









WHOLE ART OF MARBLING  
AS APPLIED TO PAPER  
BOOK-EDGES

ETC.

CONTAINING  
A FULL DESCRIPTION OF  
THE NATURE AND PROPERTIES OF THE  
MATERIALS USED, THE METHOD OF PREPARING THEM,  
AND OF EXECUTING EVERY KIND OF MARBLING IN USE AT  
PRESENT TIME, WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS AND EXAMPLES.

BY

C. W. WOOLNOUGH.



GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,  
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MDCCLXXXI.

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THIS LITTLE WORK IS DEDICATED TO THE  
MEMORY OF PROFESSOR  
MICHAEL FARADAY,  
WHOSE KIND INTEREST AND NOTICE OF HIS FIRST WORK  
THE AUTHOR BEGS GRATEFULLY TO  
RECORD.





Royal Institution

2 January 1856.

Sir

I beg to thank you for your kindness in sending me a copy of your very practical work on Marbling. I feel much interest in the subject because of its affinity with my early occupations of book-binding, and also because of the very beautiful principles of natural philosophy which it involves. The Marbled Lith is very good indeed. I suppose it is not done by a continuous process but <sup>in</sup> sheets. Indeed I see that is the case at

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Love Lu

Yours by Albert Hunt

Monday

C. W. Whitcomb Esq

**THE WHOLE ART OF MARBLING.**



## PREFACE TO THIS EDITION.

MORE than twenty-seven years have now elapsed since the author submitted his first work to the notice of the bookbinding fraternity and the public in general, and the very favourable reception accorded to it, and in some instances, from quarters whence it was least expected, coupled with the fact that it has been for some years out of print (numerous applications having been made for copies without success), have induced the author once more to come forward with another edition, superior in every respect to the first, inasmuch as, while it contains all the matter supplied in the former, it possesses much additional information, embodying the results of the study, practice, and personal experience of considerably more than half a century, arranged in the most simple, progressive, and easy manner, calculated to develop the various processes of this “pretty, mysterious art,” step by step, till nothing but practice will be required to make the student perfect.

As this is most probably the last time the author will intrude upon the notice of the public, he wishes to state that much time, labour and study, have been devoted to the object of rendering this work as perfect as possible,

and worthy of still more extensive patronage among those who desire reliable information on this hitherto dubious and mystified subject, and he embraces the present opportunity of tendering his sincere thanks to those who so kindly, voluntarily, and encouragingly testified their interest in, and commendation of his book, among whom he feels proud to record the names of the late Professor Faraday, Professors Pepper, Bachhoffner, Dr. Normandy, and others; but perhaps as strong an evidence of the truthfulness and practical utility of the work as can be obtained from the encomiums of some, may be deduced from the hostility and bitterness of others, who, in the mistaken idea that their secrets were revealed, their rights invaded, and their pecuniary interest endangered, have given vent to their spleen by heaping upon him a variety of abuse, contumely, annoyance, and persecution. However, as he never had the least particle of instruction, information, or help of any kind from any of them (in fact, the majority of those who bear the names of masters possess but a very limited amount of knowledge of the principles and practice of the profession, and still less ability to impart it), he considers that he has an indisputable right to make use of the knowledge he has acquired by dearly bought experience and labour as he may deem proper. The author was also honoured (though with what motives he will leave others to guess) by our worthy transatlantic brethren, who reprinted it in Philadelphia, and published it there in conjunction with some work on bookbinding. Not content with the benefit which might accrue to them in their own territory, they imported a quantity into this country, and began to

circulate them in London, obliging the author to institute proceedings for infringement of copyright.

But notwithstanding all these drawbacks, the interest which was manifested in this novelty was proved by the fact that not less than one hundred lectures, illustrated by experiments, were delivered at the Royal Polytechnic Institution, at Eton College, at some of the nobility's conversazioni, also before the late lamented Prince Consort and the late King of Portugal at a conversazione of the Royal Society at Connaught House, his Royal Highness manifesting great interest, and even condescending to try some experiments with his own hands, and carrying away with him a copy of the book.

There is one circumstance more which may be alluded to, for, whilst rather amusing, it serves to prove the truth of the foregoing statements, and must be admitted to be a testimony in favour of the work. Travelling through one of our large manufacturing towns or cities, the author was entering a house of business to solicit orders, when his attention was directed to an individual who was just leaving. As he passed out, the principal asked the question, "Do you know that man?" On replying in the negative, he remarked, in a bantering tone, "Why he is one of your fraternity, a most clever fellow, according to his own account he can do everything, and has published a book which tells you all about it for the small charge of sixpence; we shall soon be able to do without you altogether, and be 'Every man his own Marbler.'" On the following morning, proceeding through a bye street, whom should he see but this very person, looking intently into the window of a tobacco shop with an empty

