LYX DE QUINCEY, T. THYS 1832 Posch I 375

Book-binding & Book-lettering

~~Bibles, gave a very powerful encouragement to the art of binding at one of the arts ancillary to literature.~~ [Literature, is a mean thing enough in the ordinary way of pursuing it as what the Germans call a good studium: but in its higher relations it is so noble, that it ~~can~~ is able to ennoble other things ~~though~~ supposing them in any degree ministerial to itself. The paper-maker, ergo the rag-maker, ergo the linen-cloth maker, is the true and original creator of the modern Bible, as the Alp. of Dublin long ago demonstrated. For the art of printing had remained for want of the typographic secret: that was always known: known and practised ~~many~~ hundreds of years before the Christian era. Whether for want of a material so cheap enough and plentiful enough to make types other than a most costly substitute for hand-copying. Do you hear that, gentlemen blockheads, - that seldom hear anything but your own? — Next after the paper-maker, who furnished the sine qua non, takes rank — not the engraver, or illustrator [our modern novelist cannot swim without this caricaturing villain as one of his bladders, ~~but~~ all higher forms of literature laugh at him] but the binder: for he, by raising books into ornamental furniture, has given ~~to the~~ non-intellectual people by myriads a motive ~~for and~~ for encouraging literature and ~~its~~ an interest in its extension. ~~The very volume of Sandy, who dandy-ism had exhausted itself upon his binding for~~ ~~[illegible]~~ Any specimen of Mr. Tomas's binding I never saw: but ~~[illegible]~~ by those who have, it is said ~~it has really [illegible]~~ to be magnificent. He and his family have once, if not thrice, visited by Charles I.; and ~~to~~ they presented to that prince a most sumptuous Bible of their own binding; which like a lady once told me was in that collection gradually formed by George III. at Buckingham House, and finally presented to the nation by his son. I should fear it must be in ruins as a specimen of ~~that~~ the little Giddy workmanship. The man, who goes to bed in his coffin dress in a jewelled robe and a diamond-hilted sword, is very little to be visited from the resurrection-man, who

usually disarms him and unbosses him. ~~Pretty Lion on the~~ The hilts, the ~~is~~ has its binding inlaid with gold, ~~and~~ bound with orient pearl, and made horrent with rubies, ~~usually~~ suggests to many a most unscriptural mode of searching into its treasures, and too like the historic Memoirs' mode of peering into the gorgeous floors of heaven. ~~And~~ Be it the Bible, except the Reliquary, war ~~idea~~ that the true art of the Tudor family could be better displayed in a case of less ~~pompous~~ costly luxury. Certainly in no one art was the stupidity of Europe more atrociously needed than in this particular ~~field~~ art practised by the Tudors. Boundless was the field for improvement. And ~~I~~ in particular I had myself drawn from this art as practised of old one striking memorial of that remarkable genius for stupidity which in all ages alike seems to haunt man as by an inspiration unless he is roused out of it by panic. It is this. Look at the lettering, that is the labels lettered with the titles of books, in all libraries, ~~of~~ that are not of recent date. No man would believe that the very earliest attempt to impress a mark of ownership upon some bucket of the Argonauts, or the rudest scrawl of Polyphemus in forging a ~~brand or~~ Tarry board upon some sheep which he had stolen, could be so bad, so staggering, and ~~unmeaning half~~ illegible, as are these literary inscriptions. How much better to have had a thin fillet or veneering of marble ~~objects~~ or iron adapted to the back of the book. A stone-cutter in a neighbouring yard once told me that he charged a penny per letter. That may be cheap for a grey-stone: but it seems rather high for a book. Plate would cost you five pence: ~~[illegible] "[illegible] as [illegible]" for [illegible]~~ this would be shocking: and in decency you must put him into Latin, which would add 2d. more to every volume. On a library like that of Dulcken or the Vatican, it would run a national debt to letter the books. ~~So let the stone-cutter, if rather deep cut deep, cut true, but be chiefly home. For, if you except the great binders of [illegible] in the last generation, Lewis, Hering, [illegible]~~

end of bookbinding essay OMITTED from PW I

~~the~~ Kalthoeber, Staggemeier, and some few others with names equally frightful, not one man existed throughout Europe that could spell a title properly on the outside of a book, or could place the letters upright ~~or~~ and parallel with each other. Now that stupidity had a rotundity of perfection about it, a breadth, a marble simplicity, which I say ought not to have gone without its reward. Would the grand cross of the Legion Ehrenhunter much to ask in France for its ~~encouragement~~ decoration?