

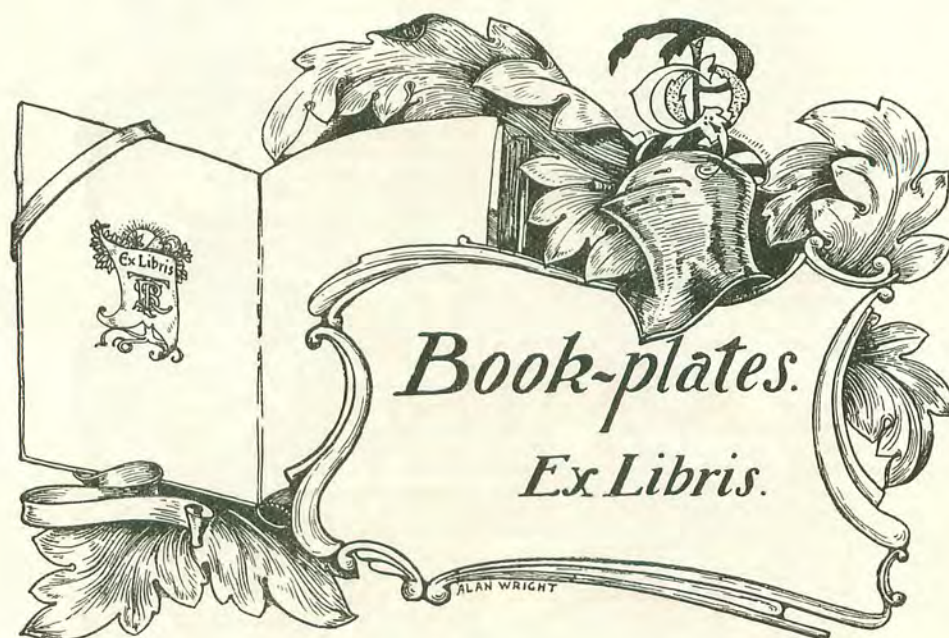
Do not be in the least degree put out if I go on to advise you to have, at all times, as few dresses as possible, and do not envy any of your neighbours who have it in their power to wear half-a-dozen new gowns in as many days. As a well-known writer has recently said—

“Such lavishness cannot, at all events, claim the countenance of one who is not only almost the highest, but by common consent also one of the best-dressed women in the land. The Princess of Wales seldom wears very costly attire in the daytime, and she goes on wearing her dresses as long as they look nice. I have repeatedly seen her at intervals during two successive seasons in the same gown; and at an important ceremony in the

Jubilee year Her Royal Highness appeared in a striking costume of green velvet brocaded with strawberries in their natural colour, which she had worn new in Ireland two years earlier. With regard to her daughters, simplicity has been carried to its utmost limit in their costume. But, in point of fact, dressing beyond what elegance and refinement demand, and dressing for the sake merely of showing how many and how expensive one's new gowns can be, is essentially vulgar; and gross and wasteful extravagance in this respect is no more truly ‘ladylike’ than it is morally justifiable.

“But the more reasonable a woman is about her dress expenditure, the more needful it is that she should pay due attention to having

what she does purchase to suit her, and made in accordance with the mode. Otherwise she soon gets dowdy and conspicuously unfashionable, or tires of her things. It is a penance of no mean description to wear what one feels is either out of style or unbecoming. That is a sensation as trying to the temper as it is distracting to the intellectual and social faculties. By all means, then, let us know what the fashions are and how they are veering, and let us try to discover what suits our faces and figures, and ‘see that we get it.’ This is quite another matter from the reckless ordering of the eternal new clothes, and wearing something fresh on every occasion of display, regardless of the fact that this means throwing aside costly clothes scarcely worn.”



A SHORT article on the origin and development of Book-plates (*Ex Libris*) must of necessity only skim the subject; but in so doing let us be careful to get only the cream, then those who feel themselves more deeply interested in the matter may turn for greater repletion to the wholesome milk—those authorities to whom we are, remember, indebted in a great measure for the cream we intend to condense, if possible, into a few columns.

Book-plates, to quote *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, is the somewhat awkward name given

to the labels denoting ownership fastened inside volumes. These labels may be anything, from a simple typographical inscription to the ambitious armorial, or the allegorical, symbolical, or pictorial design suggested by the tastes or hobbies of their respective owners; but the prince of all devices is the handsome, richly mantled armorial plate—the plate proper—although to appreciate these thoroughly one must possess some knowledge of that most cunning and fascinating art, heraldry.

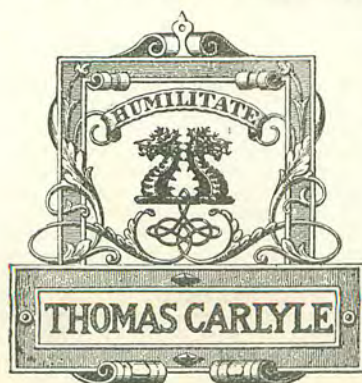
The typographical label is in these days certainly inexcusable; for one may have a design reproduced and quite a quantity of prints made for a few shillings, and even if one cannot design for one's self, our little circles of friends must in this era of Government Art Schools, include at least one artist with sufficient talent to produce the necessary small design.

