

Fantin-Latour

is in the "doubleure," or inner lining of the cover. In ordinary cases this portion of a book is occupied by the so called "end-papers," which, through many centuries now, have occasionally been of even a flamboyant type in pattern and in colour. Accordingly, when leather takes the place of paper here, one does not so keenly resent a deviation from simpler methods of decoration as one would if the form of ornament adopted were found impressed upon the outside of the volume. Besides, the exterior of a book is constantly exposed, in a greater or less degree, to a wear and tear which does not affect the "doubleure," owing to the protection from rubbing afforded by its position. I am at the same time, however, far from advocating extravagance in any direction or quarter in the matter of a well and tastefully bound volume.

In the example illustrated on page 34, will be noticed a variation from the more usual practice of making the upper and the lower covers of a book identical in design. In such a case it is well that the difference should not be too marked; and however the upper pattern may vary from the lower, there should never be wanting some strong suggestion of relationship between them in the detail or general outline of their diversified forms.

The question whether the exterior design on a book should be to any extent symbolical or indicative of its contents is one which has frequently exercised the minds of artistic bookbinders. In times past the great Roger Payne was amongst those who used—occasionally, at least—to regulate his patterns by the nature of the subject-matter of the volume which he was binding. Looked at from an artist's standpoint, there does not seem to be anything against such a practice, so long as some obvious and easily intelligible connection can be established, by form of tool or general scheme of decoration, between the outside and the contents of the volume. Marius Michel is worth quoting on this matter; and his observations may account for the too frequent instances of eccentricity with which we are familiar in the case of modern French forms of decoration: "Ce qui distinguera les reliures artistiques de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle des reliures anciennes, c'est la recherche de l'appropriation du décor au sujet de l'ouvrage; recherche qui est devenue le desideratum de tous les nouveaux amateurs de livres modernes. L'impulsion est donnée, le mouvement se dessine chaque jour davantage et malgré la résistance routinière de quelques prétendus classiques, qui dénie toute faculté créatrice aux artisans de leur temps et ne veulent encore sur

leurs livres que des copies, on ne pourra plus l'arrêter." *

The danger in adopting such a line seems to lie in the overdoing of it; for the difficulties of devising new patterns, appropriate to the extent of being emblematic of what is treated in the book, are all but insurmountable when the innumerable varieties of subject are considered; and so, on the whole, the binder, except in some rare moment of inspiration, would do well to confine his efforts at appropriateness to some artistic form which will not at least be inappropriate to the character of the contents, or the period at which the book was composed or printed.

If he be uniformly successful in doing this, he will have gone far towards establishing his position as an artist in the truest sense of the term.

EDWARD SULLIVAN.

MODERN FRENCH PASTEL - LISTS: FANTIN - LATOUR. BY RAYMOND BOUYER.

EVERY master creates a world for himself, and the name of Fantin-Latour calls up an enchanted world, a melodious fairy-land, where Music herself appears personified under the guise of a beautiful young woman with angel's wings; for the melomaniac of Dauphiné, compatriot of Stendhal and of Berlioz, had the peculiar gift of interpreting on canvas the harmonious masterpieces of his favourite composers, Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner, Schumann and Brahms, not forgetting Weber and Rossini. His work as a painter comprises portraits and compositions; his palette loves the true no less than the beautiful: two parallel tendencies which have made him the precursor of our reviving taste for the discreetly intimate and for the immortal—for poetry. His compositions are as delicate as his portraits are robust: here are invocations, dreams, harmonies; and love of music inspires them all. The history of our art will record the blossoming of these brilliant flowers in the somewhat ungrateful field of naturalism.

The misty indefinite medium of pastel naturally attracted the music mad painter. M. Fantin-Latour worked in pastel; and the pastellist has treated the same subjects, the same themes of musical poetry, as the painter, the wizard of colour, and as the lithographer, the resuscitator of his art: passing from one process to the other these same subjects are transformed, imperceptibly changed in aspect without change of meaning, like variants or

* "L'Ornementation des Reliures modernes." Paris. 1889.