

LEATHERS FOR  
BOOKBINDING  
& UPHOLSTERY

SEAL, PLAIN.



SEAL, FINE GRAIN.

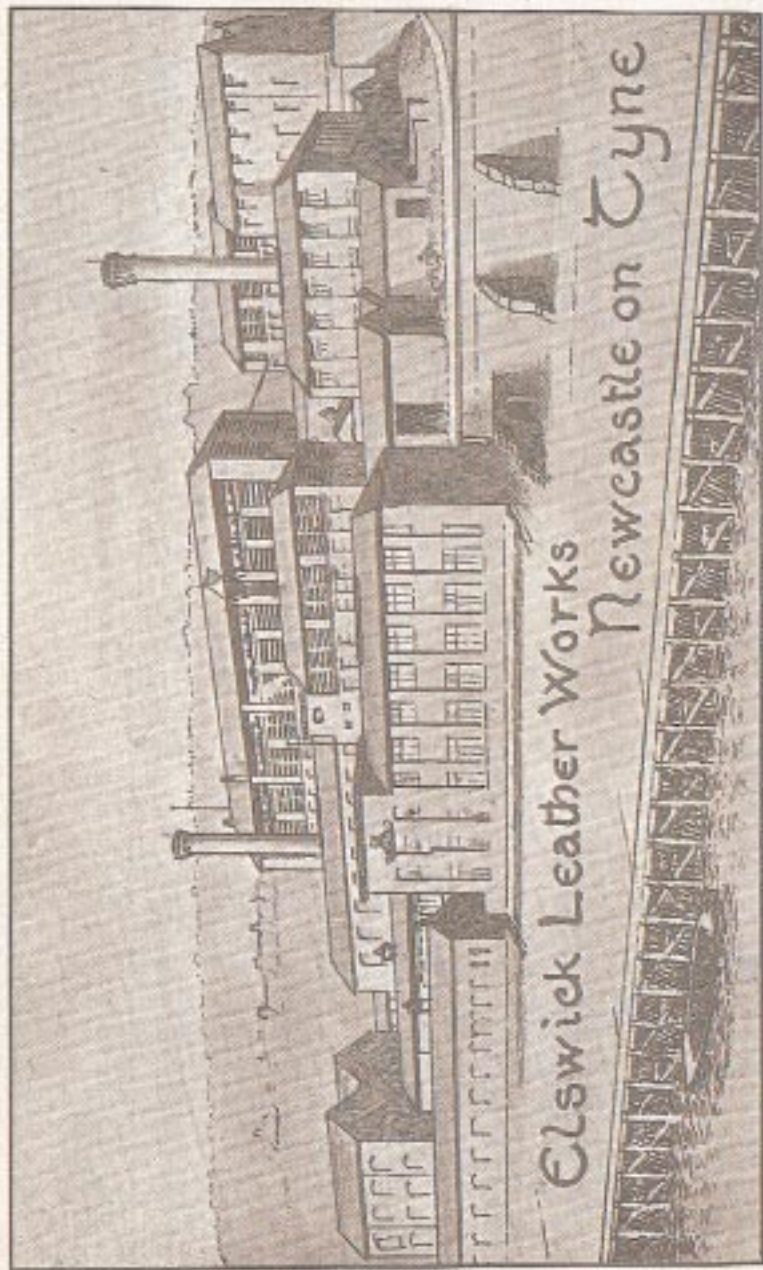


"OASIS" MOROCCOS.



ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL





LEATHERS FOR  
BOOKBINDING AND UP-  
HOLSTERY, PRODUCED BY  
EDW. & JAS. RICHARDSON

ELSWICK LEATHER WORKS,  
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

### BIBLIOGRAPHIA.

- First Edition . . . . pub. April, 1905  
Second „ . . . . „ March, 1907  
Third „ (Revised) . „ April, 1910

## LEATHER FOR BOOKBIND- ING, ETC.

THE recent report of the Committee appointed by the Society of Arts to examine and report upon the Leather used in Bookbinding has drawn attention to the very rapid decay of much of the Modern Leather used for this purpose. This decay is, of course, common knowledge to all who possess or are in the habit of handling books, and it is a constant source of regret and annoyance to find that a beautiful and costly binding is in a state of decay after only a few years' use, whereas very many leather bindings of great age remain perfectly sound. There can be no doubt the use of mineral acids in dressing the leather has been the chief cause of such premature decay.

