

sank against the angel's bosom, and Boy knew no more.

* * * *

Up in the dark Hall lights were meanwhile flashing strangely from all the windows, from dormer windows under the leads, turret slits, and the windows of the large reception rooms—generally dark as blind eyeballs. Indoors, a hum of distracted voices reiterated ceaselessly questions which, for the most part, received no replies; the wailing of a girl's voice piercing sharply through the surrounding noises, rising ever louder in hysterical despair as remonstrances strove to quiet her. The mourner was Jean the nursemaid.

Soon a pair of lamps flashed along the drive; a carriage stopped noiselessly at the door; the master and mistress alighted wondering at the disturbance of the household, and alarmed. Not without too good cause.

Out rang the mother's voice. "What! the child missing! My child! How could you all leave him alone? Oh, careless, cruel, wicked servants, all of you!"

Asked the father's voice, stern and quick—"Where have you looked—speak!"

"Everywhere, sir," whispered the old butler.

Just then a buzz of excitement was heard

in the courtyard, as of bees outside the hive-door. News at last! A stable-lad had seen the child out of doors, alone! Here came the boy, eager to tell all he knew.

Then lanterns gleamed over the snow-covered expanse of lawns and garden and by the riverside, held low, while the searchers anxiously eyed every drift, each small heap—perhaps only a stone or stump—but that might prove to be the body of a frozen infant. For the first few minutes, the mother called at intervals into the darkness.

"Boy! Boy! Where are you? Come to mother, darling."

But the rest only spoke to each other in whispers. Soon she understood, too, and ceased. Then her husband came beside her, as she went tearless and stiff, he locked his arm in hers, murmuring—

"The child would not suffer any pain, dearest."

All at once a thought struck the father. He turned back and called a groom aside, who had charge of the Newfoundland.

"Fetch the dog. He was petting Pompey when last he was seen; the dog may find him."

The man ran back; but soon returned, calling breathlessly—

"The dog is gone, too, sir! I have not seen him since five o'clock. He is nowhere about the house."

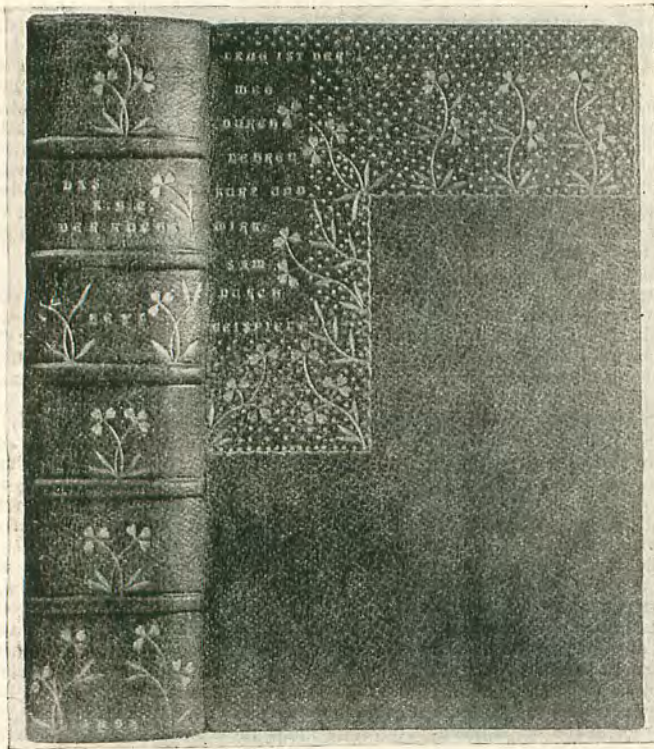
A faint ray of hope beamed in the mourners' minds. If the dog were with Boy! at least Pompey would stay by him. And all raised a long shout that echoed through the glen and woods for half a mile.

They listened in suspense, straining their ears. Then from beyond the fir-wood came a distant deep bay. The Newfoundland had heard. As a few breathless minutes later the panting crowd flashed their lanterns into the church porch, they saw a group of three lying within. There was Crazy Jane, the vagrant, stretched cold and dead but with Boy alive, sleeping warm in her arms; while behind the child Pompey lay guarding his charge so closely he did not rise, but wagged his tail with loud thumping on the stones.

The poor idiot had taken off her thin shawl and the empty sack from her back to wrap them round the little fellow; the smile on her dead face was seraphic.

"I goed to heaven, and I played wis Sissie for a little," explained Boy later. "A nice angel came in at this door, and took me away asleep in her arms, an' she said I was her wee white lamb."