On the continent, book-plates are invariably termed *Ex Libris*, and in England the Latin phrase also is often used. Our only book-plate society styles itself The Ex Libris Society, and issues monthly an interesting journal devoted entirely to book-plate lore, and freely illustrated after famous old plates or noticeable modern ones.

The phrases *Ex Libris*, *Ex Bibliotheca*, *Ex Catalogo Bibliotheca*, *Ex Musæo*, etc., were not used generally on French book-plates until

about 1700; but the German plates bear the *Ex Libris* on some of the earliest prints.

Book-plates, roughly speaking, may be said to have come into use contemporaneously with printing, of course not generally; but it would be difficult to say how uncommon they were in the early years of the printer's press, since though but very few have survived the four



THE BUXHEIM PLATE.

centuries elapsed, we cannot ascertain how many may "have gone their destined way;" and if two or three were printed, why not half a score or more?

About the earliest extant book-plate there seems some little uncertainty; but the honour of producing the first *Ex Libris* belongs, without any doubt, to Germany, and it seems but fitting that the fatherland of the printing press and of heraldry should also claim the same honour for *Ex Libris*.

The first known book-plate is a rough wood-cut representing a hedgehog with a flower in its mouth, and beneath, the motto, "*Hanns Iglar das dich em Igel kuss*"; it belonged to the chaplain to the family of Schönstett. This plate is approximately dated 1450.

The next, chronologically, is the Buxheim *Ex Libris*, a quaint little wood-cut of an angel with a shield bearing arms, an azure field upon which is a silver ox having a black ring through its nose. These plates were fixed into books presented by Brother Hildebrand Brandenburg of Biberach to the Carthusian Monastery at Buxheim, about 1480.

The earliest French and English plates bear, curiously, the same date (1574), by which it will be seen that the Germans forestalled us, and indeed all other nations, in the use of *Ex Libris*, by quite a century. This may be accounted for by the fact that they did not indulge in the richly embroidered and embossed covers that were common to their more luxurious neighbours, particularly the Italians. These covers bearing often the arms, in colour or gold, or monogram, or other personal device of owners, may be in a manner styled *Ex Libris*, though it would not be at all permissible to call them book-plates. In this manner we see that the former term may have a wider significance than its English equivalent within limitations.

In England we find but three book-plates dating from the sixteenth century; one bearing the date 1518—the earliest dated book-plate in existence, *Liber Hieronymi Ebner*, is its senior by but two years; the second, the plate of Sir Thomas Tresham, 1585; and that of 1574, the beautiful armorial plate of Sir Nicholas Bacon, father of the celebrated Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England and Essayist.

The earliest extant French *Ex Libris* bears the same date, viz., 1574, but cannot be compared with the English plate, as it is only a typographical label which belonged to one Alboise of Autun.

The earliest book-plates are almost entirely armorial; indeed, it would be surprising if it were otherwise at a period when almost every-

body could read coat armour and but few a typographical label.

It is curious to note that the first *Ex Libris* were of large size as if intended only for great volumes, although one would more readily expect small books to go astray. Prints of coat armour exceeding ten inches by eight inches were possibly too large for *Ex Libris*; at any rate the extreme limit might be set at thirteen inches by ten inches, though there are none at present known of such a size, says one authority, and certainly it seems an ungainly size for the purpose. The plate has gradually

Upon the latter point Mr. Walter Hamilton, in his thorough and interesting work, *Dated Book-plates*, says: "Of the many thousands of dated plates I have examined, I should say that not more than one per cent. have false dates, and even these, in nearly every case, prove of interest, as fixing the period of the acquisition of some property or a title, or a change of name, or a record of some other event in the history of a family."

It sometimes happens that of two prints of identically the same plate, one bears a date, and is therefore of course the more valuable.

The various mottoes, verses, etc., on book-plates are in themselves a source of amusement and instruction. The following, directed chiefly against the unconscientious borrower, are interesting:—

"The ungodly borroweth and payeth not again" (Psalm xxxvii. 21), occurs on a plate of 1756 and another of 1760.

In Latin, on a plate of 1730, belonging to the Cloister of Wessenbrunn:

"I am the good possession of the Cloister of Wessenbrunn, Ho, there! Restore me to my master; so right demands."

Yet another indulges in quite a lengthy exhortation of the volume:

"If thou art borrowed by a friend,  
Right welcome shall he be,  
To read, to study, not to lend,  
But to return to me.  
Not that imparted knowledge doth  
Diminish learning's store,  
But books I find if often lent  
Return to me no more."

And so the mottoes run on *ad infinitum*.

On a coloured plate belonging to one John Giles Knoringen, are some lines which the Hon. Leicester Warren translates as follows:—

"These are the famed insignia of my sires  
Which in their proper tinctures thou may'st see,

Not bribes, as is the fashion of these days,  
But virtue raised them to nobility."

