

INTRODUCTION

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this process work, of which one sees so many, are made in spare hours by amateurs, and the very cheapness with which the technical part of the reproduction is carried out has a deteriorating effect upon these well-meaning but exceedingly ill-equipped artists. A notable point—one might almost call it the main feature—in these designs seems to be the alarming flood of black ink, which does not even find its natural level, but spreads with a delightfully unscientific disregard of physical laws over the skies, rivers, mountains, seas, and woods (and *such* woods!) which do duty for the background of the attenuated figures and leafless trees which so often form the main composition. In pointing out this peculiarity we do not wish by any means to under-rate the artistic value of large spaces of black, and with heraldic designs these, by a skilled hand, can be most appropriately introduced with great effect. I have specially in my mind the very fine plate by Dürer, of Hector Poemer, dated 1521, which is illustrated in most of the books dealing with Book Plates. Here the sable tincture in the arms is rendered by a solid black which relieves the design in a very effective way, and many other plates could be mentioned of