THE BINDING OF A BOOK.



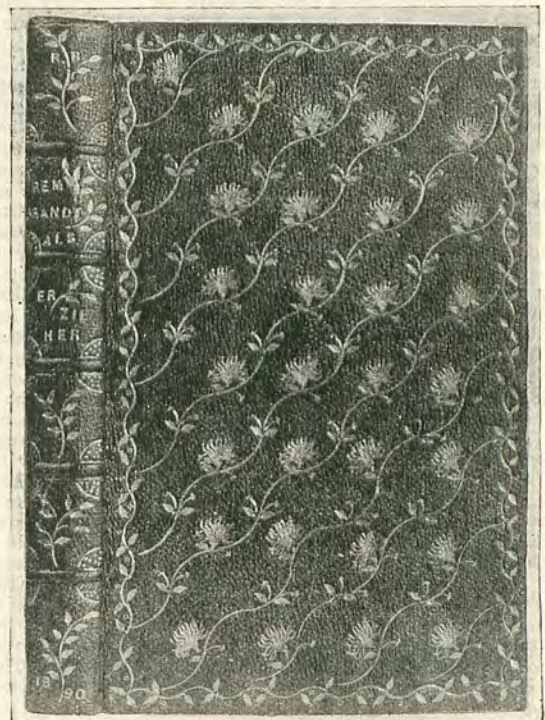
"OH, for a booke and a shadie nook
 Eyther in doore or out,
 With the green leaves whispering overhead,
 Or the streete cryes all about,
 Where I maie read all at my ease
 Both of the newe and old;
 For a jollie good booke whereon to looke
 Is better to me than golde,"

says the old English song; but what added pleasure is given to the "jollie good book" if its binding be in consonance with its contents. Books should be our friends, and as we love them so they should be garbed—our rare

editions in delicate leather, embellished with golden device, the poets in white and gold, often-read favourites in some serviceable material or strong leather, or in any way that individual fancy may suggest, provided that the bindings are durable and at once strong and beautiful.

No room has such an air of rest and quiet as a library, and no decoration can be more satisfying than that given by rows of sympathetically bound volumes.

In France the majority of the cheaper books are originally published in paper covers, which enables the reader to clothe a well-loved volume as he may choose, without sacrificing the original binding as is necessary with English books. But France has always been the home of the lover of beautiful bindings,



and, even before the invention of printing, many of her orders of monks, in common with those of Italy, were actively engaged in the joining together the various parts of Missals, Books of Hours and manuscript Bibles and Psalters, and in preparing the covers for the work afterwards put upon them by the goldsmiths and jewellers. This monastic book-binding is known as the Byzantine style. One of the finest specimens remaining of this period has a figure of Christ carved on a piece of ivory in the centre of one of its covers, surrounded with sixteen blazing jewels set in the most elaborate filigree work. Even after the invention of the printing-press books were printed and bound in direct imitation of the old manuscript volumes.

It was at the end of the fifteenth century that book-binding began to be considered as an art, when the printing-press had become common throughout Italy, then the leading nation of Europe in the sciences, in the inventions of luxury and in civilisation; and it was from a Venetian printing-press that the most gorgeously bound books were first given to the world by Aldo Manuzio.

The books printed and bound by Aldo Manuzio and his family in the century between 1490 and 1597 are known as "Aldine Editions." They are the most highly-prized and most eagerly sought of any printed volumes, some of them never having been surpassed for exquisite and perfect workmanship and beauty of design, especially those now to be seen in the National Library at Paris, which were specially bound for Tommaso Maoli, a famous Italian bibliophile, and for Jean Grolier of Lyons who had been treasurer to one of the dukes of Milan, and had thus the opportunity of seeing Manuzio's work in Italy.

The love of beautiful bindings soon spread from Italy into France, and, although Louis XII. and his wife, Anne of Brittany, possessed some fine examples of the Italian binders' art, Henry II. and Catherine de Medicis, an Italian princess, were the most enthusiastic book collectors that ever occupied the throne of France. The famous Diana of Poitiers, however, owned the finest collection of beautifully bound books probably ever gathered together under one roof. Another king of France, the weak-minded and vacillating Henry III., also gave no little time and thought to the covers of his books; but he had a morbid love for all emblems of death, and carried it so far as to have a skull and cross-bones stamped upon all the volumes in his possession. He, however, was the first king of France to specially employ book-binders, the most celebrated being Clovis and Nicholas Eve who introduced a special style of ornamentation, known as the fanfare, consisting of geometrical patterns filled in with sprays of leaves, branches of palm or other foliage. During the succeeding

centuries, France produced many famous book-binders who worthily carried on the work and tradition of their famous predecessors. Of these, Nicholas Padeloup is perhaps the best known, his binding of a book for the Duke of Orleans, the then regent of France, being considered almost equal to those by Aldo Manuzio in the National Library at Paris.

