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## CHAPTER THREE

# Early Flap-Style Jackets

1810S–1850S

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The real so-called 'jacket' came into existence when publishers began to realize their need of something which would actually protect a good binding.

Dorothea Lawrence Mann

As part of the revolution in book production and marketing that emerged with the introduction of publishers' bindings in the nineteenth century, flap-style jackets played an increasingly important role. These jackets saw service early in the century and were in widespread use long before its end. They were simple in design, cheap to produce and more versatile than sealed wrappings. They protected bindings while allowing books to be examined and read at the same time. They became the standard all-purpose publishers' jacket that is still in use today.

Some early flap-style jackets carried artwork and advertising and were used for marketing as well as protection. Others were plain or printed just enough to identify the book. Still others had holes cut or torn in the spine to let the title show through. All flap-style jackets could be used indefinitely, but they were seldom issued for continuing use in the nineteenth century, and seldom saved before the twentieth.

The three-flap style may have been about as common as the single-flap jacket for a number of years, but the latter was, or became, the standard. Late in the century there was a variant of the three-flap form in which the upper and lower flaps were cut and folded in such a way that they extended out across the top and bottom of the text block to protect those areas, with the long flaps on the fore-edge side tucked between the endpapers as usual to hold the jacket in place. The outside flaps were called yapp edges, and jackets of this type were typically reserved for special editions.<sup>1</sup>

Many grades of paper were used for flap-style jackets, along with various types and textures such as glazed, waxed, tissue and, eventually, glassine. Cloth, usually backed with paper or mesh, was used for some flap-style jackets, mostly late in the century. Coarse brown paper was used so often that it created a later impression that all early jackets were nothing but wrapping paper. While many were like that, many others were colourful and appealing, foreshadowing the permanent, market-oriented jackets of the twentieth century.

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THREE :  
EARLY  
FLAP-STYLE  
JACKETS



22. Yellow jacket and cover of *Neues Taschenbuch von Nürnberg* vol. 2 (1822).  
Image courtesy of The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.  
Another 1822 copy with light blue jacket. Note different flaps.