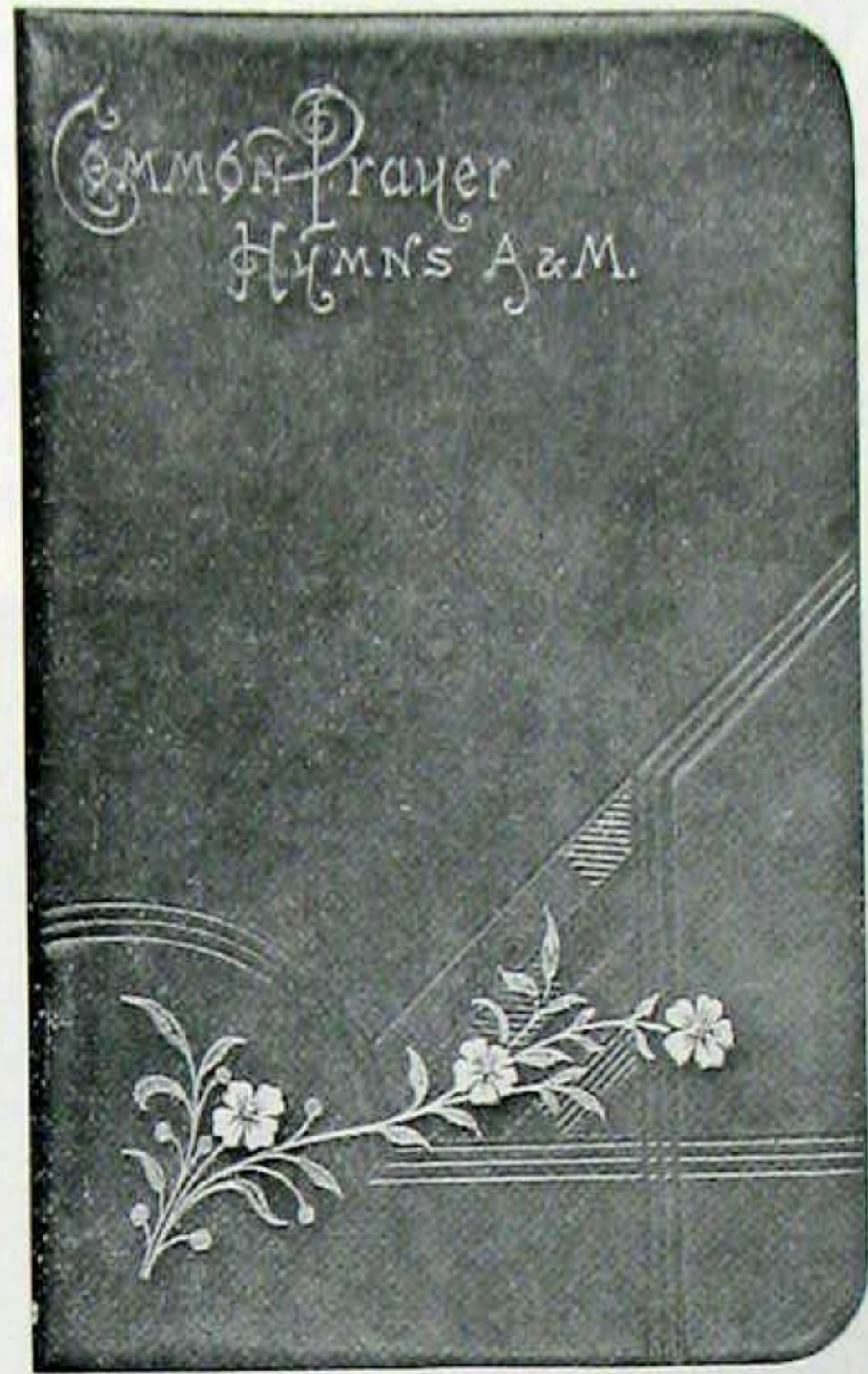
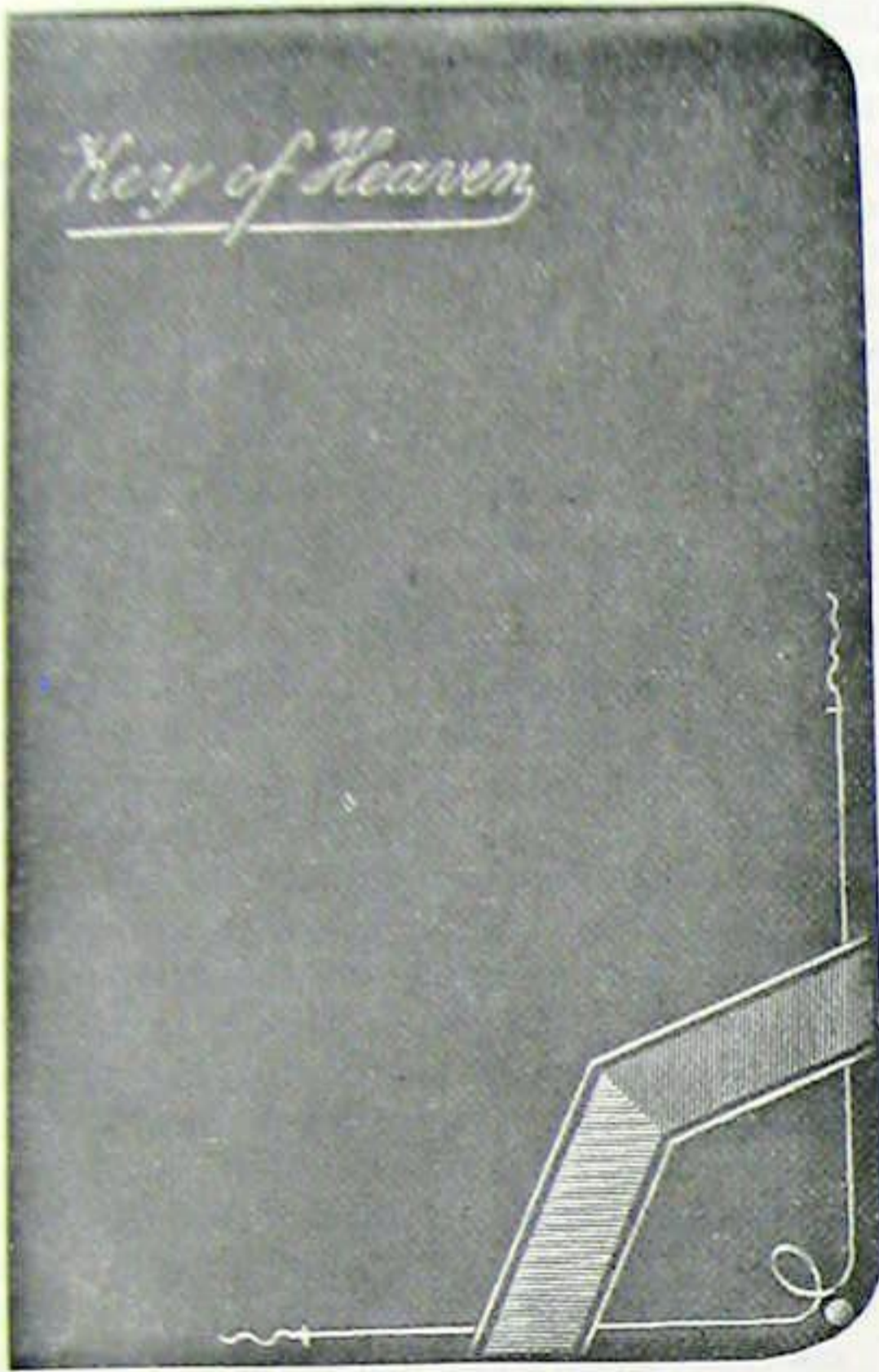
WE offer a Prize of Twenty Shillings for the best and clearest written definition of the following styles of Finishing:—Grolier, Le Gascon, Derome, Roger Payne, and Harley. Not to exceed 600 words.

RULES.

1. All answers must be written on one side of the paper only, and must arrive on or before February 29. The award will be made in the March issue.
2. The Editor reserves to himself the right to publish any paper which may be sent in, besides the successful one.
- 3.—The decision of the Editor must be considered final.
4. The Editor cannot hold himself responsible for the return of unsuccessful manuscripts under any circumstances whatsoever.
5. All papers may be signed with a *nom de plume*, but the correct name and address of the competitor must accompany each paper, together with the name of the competitor's employer. This is not intended to debar master binders from the competition, but to confine it to bookbinders.
6. All papers for competition must be directed to *The Editor, BRITISH BOOKMAKER, De Montfort Press, Queen-street, Leicester*, and marked "PRIZE COMPETITION" in the left-hand top corner of the envelope.

A cheque for 20/- will be forwarded to the successful competitor immediately upon the award being made.

WITH their season's greetings, Messrs. Kelly & Sons sent out a tastefully bound edition of Dickens' "Christmas Carols," and "The Chimes," (Cassell's National Library Series) in their novel reversed cloth with brown calf back. The binding combines strength with neat good taste.



COVER DESIGNS BY J. W. HEWETT.