England has not been without her book-binders of high merit, but the history of the art is obscure, and with the exception of John Notary, in the reign of Henry VII., John Reynes, in the reign of his much married successor, John Gibson, of Edinburgh, in the time of James I., and Roger Payne, at the

We have several book-binders in England of European celebrity, amongst them being a lady, Miss Birkenruth, whose work is attracting growing attention by reason of its delicacy, its originality and perfect finish, three specimens of which illustrate this article. It is only within the past few months that Miss Birkenruth, encouraged by the success of her work, has set up a book-binding establishment of her own in the Cromwell Road, London, thus affording another instance of the capability of women for work, the more important portions of which have hitherto been done by men.

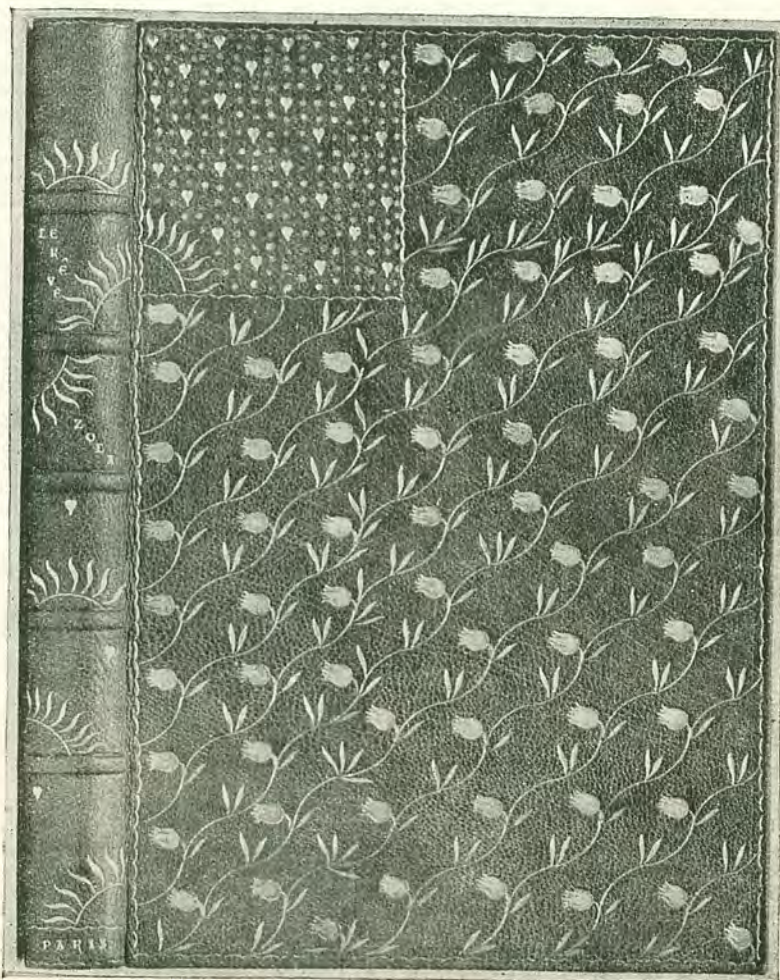
In all the large book-binding establishments, the various processes are in the hands of specialists, no one person being responsible for the whole when it is completed. But with Miss Birkenruth, the contrary is the case, and from the moment that a book is placed in her hands until the time it is returned to the owner, she herself is personally responsible for every operation and for every detail.

The art is one requiring extreme delicacy of touch, concentration, the greatest care, and no little artistic ability, one, in short, especially adapted for woman for whom a long apprenticeship has no terrors and no weariness, and who are prepared to achieve success by hard and unceasing endeavour.

Immediately the book is received by the binder, it is torn from its original covers, the glue is removed from the back, and the sheets are then carefully torn one from the other, and all binding material, such as string or linen, removed. The pages are then carefully collected, the illustrations placed in their proper positions, the sections being afterwards put into what is technically known as the "standing press," lying between metal or wooden plates. If the paper is thick, the sections are frequently passed under two rollers, moving in opposite directions, the required amount of pressure of which is regulated by screws; sometimes the sections are beaten with a heavy hammer, but the method of pressing depends

entirely upon the nature of the paper. This process is known as collating, and it is at this period that any stains or disfigurements are removed, certain chemicals removing the marks from certain papers whilst they are inefficacious with others. A knowledge of the component parts of the many kinds of paper used, and the treatment they require, is therefore an essential.

