

THE ROYCROFT PRODUCTIONS.

The books issued at the famous Roycroft Shop in East Aurora, N.Y., are as beautiful and tasteful as they are unique. The aim of Mr. Hubbard, the founder and manager of the Roycroft Shop, is to make books after the style of the early Venetian bookmakers, in regard to the binding and general appearance of the book, though the type is the modern oldstyle.

The Roycroft books are, in most cases, bound in soft leather, not stiffened with cardboard, but extremely flexible. The leather is used in red, green, grey and brown shades, and is either embossed or bronzed. The inside of the cover is finished with silk or satin, either matching or harmonizing with the color of the leather. Some of the covers are the ordinary heavy cardboard, but backed with the soft, undressed leather that is used on the others.

A photogravure of the author usually makes up the frontispiece, and the title page is invariably richly illuminated. The pages are partly uncut and partly deckle-edged. Each page is illuminated, and, as a rule, printed in 18 point old style. In some cases more than one color is used in the reading matter on the same page.

The books are nearly all editions of classic works, the exceptions being Mr. Hubbard's own writings and those of some well-known authors. Only a certain number are printed, and the plates, etc., are then destroyed. An edition rarely exceeds 1,000 in number, and as few as 450 copies have been printed. Each copy is signed by Mr. Hubbard.

WAX ENGRAVING.

The term "wax engraving" is not used in the same sense as "wood" or "steel engraving," in that the printed impression is not made directly from the wax itself, but from copper or other metal used. The wax is used only to help make the engraving on the metal. The surface of the copper plate which is to be engraved is first given an application of nitrate of silver, and over this a thin coating of wax is spread. The wax solution is composed of bees-wax, oxide of zinc and venetian pitch, and, when hardened, forms a glazed surface, upon which the design is drawn with pointed tools, or printed.

If a photographic print is to be taken, the negative is made from the copy and a print transferred to the waxed surface of the plate, which, being sensitized, as in half-tone plates, is susceptible to light. The plate is then handed to an engraver, who cuts the impression in the wax just deep enough to reach the copper underneath without scratching it. If any lettering is needed, the plate is heated slightly and the type stamped on the softened wax. After this, melted wax is poured into the large open sections of the plate, which is then sent to the electrotyper. His operation consists in immersing the plate in a bath of salts and copperas, and the electric current acting on the solution, separates the copper and causes it to assume the formation of a film-like covering on the wax mold. When this covering is sufficiently developed, it is stripped from the mold, trimmed and straightened, and, when mounted on a block, is ready for use.

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