As manufacturers of leather we have paid special attention to this matter for a lengthened period. The recommendations given in this report, which are in entire agreement with our own practice, we have followed as closely as our own experience permitted, and have been successful in producing leather tanned with the best materials for the purpose, and dressed and dyed without the use of mineral acids or any other material at all likely to affect its wearing qualities.

## THE COLOURING AND DURABILITY OF LEATHERS.

The permanency of colours also has engaged our attention, and after a long series of experiments we have selected certain colours which we have found to be the least affected by exposure to sunlight and air.

By these methods we can ensure the maximum durability of each skin, but we cannot, of course, alter the relative durability of leather prepared from the skins of different animals.

## THE SKINS USED IN BOOKBINDING.

A considerable variety of skins are used for book-binding, the chief among which are the skins of Sheep, Oxen, Calf, Goats and Pigs. SHEEPSKINS are cheap, and, when properly prepared and not subject to hard wear, last well on a book, but they are naturally of a soft, weak nature and are specially liable to be damaged by surface friction.

Those classes of skins tanned in India and known to the trade as "PERSIANS," both Sheep and Goats, owing to the nature of the tannage, have little durability, although at first they are mechanically strong.

### CALF.

Calfskin has naturally a delicate texture, which is easily abraded by rubbing wear, but when a handsome

binding is the chief consideration, its beautiful finish will give pleasure. We dress in a great variety of colours.

OX HIDE, of course, loses some of its strength by being reduced in substance to fit it for binding books, but when specially prepared from the raw state and "acid free" the loss is reduced to its minimum. It provides a good and suitable leather for binding large books, as also for Church or Railway Upholstery and is moderate in cost.

ANGLO-RUSSIA OX HIDE. The report of the Society of Arts expressly condemns the use of Russia Hides as being far from durable. This fault is avoided when Hides are home tanned in oak bark or sumac, dyed "Acid Free" and scented with the extract of Russian bark. Such hides will be appreciated by the many who like the colour and general appearance of the Russian article.

### MOROCCOS.

Goats which produce "Morocco" leather are of several kinds; of these the finest is the Cape of Good Hope Goatskin, known, when finished, as "LEVANT CAPE GOAT." This leather, which has a bold natural grain, is perhaps the most beautiful procurable for bookbinding. When properly prepared it has great durability and does not lose its flexibility.

NIGER GOATS. We import these skins and keep a large stock always in hand. They are sold as received, in plain finish.

OASIS GOATS. The number of really first-class

skins produced by the Nigerian natives is very small. We first select such skins from our purchases and taking the best of the remainder we re-tan in sumac and re-dye acid free. These are finished either plain, fine, or in medium grain and provide a sound, cheap, leather for Library binding or chair upholstery.

PIGSKIN, also termed HOGSKIN, is a durable leather much in demand by librarians. Our latest dressing leaves the skin supple, and it can be dyed acid free in a great variety of colours, giving at a moderate cost a leather suitable for binding either small or large books.

### THE GREENLAND SEAL

We are in a special position to offer another kind of skin to Bookbinders which has hitherto been much neglected by them, chiefly because it has been improperly prepared. We refer to the skin of the Greenland Seal, with which we have had very many years' experience, having tanned and dressed large quantities for a variety of purposes. The beauty, strength, and unsurpassed wearing qualities of SEALSKIN first drew our attention to its possibilities for bookbinding purposes, and after a number of trials and experiments we produced, and now supply, a leather which, in the opinion of the very highest authorities on bookbinding, cannot be excelled for beauty and durability.

It is strong, supple, and possesses a tough grain which does not peel or crack, and is capable of resisting hard rubbing wear. The skin has the peculiar property

which is, we think, confined to sealskin; it has no soft flanky or belly parts, but is the same texture all over, this rendering it very economical in use, with little waste, as all the marginal cuttings can be used for small work.