From the press the sections go to the sewing frame, where one of the most important parts of the work takes place. Five cords of equal thickness are chosen, the thickness depending upon the size of the book, and the sections are sewn securely on to them, the thread being passed through the centre of the sheet and round the cords. Thus, when the sewing is completed, there are five ends of cord on either side, the importance of which



end of the last century, there are comparatively few names to which to attribute the large mass of solid and sometimes beautiful English book-binding, specimens of which are preserved in many of our museums, palaces, and country houses, and especially in the British Museum. At the present time France is undoubtedly the seat of the art, hand-bound books being more eagerly sought after there than in other countries. England, however, runs her Gallic neighbour very close, if not so much in the matter of quantity of books bound as in quality of workmanship and beauty of design, the system that obtains of publishing books already bound in cloth and boards as opposed to the paper covers of the French publishers, doubtless explaining the lesser demand for hand-made bindings in this country.

will be seen later on. Four fly leaves are next placed at either end of the book, the two outside ones being of a colour and texture that will harmonise with the binding; the back is then glued in order to give additional firmness to the sewing, and also to permit of it being rounded. This is done by means of hammering. Two mill-boards are placed on the book when the back is rounded to the binder's satisfaction, these being most carefully measured with compasses, and cut to the exact size of the leaves they are to enclose. It is here that the cords left by the sewer are of service. Five holes are drilled into each mill-board to correspond exactly with the cords on the book; the cords are passed through them, and securely riveted by hammering.

Here comes a pause in the work, whilst the book is placed in a strong screw press in order to set it in the shape given it by the operator. After the glue is solidified, and it is seen that the covers are true, the edges of the leaves are cut straight with what is technically known as a "plough"—a sharp knife fixed in a wooden frame—the book meanwhile being firmly held in a press, whilst the "plough" is passed over and through the portion to be cut. As with all the other processes, cutting is a matter of delicate touch, the meanness or amplitude of the margins of the leaves, on which the appearance of the book so much depends, being the result. Nothing is uglier than a narrow margin, and a valuable book may be ruined by the slightest relaxation of care or watchfulness.

Up to the present the book has been receiving the foundation of the ornamentation in which it is to grace the book-shelf, or table; and when all the above processes have been completed, it receives its first glorification, the edges being coloured, marbled, or gilt.

The first effect is obtained by sprinkling the colour upon the edges of the leaves; the second, by colour floating on a thick size, and the third by fixing gold leaf in the ordinary way. Books very frequently, when closed, present gilded edges, but when opened the gold becomes red, this effect being obtained by gilding the leaves when the book is closed, and then sprinkling red in dry colour upon

them when the book is opened, the leaves, of course being all turned in one direction. When the gilding or marbling is finished, pieces of silk, known as headbands, are sewn to the top and bottom of the back, to which a piece of brown paper is glued, and the cover is put upon the boards. The required leather is cut to the exact size and must be shaved down to the necessary thickness with the greatest skill, for if it be too thin, it speedily wears through, and if it is too thick the book will not open properly. The leather is of many varieties, and the operator must know exactly the treatment it requires. First the cover is pasted, and then gently laid upon the boards, the five bands at the back, the result of the sewer's work, showing in clear ridges, the edges are turned over the boards, the fly-leaves being pasted down over these. Twenty-four hours must pass before it is safe to put any decoration upon the covers to allow them to dry thoroughly; and with the drying, that part of the binder's art known as "forwarding" is ended.

"Finishing" is the next step, and it is here that artistic ability comes into play. Many book-binders, Miss Birkenruth amongst them, draw their own designs, others copy designs specially prepared for them.

A countless number of little stamps, known as "tools" are the means by which a design is transferred; thus, very frequently, when a new pattern of ornamentation is made, special "tools" have to be cut, and very often several "tools" are required to form even a leaf or curve. Those parts of the cover which are to be lettered, or which are to show designs, are rubbed with a liquid composed of white of egg, vinegar and water, the design being first put on by "blind tooling," that is with a cold stamp. When gold is to be employed, the cover is rubbed with an oiled cotton-wool pad, the rubbed portions are then covered with gold leaf, the pattern of the design is placed upon the top of this, and traced through on the book by being stamped with heated tools, the gold leaf remaining on the leather wherever it has been struck. The remaining gold leaf is now rubbed off, and the design appears in all the glory of gilt, the oil

being first applied to the surface of the leather to prevent the leaf sticking where not stamped. Lettering is put on in the same manner. In this process as in the actual binding, the operator must know the amount of heat each leather requires; several hundreds of "tools" are used, and these also vary considerably in the length of time they require to take sufficient heat.

