



OUR BOOKS AND BOOK-MAKERS.

Some day I will tell you how a book is written, though that may not be an easy matter. And some other day I will describe how it is printed—a very curious process too. To-day I am going to put the cart before the horse and tell you how books are bound, and perhaps when you know all the labour and care that are expended upon them you will be less callous to their feelings. A good book, with a good binding, should be one of our very best friends, and no true-hearted young Canadian would willingly disregard the feelings of a friend.

Long ago, after an author had written his book, he handed it over, not to a printer or to a publisher, but to a transcriber—a man who sat down and wrote out a copy of it. After this copy was finished he wrote another, and then another, a very slow process indeed. The book was then passed over to an artist who set his ingenuity to work to decorate it with fancy titles, and much very pretty ornamentation was sometimes indulged in. It was then sent to the man who was what we should call the binder, but he was not a binder according to our notion. He put the book on to a roller about thirteen inches long. The two ends he finished off neatly with metal or ivory knobs. As many decorations were put on outside as he could well devise, and then the whole thing, for safety, was put into a neat case of parchment or wood. The box, too, was made as pretty as it could be, and the portrait of the author was sometimes put on it. He was very proud of his work, and he had good reason. These were the days of working for the love of work, before the days of working for the love of money.

Some of them were very gorgeous. The wooden cases were often richly carved, and they were occasionally made longer than the book, so that it might be easily held in the hand. They had their editions de luxe also, and vied with each other in decorations of ivory, silver, and gold. I am now looking at a cut of an old and beautiful Bible believed to have been the property of King Charles I., and to have been presented by him to one of the Bishops who attended His Royal Highness. It is bound in blue velvet, and decorated with the royal coronet in silver, precious stones, and gold.

When we first began to print our books instead of having them copied, the printing was pretty much in imitation of the copying, and the binding was also in imitation of the work of the early monks, who were the copyists and the binders. The work was gradually taken out of the hands of the good old monks, who soon found other things to do, and book making and book binding became a regular trade. It has now become almost a profession. Men who love books are as particular as to their binding as they are as to their contents. France is famous for its binding, but London holds its own against the world for the beauty, elasticity, and durability of its bindings. There are men in London who have earned for themselves as much fame in book binding as any have done in book-writing. Of one, Lewis, it is said "his books appear to move on silk hinges."

After the sheets are printed they are dried by being hung up on poles for a time. They are then made smooth by very heavy pressure. The next process is the "folding" of the sheets into the size required for the book. In a library or book-shop, there seems to us to be little rule in this matter. Every book seems to come out in a size decided either by chance, or by its own sweet will. We find, however, a law in this, as in most things. If you take a sheet and fold it once it makes a big book. Fold it twice and you have another size. Go on in this way and you get a good variety, but all according to some law. In this way we have names for the sizes derived from the number of folds. If a sheet is folded eight times, we get a volume in "octavo," and so on. It is an easy matter to fold a sheet that has not been printed. But as the pages on the sheet, eight of them in an octavo, are all printed, not after each other, but so that they will come after each other when folded,



SEWING BOOKS.