

## Rebinding for General Circulation.



At the regular May meeting of the New York Library Club, "Rebinding for General Circulation" was the subject of an interesting discussion. The topic is one of importance to librarians, and the points brought out by the members of the club were of so much practical interest that we present the "symposium" in full, as reported by *The Library Journal*.

Mr. G. H. Baker, of Columbia College Library, opened the discussion as follows: "The question of binding is one of the greatest importance for all libraries. In a library like ours the circulation is a minor feature, and it does not create the necessity for rebinding that it does in a public library where books are sent out by the hundreds and thousands. We therefore do not bind as such a library would, and our experience would consequently not be of much use to a public library. We bind with goat back; very few books of the better class are bought in cloth or other kinds of cheaper binding. For instance, law-books and others of that description make great expense for rebinding, more, perhaps, than any other class. They wear out and many have to be rebound. They must be rebound in as good or better binding than they were in originally. With other works, as of general literature, our rebinding is caused by general wear on the shelves and general library administration more than actual circulation. For the past year or two we have done much in the way of repairing books that had got loose in their covers and did not really need rebinding. Our man who gilds or numbers the books repairs them at the rate of perhaps thirty volumes a week at an expense of twenty-five cents or thirty cents a volume. Most books so repaired will last a great many years and save the expense of sending them to the binders and having them rebound.

"In the matter of subscription-books, you have all been beset by book agents who have got books out in two or three different styles of binding, cloth, half morocco, etc. It has been our practice to take cloth bindings even in books of reference that are likely to come to pieces in a year or two from constant use. We put them on the shelves and let them wear as long as they will. We get the book in its cloth-bound form and get six months or a year or two of wear out of it and then bind it. We are often asked why we do not buy better binding; but we find our practice the most economical."

Mr. R. B. Poole followed: "My experience is similar to Mr. Baker's and naturally falls in the same lines. I think there is a great difference between the needs of binding in a reference library and in a circulating library. I follow Mr. Baker's plan of getting cloth bindings and get the wear out of them. I think much money may be wastefully spent for binding. As to the circulating library, much discretion

must be used as to what is best to be done. For a book that is to be worn out, I think a binding of buckram a very good one; it will wear much longer than cloth and considerable economy can be effected by binding in this material. Good cloth bindings are very good. Sheep may be used if of the best quality. I do not think much of buffing as a material for binding."

Mr. G. W. Cole continued the discussion. He said: "We have bound some 8,000 volumes, or nearly one-fourth of the books of the Jersey City Library, since it has been in operation. Of this number 5,000 to 6,000 volumes were rebound, the rest being books bought in paper covers and sets of magazines bought in numbers. For books which circulate extensively, particularly for fiction, we bind in half-buffing. Our experience as to wear, though limited as to time, shows us that this binding will generally outlast the paper of which the books are made. There is now so much wood-pulp paper used in making books that there is more danger of a book of this kind going to pieces than of its binding wearing out. Our experience with books of this class shows that the glue used on the back of the book has not that affinity for wood-pulp paper that it has for rag-stock paper. The paper disintegrates and the paper and glue soon separate, the paper cleaving off in thin flakes with the glue. This being the case we do not consider it economical to bind in the better styles of leather those books which circulate largely. We have a very competent and honest binder, and he has developed a style of binding which we think will commend itself to those who have to do much rebinding. I will attempt to describe it: The first and last signatures of each volume are first taken and run through a sewing machine with the stitch set very long, sewing along the entire back a strip of good stout muslin about two inches in width. Three-eighths or a half inch of this muslin is sewn so as to lie between the first and second and the last and next to the last signatures when the book is put together, the remainder being used for the hinge or joint. The whole book, including the first and last signatures so prepared, is then sewn all along upon the cords in the usual manner. The narrow strip of muslin is then pasted to the signatures to which they are sewed and the next ones to which they come in contact when the book is put together. Over the back of the book is glued a flesher, or strip of leather from the inside of a split sheepskin. The book is then ready to go into its cover. The boards are fitted and the strip of muslin and the cords, fanned out, are pasted between the boards and the lining papers, forming a very strong hinge or joint. This hinge has the advantages over the usual form of cloth hinge, in that it is securely sewed, as has been shown, to the first and last signatures, besides being pasted between their leaves and those of the ones with which they come in contact, whereas the usual form of the cloth hinge is only pasted between the loose binding paper and the first or last leaf of the book. After our hinge is made, the leather is put over the back, forming a loose back, and finished in the usual way with vellum corners. With the flesher glued to the back of the book before it is put into the cover we get



