

These facts are mentioned to show the necessity of retraining, if one may so use the term; and such work lies more in the hands of the publishers and booksellers than with binder.

It has been said over and over again that a properly bound book should open easily and remain open at any page. Now, if a book is printed on very heavy or stout paper to make it appear bulky, as is sometimes done for want of matter, is it possible for the binder to make such a book open easily and remain so without putting each leaf on a guard, and thus making it a guard-book! Books printed three hundred years ago had good paper; their bindings are in many instances in fair preservation, and in all cases these books were bound with tight backs, a thing perfectly impossible to do with the present class of paper. The very fact of them having tight backs tended to their good condition; the paper allowed of such treatment—it was good, thin, and pliable. As the paper altered in the manufacture and became adulterated, so the binder had to meet the requirements such paper demanded, and the hollow back was introduced to enable the book to open more easily. There is a great deal of difference between a tight back as above and a flexible back. The former had paper glued upon paper until the back was as hard as iron. In many cases these layers were quite one sixteenth of an inch thick; in the latter the leather is almost fastened direct upon the sections, thus permitting the book to open perfectly flat. But this method is not suitable for all bindings of the present day. It has been asked, Why cannot one get a book bound now equal to those of two hundred and fifty years ago? This is answered, that one can get better binding and more accurately done by going to a binder of good standing, for books are quite as elaborately decorated now as in former years; but modern books are of less money value, therefore have cheaper bindings. But when a book has over fourteen days spent on its decoration, one must be prepared for the charge of time expended on it. When Channing said, "God be thanked for books," he ought to have added, "and good bookbinders."

France is producing some very fine books, the paper made purposely for the work, the type all that can be desired, illustrations perfect. Let our publishers follow the example and produce some works worthy of the name of books, and our bookbinders will, it is quite certain, put a jacket around them equal to the printer's efforts.

WOOD FOR BOOK COVERS.—There is a process of "carving" wood by softening it, and then pressing it in moulds. In a Parisian process, known as Xylobasty, the wood is softened by steam and imbued with certain ingredients, which impart to it sufficient ductility to enable it to receive bas-relief impressions from four to five millimetres in height. For medallions, bosses, &c., mastic is forced into the hollows, so that all tendency in the compressed wood to split or open is completely overcome. For bookbinding purposes, much seems expected from this process, as it is applicable to the scented or odoriferous woods—cedar, teak, cypress, rosewood, &c.—which repel worms.—*Ex.*

BOOKBINDERS' THREAD SEWING MACHINE.—Mr. Aug. Brehmer is perfecting a new thread sewing

machine for bookbinders, of which great things are predicted. Although bookbinding is a trade in which hand labour must always be largely employed, the adoption of machinery is fast altering the complexion of the business, and has promoted the growth of vast bookbinding factories conducted on a scale which a generation ago would have been thought impossible. —*London Bookseller.*

BOOKSELLING IN RUSSIA.—The experience of a Russian bookseller has just come to light, who was for some time systematically persecuted and outraged by the Government officials, and finally robbed of three-fourths of his property for no other reason than that he fostered the study of literature in the district in which he kept his shop. He thereby offended the Government accustomed to treat literature and science as enemies, and to punish with the utmost severity those who became conspicuous as students of either. The unfortunate man who just now is described as an instance of the Russian Government's brutality is one named Kervelli, a French citizen, who obtained patents from the Crown to sell books in Karkoff, a city of 60,000 inhabitants, in Southern Russia. M. Kervelli excluded entirely from his stock all so-called "illegal" books. His shop was several times examined by the police, but no illegal literature was to be found, and everything went well with the book-seller, his business growing rapidly. In August, 1883, M. Kervelli was taken into custody, and his house and shop again ransacked; but no forbidden books were discovered. Yet he was detained twenty-five days, and then "examined." The Russian mode of examining political prisoners is a process entirely unique, and almost invariably results in the sending back of the suspected person to prison, who has no idea of the nature of his crime. After the farce of questioning M. Kervelli had been gone through, he was sent to St. Petersburg, where he was confined for the next seven months. At the end of that time the French Consul interfered, and gained another examination. In reply to a demand for a statement of the prisoner's offence, the chief of political police said: "You have done nothing openly illegal, I admit; but that only shows how prudent you are, and therefore all the more dangerous. It is true also that we have found no forbidden literature in your possession. All the same, we know quite well that it is possible to arrange an assortment even of authorized books so as to spread subversive ideas quite as effectually as if they were revolutionary pamphlets printed at Geneva." Or, to speak candidly, a person living in Russia who may show unusual intellectual activity is deemed a traitor to his country, worthy of such a punishment as fell to the lot of M. Kervelli. The final outcome of this affair was that, owing to the perseverance of the French Consul, Kervelli was set at liberty, with instructions to leave the country forthwith. He was allowed, however, to revisit Karkoff to dispose of his business. On the 22nd of last March he reached his destination, escorted by two guards. With wonderful consideration the officials had closed up the shop, and he was ordered to liquidate his business in twenty-four hours. The result was that a valuable stock of books was sold for one quarter of their actual cost. The next day he was accompanied to the frontier. His travelling expenses and the expenses of the soldiers who guarded him