

jealously guarded that anything which would detract from the main feature is looked upon with feelings of alarm. Although this is quite reasonable, it should be borne in mind that the same argument applies to the taste for elaborate and distinctly appropriate bindings which is so prevalent at the present day. We find also that the early book collectors—who are not to be despised as models—did not by any means look upon the “garnishing” of their choice books, with either fine bindings or quaint and artistic Book Plates, as of too little importance to deserve their careful thought and attention.

Dealing more particularly with the class of design for which the wood-block is most suitable and to which we have entirely devoted this volume, it is noticeable that the Germans not only were the first to adopt elaborate designs, both in this style and in the more finished style of the copper plate, but that the artistic qualities of their Book Plates, even from the very earliest examples, are far ahead of those of any other country. Considerable controversy has taken place as to the cause of this pre-eminence, but the teutonic vigour of character