

Some Sumptuous Book-Bindings

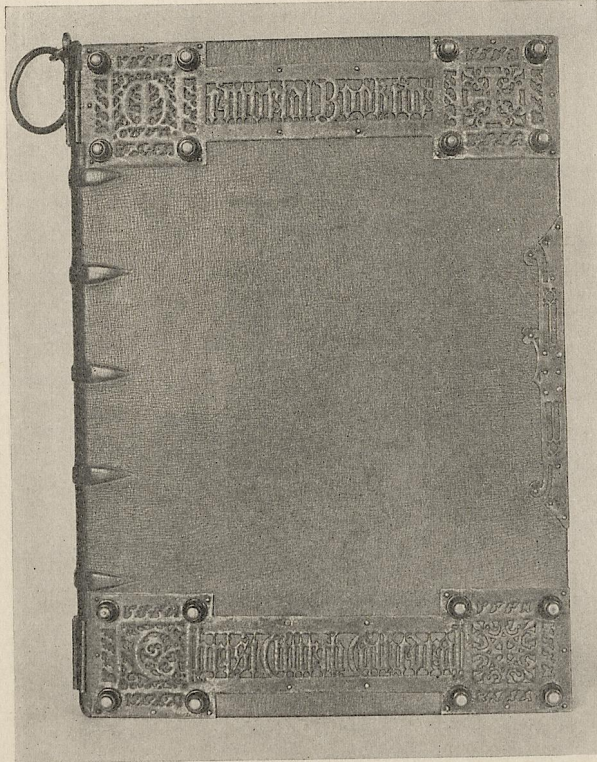
of tangled masts and rigging in the one, and the nearly naked tree forms about the Peggy Stewart House in the other. There is no attempt at the creation of an effect of distance in all these panels. The flatness of the wall is perfect. Long lines of forms, sky as described, heads in line below, from end to end. Then bodies in costume, then the line of varied legs (what a pity we have no varied legs to-day), then the line of the earth at the bottom of the series of line forms. All this probably could be in no way bettered, and proves that Turner is an experienced master of decoration. The colors are made very fresh and clear, in order to carry well in the never-changing artificial lighting. The handling is frank and firm, sufficiently finished so as not to offend the eye, in view of the narrow place and the nearness of the spectators. Decoration is gradually becoming a necessity—and let us be thankful for it—so that there is a growing sentiment in the country: no decorations, no trade. And it teaches us the history which has made us the favored nation we are proud of being.

SOME SUMPTUOUS BOOK-BINDINGS CARRIED OUT AT THE MERRYMOUNT PRESS, BOSTON. BY NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.

THE BREAKING of the "alabaster box of ointment, very precious," and Christ's rebuke to those who condemned the extravagance will always serve for a sufficient justification to the conscientious for any amount of money spent in the decoration and adornment of churches and the beautification of all that pertains to religious service. Art need never fear reprehension from her foster sister, Piety. The orchids blooming in serene loveliness in the New England forests, with not an eye to feast on them, ought to have been a perpetual rebuke to our stern Puritan ancestors, who would have divested worship of all beauty except that of holiness. Indeed, it may be set down as an axiom that Mother Nature herself is a wonderful monitor to those that decry waste, or what we in our petty ignorance call waste. The brief flowering-time of the fruit trees,

the lavish magnificence of a snow-storm, when the air is filled with uncounted billions of exquisite crystals destined to perish in a few minutes, the gorgeous paintings of the sinking sun that last only while one takes a breath, are, or ought to be, enormous incentives to well-directed extravagance. This is heretical doctrine to come from New England, whose vaunted virtue has ever been economy in its most restricted sense; but properly understood it is a heresy that conduces to the general well-being of humanity, to all progress in Art and Science, and to vastly greater enjoyment of life.

It is safe to assert that Literature is the gauge of a nation's success. Its sculpture, paintings and architecture are more ephemeral; for, even if a book or roll containing a history or poem is destroyed, the memory of some gifted person will probably transmit it to the next generation, and it will be thus preserved like the Kalevala or Odyssey. The preservation of books is a sacred duty, and allied to it is the reverent treatment of them. If a man is justified in giving his sweetheart or



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