

INTRODUCTION

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has no doubt a great deal to do with the readiness to appreciate fine work, while the great number of small princely courts each vying with the others in their desire to have the very best, both of books in their library and of labels to show the taste of their respective owner, created a demand which attracted and developed the talents of some of the finest minor masters of the time. In the search for good examples it is therefore only natural that we should turn to the older German Book Plates, and the majority of the examples in this book are founded upon the excellent work of Dürer and his contemporaries.

Another source of inspiration for this class of design must not be overlooked, and that is the trade marks and colophons of the early printers. These are exceedingly interesting, both from the artistic sense of proportion in their design, and also from the quaint and ingenious symbolism introduced. The marks of Aldus, Wynkyn de Worde, and others of a simple nature are well-known, but those of some of the more obscure printers are little known save to the bibliographer, but are, nevertheless, of great value from an artistic standpoint.