The translator remarks of coloured armorial plates that they are all probably prior to 1600, accounted for by the fact that the present system of tincture lines in heraldry came into use about 1640, and made application of colour to coat-armour designs unnecessary, though the early specimens of the new method are not always trustworthy.

The amount of detail crammed on to some book-plates is astonishing. On one plate alone will be found over and above owner's name and device, his horoscope, occupation,



decreased in size, and now a small plate is usually made to serve for all volumes. Some book-owners, however, indulge in several sizes, and others, even, in many designs; but of the latter fashion it is difficult to discover the advantages.

We have already seen that the earliest dated book-plate is that of *Liber Hieronymi Ebner*, 1516; the earliest signed book-plate is but a few years later, being that of Dr. Pomer, by "R.A.," 1525.

It may be mentioned here that a manuscript date upon a book-plate does not constitute a dated plate, and in a few cases the printed date upon a plate may be greatly anterior to the execution of the design.



REBUS PLATE.

an epitaph, and address. Another will have all his quarterings on separate shields, himself, in full panoply of war, mounted on a careering charger surrounded by allegorical figures or symbols of such virtues as Truth, Justice, Piety, etc.; or the professions, the Army, Navy, Church, State, Law, Art.

The list of artists who have lent their genius to the designing and engraving of book-plates contains many an illustrious name. Albert Durer produced some twenty plates, and surely no genius could have been more apt to the work. His love of detail, care, and crispness of touch, and his superb decorative qualities made him an ideal book-plate designer.

Glancing through the long lists we catch sight of such names as Lucas Cranach, Siebenburgher, Hogarth, Bartolozzi, and Bewick, to quote but a few men familiar to us from childhood, and promising valuable artistic interest as an additional lure to the study of *Ex Libris*.

With regard to the arrangement of collections of book-plates, the best authorities are agreed that the most convenient is that which is guided by style. Space forbids entering minutely into explanation, but the following list of terms will sufficiently explain themselves. They are: (1) Early English, or

Early Armorial; (2) Jacobean; (3) Chippendale; (4) Allegorical; (5) Wreath and Ribbon, circa 1770 to 1790; Festoon; (6) Urn; Landscape; (7) Seal book-plates; (8) Rebus, *i.e.*, name of owner represented by objects, as an eye and a tun for Eyton; Ash-bee, an ash-tree and a bee; Canting Arms, similar to Rebus plates only taking heraldic form; Mock Heraldry, *i.e.*, made-up arms, for example, a collector of postage-stamps might have a shield charged with a postage-stamp; argent, a postage-stamp gules; (9) Portrait Book-plates; (10) Book-pile, Library Interior, and Literary Book-plates.



CHIPPENDALE.

The collector will at the commencement find it perhaps most convenient to simply keep the plates loose or pasted upon thin boards. Only the tiniest corner should be pasted, so that at any time the plate may be easily removed. Each board bearing a plate should be numbered and indexed, and they may be best kept in an ordinary letter-case made in book form. As the collection increases the collector will add a case until, perhaps, he will find it necessary to have a separate case, or even two or more for each style.

The easiest method of removing book-plates from old covers, without doing harm to either book or book-plate, is to soak a piece of thick white blotting-paper, slightly larger than the plate to be removed, in boiling water and lay it over the plate for five minutes, more or less as the case requires, then gently raise an edge with a blunt paper-knife, and the plate should come away without the least trouble; but, above all, be careful to ascertain first that the plate and book together have no peculiar value in their association.



*Thomas Potter*  
*of the Middle Temple*

1745

JACOBAN.

Those of my readers who are fortunate enough to live in Town, and have the *entrée* of any of the large libraries, will be able to gain fuller information from the following authorities:—

The Hon. Leicester Warren, *A Guide to the Study of Book-plates*. This is the first English work on the subject (1880).

Walter Hamilton, *Dated Book-plates*, 1894, published in three parts. A most exhaustive and thorough work.

By the same author, *French Book-plates*.

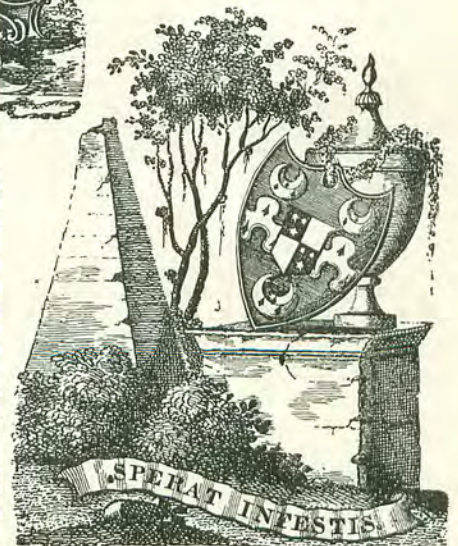
Egerton Castle, *English Book-plates*.

These authorities will be found ample, and will themselves give further references to foreign works on the subject if required.



*Samuel Rogers.*

WREATH AND RIBBON PERIOD.



*Rev. Sidenham Teast Wylde, B*

BRISTOL 1779

URN AND LANDSCAPE.