pipe in his hand, and, as it was obvious that he was not too well off, he felt a little commiseration for him, and accosting him said, "Well, friend, were you not in such a place yesterday?" "Indeed I was," said he, putting the tip of his little finger into the bowl of his pipe, and then tapping it on the palm of his other hand, "but I don't remember seeing you there." "Never mind," was the reply, "I saw you, and was informed what a clever fellow you were. Now I sometimes do a little in that way myself; have you met with any success?" "Ah no," said he, "I have been on the tramp these ten days, worn the shoes off my feet walking from place to place in search of employment; no luck anywhere; shall leave here to-night and push on towards Liverpool." On a trifle being slipped into his hand, his countenance brightened, and with an exclamation of surprise, "Gad," said he, "but you are the best fellow I've met for many a long day," and, thrusting a hand into his coat pocket, he drew therefrom a small pamphlet of a few pages, saying, "Here, take this, there's something in it worth trying; I've tried it, and proved it myself, and I can confidently recommend it to you; it's first-rate. I took it out of a half-guinea book published by one Woolnough of London; it's worth all the money." I never saw the poor fellow again, and he never knew that it was Woolnough himself to whom he had been confessing his delinquency, and at the same time so strongly recommending his own production.

It may not be out of place here to relate, by way of illustration, a circumstance which is calculated to throw a little light on the causes which have tended, in some measure, to cramp the progress of this art, and to dis-



courage the development of its resources. Masters take lads as apprentices, engaging to teach them the Art and Mystery of Marbling, to whom it is a perfect mystery in every respect; these masters, in fact, possessing little or no knowledge of the practical or experimental working of the various and intricate processes connected with the successful carrying out of their object, and, as a rule, these lads are handed over to the tender mercies of the men employed, and, unless they are gifted with a little more than ordinary acuteness and penetration, will be kept in the dark as much as possible with regard to many things essential to their advancement and ultimate perfection in their calling. The case I now introduce will not exactly apply to the master, but only to the hands employed. In the beginning of the present century a person possessing a general knowledge of the art as it was practised in those days, devised a plan by which he acquired a moderate competency and retired in comfortable circumstances. The course adopted by him was the following. He took some half-dozen or more boys from the parish workhouse, and selecting such as appeared likely to suit his purpose, had them bound apprentices. These lads he carefully trained, each to a separate class of work; for instance, he would keep one upon large French or Shell, another on the small, another on Italian, another to certain patterns of Spanish, and so on, bringing each to excel on a few patterns, but not making them perfect in all, with the exception of one, whom he required to do book edges, and for him it was necessary he should be taught the whole, he, as a matter of course, having higher wages than the others. Although at first there was a good

deal of imperfect work produced, yet at that time prices were such as would amply remunerate for disposing of the produce of these embryo workers at a reduced price, and as they improved every week, while the cost for labour was so small, he soon found that his speculation was successful, and by the time these youths were out of their time he was able to command one of the most extensive and best paying concerns going. If any dispute arose, and any one of these men left, he found a difficulty in obtaining work, not having a full knowledge of all, and he had to return to his old place. This state of things continued for some years, and when he died, the business, being divided among the men, who, being taken from an illiterate and humble class, were not equal to the responsibility, suffered it to decay, and it is now only as one of the things of the past, and in the present age almost forgotten except by a very few.

## INTRODUCTION.

THE Art of Marbling is by no means a novel invention, although it has been kept in the dark and involved in a kind of mystery by those who practised it. When the author was young, it was almost an impossibility for anyone, especially if they were at all connected with the bookbinding or stationery trades, to get a sight of the inside of the apartment where the process was performed, every hole and crevice through which you might get a peep was carefully stopped up, and "No Admission" put upon the door. However, patience and perseverance conquer difficulties, of which truth the work now before you is a witness; it is the only practical work of the kind that has ever appeared (except the smaller edition of twenty-seven years ago), calculated to impart correct instructions to the minds of those who desire to become acquainted with its various details. There have been many receipts given and articles written and printed in Cyclopædias and works of a similar character, but the methods therein described are so utterly ridiculous that anyone possessing the smallest amount of knowledge on the subject must treat them with contempt. Marbling is an art which consists in the production of certain patterns and effects by means of colours so prepared as to float on

a preparation of mucilaginous liquid which must possess properties of an antagonistic nature to those prepared colours, and which colours, while floating upon the surface of this mucilaginous liquid, are formed into patterns and taken off or transferred to a sheet of paper by gently laying the paper down upon it, or to the smoothly cut edges of a book by gently dipping it therein. This process is not very easy to describe, and yet to anyone beholding it for the first time it appears extremely simple and easy to perform, yet the difficulties are many and the longer anyone practises it the more he becomes convinced that there is ample room for fresh discoveries and more interesting results than any that have yet been accomplished.

When it was first discovered, and by whom, or in what country it was first practised, it is hardly possible to determine. The old Dutch paper is not unfrequently found on books printed at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and circumstances seem to point to Holland or some locality near to that country as the place where it was then practised. Many years ago this old Dutch paper, generally in the size of foolscap, used to be imported into England, and in order to evade the duty to which it would be subject as an article of commerce, some of it (I do not mean to say all) was wrapped round small packages of Dutch toys, and thus as wrappers passed free, after which it was carefully taken off, smoothed out, and sold to the bookbinders at a good price for the better class of work; indeed, so choice was it, that in some of those old books the inside linings were formed of pieces neatly and cleverly joined together, and the brightness