

being placed around \$100,000, the insurance held by the company being as follows: Royal \$7,500, Northern \$3,750, Queens \$5,000, Phoenix of Hartford \$5,000, Hartford \$2,500, United Fire \$2,500, Western \$6,000, North American \$25,000, Eastern \$2,500 and some other small sums amounting in all to about \$40,000. The two arbitrators for the company and the insurance people have been holding their enquiry since and find that the insurance will practically cover the loss. As soon as the appraising is finished therefore the firm will resume business. It may be noted that they intended to move next spring into the big new block which the street railway company are erecting for their general offices at the corner of Craig and Lambert's Hill, but as it is not complete they will have to secure temporary premises somewhere. The only difficulty that remains now is a difference of opinion between the arbitrator for the insurance people and the gentleman who acts for the Bank Note Co. as to the damage to the machinery. The latter holds that it is a total loss, while the former says that some of it can be utilized again. In the meantime some 75 or 100 workpeople are temporarily out of employment.

EARLY BOOKBINDING.

THE art or craft of bookbinding has, in varying degrees, occupied the minds of literary men and book lovers from times all but coeval with the existence of books themselves; and there have been few, indeed, among those entitled to the name of bibliophile who have been proof against the attraction presented by an artistically bound volume. "This seductive branch of book-commerce," as Dibdin justly calls bookbinding, has undoubtedly been for some years past more generally popular than it has ever been before. Nor is this taste at present confined, as frequently in old times, to any one country more than another. In England, France, Germany and the United States, the artistic revival which has taken place during the last ten or fifteen years has impressed itself most unmistakably on the binder's craft. In all these countries, for some time now, both patrons and artisans interested in the art have, in their respective spheres, been united in an endeavor to make their age, if possible, the rival of the best periods of bookbinding in better times, and it is no exaggeration to say that such efforts have been attended with a large measure of success. Under the circumstances it is therefore a matter which calls for no little surprise, that the history of this fascinating subdivision of bibliography has until recent years remained wholly unwritten. The subject has now and then been touched upon by many writers, in many languages, who have devoted their labors to the production of works on books and bookmaking, but the gathering together into systematic historical sequence of such scattered allusions as are to be found in the pages of these authors is a task which, we regret to say, has not yet been fully and successfully accomplished by any one.

The early history of the subject is enveloped in an almost impenetrable mist of obscurity. What are generally considered the first known specimens of the art are terra cotta cases, samples of which are to be seen in the Assyrian Collection in the British Museum. These ancient book covers bear the inscriptions in cuneiform characters, with a simple archaic ornamentation, and are capable of containing a small-sized volume. Next to these in point of time comes the papyrus rolls on which hieroglyphics were inscribed, fastened together by means of rings. After these came the Egyptian roll, the most usual form of ancient

manuscripts, and the form in which books continued to be made up, without any change for many centuries, being commonly found both in Greek and Roman libraries for a considerable period after the Christian era. The appearance of these rolls is too well known to need description, and it will be readily seen that their very form precluded the possibility of any great variety in the bindings; and, accordingly, the history of bookbinding—as the term is now understood—cannot be said to have commenced until a new departure from the old methods of literature took place, which consisted of folding, instead of rolling, the manuscript. It is somewhat remarkable that the Greek writings which remain to us from classic times, give us no details as to the bindings of books; although we are enabled to collect from Latin literature a very full account of almost the entire process by which the Roman binders did their work. Cicero himself, not to mention others, tells us that the bindings fashionable at his time were already of a very costly and sumptuous kind. Nor was the habit of collecting fine books in the old Roman days by any means confined to men of literary taste. We find Seneca inveighing against those who were mere book collectors, and for whom the bindings had a greater value than the contents; while Lucian wrote a treatise specially directed to the exposure of this common folly.

It is uncertain at what period the place of the roll was first taken by the book in folded form. Eumenes II., King of Pergamus (197 B.C.), a city renowned for its library, is generally supposed to have at least made the new shape popular. Its invention has been attributed to him, but on insufficient grounds, as the idea was in all probability derived from the Roman pugillaria, or table books, many of which have been found at Herculaneum; while the author of "The Art of Bookbinding" gives it as his opinion that the most ancient instance of books formed of separate pages will be found in the sacred books of Ceylon, which were composed of palm leaves connected by a silken string.

With this folded form, whenever introduced, bookbinding, in the everyday sense of the term, may be said to have commenced; for the two boards which were first used as the protecting covers for volumes so made up, being attached by thread to the body of the work, were, for all practical purposes, identical with the means now everywhere adopted by binders for the preservation of modern books.

In the adornment of these old-world covers we must look for the origin of artistic binding; and we accordingly find that, shortly after the introduction of this new fashion in the making up of books, the worker in gold, in silver and in copper began to be associated with the manufacturer of literary wares, and lent his aid toward the embellishment and decoration of the outside coverings in which such literary products made their appearance. The earliest specimens of bindings in this folded form were probably the productions of the Eastern Roman dominions, or Byzantine empire, and the art of decorative binding which, we may assume, sprang into existence there, continued to be practiced with success for many centuries in the same locality, until in process of time it came to be transplanted from the place of its birth to the western cities of Italy and Spain, partly as the result of the visits of the Crusaders and others to the East, and partly by reason of the increased demand for models and examples of ornamental bindings which followed on the invention of printing and the consequent multiplication of books to which that discovery led. —London quarterly Review,