We produce this skin in a variety of grains and finishes, suitable for whatever class of work it may be applied to, from the finest and most artistic binding to the plainest Library or Commercial Work. In price also it ranges from that suited to high-class work down to an extremely cheap leather for Commercial bindings.\*

It may perhaps be of interest at this point to say a few words as to the creature which produces this skin. The Seal is a warm-blooded amphibious animal, very widely distributed over the world, being found in almost all Seas from the Northern to the South Polar regions, their food being mostly fish or shell-fish. Many of them spend nearly all their time in the water, only resorting to the shore or ice floes at the breeding season. This is the case with the well-known Alaskan Seal which produces the very beautiful fur; these skins are, however, far too valuable to be tanned as leather.

The animal producing the skin with which we deal is the ARCTIC or GREENLAND SEAL from the Northern Coasts of Europe and North America. They are caught for the most part by ships specially equipped and sent out for the purpose, and their

\* The cheaper grades are large skins and have small natural defects on the grain which, while they may detract from the appearance, do not affect the strength or wearing qualities.

capture is attended with considerable risk and great uncertainty. Moreover, a very large proportion of the skins when tanned are found to be very badly damaged, as the animals fight a great deal among themselves and are also apt to be cut and scratched on rocks, ice, etc. All these things tend to make the first cost of a good skin somewhat high when compared with skins of domestic animals which are not subject to such rough usage. But taking the quality, regularity and large surface available into consideration, SEALSKINS will be found one of the most satisfactory leathers ever introduced to the trade.

#### LEATHER FOR UPHOLSTERY.

SEALSKIN is very suitable for upholstery as well as bookbinding. It is a cause of constant complaint among those with leather-covered chairs, etc., that the leather wears no time, and yet on an old chair which may have been in existence for several generations the leather is still quite good and strong. All sorts of causes are blamed, such as gas, and many other things, and finally leather has got so bad a reputation that it is being superseded to a large extent by cloth of various sorts, which are by no means as satisfactory, as they hold dirt, and look shabby far more quickly than good leather.

But the real reason of this decay of leather used in upholstery—as in bookbinding—is in improper tanning, and the use of injurious materials in the dressing which, while they improve the depth and brilliancy of

the colour, will infallibly destroy the leather long before it should have been worn out by fair usage.

We have applied the same processes to leather for upholstery as to leather for bookbinding, and would strongly recommend SEALSKIN for the purpose, believing it to be unequalled, rivalling even PIGSKIN, which, while it certainly wears well, has the unfortunate property of stretching and becoming baggy, to the detriment of the appearance of the article covered with it. See also note at foot of page 9.

We dress in this manner the Cape of Good Hope and also European Goatskins in Bold, Fine and Long Grains for this work.

Oasis Moroccos provide a really high-class leather for small seats at a moderate cost.

#### THE MANUFACTURE OF GLUE.

In connection with the foregoing, we would urge the necessity of the use of good glue, having the qualities of great strength combined with elasticity. The best glue for bookbinding is made from skin pieces only, and should show a dark port wine colour in the cake. The amber and light coloured glues are mostly made from bones, and, though nice looking, are not always so good.

To prepare glue for use, it should be broken into small pieces and steeped over night in water which can be thrown away. Good glue will not lose any of its qualities by being so steeped. In the morning the glue will have absorbed water and be swollen to double its

size; it can then be put into the glue pot and melted for use. It should not, however, be boiled, as this decreases its strength and elasticity.



**GUARANTEE.**—We stamp every skin of (specially prepared) leather, and hereby guarantee that every skin so issued from our works, and bearing our stamp as above, is entirely free of all injurious acid, and has been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the Special Committee of the Society of Arts on Leather for Bookbinding.

The following points are brought to the notice of Librarians and Bookbinders.

We give a guarantee with our leather, and stamp each skin.

We produce Bookbinding leather of the highest class for extra work, such as Levant Cape Goats, and specially selected Seal, as well as cheaper Leathers for Commercial and Library Binding all acid free. The price of the Acid Free Leather does not exceed that of other makes, and in the case of the Oasis Morocco is actually less.

We make a pure Skin Glue suitable for Bookbinders.

We are confident that our leather will compare favourably with any produced for quality and price.

We will send samples and prices to the trade on application.





71/0

PLAIN FINISH PIGSKIN.



LEVANT MOROCCO, PREPARED FROM THE SKIN OF THE "CAPE GOAT," NATURAL BOLD GRAIN.

