

library. This is no doubt the reason at the root of the fact that German book bindings as a whole are so varied, so original, and so intriguingly beautiful—the most individualistic covers in the world. The German book usually appears both in paper and bound covers; the material is often cheap and simple, but the most striking effects are achieved through unusual color combinations, specially designed original type, or some haunting symbol. The French publisher is content to issue thousands of books all bound in the familiar but monotonous yellow paper covers, and even the typography is unchangeable through the decades. American and English publishers are prone to rely, especially for novels, upon a stout linen cover of this or that color with black, white, or gold stamping, and a loud, chromatic jacket, too frequently a mere illustration of no artistic value. The German publisher, like some of the big German firms, has discovered the advantage of working in conjunction with the true creative artist and giving him a free hand. Most of our own books, it must be confessed, appear staid and old-fashioned beside these.

Books for Books' Sake

THE German book lover is not only devoted to the book for its contents. Indifferent as he may often be to sartorial elegance or becomingness in his dress or that of his wife, he is nevertheless very mindful of style, beauty, and fitness in the garmenting of the books in his

To be sure, unscrupulous German publishers, catering to the taste and the purse of the war profiteer, began immediately after the war to produce numbers of artistically worthless books at extremely high prices, their showy exteriors designed to distract the reader's or rather the buyer's attention from the poor quality of the paper and printing. But this period is over, and the good and beautiful book has recovered its own.

Bibliophile societies are a peculiar institution in Germany and do much to encourage art. The enormous increase in price of everything con-

nected with book production led many book lovers to fear that the societies would no longer be able to exist. The fees for membership rose to great heights, but most of the subscribers remained faithful, and so the beautiful private editions could continue to appear. Not only this, but new bibliophile societies have arisen in a number of cities, for instance, one in the great art city, Darmstadt, one in industrial Chemnitz, and one in Dortmund. That it is not a fashion or a fad to belong to these societies is proved by the type of books which they issue. The latest book produced by the Dortmund society, for instance, was a beautiful edition of Dostoyevsky's "Petersburg Nights", which is certainly no everyday fare. The edition was limited to one hundred copies.

Many private presses also bring out exquisite work—the Eginhard Press in Aachen, the Rudolfinische Drücke in Offenbach-on-the-Main, the Insel Press, a branch of the famous Insel Verlag, and the Amalthea Press in Vienna—to mention but a few. The Amalthea Press even brought out a book in English—"In Pandean Vale", sonnets by Geoffrey Sephton, bound in white and gold and printed and decorated in color with designs by the Marquis von Bayros. The newly founded Leipziger Akademie für Graphische Künste und Buchgewerbe has begun a series of exquisite editions with a "Troilus and Cressida" (in a new translation by Hans Rothe which is said to be highly dramatic and effective), decorated with glowing lithographs in the baroque spirit of the play.

The Jakob Krause Bund, the Society of German Bookbinders, named after a famous bookbinder of the eighteenth century, is sending round

prospectuses proposing that book lovers should join the society as "patrons". They believe that a closer connection between bookbinder and book lover would necessarily be of advantage to both. They are to issue a monthly magazine, entitled, technically, "Die Heftlade", edited by Ernst Collin. It is to be devoted to book-binding in a practical and æsthetic sense, and lavishly illustrated. The magazine will be published by the Euphorion-Verlag of Berlin, which has a good name for fine printing, and it is proposed to issue occasional private editions, the circulation of which will be limited to the patrons. Members of the Jakob Krause Bund will design the covers for these delectable editions.

A private edition of general interest has just been issued by Paul Cassirer, after its public circulation had been forbidden. This is a wickedly brilliant squib upon the German world of music publishers, written by that most witty and devilish of dramatic critics, the Mencken of Berlin, Alfred Kerr, and with music by Richard Strauss. The work is entitled "Der Krämerspiegel" (The Hucksters' Mirror). Kerr's verses flash, prick, and stab, as does Strauss's music. The style is somewhat similar to that of the "Rosenkavalier", with delightful moments of parody and a deeper lyric note when art is depicted as lying enslaved under the claw of the profiteer. Michel Fingesten, one of the most original and fantastic-poetic of the young black and white men, illustrated this bibliophilic curiosity with some dashing etchings. The book is dedicated to the man who has done so much to secure the rights of the composer in Germany, Dr. Friedrich Roesch, and

the small edition is priced at over 1,500 marks.

A most important work for book lovers which has just been published by Felix Kraus of Stuttgart, is "Die Neue Deutsche Buch-Kunst" (New German Bibliographic Art), by Professor Hans Loubier, president of the Berlin Museum of Arts and Crafts. It is a history, complete, critical, and objective, of the artistic progress and development of the German book in the last twenty-five years. The renaissance of book printing and production dates from William Morris's establishment of the Kelmscott Press at Hammersmith, London, in 1891. Four years later the first fruits of the revivifying influence were already visible in German book production. The highest point of perfection was reached with the magazine "Pan", in which poets, artists, and printers vied to produce the most beautiful magazine in the world. It was unfortunately as short-lived as these

splendid productions usually are, and has never since been equaled. In Professor Loubier's magnificent work, with its 157 illustrations in color and black and white, its reproductions of book bindings, fine new types, and publishers' signets, the reader interested in the technique of his books and the record of modern German illustrators, will find many an hour of absorbing reading. The price of this noble book, itself a work of art, bound in white parchment, with title in orange and black, is five dollars. Professor Loubier writes in a lively, descriptive manner, free from all pedantry. While liberal with praise where praise is due, he has a refreshing vigor of criticism and the most famous artists are dealt with in a summary fashion when their artistic product has been out of harmony with the work it was intended to illustrate.

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