The book is now completed; it may be bound in calf, in vellum, in morocco, in crocodile skin, but if the greatest care has been taken throughout it is a "thing of beauty" and "a joy for ever," and after twenty hours in the press it may go to gladden the heart of its owner, who has the comforting knowledge that with reasonable care it will give pleasure to many generations.

Miss Birkenruth's success has clearly shown that book-binding is a field which women may occupy and make their own if they will. But nothing is gained without strenuous and unceasing endeavour, and any girl who seriously contemplates adopting the art as a means of livelihood must face the prospect of several years of unremitting and unremunerative toil before she is competent to set up an establishment for herself. The most characteristic difference between Miss Birkenruth's system and that of our other book-binders, as I have said before, is that she herself not only superintends, but actually performs every process. In the matter of design she is not bound by any conventional rules, and some of her books, in which she has employed brocade and leathers of different colours for the binding, are extremely beautiful.

Book-binding is one of the arts to be admired, and although its perfect achievement is reached only by the paths of patient carefulness and concentration, it is an accomplishment of which, when won, any woman may be justly proud. To give beauty to the world is admirable, but to give beauty combined with usefulness is permitted to few people. And for this, as well as for pointing to a new outlet for women's energy and capabilities, Miss Birkenruth is deserving of the respect and admiration of her fellow-sisters.

FRANK HIRD.

LITERARY INFANTICIDE.

By FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE, Author of "Sent Back by the Angels."



THE pathos of a child's death is as obvious as it is profound. Any fumbling hand can move us to tears, touching those chords of pity, wonder, and defeat. So ready, indeed, is our recognition of that truth, that we are beginning to feel a sense of outrage, of indecency, when a writer makes us stand beside the cradle or the cot of death. The etiquette of the matter is becoming fixed and stringent. Nature cries out with Hagar, "Let me not see the death of the child." When, therefore, art gainsays that voice, it must show either literary necessity, or else that touch of perfect surety which is justification of any attempt.

I think that to-day the heaviest charge which the morality of taste—æstheticism in its best sense—can bring against Charles Dickens is just this: that he, for impious and ignoble gain, did to death many children. The charge is not

wholly true. Not lightly nor wantonly did our gentle Master of the Magicians extinguish the life of little Nell. All one night, as we have learned, he paced the streets of Paris, hardening his heart to let her go. It seemed to him that there was no place in the world for a grown-up Nell. And yet we cannot altogether admit the defence of necessity. Dickens's whole conception of the child had been morbid, theatrical, false. It was true and righteous retribution that overtook him. In truth, he had created an infant monster, had fondled it, tricked it out in fantastic shreds and patches, had poured maudlin tears upon its feet, had bowed down his knees and worshipped it. And the doom was, that he, with his own hands, must strangle it, or else by it be strangled. The same thing happened to him in relation to little Paul; and it happened for our learning. I think we have all been taught—we sorry scribblers not worthy to stoop and kiss the Master's feet—to hold gain-seeking hands off the innocent sanctities of childhood. Evil times have come upon the literary baby-farmer. For aspersion of sentimental tears, he is like to get the franker tribute of the nearest pump.

And, consciously or unconsciously, was not Dickens led to repentance?

After long years he bade us for one moment look again upon the passing of a little white soul. And how worthily—with how exquisite a reticence—he spoke the Nunc Dimittis of Johnny of *Our Mutual Friend*.

What a difference between that, and yet another death-scene of Dickens's, with which it invites comparison—the departure of Jo of *Bleak House*, fattened on his first page for effective slaughter later on.

Those last moments of Jo—slobbering, melodramatic Jo—without reality, ease, or even an *e*, might well have suggested to Mr. Crockett the properties of that "big," that almost "immense" death-scene in "Cleg Kelly," upon which the curtain is sure to rise twice. An eighteen-stone engine-driver in *extremis* is quite an astonishing lever for lumps in the throat. A dying baby is hardly more effectual. Nobody ever discerns any pathos in the decease of a person of middling size. And yet a man may be ten stone ten and have his medium feelings too.

By the way, I am one of Mr. Crockett's staunch admirers. I think, too, I may claim to be one of his earliest panegyrists. How many reviewers besides myself, I wonder, discovered the excellent promise of *Dulce Cor?* I wish, however, he would not kill engine-drivers.