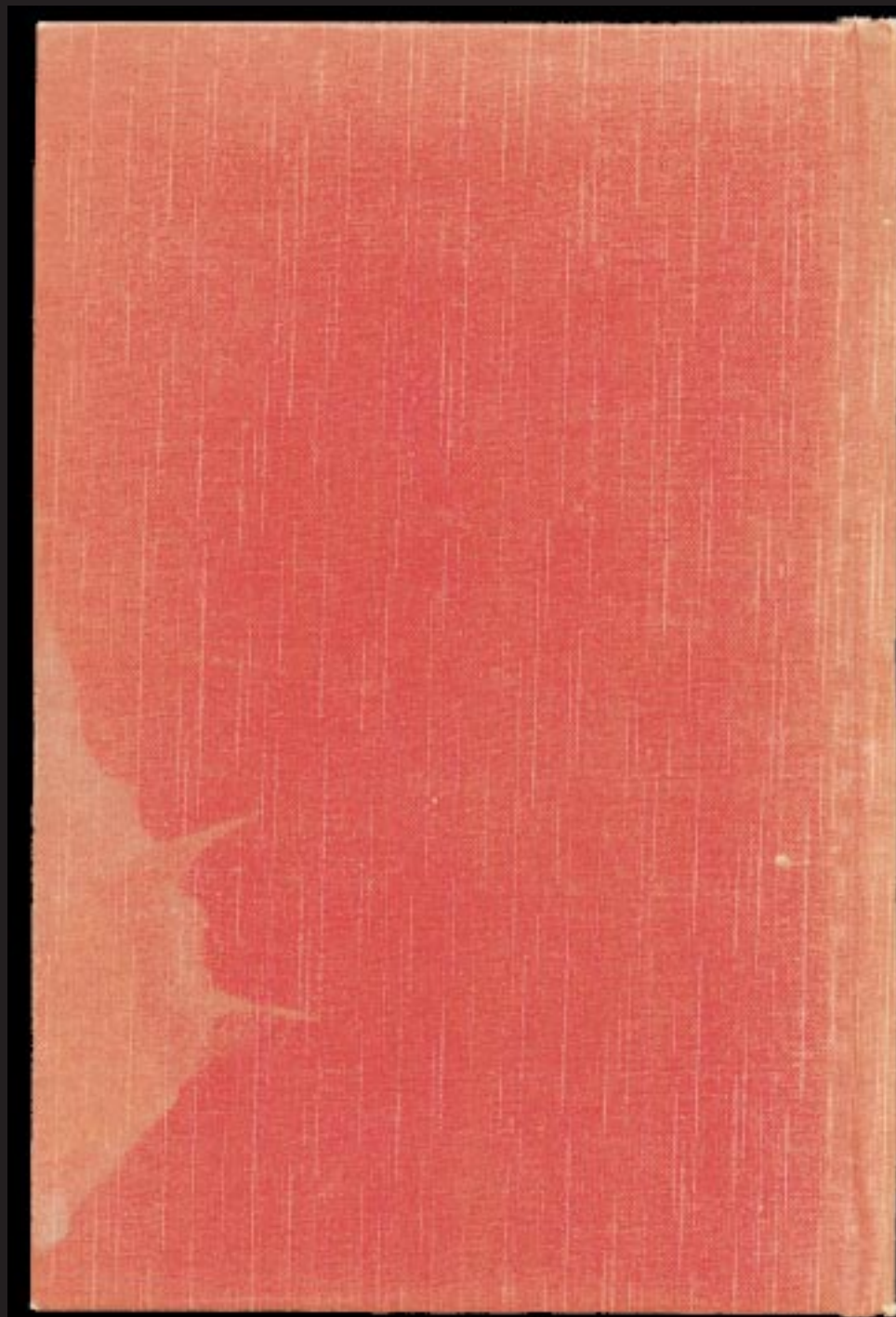


FINE GRAIN MOROCCO, PREPARED FROM THE SKIN OF THE "CAPE GOAT."



Patterns of other Leathers and samples of GLUE will be supplied on application.





This electronic version produced by **HARMATAN LEATHER** © 2002 Phone 01933 412151 [www.harmatan-leather.co.uk](http://www.harmatan-leather.co.uk)  
The original volume is part of the Harmatan CollectioN of material relating to books and bookbinding Not to be reused for any purpose without permission.